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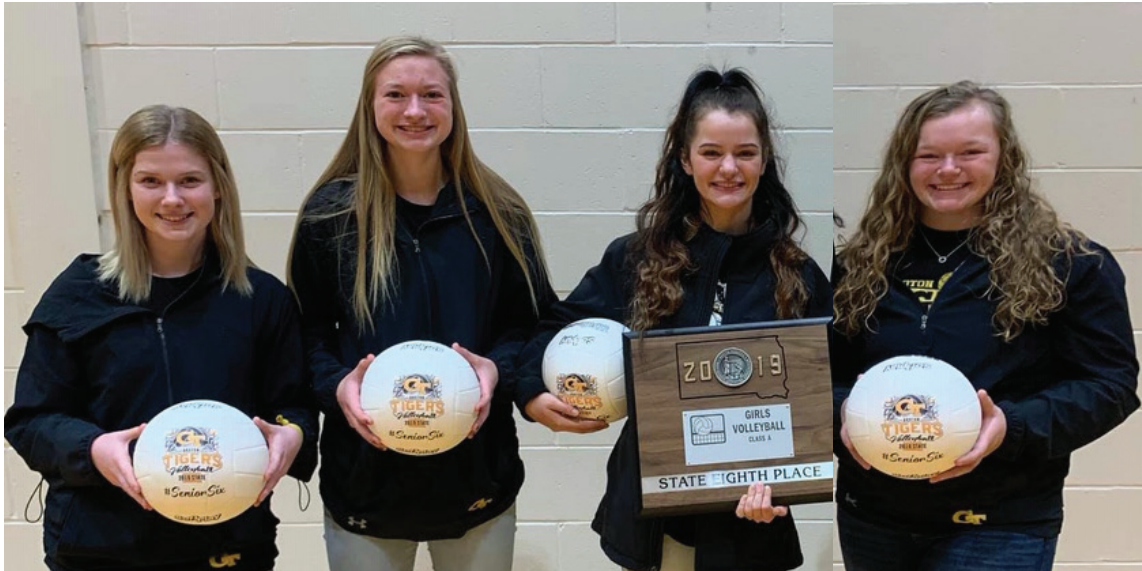


90th Birthday

**Ilse Cameron
will celebrate her
90th birthday
on December 5, 2019.**

**Greetings may be sent to
1324 12th Avenue SE, Apt #36
Aberdeen, SD 57401**

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



Four named to All-Conference Volleyball Team

Groton area placed four members on the All-Conference Northeast Conference Team. Left to right they are Tadyn Glover, Nicole Marzahn, Eliza Wanner and Kaylin Kucker.

Others on the team are:

Aberdeen Roncalli: Mariah Winegar, Madelyn Bragg, Madelyn Martin

Clark/Willow Lake: Erica Juntunen

Hamlin: Ashtyn Abraham, Logan Keszler

Milbank: Jaecy Engebretson

Redfield: Hannah Kuehn, Kailee Clausen, Courtney Turck

Webster: Janessa Storley, Abby Richie

GHS Soccer Awards



Austin Jones
Most Valuable Player
Offensive Most Valuable Player
(Photo by Tricia Keith)



Grady O'Neill
Most Valuable Player
(Photo by Tricia Keith)

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Austin Jones
First Team - All State
(Photo by Tricia Keith)



Isaac Smith
Defensive Most Valuable Player
(Photo by Tricia Keith)

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Hunter Schaller
Perseverance Award
(Photo by Tricia Keith)



Steven Paulson
Most Improved Player
(Photo by Tricia Keith)

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Piet Solling
Offensive Most Valuable Player
(Photo by Tricia Keith)



Anthony Schinkel
Defensive Most Valuable Player
(Photo by Tricia Keith)

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Braxton Imrie
Rookie of the Year
(Photo by Tricia Keith)



Laila Roberts
Rookie of the Year
(Photo by Tricia Keith)

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**Allyssa Locke & Trista Keith
The Heart and Soul Award**

(Photo by Tricia Keith)

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Carly Guthmiller & Madeline Fliehs
The Hustle Award

(Photo by Tricia Keith)

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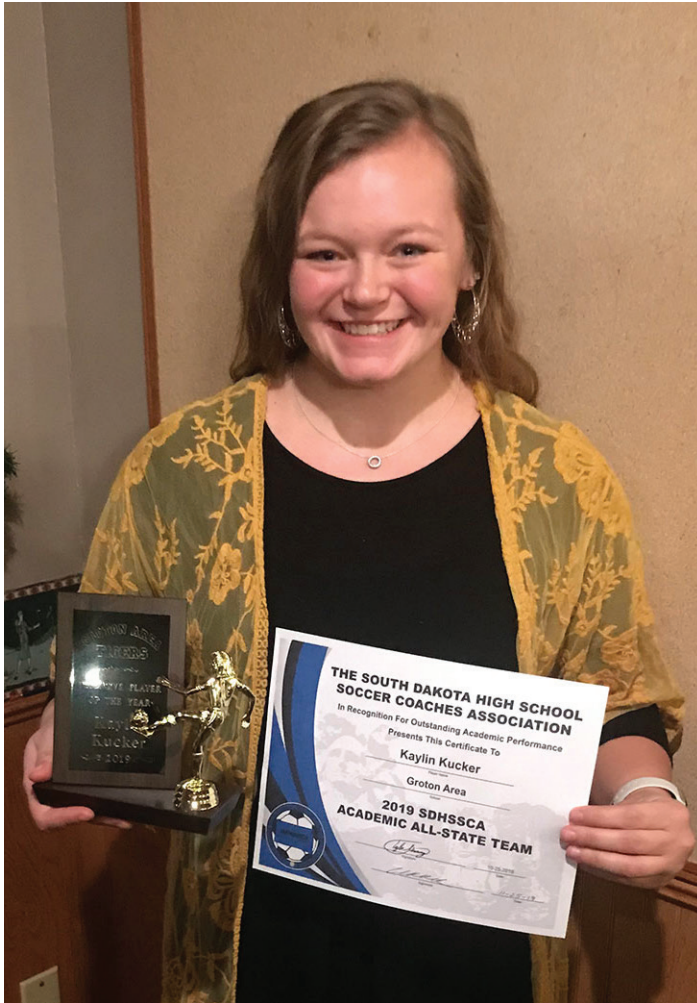
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Emma Schinkel & Brooklyn Gilbert
Miss Universal
(Photo by Tricia Keith)

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Kaylin Kucker
Defensive player of the Year
Academic All-State
(Photo by Tricia Keith)



Regan Leicht
Offensive Player of the Year
(Photo by Tricia Keith)

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**...WINTER WEATHER ADVISORY NOW IN EFFECT UNTIL 6 PM CST THIS EVENING...
...WINTER STORM WARNING IN EFFECT FROM 6 PM THIS EVENING TO NOON CST SUNDAY...**

* WHAT...For the Winter Storm Warning, heavy mixed precipitation expected. Total snow accumulations of 6 to 15 inches and ice accumulations of around one tenth of an inch. Winds gusting as high as 40 mph. For the Winter Weather Advisory, mixed precipitation. Additional snow accumulations of up to one inch and ice accumulations of around one tenth of an inch.

* WHERE...Portions of central and northeast South Dakota and west central Minnesota.

* WHEN...For the Winter Storm Warning, from 6 PM this evening to noon CST Sunday. For the Winter Weather Advisory, until 6 PM CST this evening.

* IMPACTS...Travel could be very difficult. The hazardous conditions could impact the morning or evening commute.

PRECAUTIONARY/PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS...

If you must travel, keep an extra flashlight, food, and water in your vehicle in case of an emergency. Slow down and use caution while traveling.

In Minnesota, the latest road conditions can be obtained at 511mn.org, or by calling 5 1 1. In South Dakota, the latest road conditions can be obtained by calling 5 1 1.

.DAY ONE...Today and tonight.

Areas of light freezing drizzle, mist and light snow will continue to move across the area through this afternoon. A transition to all snow is expected to take place late this afternoon and tonight.

DAYS TWO THROUGH SEVEN...Saturday through Thursday.

Areas of snow, moderate to heavy at times, will move through the region on Saturday into Sunday morning. Some pockets of freezing drizzle or freezing rain or rain could be possible Saturday afternoon. Strong winds will lead to blowing snow and reduced visibilities through the weekend.



*Olive Grove's
4th Annual*

*Christmas
Tour
of Homes
& Holiday Party*

SATURDAY, DEC. 7, 2019

TOUR OF HOMES - 4-7 P.M.
Steve & Betty Dunker
Brett & Anna Schwan
Ryan & Jennifer Schelle
Olde Bank n' Café

**COFFEE, APPLE CIDER AND
GOODIES AT THE CLUBHOUSE**

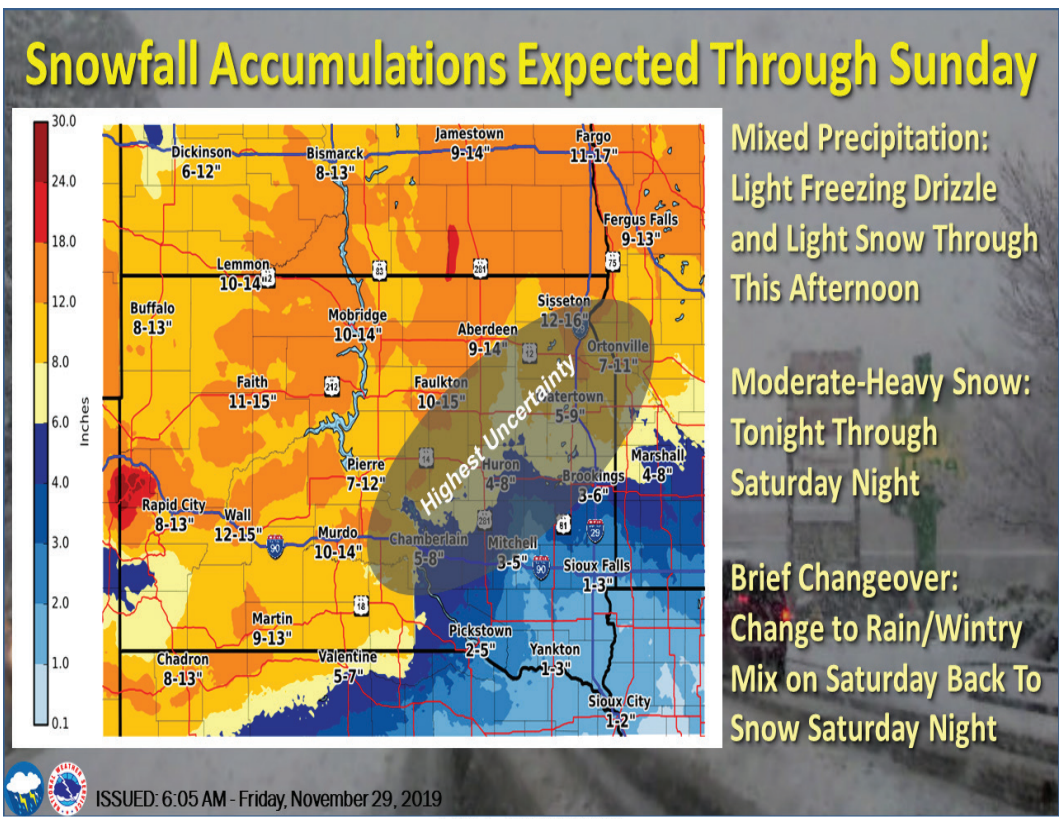
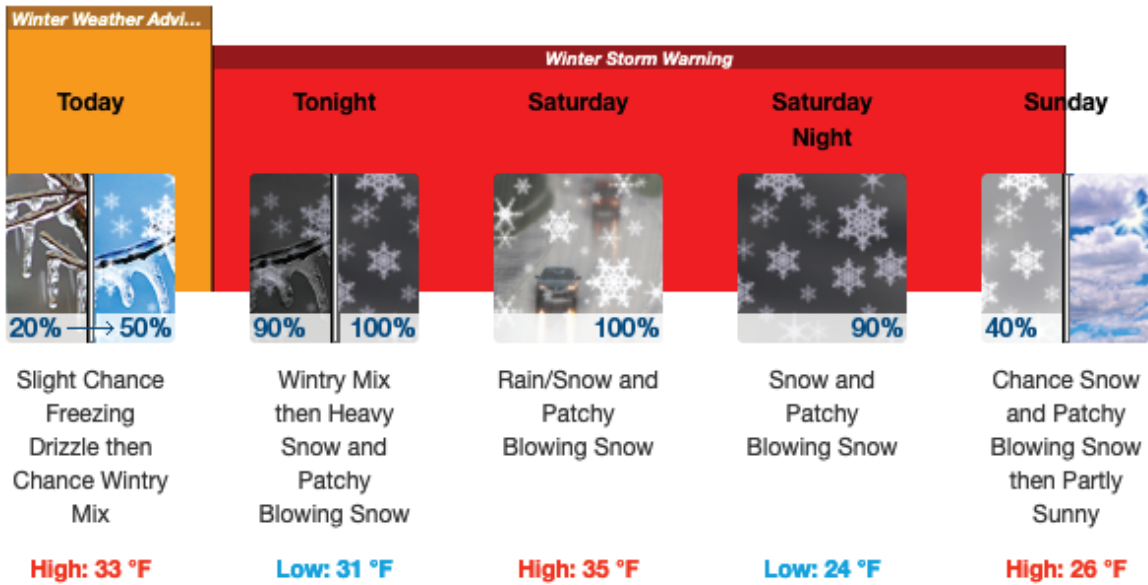
HOLIDAY PARTY - 4 P.M. TO CLOSE
A variety of snacks served
Silent Basket Items
Bidding Closes at 8:30 p.m.
Live Auction begins at 8:30 p.m.

**\$15 TICKETS AVAILABLE AT
LORI'S PHARMACY, GROTON
GROTON FORD
HAIR & COMPANY, ABERDEEN**

COME ON OUT FOR A FUN EVENING!
Support your local golf course!

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A strong winter storm system is still anticipated to move through the region this weekend. Significant snowfall accumulations are expected across the Missouri Valley into parts of northeast South Dakota. Strong winds will kick in leading to blowing snow and reduced visibilities. Expect hazardous travel conditions to develop by late Friday afternoon and persist into Sunday.

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Today in Weather History

November 29, 1896: The mercury plunged to 51 degrees below zero at Havre Montana. It marked the culmination of a two week long cold wave. A stagnate high-pressure area similar to those over Siberia during the winter was the cause. During the month of November temperatures across Montana and the Dakotas averaged 15 to 25 degrees below normal. Aberdeen's low temperature on this day was 25 degrees below zero. The average temperature for the month was 9.7 degrees, or 19.6 degrees below normal.

November 29, 1996: Widespread freezing rain laid down a thick layer of ice across a large part of north-east South Dakota and west central Minnesota on the 29th and 30th, making driving on area highways and Interstate 29 treacherous. Later on the 29th, the freezing rain changed over to snow. Snowfall amounts ranged from 2 to 4 inches across the area. Numerous accidents occurred throughout the weekend with mainly minor injuries. Many cars and trucks also went into ditches. The South Dakota Highway Patrol reported in, one three hour period that along I-29, from the Clear Lake exit to the Codington County line 40 to 45 vehicles were in the ditch. Many activities and sporting events were also postponed or cancelled.

November 29, 2002: High winds of 30 to 50 mph, gusting to near 70 mph, occurred much of the afternoon across central and north central South Dakota. A tractor-trailer, carrying a load of livestock, was overturned on Highway 12 about three miles east of Mobridge. The tractor was totaled, four cattle were killed, and the driver suffered minor injuries. High winds of 30 to 50 mph, with gusts to near 60 mph, also occurred across Roberts and Grant counties in the late afternoon hours.

November 29, 1991: A tornado struck southeast Springfield, Missouri, causing F4 damage. Shortly after touchdown, the tornado reached F3 intensity, approximately 3 miles north of the town of Nixa. While crossing Highway 65, the tornado picked up a truck and dropped it onto a frontage road, killing one passenger and injuring ten others. The tornado intensified to F4 strength as it moved through the Woodbridge and Natural Bridge Estates subdivisions where 15 homes were destroyed. Altogether, two people were killed and 64 others were injured.

1896 - The mercury plunged to 51 degrees below zero at Havre, MT. It marked the culmination of a two week long cold wave caused by a stagnate high pressure area similar to those over Siberia during the winter. During the month of November temperatures across Montana and the Dakotas averaged 15 to 25 degrees below normal. (David Ludlum)

1969 - Dense fog along the Jersey Turnpike resulted in a chain reaction of vehicle collisions during the morning rush hour. A propane truck jackknifed and was struck by a trailer truck, and other vehicles piled into the fiery mass. (David Ludlum)

1975 - Red River was buried under 34 inches of snow in 24 hours, establishing a record for the state of New Mexico. (The Weather Channel)

1985 - The temperature at Bismarck, ND, plunged to 30 degrees below zero to establish their record low for the month of November. The high that day was 4 degrees below zero. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Snow blanketed the Upper Mississippi Valley, with heavy snow reported near Lake Superior. Up to ten inches of snow was reported in Douglas County and Bayfield County of Wisconsin. Brule WI received nine inches of snow. Heavy rain soaked the Middle Atlantic Coast States, while gale force winds lashed the coastline. Flooding was reported in Maryland and Virginia. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Nine inches of snow at Alta UT brought their total for the month to 164 inches, surpassing their previous November record of 144 inches. Snowbird UT, also in the Little Cottonwood Valley, surpassed their November record of 118 inches of snow. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Strong Santa Ana winds diminished over southern California, but record cold was reported in some of the California valleys, with readings of 27 degrees at Redding and 31 degrees at Bakersfield. Gale force winds, gusting to 44 mph at Milwaukee WI, produced snow squalls in the Great Lakes Region. Sault Ste Marie MI finished the month of November with a record 46.8 inches of snow. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 27 °F at 6:55 PM

Low Temp: 22 °F at 3:41 AM

Wind: 18 mph at 7:03 PM

Day Rain: 0.00

Record High: 57° in 2017

Record Low: -26° in 1964

Average High: 32°F

Average Low: 12°F

Average Precip in Nov.: 0.69

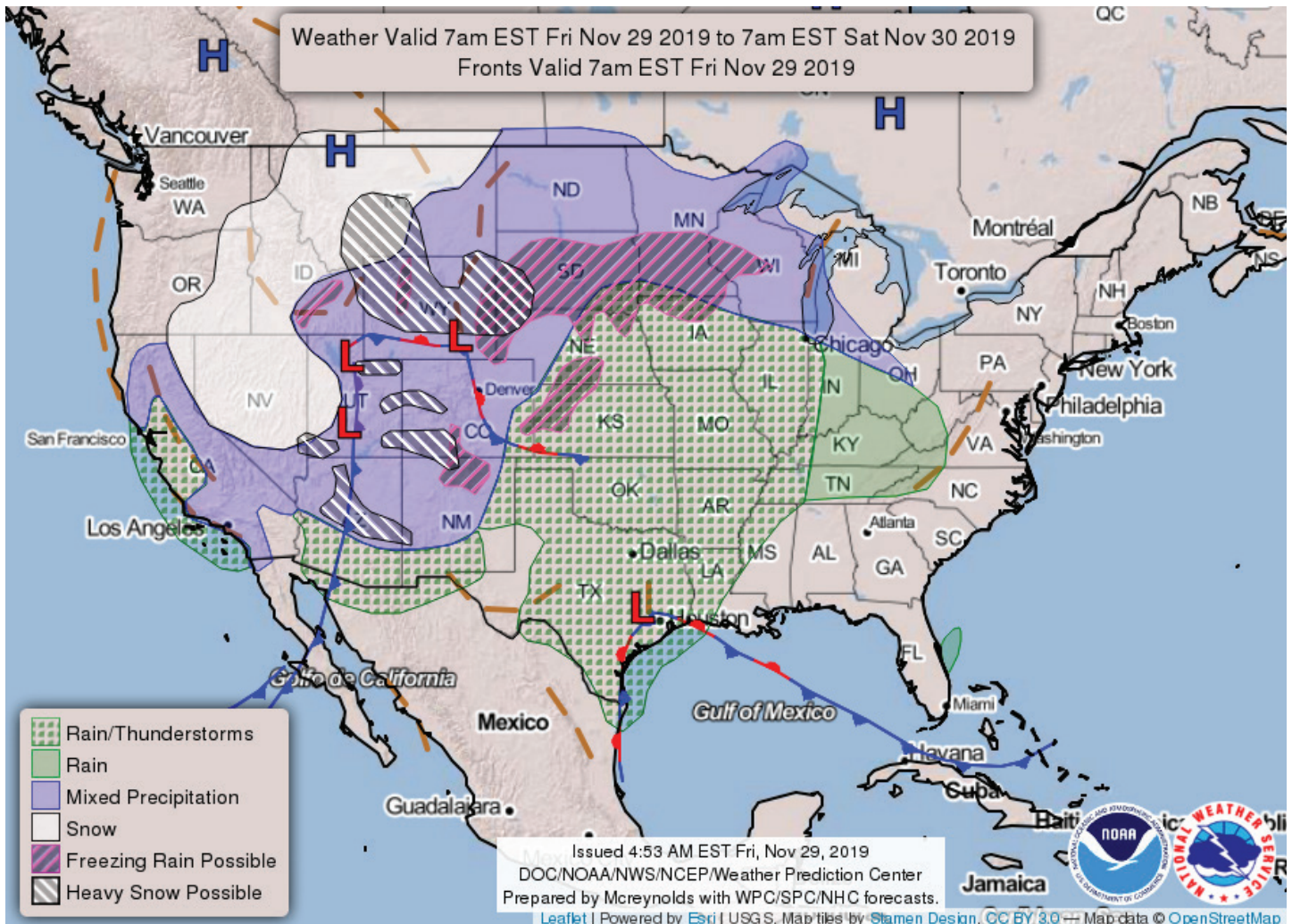
Precip to date in Nov.: 0.38

Average Precip to date: 21.16

Precip Year to Date: 26.95

Sunset Tonight: 4:54 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:51 a.m.





WHAT'S IN YOUR NAME?

Arthur Rubinstein was one of the world's most celebrated pianists. He often wondered what the critics and his audience would say if someone else appeared at a concert to play in his place.

One night, with an assumed name and made-up to look different in a disguise, he performed a concert before a large audience. After the concert, the critics agreed, "The gentleman who played this evening wasn't in the class with the great Rubinstein."

We are reminded in Proverbs that "A good name is more desirable than great riches, and to be esteemed is better than silver or gold."

God has called each of us to fill a unique role in His world. We are "one of a kind."

He has given each of us unique gifts and talents that He expects us to develop and refine. As we work with what He has given us, we develop a reputation for our accomplishments – whatever they may be. We become known to others not only by what we do but how well we do it. Our reputation, our "name," is a result of what we do with what God has given us. We dare not waste His gifts foolishly on meaningless things.

Prayer: Help us, Father, to "work hard" to "earn" a good name, and bring great honor to You. Give us a desire to become all we can become through You! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Proverbs 22:1 A good name is more desirable than great riches, and to be esteemed is better than silver or gold.

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2019 Groton SD Community Events

11/29 & 30/2019 – Christmas at the Barn – Round TWO 10am-5pm, Front Porch 605 – 1506 W Aspen Ave

12/03/2019 – Christmas Open House 10am-4pm, James Valley Telecommunications

12/07/2019 – Santa Day 9am-12pm, Professional Management Services

12/07/2019 – Tour of Homes 4pm-7pm, Olive Grove Golf Course (Tickets available at Lori's Pharmacy, Groton Ford, Hair & Co (Aberdeen) and Vicki Walter (605) 380-0480)

12/19/2019 – Christmas Open House 10am-4pm, Wells Fargo Bank

12/20/2019 – Holiday Bake Sale & Open House 9am-4pm, Groton Community Transit

• Bingo: every Wednesday at the Legion Post #39

2020 Groton SD Community Events

• 01/26/2020 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)

• 04/04/2020 Groton Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt, 10 a.m. Sharp (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)

• 04/25/2020 Fireman's Stag (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)

• 05/02/2020 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. (1st Saturday in May)

• 05/25/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)

• 06/8-10/2020 St. John's VBS

• 07/04/2020 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)

Groton Hosting State B American Legion Baseball Tournament

• 07/12/2020 Summer Fest/Car Show

• 09/12/2020 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. (1st Sat. after Labor Day)

• 10/10/2020 Pumpkin Fest

• 10/31/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat (Halloween)

• 11/14/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Annual Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)

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News from the Associated Press

Rapid City officer attacked with knife after fiery car chase

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A Rapid City police officer was attacked with a knife and suffered a cut to the hand after a fiery car chase. Authorities say he is recovering.

The incident happened early Thursday. The Rapid City Journal reports that officers tried to stop a car that was driving the wrong way when the driver fled. The car caught on fire after it was damaged while crossing a median.

Police say the car was engulfed in flames and the male driver, female passenger and a dog fled on foot. As the driver was approached, he allegedly cut one of the officers. Authorities used a stun gun on the driver and arrested him on multiple counts.

Police say the female was arrested on outstanding warrants. The dog was taken to an animal shelter.

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

Thanksgiving brings brief respite from worst of snow, winds

By **JULIE CARR SMYTH** Associated Press

Wintry weather temporarily loosened its grip across much of the U.S. just in time for Thanksgiving, but travelers were bracing for heavy snow and blizzard conditions in some areas as they made plans to return home.

The wind, ice and snow that tied up major highways and airports Tuesday and Wednesday largely let up Thursday, with a notable exception in California, where the main north-south Interstate 5 was shut down in Southern California as heavy snow blanketed the region. The lanes in both directions were reopened hours later.

High winds that had ripped a wooden sign from scaffolding on Chicago's Willis Tower and nearly felled the Christmas Tree to close Cleveland's Public Square Wednesday were calm enough by Thursday morning to allow the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York to proceed, albeit with balloons flying at lower levels.

The National Weather Service predicted things could get dicey — if not impassable — for holiday travelers' trips home. Forecasters warned against travel Friday night through Saturday night in a stretch of country from northeast Wyoming to northwest South Dakota due to expected blizzard conditions.

The next storm system was expected to drop up to 2 feet of additional snow from the Sierra Nevada to the central and northern Rockies as it rolls across a large swath of the western and central United States.

"Instead of telling you the whole spiel of when not to drive, we think it's easier to give the advice of just staying home this weekend," said a tweet from the National Weather Service in Reno. "It'll be a mess out there and we want everyone to enjoy their holiday weekend."

Long stretches of two interstate highways in northern Arizona's high country also were expected to be closed between late Thursday and early Friday because of expected heavy snowfall.

High winds also caused power outages in parts of the country, which crews scrambled to address Thursday.

In Ohio, crews had restored power to about 90 percent of those affected by Wednesday power outages caused by high winds. At peak, 42,000 customers in central Ohio and 39,000 in northeast Ohio were without electricity.

In Maine, heavy, wet snow and gusty winds caused more than 20,000 power outages. Central Maine Power Co. said in addition to its crews, at least 70 contractor crews, including 50 from Canada, were actively working or were headed to Maine Thursday to provide restoration support.

About 40 flights at Salt Lake City International Airport were experiencing delays averaging around 25 minutes around midday Thursday. Spokeswoman Nancy Volmer said some of those may have related to

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weather in other cities. Los Angeles and Denver also had a high number of delays, according to the live-tracking website FlightAware.

Volmer said Thursday's weather respite had given the airport time to clear most runways and roadways, but crews were bracing for more snowfall by evening.

In Chicago, which experienced delays headed into Thanksgiving Day, the Chicago Department of Aviation said things were pretty much back to normal.

Associated Press writers Martha Mendoza in Frazier Park, California, Don Babwin in Chicago and Kathy McCormack in Concord, New Hampshire, contributed to this report.

South Dakota State women upset No. 21 South Florida 61-50

CANCUN, Mexico (AP) — Myah Selland scored 17 points, Paiton Burckhard had 16 points and nine rebounds, and South Dakota State beat No. 21 South Florida 61-50 on Thursday in the Cancun Challenge.

Selland scored 10 points in the Jackrabbits' 10-2 game-opening run, including two 3-pointers. USF rallied to take a 46-44 lead midway through the fourth quarter when South Dakota State went on a game-changing 15-0 run.

Kallie Theisen added 10 points for South Dakota State (4-2). The Jackrabbits shot 63.6% from the field in the second half and finished at 48.9%.

The Jackrabbits are now 11-28 versus nationally ranked opponents and will play again on Friday against Notre Dame, which is just outside the AP Top 25.

Bethy Mununga had 15 points, 12 rebounds and three steals for South Florida (5-2).

More AP women's basketball: <https://apnews.com/Womensbasketball> and https://twitter.com/AP_Top25

South Dakota announces settlement in medical devices case

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The state of South Dakota has reached a settlement agreement with a company accused of buying and selling medical devices that were not approved or cleared by the Food and Drug Administration.

State Attorney General Jason Ravnsborg says the deal with Avalign Technologies and its subsidiary, Instrumed International, Inc., along with a separate settlement with CareFusion, calls for the state to receive more than \$102,000. Of that, about \$63,500 will go to the federal government and about \$39,000 will go to the state general fund, both to offset alleged Medicaid damages.

Ravnsborg says Avalign Technologies has paid a total of \$9.5 million to the United States and the participating states, of which \$3.1 million will go to the Medicaid programs. CareFusion has paid a total of \$3.3 million to the United States and the participating states.

Bison a bright spot for agriculture in Kansas, nation

HUTCHINSON, Kan. (AP) — One of the promising industries for agriculture harkens back to the days when bison roamed the Kansas prairie.

The Hutchinson News reports that when Moundridge rancher Dick Gehring started his bison ranch more than 30 years ago, he did it for the money. The animals quickly became his passion.

"Whether the money was there or not, we hung in there," said Gehring, the owner of Black Kettle Buffalo in McPherson County. "It gets in your blood, and you can't let go."

Gehring, a four-generation rancher with a herd numbering more than 500, now calls them one of the "bright spots in agriculture."

Bison are adaptable and thrive in different environments. The National Bison Association says there are an estimated 385,000 bison in North American private, public and tribal herds.

The 2017 Census of Agriculture shows South Dakota has the most bison, followed by Nebraska, Montana,

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Idaho and North Dakota. Kansas ranks 10th with more than 5,000 head.

"It's just like raising cattle, only different," Gehring said. "They're wild animals; you can't breed it out of them."

Gehring has spent years helping to grow the Kansas Buffalo Association, whose membership now includes more than 75 ranches. He is also president of the board of directors of the National Bison Association.

Ryan Brady, co-owner of Instinct Bison Producers in Ingalls in Gray County, called Gehring his mentor. Brady decided six years ago to include bison along with grains on his farm. He raises more than 80 bison on his cow-calf operation.

"It is exciting to be a part of the movement of working with nature and the soil rather than trying to conquer or tame (it) for our needs," Brady said. "Adding the bison and cover crops to the farming operation hopefully provides my children the choice to continue the path of sustainable farming."

Gehring said that because of the self-sufficiency of bison, they are low-maintenance. But they require steadfastness and patience.

The National Bison Association's goal is for the bison in the U.S. to become 1 million strong.

"It's a slow-growing animal," said Karen Conley, spokeswoman for the National Bison Association. "They're good for the environment. Their carbon footprint is pretty small."

Millions of bison roamed the Great Plains up until the late 1800s. The herds then dwindled dramatically. During the 1920s, there was an effort to bring them back. In 1924, the Sandsage Bison Range and Wildlife Area obtained the first publicly owned bison herd in Kansas. More than 60 bison roam in this Garden City refuge of a little less than 4,000 acres (1,618.8 hectares).

"Kansas was the heart of buffalo country," said Tom Norman, area manager at Sandsage. "Buffalo are an important part of our history."

Sandage — like Maxwell Wildlife Refuge, which has about 200 bison in Canton in McPherson County — uses the animals to preserve its grasslands.

The same is true in Manhattan at Konza Prairie Biological Station, a native tallgrass prairie preserve jointly owned by The Nature Conservancy and Kansas State University. Researchers there are examining how the prairie operates by studying the habits of about 300 bison.

"We're trying to understand, at its basic core, how the tallgrass prairie functions," said Jeff Taylor, bison head manager at KPBS. "We consider the three main drivers of the pasture: fire, climate and grazing."

Two Native American reservations in northern Kansas also maintain bison herds.

Information from: The Hutchinson (Kan.) News, <http://www.hutchnews.com>

UK police clear London Bridge after reports of gunshots

LONDON (AP) — British police say they're dealing with an incident on London Bridge, and witnesses have reported hearing gunshots.

The Metropolitan Police force tweeted that officers were "in the early stages of dealing with an incident at London Bridge."

A BBC reporter said he heard shots being fired and saw someone on the ground.

Police could be seen ushering people away from the northern end of the bridge, which links the city's business district with the south bank of the River Thames.

City of London Police, the force responsible for the business district, urged people to stay away from the area.

Iraq's PM announces he'll resign amid worsening crisis

By SAMYA KULLAB and MURTADA FARAJ Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraq's prime minister said Friday he would submit his resignation to parliament, a day after more than 40 people were killed by security forces and following calls by Iraq's top Shiite cleric for

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lawmakers to withdraw support.

The move by Adel Abdul-Mahdi 13 months after he took over as prime minister triggered celebrations by anti-government protesters who have been camped out in Baghdad's Tahrir Square for nearly two months. Young men and women broke out in song and dance as news of his imminent resignation reached the square, the capital's largest.

In a statement, Abdul-Mahdi said he had "listened with great concern" to Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani's sermon and made his decision in response to his call and in order to "facilitate and hasten its fulfillment as soon as possible."

"I will submit to parliament an official memorandum resigning from the current prime ministry so that the parliament can review its choices," he said. Abdul-Mahdi was appointed prime minister just over a year ago as a consensus candidate between political blocs.

Al-Sistani said parliament, which elected the government of Abdul-Mahdi, should "reconsider its options" in his weekly Friday sermon delivered in the holy city of Najaf via a representative.

"We call upon the House of Representatives from which this current government emerged to reconsider its options in that regard," al-Sistani said in the statement — a clear sign he was withdrawing his support for the prime minister.

It wasn't immediately clear whether Abdul-Mahdi's resignation would placate protesters, who are now calling for the removal of the entire political class that has ruled Iraq since the 2003 downfall of Saddam Hussein. Nearly 400 people have been killed in the bloody crackdown on protests since Oct. 1, most of them young protesters shot dead or killed by exploding tear gas canisters fired by security forces.

Amira, a 25-year-old protester, said the resignation should have come many weeks ago.

"We will not stop with the prime minister, we still have more fighting to do. We will push forward until our demands are met," she said, declining to give her full name, fearing retaliation.

Forty protesters were shot dead by security forces in Baghdad and the southern cities of Najaf and Nasiriyah on Thursday, in a sharp escalation of violence that continued Friday. Najaf is the headquarters of the country's Shiite religious authority headed by al-Sistani.

Three more protesters were shot and eight wounded by security forces in Nasiriyah on Friday when the demonstrators attempted to enter the city center to resume their sit-in, security and hospital officials said. Security forces had fired live rounds the previous day to disperse protesters from two key bridges, killing 31 people.

Al-Sistani also said protesters should distinguish between peaceful demonstrators and those seeking to turn the movement violent, following the burning of an Iranian consulate building in Najaf on Wednesday that government officials say was perpetrated by saboteurs from outside the protest movement.

The Islamic Dawa party called for parliament to convene immediately and choose an alternative government, in a statement.

A former oil and finance minister and an ex-vice president, the 77-year-old Abdul-Mahdi was seen as a political independent when he took the post in October 2018 and is Iraq's first prime minister from outside the Dawa party in 12 years.

He moved his offices out of Baghdad's highly secure Green Zone on the first day of his term, saying he wanted to bring his government closer to the people, and said he wanted to provide security, water and electricity for all Iraqis during his term.

But reality soon caught up as he faced a raft of challenges including high unemployment, widespread corruption and dilapidated public services. His government and key staffers in his office were also seen to be close to Iran.

In Baghdad, protesters gathered around the historic Rasheed Street near the strategic Ahrar Bridge and burned the Iranian flag, chanting "Iran out!"

Four people were shot by security forces on the bridge the previous day. Protesters are also occupying parts of the nearby bridges Jumhuriya and Sinar — all of which lead to the fortified Green Zone, the seat of Iraq's government.

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A spokesman for the U.N. secretary-general expressed deep concern over the use of live ammunition against protesters on Friday.

"The Secretary-General reiterates his call on the Iraqi authorities to exercise maximum restraint, protect the lives of demonstrators, respect the rights to freedom of expression and assembly, and swiftly to investigate all acts of violence," said Stéphane Dujarric, in a statement.

Hong Kong protesters seek British support; campus siege ends

By KEN MORITSUGU and EILEEN NG Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Hundreds of Hong Kong pro-democracy activists rallied Friday outside the British Consulate, urging the city's former colonial ruler to emulate the U.S. and take concrete actions to support their cause, as police ended a blockade of a university campus after 12 days.

Waving British flags, the activists urged Britain to ensure that Hong Kong political dissidents do not suffer the same fate as Simon Cheng, a former British Consulate employee in the city who says he was detained and tortured by Chinese secret police.

The rally came a day after U.S. President Donald Trump signed into law two bills to support democracy and human rights in the semi-autonomous Chinese territory.

"The U.K. should enforce similar laws and should have done even more" to support the protest movement, said a masked rally organizer who identified herself only as Dawn. Activists handed a petition to a British Consulate official before leaving.

Beijing denies torturing Cheng and says he was held for soliciting prostitution during a business trip to mainland China in August. Cheng says he agreed to confess to avoid harsher charges. He says he was hooded, beaten and chained to a metal frame as Chinese secret police sought information on activists involved in the protests and on Britain's purported role.

Cheng has left the consulate and is in hiding.

Violence in Asia's top financial hub has abated since a stunning victory by the pro-democracy camp in Nov. 24 local elections, seen as a sharp rebuke to the city's embattled leader, Carrie Lam.

Protesters are planning more rallies this weekend to keep up their pressure on Lam, who has refused to offer any new concessions to their demands, including greater democracy and an independent probe into alleged police brutality.

At a lunchtime rally Friday, hundreds of people chanted slogans and carried posters telling Lam that "it's time to step down." Protesters disrupted traffic in at least two places but dispersed after police issued warnings.

On Thursday night, thousands joined a large rally to thank America, on its Thanksgiving Day holiday, and to call on other countries to join the U.S. in supporting the protest movement, now in its sixth month.

One of the new U.S. laws prescribes sanctions on officials found guilty of human rights abuses and requires an annual review of a special trade status for Hong Kong. The other bans the export of certain nonlethal munitions to Hong Kong police.

China has warned of strong countermeasures and Hong Kong's government has slammed the U.S. move as unwarranted meddling in its affairs.

During an official visit to Thailand, Carrie Lam said Hong Kong's fundamentals, including its "one country, two systems" framework, remain strong despite the unrest.

"I and my government are listening to our people with a view to resolving some deep-seated problems in Hong Kong through dialogue," she said, adding that "Hong Kong can bounce back."

Earlier Friday, police lifted their siege of Polytechnic University, a key earlier battleground with pitched battles between protesters and riot officers.

Police said they seized 3,989 gasoline bombs, 1,339 explosive items, 601 bottles of corrosive liquids and 573 weapons over two days of searching. No protesters were found inside. Some 1,100 people have already left or have been arrested by police.

A university official estimated it would take five to six months to repair the extensive damage to the

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campus.

Separately, police said two high school students were detained Wednesday for possessing TATP, or triacetone triperoxide powder, a powerful explosive that has been used in bomb attacks worldwide. Police said it was alarming that such dangerous explosives were found with young students.

The unrest began in June with a huge march against an extradition bill seen as an erosion of freedoms promised when Hong Kong returned to Chinese control in 1997. The movement has since expanded into a protest against growing Chinese interference in the city. Police say 5,890 people have been arrested since the unrest started.

Associated Press journalists Dake Kang in Beijing and Tassanee Vejpongsa in Bangkok contributed to this story.

Global climate protests ahead of Madrid meeting

By FRANK JORDANS Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Protesters in cities across the world staged rallies Friday demanding leaders take tougher action against climate change, days before the latest global conference, which this year takes place in Madrid.

The rallies kicked off in Australia, where people affected by recent devastating wildfires joined young environmentalists protesting against the government's pro-coal stance.

Janet Reynolds said she had come to the rally in Sydney after losing everything in an "inferno, an absolute firestorm that raced through my property."

"It's so unnatural that I started investigating, reading science and really exploring what's happening with climate change," she told Australian television.

Student Daisy Jeffrey said protesters had come to help raise money for those affected by the fires and to demand action from the government.

"People have lost their homes, people have lost their lives. We have to ask: How far does this have to go before our government finally takes action," she said.

Teenage activist Greta Thunberg, who is traveling across the Atlantic by sailboat to attend the climate talks, sent a message of support to protesters. "Everyone's needed. Everyone's welcome. Join us," she said on Twitter.

Since starting her one-woman "climate strikes" in Sweden more than a year ago, Thunberg has drawn a huge following around the world and inspired thousands more students to regularly skip school on Fridays and join climate protests.

Further rallies took place in Germany, South Korea, Poland, England, Turkey, Italy, Spain and France — where environmental protesters took a swipe at Black Friday.

In Berlin, about two dozen environmental activists jumped into the chilly waters of the Spree river in front of parliament to protest a government-backed package of measures they say won't be enough to reduce the country's greenhouse gas emissions. The package was blocked Friday by Germany's upper house, which represents the country's 16 states.

Later, tens of thousands of students rallied in front of the Brandenburg Gate.

"The generations before us messed it up," said 17-year-old Robin Ebelt. "And we're the ones that will feel the consequences. I would like to spend another 60 years on this planet, grow old and have grandchildren."

Quang Paasch of the activist group Fridays for Future said governments attending next week's annual climate conference should keep in mind the goals of the 2015 Paris accord, which set a target of keeping global warming well below 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit). "We need to keep taking to the streets, we need to defend Paris."

In South Africa, a few dozen people holding signs saying "Not Cool" and "Stop Pollution Now" protested outside the Johannesburg Stock Exchange in the summer heat of the Southern Hemisphere.

One protester lay on the ground faking death, holding a sign saying "Black Friday Reason to Grieve."

Africa contributes least to climate change and is the least prepared to deal with it. Temperatures in parts

of the continent are projected to rise more quickly than the global average.

"The reality is that we have a climate change emergency," protest organizer Elana Azrai said. She noted water shortages in parts of the country amid a drought in southern Africa.

Elsewhere, officials have raised the alarm over unusually severe rainfall in East Africa and a pair of cyclones that ripped into Mozambique within weeks of each other early this year.

Scores of young Nigerians marched in downtown Lagos displaying messages such as "There is no planet B" and "Stop Denying the Earth is Dying" as passing vehicles slowed and honked in support.

The megacity is Africa's most populous and is among its coastal cities threatened by rising sea levels.

Lekan Oyekanmi in Lagos, Nigeria, and Rob Celliers in Johannesburg contributed to this report.

Follow AP's climate coverage at <https://www.apnews.com/Climate>

Rod Stewart: Rocker turned model railroad builder

By GREGORY KATZ Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Rod Stewart, known for decades as a consummate crooner, rocker, fashion plate and tongue-in-cheek sex symbol, is adding a new element to his image: serious model railroad builder.

The former front man of the Faces who has hits dating back to the 1960s has put the finishing touch on a 23-year project that has landed him on the cover of Britain's Railway Modeller magazine. It's a far cry from Rolling Stone, whose cover he has graced many times.

The model is an ambitious portrayal of a gritty American city in 1945, representing a combination of New York and Chicago. It's an artistic success, one that Stewart didn't outsource but designed and constructed from start to finish, with some help with the electrical and computer connections.

"It's the detail that I'm proud of," Stewart said in an interview with The Associated Press.

Stewart is modest about hits like "Maggie May" but proud of his railway design skills.

"Absolutely amazing detail," Stewart said. "There's garbage in the streets, the windows are filthy, there's everything you can imagine in real life is on the railroad."

He grew up in London across the street from a railroad line and has been fascinated by trains ever since, taking mental notes on his extensive world travels.

When he got around to building a house in Beverly Hills, he added a room at the very top for his oversize model railroad. He would typically go up there for three or four hours at a time, quietly stepping away from his family and his musical responsibilities.

"It wasn't a whim, it took a bit of planning, and 23 years later it's finished," Stewart said.

Now that the project is completed, he's got more time for music. The 74-year-old singer says that for some reason it's easier for him to write songs than it used to be.

He's promoting a new record — his best-known songs backed by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra — and traveling in style, arriving for interviews in a chauffeur-driven Rolls-Royce with a hair stylist standing by to help with shape and volume.

If pressed, he can come up with a few new artists that he likes, but Stewart readily admits he's "old fashioned" and prefers to listen to classics by Otis Redding, the Temptations, and Frank Sinatra, who he started paying attention to when he was nine or ten because his parents were big fans.

"The greatest," he said of Sinatra. "Probably the only white singer I've ever listened to and really studied his technique. And I've actually met him a couple of times...and his daughter is the godmother of my children. Pretty good, huh?"

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Shorter shopping season means a more intense scramble

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The mad scramble between Thanksgiving and Christmas has begun — but with six fewer days.

Black Friday once again kicks off the start of the holiday shopping season. But with it will be the shortest season since 2013 because Thanksgiving fell on the fourth Thursday in November — the latest possible date it could be. That means customers will have less time to shop and retailers will have less time to woo them.

At Macy's Herald Square in Manhattan, there was a steady stream of shoppers by 7 a.m. in search of deals from 40 % to 60% on everything from boots to sheets. But the crowds grew bigger an hour later.

Theodora Hatcher from Manhattan arrived with her son at around 6 a.m. Friday. She said she started holiday shopping two weeks ago, lured by online deals of up to 60 % at Walmart.com, Amazon and Old Navy.

As for the shortened calendar, she prefers it.

"It adds pressure," she said.

Seturah Winkler, 43, was shopping in the women's shoe department with her friend. They were among the throngs of shoppers at Macy's 5 p.m. opening on Thanksgiving.

Winkler had already spent \$1,000 Thursday on coats, comforters and towels and was back for more.

"We took a break, and we are back at it again," said Winkler of Richmond, Virginia, who has made the pilgrimage to Macy's on Thanksgiving and Black Friday an annual tradition for several years. "I love the thrill of it. It's exciting."

Adobe Analytics predicts a loss of \$1 billion in online revenue from a shortened season. Still, it expects online sales will reach \$143.7 billion, up 14.1% from last year's holiday season

The National Retail Federation, the nation's largest retail trade group, baked the shorter season into its forecast, but it says the real drivers will be the job market. It forecasts that holiday sales will rise between 3.8% and 4.2%, an increase from the disappointing 2.1% growth seen in the November and December 2018 period that came well short of the group's prediction.

Last year's holiday sales were hurt by turmoil over the White House trade policy with China and a delay in data collection by nearly a month because of a government shutdown. This year's holiday forecast is above the average holiday sales growth of 3.7% over the previous five years.

NRF expects online and other non-store sales, which are included in the total, to increase between 11% and 14%, for the holiday period.

Black Friday is expected to once again be the largest shopping day of the season, followed by the last Saturday before Christmas, according to MasterCard SpendingPulse, which tracks spending across all types of payments including cash and check. Thanksgiving Day isn't even on the top 10 holiday shopping days, according to MasterCard.

The 2019 holiday season will be a good measure of the U.S. economy's health. Many retail CEOs describe their customers as financially healthy, citing moderate wage growth and an unemployment rate hovering near a 50-year low.

"The overall picture is positive," said Craig Johnson, president of Customer Growth Partners, a retail consultancy. "People are spending out of positive cash flow as opposed to borrowing."

Economic growth has moderated since earlier this year, with growth at just 1.9% in the July-September quarter, down from 3.1% in the first three months of the year. Analysts blame at least part of that on the U.S.-China trade war, which has forced many companies to delay plans to invest and expand.

That's left consumers as the main drivers. So far, Americans have kept up their spending, allaying fears of a recession.

With more holiday deals happening earlier to compensate for the late start, many have already started to shop. More than half of consumers have already started their holiday shopping and nearly a quarter of purchases have already been made, according to the annual survey released by the NRF and Prosper Insights & Analytics. The survey of 7,917 adult consumers was conducted Oct. 31 through Nov. 6.

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"This is further evidence that the holiday season has grown far beyond the period between Thanksgiving and Christmas," said Matthew Shay, president and CEO of NRF, in a statement.

Black Friday frenzy goes global - and not everyone's happy

By ANGELA CHARLTON and SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — People don't celebrate Thanksgiving in France, or Russia, or South Africa - but they do shop on Black Friday.

The U.S. sales phenomenon has spread to retailers across the world in recent years with such force that it's prompting a backlash from some activists, politicians and even consumers.

Near Paris, climate demonstrators blocked a shopping mall and gathered in front of Amazon's headquarters to protest over-production they say is killing the planet. Workers at Amazon in Germany went on strike for better pay. Some French lawmakers want to ban Black Friday altogether.

Consumer rights groups in Britain and some other countries say retailers use Black Friday as a slogan to lure in shoppers, but it's not always clear how real or big the discounts are. Other critics say it hurts small businesses.

Globalized commerce has brought U.S. consumer tastes to shoppers around the world, from Halloween candy to breakfast cereal and peanut butter, sometimes even supplanting local traditions.

To French activists, Black Friday is the epitome of this shift, a purely commercial event designed to boost U.S. retailers ahead of the Christmas holidays, the symbol of capitalism run amok.

"The planet burns, oceans die, and we still want to consume, consume, and therefore produce, produce - until we eradicate all living things? ... We will not betray our children for a 30% discount!" reads a manifesto by groups holding "Block Friday" protests around Paris.

In Britain, where the big winter sales have traditionally been held on the day after Christmas, companies have adopted Black Friday marketing campaigns since about 2010. After a rise in business on the day in the first years, the volume of shopping has leveled off, with most of it happening online over multiple days.

Research by a U.K. consumer association found that 61% of goods advertised in Black Friday deals last year were cheaper or about the same price both before and after the event.

That echoes similar warnings in other countries. Russia's consumer watchdog published detailed tips on how to avoid getting fooled, like checking whether prices were raised before Friday to make deals look good or whether delivery costs are inflated.

The Black Friday advertising push has extended beyond the one day to Cyber Monday, with retailers in several countries spreading them across what's often called "Black Week."

In the Czech Republic, one electronics chain encourages shoppers - in English, of course - to "Make Black Friday Great Again," in an ad featuring a suited man wearing the distinctive red cap used by U.S. President Donald Trump's election campaign.

While the phenomenon is less widespread in Asia, some major companies like Japan Airlines use it as a slogan.

Broadcasters in South Africa showed people waiting in line to shop in one of the world's most socially and economically unequal nations. The respected weekly Mail & Guardian newspaper decried in a scathing editorial how Black Friday is used to enrich big retailers.

"Like no other day, this Friday shows how broken the world we have built is," it said.

Black Friday has meanwhile had to adapt to cultural norms. Egyptians, for example, have taken on all aspects of the occasion - except the name, because Friday is a sacred day of worship for Muslims. Rather than scrap the event, many retailers decided to rename it White Friday or Yellow Friday.

The term Black Friday comes from retailers' claim that it was the day when they went from being loss-making for the year - in the red - to making a profit - in the black.

Among other concerns is that Black Friday could hurt small businesses that do not have the vast marketing budgets and online sales presence of big retail chains or multinationals.

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In Italy, for example, Black Friday falls outside the season's strictly defined schedule for when the winter shop sales can be held. This year, sales cannot be held from Dec. 5 until Jan. 4, when stores are allowed to clear out stock. The fashion industry has warned that can hurt smaller retailers in a country that relies on them heavily.

A French legislative committee passed an amendment Monday that proposes prohibiting Black Friday because it causes "resource waste" and "overconsumption." France's e-commerce union, whose members are aggressively marketing Black Friday sales throughout November, has condemned the measure.

Dozens of French activists blocked the Amazon warehouse in Bretigny-sur Orge on Thursday, spreading hay and old refrigerators and microwaves on the driveway. They held signs in front of the warehouse gates reading "Amazon: For the climate, for jobs, stop expansion, stop over-production!"

The activists were later dislodged by police.

Cara Anna in Johannesburg, Colleen Barry in Milan, Noha ElHennawy in Cairo, James Heintz in Moscow, Karel Janicek in Prague, Frank Jordans in Berlin, Yuri Kageyama in Tokyo, Jan Olsen in Copenhagen, and Carlo Piovano in London contributed to this report.

Trump thanks troops on Afghan visit, says Taliban want deal

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

BAGRAM AIR FIELD, Afghanistan (AP) — President Donald Trump paid a surprise Thanksgiving visit to Afghanistan, where he announced the U.S. and the Taliban have been engaged in ongoing peace talks and said he believes the Taliban want a cease-fire.

Trump arrived at Bagram Air Field shortly after 8:30 p.m. local time Thursday and spent 3½ hours on the ground during his first trip to the site of America's longest war. He served turkey and thanked the troops, delivered a speech and sat down with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani before leaving just after midnight. He arrived back in Florida, where he is spending the holiday weekend, early Friday morning local time.

As per tradition, reporters were under strict instructions to keep the trip a secret to ensure the president's safety in the country. About 12,000 U.S. forces remain in Afghanistan.

Traveling with Republican Sen. John Barrasso of Wyoming and a small clutch of aides, including his acting chief of staff, press secretary and national security adviser, Trump appeared in good spirits as he was escorted around the base by heavily armed soldiers, as the smell of burning fuel and garbage wafted through the chilly air. Unlike last year's post-Christmas visit to Iraq — his first to an active combat zone — first lady Melania Trump did not make the trip.

Trump's first stop was a dining hall, where the crowd erupted into cheers when he arrived. There, he served turkey to soldiers dressed in fatigues and sat down for a meal. But he said he only tasted the mashed potatoes before he was pulled away for photos.

"I never got the turkey," he told the troops. "A gorgeous piece of turkey."

During his visit, Trump announced that the U.S. and Taliban have been engaged in peace talks and insisted the Taliban want to make a deal after heavy U.S. fire in recent months.

"We're meeting with them," he said. "And we're saying it has to be a cease-fire. And they don't want to do a cease-fire, but now they do want to do a cease-fire, I believe ... and we'll see what happens."

The trip came after Trump abruptly broke off peace talks with the Taliban in September, canceling a secret meeting with Taliban and Afghan leaders at the Camp David presidential retreat after a particularly deadly spate of violence, capped by a bombing in Kabul that killed 12 people, including an American soldier.

That ended a nearly yearlong effort by the U.S. to reach a political settlement with the Taliban, the group that protected al-Qaida extremists in Afghanistan, prompting U.S. military action after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. U.S. and international forces have been on the ground ever since.

It was not immediately clear how long or substantive the U.S. reengagement with the Taliban has been.

Trump ran his 2016 campaign promising to end the nation's "endless wars" and has been pushing to withdraw troops from Afghanistan and in the Middle East despite protests from top U.S. officials, Trump's

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Republican allies in Washington and many U.S. allies abroad. For months now, he has described American forces as “policemen” and argued that other countries’ wars should be theirs to wage.

Tens of thousands of Afghan civilians and more than 2,400 American service members have been killed since the war began 18 years ago.

Just last week, Trump flew to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware to oversee the transfer of the remains of two Army officers killed when their helicopter crashed as they provided security for troops on the ground in Logar province in eastern Afghanistan. The Taliban still controls or holds sway over about half of the country, staging near daily attacks targeting Afghan forces and government officials.

The U.S. and Taliban had been close to an agreement in September that might have enabled a U.S. troop withdrawal.

Nonetheless, Trump said Thursday that he was proceeding with a plan to reduce U.S. troop levels to about 8,600, telling reporters we’re “bringing down the number of troops substantially.”

Still, he said, the U.S. will stay in the country “until we have a deal or we have total victory.”

Trump made the announcement as he met with Ghani, the Afghan president. Ghani thanked the Americans who have made the “ultimate sacrifice” in Afghanistan and assured the president that Afghan security forces are increasingly leading the fight.

“In the next three months, it’s going to be all Afghanistan!” Ghani said.

Ghani also praised Trump for the October mission that killed Islamic State leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The Afghan leader also indicated, as Trump himself has, that the al-Baghdadi mission was even more significant than the 2011 mission targeting al-Qaida founder Osama bin Laden. The bin Laden mission was ordered by then-President Barack Obama.

“President Trump, people talked a lot about bin Laden, but what you did to eliminate al-Baghdadi, who was an organizer and not a talker, is a much greater accomplishment,” said Ghani, in remarks to U.S. troops before Trump’s departure.

The trip came a week after the Taliban freed an American and an Australian who had been held hostage since 2016 in exchange for three top Taliban figures — a move that has been widely seen as a possible entree to rekindling peace talks.

The White House took pains to keep the trip a secret after Trump’s cover was blown last year when Air Force One was spotted en route to Iraq by an amateur British flight watcher.

Cellphones and other transmitting devices were confiscated for most of the trip from everyone traveling aboard Air Force One. And Thanksgiving-themed tweets were teed up to publish ahead of time from Trump’s account to prevent suspicions arising about the president’s silence.

A small group of reporters was told to meet Wednesday night on the top floor of a parking garage in Maryland and was transported in black vans to Andrews Air Force Base. Nobody would confirm where he was going. The only guidance: Dress casually and warmly. Meanwhile, the president was secretly flying back from Florida, where reporters had been told he’d be spending Thanksgiving at his Mar-a-Lago club.

The plane he’d flown to Florida — the modified 747 painted in the iconic white and blue of Air Force One — remained parked on the tarmac at West Palm Beach Airport to avoid revealing the president’s movement.

About 9:45 p.m. Wednesday, the president boarded a nearly identical plane concealed in a hangar at Andrews Air Force Base, taking off and landing under the cover of darkness, with cabin lights dimmed and window shutters drawn.

White House press secretary Stephanie Grisham said plans for the visit had been in the works for weeks.

“It’s a dangerous area and he wants to support the troops,” Grisham told reporters before Trump landed. “He and Mrs. Trump recognize that there’s a lot of people who are away from their families during the holidays, and we thought it’d be a nice surprise.”

Shortly after midnight, Trump and his entourage departed from Afghanistan.

The president told the troops he was honored to spend part of his holiday with them.

“There is nowhere I’d rather celebrate this Thanksgiving than right here with the toughest, strongest, best and bravest warriors on the face of the earth,” Trump said.

Associated Press writers Amer Madhani and Deb Riechmann in Washington contributed to this report.

AP Analysis: Iran protests point to turmoil in the future

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Even among hardliners in Iran, there seems to be an acknowledgment of one fact after widespread protests, violence and a security force crackdown following a spike in government-set gasoline prices: This will not be the last time demonstrators come out on the street.

As Iran struggles under crushing U.S. sanctions following President Donald Trump's unilateral withdrawal of America from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers, its elected civilian government and those in its Shiite theocracy will face ever-tougher decisions on where to cut costs.

Those cuts will more than likely target its vast system of government subsidies that make life affordable for its poor, from low-cost electricity in their homes to the bread on their plates. Any move to increase those prices will draw further protests. But the government may not have any other option.

The protests that struck some 100 cities and towns across Iran beginning Nov. 15 came after Iran raised minimum gasoline prices by 50% to 15,000 rials per liter. That's 12 cents a liter, or about 50 cents a gallon. After a monthly 60-liter quota, it costs 30,000 rials a liter. That's nearly 24 cents a liter or 90 cents a gallon. An average gallon of regular gas in the U.S. costs \$2.58 by comparison, according to AAA.

Cheap gasoline is practically considered a birthright in Iran, home to the world's fourth-largest crude oil reserves despite decades of economic woes since its 1979 Islamic Revolution. Gasoline there remains among the cheapest in the world, in part to help keep costs low for its underemployed, who often drive taxis to make ends meet.

Iran's per-capita gross domestic product, often used as a rough sense of a nation's standard of living, is just over \$6,000, compared to over \$62,000 in the U.S., according to the World Bank. That disparity, especially given Iran's oil wealth, fueled the anger felt by demonstrators.

Iran's government, however, likely saw little choice in trying to push through changes to its gasoline subsidies. Iran spent \$26.6 billion on oil subsidies in 2018, according to the Paris-based International Energy Agency, the most of any country in the world. Iran spent 15% of its overall GDP, or \$69.2 billion, that year on oil, electricity and natural gas subsidies.

Keeping gas costs low also benefits the wealthy, as well as those who smuggle Iranian fuel into other countries.

U.S. sanctions, re-imposed by Trump, largely have stopped Iran from selling its crude oil abroad, cutting into a crucial source of government income. While Iranian President Hassan Rouhani pledged the money saved from cutting gasoline subsidies would go to the poor, Tehran also needs to cut back spending in order to weather the sanctions.

Already, Iranians have seen their savings chewed away by the rial's collapse from 32,000 to \$1 at the time of the 2015 atomic accord to 126,000 to \$1 today. Daily staples also have risen in price.

Even with the hike in gasoline prices, Iran still subsidizes fuel costs. Its economy remains largely state-planned despite privatization efforts. Among other major subsidies are bread and wheat, diesel fuel, heating oil and electricity.

Iran's minister of industry and trade, Reza Rahmani, pledged Tuesday that prices will not be increased through the end of the current Iranian year on March 21. However, the gasoline prices came suddenly and without warning overnight, signaling further cuts likely would follow the same way in order to try and control the outcry.

The scale of the gasoline price demonstrations remains unclear even today as Iran so far has not offered nationwide statistics for the number of people arrested, injured or killed in the protests. Amnesty International believes the protests and the security crackdown killed at least 161 people.

One Iranian lawmaker said he thought that over 7,000 people had been arrested, while the country's interior minister said as many as 200,000 people took part in the demonstrations.

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While demonstrators attacked gas stations, the target of choice appeared to be banks. Protesters attacked over 700 banks, smashing ATMs and setting some ablaze, Interior Minister Abdolreza Rahmani Fazli said. That anger doesn't come as a surprise. In recent years, banks burdened by bad debts or circled by corruption allegations have collapsed in Iran, sparking sporadic protests by depositors who lost their money. Some of those banks had ties to powerful people within Iran, leading to allegations of cronyism.

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei called those who attacked the banks "thugs" in his first comments on the demonstrations. His website published a cartoon showing masked rioters attacking a bank, while another frame showed a family and an elderly man with a cane peacefully waiting to withdraw money from an ATM.

"Setting fire to such and such bank is not the action of the people, it is the action of thugs," Khamenei said, according to his website. "These acts of sabotage do not solve any problem. In fact, they add insecurity to the problems that exist."

However, bank attacks were widespread in 1978 in the months ahead of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi abandoning the throne and the Islamic Revolution. Marxists who hated capitalism, Islamists who opposed usury rates and others taking advantage of the chaos ransacked hundreds of banks, angry over corruption. The Iranian economy nosedived as money flooded out of the country.

The revolution saw millions on the street, something not seen in these recent protests. However, these demonstrations turned violent in the span of a day, showing the danger looming ahead for Iran's government as it likely faces further hard choices ahead as sanctions look unlikely to be lifted as it has begun breaking centrifuges, enrichment and stockpile limitations in the nuclear deal.

"These riots are not the last ones and it definitely will happen in the future," Revolutionary Guard acting commander Gen. Ali Fadavi has warned.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Jon Gambrell, the news director for the Gulf and Iran for The Associated Press, has reported from each of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, Iran and other locations across the world since joining the AP in 2006. Follow him on Twitter at www.twitter.com/jongambrellAP.

Trump impeachment drive has similarities to Wisconsin recall

By SCOTT BAUER Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — A divisive leader drove the opposition to extreme measures. The political climate was toxic — with little civil debate or middle ground. The clash ended in a high-risk political showdown that captured the nation's attention and shaped the next election.

This was the 2012 battle to recall Republican Gov. Scott Walker, not the 2019 fight to impeach President Donald Trump. But for some who lived through the former, the episodes have clear similarities and a warning for Democrats about overreach and distraction.

"In both cases, they thought just as they were upset about something, everyone was," Walker said, describing one of his takeaways from the campaign that failed to remove him from office. "Just because your base feels strongly about something doesn't mean that the majority of other voters do."

Although moderates declined to join liberals back then in voting to eject Walker, Democrats warn against presuming they'll break the same way for Trump next year in Wisconsin, a state seen as pivotal in 2020. Voters who were likely wary of undoing Walker's election via a rare recall face a simpler choice in whether to hand Trump a second term, they say.

"People may not like impeachment, simply because it adds to the drama of his presidency, but that doesn't mean they are on the fence or sympathetic to Trump," said Jon Erpenbach, a Democratic Wisconsin state senator.

The Walker recall sprang from a law he signed just months into his first term that effectively ended collective bargaining for most public employees. Walker didn't reveal his plan until after he was elected in 2010, and the move sparked massive protests that made Wisconsin the center of a growing national fight over union rights.

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Angry activists gathered nearly a million signatures to force the recall. Although Democrats had fought hard against the bill, with some state senators even fleeing the state at one point to avoid a vote, they were initially reluctant to embrace the recall for fear it would hurt then-President Barack Obama's reelection hopes in 2012.

The recall became a proxy battle ahead of the presidential election, with Democrats arguing that Walker unfairly targeted teachers, nurses and other public employees to weaken the unions that traditionally supported Democratic candidates. Walker argued that his proposal shouldn't have been a surprise since he campaigned on forcing public employees to pay more for their benefits while capping how much they could bargain for in raises. He also argued that it wasn't proper to use the extraordinary option of recall over a policy dispute.

Walker ultimately won the recall election in June 2012, becoming a conservative hero on his way to a short-lived run for president in 2015. In a testament to Wisconsin's political division, just five months after Walker won the recall vote, Obama cruised to victory in Wisconsin on his way to reelection.

Trump is accused of improperly withholding U.S. military aid that Ukraine needed to resist Russian aggression in exchange for Ukraine's new president investigating Trump political rival Joe Biden and his son. Trump has argued that he was within his rights to ask Ukraine to look into corruption and that impeachment is just an attempt by Democrats to remove him from office.

Both impeachment and attempting to recall governors from office are exceedingly rare. Impeachment has only been leveled by the House against two presidents, Andrew Johnson in 1868 and Bill Clinton 130 years later. Richard Nixon was on the brink of it in 1974 before he resigned. Walker was only the third governor in U.S. history to face a recall election and the first to survive it.

The rarity of the remedy may help explain why voters are reluctant to do either one, said Charles Franklin, who has regularly surveyed voter attitudes in Wisconsin for Marquette University.

A Marquette University Law School poll conducted just as public impeachment hearings were beginning earlier this month showed 53% of voters in Wisconsin were against removing Trump for office, with just 40% in support. National polls have shown a more even divide.

Even more troubling for Wisconsin Democrats was that while 78% of Democrats supported removing Trump through impeachment, 93% of Republicans were against it. That stronger rallying behind the incumbent, with the other side not as unified, parallels what was seen during the Walker recall, Franklin said.

Walker saw his support among independent voters go from about even six months before the recall election to positive 16 points just before the election. The latest Marquette poll also shows independents currently breaking against impeachment, with 47% against and 36% in favor.

Mike Tate, who was chairman of the state Democratic Party during the recall and continues to work in the state as a consultant, cautioned against making too much of where independents are on impeachment — and where they may be next November. After the impeachment process runs its course, Democrats will move on to talk about many other issues throughout the presidential campaign, Tate said.

"Impeachment will be in the rearview mirror," he said.

But Stephan Thompson, who led the state GOP during the recalls and went on to manage Walker's successful 2014 reelection campaign, said impeachment is "such a monumental event in history and politics" that it will hang over Democrats the rest of the cycle and make it difficult for them to bring moderate voters back to their side.

"When the left pushes this hard and overreaches, it helps you band together with people because you're all in the foxhole together," Thompson said. "I think that's something they don't realize."

Erpenbach, the state senator, was among those who fled to Illinois for two weeks to try to kill the anti-union bill. He argues that unlike the recall, which was motivated by a policy disagreement, Congress was forced to hold impeachment hearings because Trump is alleged to have violated the Constitution.

Democrats are taking a political chance, Erpenbach said, but they're doing what the Constitution requires, a key distinction from the recall.

"It worries me that it could backfire," Erpenbach said, "but that's not the point."

Follow Scott Bauer on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/sbauerAP>

Surge in new voters sparks talk of UK election 'youthquake'

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — In a British election dominated by Brexit, young voters who had no say in the country's decision to leave the European Union could hold the key to victory. That is, if they can be bothered to vote.

It has long been a truth in British politics that young people vote in lower numbers than older ones. In the last election in 2017, just over half of under-35s voted, compared to more than 70% of those over 60.

But that may be changing. According to official figures, 3.85 million people registered to vote between the day the election was called on Oct. 29 and Tuesday's registration deadline — two-thirds of them under 35. The number of new registrations is almost a third higher than in 2017.

Amy Heley of Vote for your Future, a group working to increase youth participation, says the figure is "really encouraging, and shows that politics has been so high profile recently that it is encouraging more young people to vote."

That doesn't mean, however, that young voters like what they see. Many appear unimpressed with the choice between Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservatives, the main opposition Labour Party under Jeremy Corbyn and a handful of smaller parties.

"I think they're all unlikeable," said Callum Nelson, a 21-year-old law student attending a question session with local candidates at his London college. "I'm tempted to exercise my right to spoil my ballot."

About 46 million people are eligible to vote in the Dec. 12 election to fill all 650 seats in the House of Commons, including hundreds of thousands who were too young to take part in the U.K.'s 2016 Brexit referendum. Britain's voting age is 18, although Labour and other parties, including the centrist Liberal Democrats and environmentalist Greens, want it lowered to 16.

The current election campaign is a product of that 2016 vote, in which Britons decided by 52%-48% to leave the European Union after more than four decades of membership.

More than three years on, the country remains an EU member. Johnson pushed for the December election, which is taking place more than two years early, in hopes of winning a majority and breaking Britain's political impasse over Brexit. He says that if the Conservatives win a majority, he will get Parliament to ratify his Brexit divorce deal and take the U.K. out of the EU by the current Jan. 31 deadline.

Labour says it will negotiate a new Brexit deal, then give voters a choice between leaving on those terms and remaining in the bloc. It also has a radical domestic agenda, promising to nationalize key industries and utilities, hike the minimum wage and give free internet access to all.

While most opinion polls give Johnson's Conservatives a substantial lead overall, the surge in new young voters is good news for Labour, which is seeking to defy the odds and win a general election for the first time since 2005.

Young voters are more likely than their older compatriots to oppose Brexit, which will end Britons' right to work and live in 27 other European nations and will have a major — though as yet unknown — economic impact.

Matt Walsh, a senior lecturer in journalism at the University of Cardiff, said young voters also strongly back abolition of tuition fees and stronger action against climate change — both policies "at the center of the offer that the Labour Party is putting forward to young people."

Labour's strategy "is to try and grab those missing voters, get them registered and get them to vote and support Labour policies," he said.

Labour is spending more than its main rival on social media ads, churning out a stream of memes and messages on Facebook and Instagram. It is also outspending the Conservatives on Snapchat, whose users tend to be younger than those on the other networks. Twitter has banned all political advertising.

Labour also pushed to get young people to register to vote before the Nov. 26 deadline, spreading the message through tweets from celebrity supporters, including grime artist Stormzy. Corbyn posted a link to the government's voter registration website 26 times on Twitter and 31 times on Facebook in the month

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before the deadline. Johnson, in contrast, didn't post the link or the word "register" at all on Twitter, and just once on Facebook.

While some analysts are forecasting an electoral "youthquake," others are cautious. This is a rare winter election, and turnout could suffer if Dec. 12 is a wet, cold day. It's also difficult to know how much the voters' decision will be motivated by Brexit and how much by domestic issues.

"At this point, I'm kind of sick of Brexit," said Susie Chilver, a first-year politics student at the University of Bristol, in southwest England. "So, the things that are swaying it for me are things like social housing, and things like health care, more about social issues than foreign policy."

Konstantinos Matakos, senior lecturer in the department of political economy at King's College London, said there is an assumption that young voters are "leaning more Labour." But he says their geographical spread — and whether they show up on polling day — will ultimately determine their impact on the outcome.

"It's not a straightforward assumption to say that this surge in the registration rates will undoubtedly benefit Labour in terms of gaining electoral seats," he said.

Some young voters agree that Labour shouldn't take their support for granted.

"People think that students will definitely vote for Labour," said Molly Jones, a 19-year-old student at London's Westminster Kingsway College. "But a lot of them who I've spoken to, it's not like that. They will vote for the Liberal Democrats, or the Greens, or even the Conservatives.

"All the parties are just a mess at the moment, and all the leaders are terrible," she said. "It makes it really hard to vote for someone — you just hold your nose and vote."

Jo Kearney and Vicki Ferrar contributed to this story.

Follow AP's full coverage of Brexit and British politics at <https://www.apnews.com/Brexit>

Sabbath buses barrel through Israel's religious-secular rift

By TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Tel Aviv has taken a major step to cement its status as Israel's secular mecca, launching public transportation services on the Jewish sabbath and redrawing the lines in the country's culture wars between religious and secular citizens.

The defiant move circumvents the law and upends a decades-long status quo keeping public transit largely off the streets from sundown Friday to sundown Saturday throughout most of the country. It comes amid political paralysis that has cleared the way for what could prove to be the next battleground over the country's ethos.

"This is a revolution," said Nitzan Horowitz, the head of the dovish, secular Democratic Union party. "We cannot maintain a modern state with the necessary demands of the public while maintaining the religion with all its rules and laws."

For years, secular activists have pointed to the lack of public transit on the Sabbath as a prime manifestation of religious coercion in a state still grappling over its identity more than 70 years after its establishment.

Religious and traditional Jews in Israel view the Sabbath as sacrosanct and a time for rest. Observant Jews do not drive or use electricity on the Sabbath, among other restrictions. Most businesses shut down each week, and commerce comes to a standstill.

But in Tel Aviv, the country's economic and cultural hub, the Sabbath takes on a different hue. Its sandy beaches are packed, cafes are buzzing and some shops stay open.

Since the days before Israel's foundation, most of the country hasn't been served by public transportation on Saturdays, aside from Arab communities as well as mixed Jewish-Arab cities such as Haifa.

In the 1990s, certain public transportation was given official approval to run on Saturdays, including in Arab areas and lines traveling to hospitals, leaving most Israelis relying on cars to get around on the weekend. Nearly half of Israel's Jews consider themselves secular.

While some transport solutions have emerged over the years — a minivan taxi service in Tel Aviv as well

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as sporadic lines from suburbs into the city's beaches — the new effort establishes a veritable network of public transit, allowing hundreds of thousands of people to crisscross the metropolis and beyond.

The earlier services, coupled with years of growing public and political support for Sabbath transit, showed there was a need and that it was legally possible to run the lines, said Uri Keidar, head of Israel Hofsheet, an organization that champions pluralism.

The city has managed to flout a 1992 law by making the minibus ride free. If it were to charge a fare, it would have required the Transportation Ministry's approval, something that would have been nearly impossible.

"We as a city needed to play a trick," said Meital Lehavi, a Tel Aviv deputy mayor in charge of transport. "The need is real. The people are voting with their feet and they are riding these lines."

The network consists of six lines and 500 stops spanning from Tel Aviv to three nearby cities. The municipality plans to eventually upgrade the minibuses to full-sized buses and hopes to receive retroactive government approval, allowing it to charge a fare and sustain the service.

During its initial run last weekend, minibuses careened around the sun-soaked city, in many instances packed with passengers, many of whom rode them simply to celebrate what they called a "holiday of freedom."

Parents brought children to mark the occasion. Tourists, many oblivious to the political baggage associated with the transportation, were ferried to beaches and secular politicians took celebratory rides.

"Just as I respect other people's freedoms, I cherish my own freedoms and I want to be allowed to travel," said Avigail Pekelman, a Tel Aviv resident.

The city said the maiden service was so successful, serving some 10,000 people, that it plans to expand capacity this weekend.

The bus lines appear to also be materializing as a result of political disarray following two inconclusive elections this year, and the strong likelihood of another vote early next year.

"For many months now, there is no central government that can do something," said Shuki Friedman, an expert on religion and state with the Israel Democracy Institute, a think-tank. "The (municipality) may be violating the Sabbath but they are doing it like thieves in the night."

The caretaker government, a holdover from the one in power before elections were called in December last year, is dominated by opponents of Sabbath transportation, including Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's conservative Likud party, two ultra-Orthodox parties and a religious-nationalist faction.

But caretaker governments follow an unwritten rule of not passing major legislation. Lacking a majority in parliament, it would struggle to pass any law against the move in any case.

While the ultra-Orthodox community makes up about 10 percent of the population, their political parties have traditionally wielded outsized influence in Israel's parliament, often emerging as kingmakers in coalition building and allowing them to extract concessions for their constituents.

That political clout, along with the tendency by many ultra-Orthodox Jews to forgo work and compulsory military service and spend their days in religious study while living on government handouts, has bred tensions with secular Israelis who see themselves as funding an unsustainable lifestyle out of touch with the modern world.

The two sides have clashed in the past over military service for ultra-Orthodox men and the opening of convenience stores on the Sabbath.

Opponents say the buses are part of a broader trend of creeping secularism.

"The minute you take steps such as these, it is a head-on collision with the country's Jewish character," said Amital Bareli, head of Hotam, a group that seeks to bolster Israel's Jewish side.

Proponents say the move is irreversible and expect other predominantly secular cities to follow Tel Aviv's lead.

"This is something that cannot be turned back," said Roy Schwartz Tichon of the group Noa Tanua, which has worked to promote Sabbath bus lines. "The train has left the station."

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Saints beat Falcons to clinch 3rd straight NFC South title

By CHARLES ODUM AP Sports Writer

ATLANTA (AP) — Taysom Hill's rare moment in the spotlight came in an important game for the New Orleans Saints.

Hill blocked a punt to set up his 3-yard touchdown catch before scoring again on a 30-yard run, and the New Orleans Saints clinched their third straight NFC South title by beating the Atlanta Falcons 26-18 on Thursday night.

Hill stole the show on a roster filled with more established stars.

"When you have guys like Mike Thomas, Alvin Kamara, Jared Cook, the list goes on, it kind of creates opportunities for little old me because it creates so much attention that's put on those guys," Hill said.

"Coach (Sean Payton) is one of the best at being creative and putting guys in positions to be successful. I got lucky because I was that guy tonight."

The Saints (10-2) atoned for their 26-9 home loss to the Falcons on Nov. 10, their only defeat in the last 10 games.

With Julio Jones inactive due to a shoulder injury, the Falcons had too little offense to keep pace with Drew Brees and the Saints. Atlanta recovered two onside kicks in the closing minutes, including one with 1:54 remaining, to make things interesting.

Matt Ryan was sacked by Cameron Jordan on a fourth-down play from the New Orleans 44 with 38 seconds remaining. Ryan was sacked nine times, including four by Jordan.

"We had to drop back and pass at the end of the game," Ryan said. "When you do that and there's really no threat of run, it's tough sledding, particularly when you're going against a good defense, a very good defensive line and one of the better pass rushers in the game in Cam Jordan."

The versatile Hill blocked Ryan Allen's punt to end Atlanta's first possession. The Saints took over at the Falcons 30, and four plays later Hill scored his first touchdown on a short pass from Brees.

Hill took a direct snap and ran 30 yards for his first rushing touchdown of the season to give New Orleans a 17-6 lead late in the first half.

"If I can step on the field eight to 10 to 15 times, whatever that number is, my goal is to add a spark whenever I can," Hill said. "I love to be able to go in and add some energy."

The disappointing Falcons (3-9) solidified their hold on last place in the division with their second straight home loss.

Atlanta running back Devonta Freeman returned after missing two games with a foot sprain. Freeman ran for 51 yards on 17 carries.

Ryan committed three second-half turnovers — two interceptions and a lost fumble. Saints nose tackle Shy Tuttle and safety C.J. Gardner-Johnson had interceptions.

Ryan fumbled in the fourth quarter when hit by Marcus Davenport. Vonn Bell's recovery set up Will Lutz's fourth field goal, from 45 yards.

Eli Apple's 22-yard pass-interference penalty helped extend an Atlanta drive that ended with a fourth-down incompleteness from the Saints 2.

Apple drew another pass interference call, this one a 35-yarder, and on the next play Ryan found tight end Jaeden Graham for an 18-yard touchdown pass that cut the Saints' lead to 7-6, following Younghoe Koo's missed extra point.

Koo also missed a 42-yard field goal before making a 45-yarder with 3 seconds remaining in the first half. Koo was good from 43 yards late in the game.

INJURIES

Saints: Kiko Alonso left the game with a thigh injury. ... The offensive line remained short-handed as left tackle Terron Armstead was inactive after leaving last week's win over Carolina with an ankle injury. Left guard Andrus Peat missed his third straight game since breaking his arm against Atlanta on Nov. 10.

Falcons: Left guard James Carpenter left the game with a concussion in the first half. Jamon Brown, who lost his starting job at right guard to Wes Schweitzer, returned to the game following Carpenter's injury.

... Backup offensive tackle Ty Sambrailo injured his hamstring.

BIGGER GOALS

Hill and many teammates wore T-shirts after the game that read "The South Is Not Enough." Clearly, the Saints' goals extend beyond the division crown. "We've got bigger fish to fry, so to speak," Brees said. "We've got a list of goals and objectives and want to knock them down, one by one."

NEXT UP

With Jones missing a game for the first time since 2016, and Atlanta tight ends Austin Hooper and Luke Stocker held out with injuries, Ryan had to look for new targets. He threw a 13-yard touchdown pass to Russell Gage with less than four minutes remaining. Christian Blake had six catches for 57 yards.

UP NEXT

The Saints return home to play San Francisco on Dec. 8.

The Falcons play their fifth straight game against an NFC South rival when they face Carolina on Dec. 8. The Falcons beat the Panthers 29-3 on Nov. 17.

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

Impact of WTO protests in Seattle still felt 2 decades later

By **GENE JOHNSON** Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — Nancy Haque worried about the conditions in sweatshops around the world. For Lynne Dodson, it was the possibility of attacks on public education. The plight of imperiled sea turtles got Lisa Wathne.

An array of issues brought tens of thousands of protesters to Seattle 20 years ago Saturday, with one unifying theme: concern that the World Trade Organization, a then-little-known body charged with regulating international trade, threatened them all.

With their message amplified not just by their numbers, but by the response of overwhelmed police who fired tear gas and plastic bullets, the protesters delayed the WTO's conference and raised awareness of the international trading system and its implications for the environment, labor standards and human rights.

While many of the problems they identified are unsolved two decades later, some still credit the protest with restoring a sense that mass demonstrations and civil disobedience can effect change.

Demonstrators' criticisms of economic inequality, rapacious capitalism, environmental degradation and worker exploitation are at home in the platforms of progressive Democratic presidential candidates such as Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders.

"There was a real feeling among students in the '90s that it doesn't matter, that nothing we do is going to change anything," said Dodson, a longtime teacher and labor organizer. "The WTO protests changed that."

Officials from 135 nations gathered in Seattle for a conference intended to launch a new round of talks to reduce trade barriers, but a monthslong leadership tussle within the WTO hobbled advance preparations, making it unlikely the meeting would succeed.

Seattle had lobbied to host the conference because Washington was — and still is — one of the nation's most trade-dependent states, with Boeing planes, Microsoft software and agricultural products like apples and cherries making up significant exports.

During more than a year of planning, the city failed to heed signs of a massive disruption, neglecting to ensure it had enough police to handle the influx of protesters.

A WTO meeting in Geneva the year before had drawn protests, and protesters surrounded and rocked a bus carrying the WTO's new director general during an October 1999 appearance at the University of Washington.

The day before the conference, Mayor Paul Schell insisted he wanted to honor the right to protest and pleaded with the demonstrators: "Be firm in your message but be gentle with my city."

As the conference opened on Nov. 30, 1999, thousands of demonstrators chained themselves together in downtown intersections. They locked arms outside a convention center, preventing dignitaries, including

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U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan, from entering.

Tens of thousands of drumming and chanting steelworkers, machinists, teachers and other union members marched. Many of the union members' jobs depended on trade, but they worried reducing trade barriers without requiring labor standards would allow companies to ship their jobs to developing countries.

To the dismay of many activists, a small number of black-clad anarchists rampaged, breaking windows, vandalizing stores with graffiti and looting a Starbucks. The start of the conference was delayed, leaving the assembled nations less time to reach agreement on key issues.

Understaffed police stood by at first, but by midmorning began using tear gas to try to disperse the protesters. With then-President Bill Clinton due to arrive, the mayor declared a downtown curfew and no-protest zone — restrictions not seen in Seattle since World War II.

The next day, police began making mass arrests. Nearly 600 people were arrested, some of whom had nothing to do with the protests. A federal jury later ruled the city was liable for arresting protesters without probable cause, and the city settled lawsuits.

Dodson first became concerned about the WTO because she feared it might consider public funding of education to be an unfair trade practice. That didn't materialize.

She remembers walking with her 11-year-old daughter after a WTO-related event when police reached out of their vehicle and tried to pepper-spray them. Her daughter grew up to be a labor activist.

"It radicalized her," Dodson said. "What were they thinking when they leaned out and pepper-sprayed this little girl and her mom as they were walking down the street?"

For Haque, who worked in Portland, Oregon, as a labor activist, she had become concerned about major corporations relying on sweatshop labor to make apparel and soon had other worries about the WTO.

She laid down in an intersection on a rainy morning, while others dressed as butterflies drew attention to Monsanto Corp., saying its pesticides were killing butterflies.

Haque was overwhelmed by tear gas, but she returned the next morning and blocked a sidewalk. She was arrested and spent five days in jail.

"We were anti-exploitation," she said. "Twenty years later, I think more people are aware of the effects of the way capitalism is working, the way it's destroying the planet and exploiting people."

Among the most enduring images from the protest were demonstrators in sea-turtle costumes. The WTO had invalidated American restrictions that required shrimp fishermen overseas to use devices that would allow turtles to escape from nets if they wanted to sell their product in the U.S.

The WTO has always insisted that ruling was misunderstood: The U.S. lost the case not because it sought to protect the turtles, but because it helped Caribbean countries comply but didn't do the same for Asian nations. That was discriminatory, the WTO said.

"Our number one goal was the sea turtle issue. We helped bring that to the forefront," said Wathne, who lives in the Seattle suburb of Lake Forest Park and works for the Humane Society. "But on a personal level, it was heartening to see people who cared about so many different issues coming together."

Such misperceptions about the organization were common, said WTO spokesman Keith Rockwell, who was in Seattle at the time. Many protesters thought they were helping people in the developing world by insisting on higher labor standards, but those countries opposed them, fearing it would hurt their competitive advantage — cheap labor — to the detriment of their economies.

After four days, the trade talks collapsed.

Afterward, the WTO took steps to better explain itself, opening its dispute resolution process, releasing documents and launching a regular forum where people could air concerns.

"A lot of important things happened as a result of Seattle, in terms of the way the organization functioned and in terms of transparency," Rockwell said.

James Gregory, a University of Washington history professor who specializes in labor issues, said the most lingering effects of the WTO protests might be the connection of the labor and environmental movements and a reawakening of progressivism.

In Seattle, a vast campus for Amazon — a poster child for global capitalism — has emerged. But Gregory

noted the city retains a strong progressive streak that has made it a national leader on workers rights, including a \$15 minimum wage and paid leave requirements.

The legacy of the WTO protests may be partly to thank, he said.

"The electrifying images and stories built excitement among labor people and environmentalists and activists of every kind," he said. "Had there not been that kind of clash and publicity, we wouldn't be talking about Seattle."

Schools teach refugee, migrant kids skills to succeed in US

By ANITA SNOW Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — International flags flutter from the ceilings of the outdoor hallways at Valencia Newcomer School, where more than 200 children from around the world are learning English skills and American classroom customs they need to succeed.

When the school year begins, the refugee and immigrant children often don't know the rules. A kid might be fascinated with a light switch they excitedly turn off and on. Another is startled by a whistle or a helicopter buzzing overhead that recalls conflict back home.

But fears melt away as the kids adjust, said Valencia Principal Lynette Faulkner, who calls the school their "safe place." Soon, they stand in line, raise their hand, keep their feet on floor. As they learn English, students make friends across cultures.

Since fall 2018, the public school has welcomed students from countries including Myanmar, Eritrea, Indonesia, Afghanistan and Cuba for an extra year of attention before transferring to mainstream schools. This year's kindergarten through eighth-grade students come from 21 countries and speak 15 languages.

Valencia is among a handful of U.S. public schools dedicated to helping some of the thousands of children who arrive in the country each year, even as the Trump administration has proposed pushing down the annual cap for refugees to a historic low of 18,000. No refugees were settled in the U.S. last month.

The schools aren't necessarily in cities with more refugees, but where local education officials took the initiative to create them. Similar schools are in Indianapolis; Houston; Fort Worth, Texas; Greensboro, North Carolina; and Providence, Rhode Island.

Arizona ranks eighth among states for refugee resettlement. The number plunged from 4,110 people in fiscal year 2016 to 998 in 2018, then rose slightly to 1,216 for the 12-month period that ended Sept. 30. About half are kids.

Gov. Doug Ducey hasn't weighed in yet on President Donald Trump's executive order allowing states and cities to reject refugees. At least five states have signaled they will accept refugees, and no governor has said they plan to keep them out. Several agencies sued last week seeking to halt the order.

"There may be less, but they're still coming," Valencia teacher Kristine Jones said. "And we have to be there for them, whether it's academically or getting them services like immunizations."

It's unclear if the lower cap on refugees will affect already limited funding for school districts from the Office of Refugee Resettlement's Refugee School Impact Program.

The Arizona Department of Economic Security last year distributed about \$635,000 to help 1,026 school-age refugees statewide with things like interpretation, tutoring and school supplies.

Immigrants and other children newly arrived from abroad can attend newcomer schools if they need help with basic English, including those born in the U.S., taken out of the country and returned.

"As long as you have kids struggling with English, there will always be a place for these kinds of programs," said Deborah Short, a Washington-based English learning specialist who has written about newcomer education. She noted some mainstream schools have newcomer classrooms.

Rebecca Kawa, 10, didn't learn English at the refugee camp in Uganda where she was born and spent most of her life, studying in a classroom with up to 200 students. But she needed no interpreter after only two months at Valencia.

"I like this school because they teach you English, and you learn it fast," said the daughter of Congolese refugees.

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There are often huge challenges for children who trudged across several countries, lived in camps or witnessed extreme violence.

Refugee and other immigrant children who lose a home or parent can suffer from toxic stress, a term used by child development experts for the body's response to long-term adversity, said Sarah Smith, senior director of education for the nonprofit International Rescue Committee.

"Infants might cry for long periods of time," Smith said. "Children in school might have a hard time concentrating."

Newcomer school teachers and social workers strive to ensure children get the social and emotional time they need to talk through feelings and make new friends. Valencia social worker Michelle Frias said that over the last year, she's referred about 10 kids to psychologists for extra care.

At Valencia, the day starts with teachers greeting students as they step off the buses. Samuel Lavi, a teaching assistant from Congo who speaks seven languages, is the first to give each kid a hug or high-five.

"My most important role is to make sure the students get what they're supposed to get," he said.

Inside the classrooms, brightly colored letters adorn the walls. Small groups of children face each other at round tables as they listen to an instructor trained to teach English to non-native speakers. They also have math, art, music and physical education.

Outside, kindergartners with plastic jugs water the flower and vegetable gardens built with materials donated by the Arizona Cardinals football team. The Diamondbacks baseball club paid to spruce up the school before it opened and donated trees.

Faulkner, the Valencia principal, said the Alhambra School District looked into newcomer programs after seeing new arrivals struggle to meet state English language standards. She visited Las Americas newcomer school in Houston.

Las Americas has some 400 students in fourth through eighth grades who come from up to 32 countries and speak 29 languages, Principal Marie Moreno said.

"We wanted to provide them a space where they can get grounded, whenever they feel traumatized or whenever they remember something from the past," Moreno said as she showed off the school's "peace garden."

"We try to support them by helping them understand where they came from and where we want them to go," she said.

Associated Press videographer John Mone contributed reporting from Houston.

Follow Anita Snow on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/asnowreports>

LGBT activists in China seek to change marriage civil code

By YANAN WANG Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — It was only after her partner's death that He Meili realized the full meaning of marriage. As a lesbian couple in China, He and Li Qin kept their ties largely unspoken, sometimes introducing themselves as cousins. This rarely bothered He until Li succumbed to complications from lupus in 2016, and Li's parents demanded that He hand over the deed for their apartment and other property documents under Li's name.

He, a 51-year-old nonprofit worker in southern China's Guangzhou city, has joined LGBT activists and supporters in an appeal to lawmakers to allow same-sex marriage, using a state-sanctioned channel to skirt recent government moves to suppress collective action.

"I realized if LGBT people don't have the right to marry, we have no legal protections," she said. "Others will also experience what I did — and be left with nothing."

Under Chinese President Xi Jinping, space for civil society and advocacy has shrunk. Human rights activists and their lawyers have been detained, while internet censorship has increased.

LGBT activists have turned to a novel tactic: submitting statements to the National People's Congress,

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China's legislature, which is soliciting opinions from the public on a draft of the "Marriage and Family" portion of the Civil Code through Friday.

"A lot of people told me that this is the first time they've participated in the legal process," said Peng Yanzi, director of LGBT Rights Advocacy China, one of several groups running the campaign.

The Marriage and Family section is among six draft regulations for which the legislature began seeking comments at the end of October. As of Thursday afternoon, the website showed that more than 200,000 suggestions had been submitted either online or by mail, the greatest number of any of the outstanding drafts. It was not clear what proportion of the suggestions pertained to same-sex marriage.

In social media posts, campaign participants held up their Express Mail Service envelopes along with rainbow Pride flags. In their suggestions, they shared stories of coming out, the challenge of gaining family members' acceptance and running into legal roadblocks when trying to share their lives with someone of the same sex.

A teacher wrote about experiencing discrimination at his workplace; others wrote about not being allowed to make medical decisions for their ailing partners.

"This is not just a symbolic gesture," Peng said. "It really has an impact on our everyday lives."

Peng's organization has outlined a desired revision to the language in the Civil Code, changing the terms throughout from "husband and wife" to "spouses" and from "men and women" to "the two parties." Rather than adding specific language about same-sex marriage, the revisions seek to eliminate gendered terms from the legislation.

While activists and experts acknowledge that legalizing same-sex marriage is still a far-off reality in China, they said appeals through the official channel will push the government to take the demand more seriously.

"There's a near-zero chance the suggested changes will be accepted and implemented, but this campaign makes China's LGBT community's demands for equality harder to ignore," said Darius Longarino, a senior fellow at Yale Law School's Paul Tsai China Center who has worked on legal reform programs promoting LGBT rights in China.

"Calls for gay marriage often get dismissed as being too marginal and unimportant to get onto the political agenda, or as being inconsistent with Chinese traditional culture," Longarino said.

Few legal protections are available for same-sex couples in China. One party can apply to be the other's legal guardian, but those accompanying rights are just a fraction of those enjoyed by married couples, Longarino said. He gave the example of a lesbian woman who bears a child in China, with no way for her partner to become a second legally recognized parent of that baby.

At a briefing in August, a spokesman for the National People's Congress Standing Committee's Legislative Affairs Commission suggested that same-sex marriage does not suit Chinese society.

"China's current marriage system is built on the basis of a man and a woman becoming husband and wife," said Zang Tiewei, director of the commission's research department, when asked whether same-sex marriage will be legalized.

"This regulation is in line with China's national conditions and historical and cultural traditions," Zang said. "As far as I know, at the moment most countries in the world don't recognize the legality of same-sex marriage."

LGBT advocates have garnered growing support from the Chinese public, using social media to raise awareness even as they face frequent censorship. They won a victory over the censors in April 2018, when one of the country's top social networking sites backtracked on a plan to restrict content related to LGBT issues. Users flooded Weibo with hashtags such as "#I'mGayNotaPervert" after the Twitter-like platform said "pornographic, violent or gay" subject matter would be reviewed.

But misconceptions and discrimination persist. A 2015 survey by the Beijing LGBT Center found that 35% of mental health professionals in a sample group of nearly 1,000 believed that being gay is a mental illness. Around the same percentage supported the use of conversion therapy. When *Bohemian Rhapsody*, the hit biopic about Queen lead singer Freddie Mercury, came to China, viewers were treated to a version without any references to Mercury's sexuality or his struggle with AIDS.

Hua Zile, the chief editor of an LGBT-focused Weibo account with 1.69 million followers, said he hasn't publicized the same-sex marriage campaign on his microblog because he worries about the dispiriting effect it will have on the LGBT community when it inevitably fails.

"We can't reach the sky in a single leap," Hua said. "We should try to make progress step-by-step, or else we'll constantly be disappointed."

After He's partner passed away, it pained her to think about how they kept their status in the shadows. Through their 12-year relationship, it was He who accompanied Li on doctor's visits. She stayed with her at the hospital when lupus made her nauseous and delirious with fever, and she helped her reach their fourth-floor walk-up after her legs grew weak.

In He's mind, they were married. But in reality, many people didn't even know they were dating.

Friends told He that she could file a lawsuit to recover some of her and Li's shared property. She hired a lawyer to start the process, which required painstaking documentation of their relationship and signed statements from their neighbors and friends attesting to their long-term bond.

"It was like tearing open a wound over and over again," He said. "I had to keep coming out about my sexuality. If we were married, all of this would be understood."

In the end, He gave up on the lawsuit. It was too exhausting, she said, to have to prove their love to everyone.

Associated Press researcher Shanshan Wang contributed to this report.

Follow Yanan Wang on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/yananw>.

North Korea may deploy 'super-large' rocket launcher soon

By **HYUNG-JIN KIM** Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea said Friday the latest test-firing of its "super-large" multiple rocket launcher was a final review of the weapon's combat application, a suggestion that the country is preparing to deploy the new weapons system soon.

South Korea's military earlier said North Korea fired two projectiles, likely from the same "super-large" rocket launcher, on Thursday. It expressed "strong regret" over the launches and urged North Korea to stop escalating tensions.

On Friday, the North's Korean Central News Agency confirmed the launches were made with the presence of leader Kim Jong Un and other top officials.

"The volley test-fire aimed to finally examine the combat application of the super-large multiple launch rocket system proved the military and technical superiority of the weapon system and its firm reliability," KCNA said.

It said Kim expressed "great satisfaction" over the results of the test-firing.

Analyst Kim Dong-yub at Seoul's Institute for Far Eastern Studies said North Korea appears to be entering the stage of mass-producing and deploying the rocket launcher. He wrote on Facebook that the weapons system may already have been deployed.

Thursday's firing was the fourth test-launch of the rocket launcher since August.

Some experts say the flight distance and trajectory of projectiles fired from the launcher show they are virtually missiles or missile-classed weapons. The projectiles fired Thursday flew about 380 kilometers (235 miles) at a maximum altitude of 97 kilometers (60 miles), according to South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe on Thursday called the projectiles ballistic missiles.

North Korea has fired other new weapons in recent months in what some experts say is an attempt to wrest concessions from the United States in stalled nuclear diplomacy while upgrading its military capabilities.

A U.S.-led diplomacy aimed at persuading North Korea to scrap its nuclear program in return for political and economic benefits remains largely stalemated since the February collapse of a summit between Kim

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and President Donald Trump in Vietnam.

Most of the North Korean weapons tested since the Vietnam summit were short-range. Attention is now on whether North Korea resumes nuclear and long-range missile tests if Trump fails to meet a year-end deadline set by Kim for Washington to offer new proposals to salvage the negotiations.

Trump considers North Korea's self-imposed moratorium on nuclear and intercontinental ballistic missile tests a major foreign policy win.

Trick TD sparks Bills in 26-15 Thanksgiving win over Cowboys

By SCHUYLER DIXON AP Pro Football Writer

ARLINGTON, Texas (AP) — Cole Beasley savored a little extra time on the field with his former teammates after what had to be one of the most satisfying days of the Buffalo receiver's career.

And to think he didn't even have the most noteworthy play for the Bills' pass-catchers.

John Brown became the first Buffalo receiver to throw a touchdown pass, Josh Allen set a franchise record by producing at least two touchdowns in an eighth consecutive game and the surging Bills beat the fading Dallas Cowboys 26-15 on Thursday.

Allen ran for a TD and threw a scoring pass to Beasley, who had 110 yards receiving in the stadium where he spent his first seven seasons as the Bills (9-3) got their first Thanksgiving win since 1975 in their first appearance on the holiday in 25 years.

Buffalo is 5-1 on the road for the first time since 1966, and the nine wins through 12 games are the most since the Bills finished 10-6 in Hall of Fame quarterback Jim Kelly's final season in 1996.

"It'll be the most satisfying day when we win a Super Bowl," said Beasley, who was critical of the Cowboys after leaving, then had six catches and finished 2 yards shy of his career high against them. "It's just another win, another step in the right direction."

The Cowboys (6-6) stumbled after scoring a touchdown on their opening drive, giving Philadelphia a chance to rejoin them atop the NFC East after their fourth double-digit loss in the past six Thanksgiving games.

A lackluster showing for Dallas' sixth loss in nine games came four days after owner Jerry Jones blasted the coaching staff following a loss to New England from a team that entered the season with lofty expectations.

Jones remained supportive of embattled coach Jason Garrett, who is in the final year of his contract in his ninth full season for a franchise that hasn't been past the divisional round since the last of its five championships to finish the 1995 season.

"This is not the time for me," said Jones, who made an in-season change when Garrett got the job in 2010. "I'm looking ahead at winning four or five straight. Every decision that I make over the next month will be with an eye in mind to get us in the Super Bowl now."

Allen, whose 15-yard run put Buffalo ahead 23-7 late in the third quarter, was 19 of 24 for 231 yards and a career-best 120.7 passer rating as the Bills won their third straight game and solidified their hold on an AFC wild-card spot.

The second-year quarterback found the ball at the bottom of a pile after fumbling a snap on fourth-and-1 in the second quarter, quickly reached the ball over the first down spot and then stumbled forward 3 yards to the Dallas 28, pumping his arms emphatically afterward.

"On fourth down, fourth and short, fumbling the snap, I got to do a better job with that, and get the ball to our running back and let him do the job there," Allen said. "But I wanted it. I wanted it really bad."

On the next play, Brown took a pitch on a double reverse and lofted the ball to wide-open running back Devin Singletary for Buffalo's first lead at 13-7 in the second quarter.

"I played a little backup quarterback in Pop Warner, but I wasn't all that," Brown said becoming the first non-QB with a touchdown pass for the Bills since Fred Jackson 10 years ago.

"Dropped a dime," Beasley said. "We had two great quarterbacks today."

The Cowboys couldn't blame a sputtering offense on the conditions after the windy and rainy loss to the

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Patriots. Dak Prescott threw an interception, lost one fumble and had another on fourth down as Dallas was outscored 26-0 over a 50-minute stretch.

Ezekiel Elliott had 54 yards rushing and another 20 receiving in the first nine minutes, but wasn't much of a factor the rest of the way. He finished with 71 yards rushing and 66 receiving.

Singletary became the latest back to have a splashier day than the two-time rushing champion, rushing for 63 yards with 38 more receiving. The 28-yard score was the easiest play he had all day, waiting for Brown's throw to come down and waltzing into the end zone.

BASKING BEASLEY

Most of the Buffalo joy was saved for Beasley, who had several momentum-changing plays along with his 25-yard touchdown in his first 100-yard game with the Bills and third of his career. The diminutive receiver who grew up in the Dallas area and played at SMU.

"I'm extremely proud of Cole and happy for him," coach Sean McDermott said. "He's worked hard. Obviously we're happy to have him on our team. He said that to me before the game, and I'm just grateful for him and his mindset as well."

CAN'T GET IT RIGHT

A week after getting criticized for taking a field goal down seven late against New England, the embattled Garrett went for it on fourth down from the Buffalo 6 late in the third quarter. But Prescott's pass to Elliott in the flat wasn't close, skipping in front of the running back.

Settling for field goals didn't help the Cowboys much either. Brett Maher had a 36-yard miss partially blocked by Star Lotulelei on the final play of the first half and was wide right from 47 in the third quarter.

EMPTY STATS

Prescott was 32 of 49 for 355 yards and two touchdowns. The first was to Jason Witten, who has the most yards receiving on Thanksgiving with 895 after catching six passes for 42 yards.

INJURIES

Dallas left guard Connor Williams injured a knee and tried to return before being ruled out in the second half. He was just a few weeks removed from arthroscopic knee surgery.

UP NEXT

Bills: Home against Baltimore on Dec. 8.

Cowboys: At Chicago next Thursday.

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

Police: 7 dead in plane crash near Canadian city

KINGSTON, Ontario (AP) — Police in the Canadian city of Kingston say seven people have died after a small plane crashed in the area Wednesday evening.

The Transportation Safety Board of Canada has sent a team of four investigators to the scene of the crash, where they're examining and documenting the wreckage.

They've said the plane left Markham, Ontario, and was destined for the Kingston airport, but went down just a few miles from its destination.

Kingston Police Const. Ash Gutheinz said Thursday there's "no indication" there were any survivors from the crash. Identities of the victims have not been released.

Gutheinz says the area was under a wind advisory at the time, and while winds may not have been as bad as predicted, it was certainly "blustery."

Ads assail conservative legal group over Trump's court picks

By MATTHEW DALY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A liberal activist group is launching a digital ad campaign targeting the Federalist Society, a conservative legal organization that has championed judges appointed by President Donald

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Trump, such as Supreme Court Justices Brett Kavanaugh and Neil Gorsuch.

The ads, to appear on LinkedIn and Facebook, assail major law firms that sponsored the Federalist Society's recently annual dinner, where Kavanaugh addressed more than 2,000 people in tuxedos and gowns at Washington's Union Station.

The ads feature photos of a snarling Kavanaugh, along with Christine Blasey Ford, the woman who accused him of sexually assaulting her when they were teenagers, a charge he denied. "The Federalist Society is rebuilding Kavanaugh's image" through events such as its annual dinner, the ad charges, so why are the law firms paying for it?

Sponsored by Demand Justice, the ads target a half-dozen prominent firms that sponsored the dinner, such as Kirkland & Ellis, where Kavanaugh served as a partner, as well as Sullivan & Cromwell, WilmerHale and Consovoy McCarthy, where a senior partner was recently confirmed as a federal appellate judge.

The bare-knuckle ads are a rarity in the city's genteel legal world and an example of the increasing toxicity of the political debate over Trump's judicial nominees.

Demand Justice says the ads are the beginning of a sustained campaign "to hold accountable" people who help the Federalist Society "rehabilitate a sexual predator and attack the rule of law."

The Federalist Society declined to comment. Carrie Severino, a longtime Federalist Society member and policy director of the conservative Judicial Crisis Network, called criticism by Demand Justice and other liberal groups a badge of honor.

The Federalist group "is a successful network of conservatives and conservative lawyers that are very effective," Severino said. Liberal critics "don't like that," she added.

The ads come as Trump and his allies celebrate his administration's success in getting more than 160 federal judicial nominees confirmed by the Republican-controlled Senate, including 48 appeals court judges. About a quarter of current federal appeals court judges were nominated by Trump.

Senate Majority Mitch McConnell of Kentucky hailed Trump's record on reshaping courts in an appearance with the Republican president this month. "And Mr. President, we're going to keep on doing it," he said. "My motto is: Leave no vacancy behind."

The Senate will begin considering eight more judicial nominees next week, including Sarah Pitlyk, a former Kavanaugh clerk who was deemed unqualified by the American Bar Association. Pitlyk, who has never tried a case, works for an anti-abortion-rights group. Many Democrats opposed her nomination.

Brian Fallon, executive director of Demand Justice, is a former adviser to Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign and former spokesman for Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer.

He said Pitlyk's nomination and the recent party line confirmation of Steven Menashi, a former White House lawyer named by Trump to a New York-based appeals court, show the importance of the ad campaign.

Many of Trump's nominees, Menashi among them, have ties to the Federalist Society, which has vetted and recommended dozens of conservative lawyers for Trump's consideration as judges.

"Trump is larding up the judiciary with people who are loyal to him," Fallon said.

The hard-hitting ads featuring Kavanaugh mirror the aggressive tactics conservative groups have used for years, Fallon said.

"The other side has been playing for keeps when it comes the courts for a long time," he said. "Democrats need to get back in the game."

Fallon angered more than a few Democrats recently with an ad criticizing Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., a moderate who has supported some Trump judicial nominees. Fallon's group said Coons should have opposed nominees who refused to explicitly endorse *Brown v. Board of Education*, the Supreme Court's landmark 1954 ruling that outlawed school segregation.

Illinois Sen. Dick Durbin, the No. 2 Democrat in the Senate, called the ad "way out of line."

Coons, who is up for reelection in 2020, brushed off the criticism.

Fallon said hardball tactics are succeeding. A report card compiled by Demand Justice found that in 2017-18, Senate Democrats voted for Trump's judicial nominees more than 60% of the time. By 2019, Democratic support for judicial nominees plummeted to 28%.

Democrats unanimously opposed Menashi and Appeals Court Judge Neomi Rao, another former Trump aide who like Menashi had never tried a case before winning a lifetime seat on the appellate court.

Despite their confirmations, Fallon said he was "delighted" at Democratic solidarity in both cases. Unified opposition is needed to slow Trump's transformation of the courts, he said.

WilmerHale and other law firms targeted by the ads declined to comment.

40 Iraqi protesters slain in 24 hours as violence spirals

By **SAMYA KULLAB** and **MURTADA FARAJ** Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — Security forces shot dead 40 anti-government protesters during 24 hours of bloodshed amid spiraling violence in the capital and Iraq's south, security and medical officials said Thursday, one day after an Iranian consulate was torched.

Iran condemned the burning of its consulate in the holy city of Najaf as violence continued into the night across southern Iraq, where security forces had killed 36 protesters and wounded 245 since Wednesday evening, the officials said. Another four protesters were shot dead in the capital. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations.

Police and military forces were deployed across key oil-rich provinces to re-open roads closed off by demonstrations.

The escalating violence and heavy response against demonstrators by a largely Iran-backed government threatened to intensify tensions, especially if efforts to implement electoral and anti-corruption reforms fail to placate protesters.

Crisis committees were created to enhance coordination between Prime Minister Adil Abdul-Mahdi and governors in provinces affected by the protests "for the importance of controlling security and enforcing the law," said a statement from the joint operations command.

Security forces shot four protesters dead in Baghdad and wounded 22 when they tried to cross the important Ahrar Bridge leading to the nearby Green Zone, the heavily fortified seat of Iraq's government. Protesters occupy parts of the Jumhuriya, Sinak and Ahrar bridges, all of which lead to or near the fortified area.

In Najaf, five protesters were fatally shot and 32 wounded when security forces opened fire to prevent them from torching a central mosque named after the father of a prominent political leader, officials said.

The deaths came after a day after protesters burned the Iranian consulate in Najaf. It was one of the worst attacks targeting Iranian interests in the country since the anti-government protests erupted two months ago.

The unrest in Iraq began on Oct. 1, when thousands took to the streets in Baghdad and the predominantly Shiite south. The largely leaderless movement accuses the government of being hopelessly corrupt and has also decried Iran's growing influence in Iraqi state affairs.

At least 350 people have been killed by security forces, which routinely use live ammunition and tear gas to disperse crowds.

Iran has called for a "responsible, strong and effective" response to the burning of its consulate, Abbas Mousavi, a Foreign Ministry spokesman, said in statements to Iran's official IRNA news agency.

Iraq's Ministry of Foreign Affairs condemned the attack, saying it was perpetrated by "people outside of the genuine protesters" seeking to harm relations between the countries.

One demonstrator was killed and 35 wounded when police fired live ammunition in a failed effort to prevent protesters entering the consulate building. Once inside, the demonstrators removed the Iranian flag and replaced it with an Iraqi one, said a police official who spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations.

A curfew was imposed in Najaf after the attack on the consulate. Security forces were heavily deployed around main government buildings and religious institutions Thursday morning.

Najaf province is the headquarters of the country's Shiite religious authority headed by Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani. He has been largely supportive of protester demands, siding with them by repeatedly calling

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on political parties to implement serious reforms.

Influential Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr called on Iraq's government to resign "immediately to stop the bloodletting," while imploring protesters to maintain the peace.

"If the government does not resign, this will be the beginning of the end of Iraq," he warned.

Al-Sadr, who has supported the protests, also categorically denied that his supporters were involved in the attack on the Iranian consulate in Najaf.

In addition to using sit-ins and burning tires to close main avenues, protesters have lately targeted Iraqi economic interests in the south by blocking key ports and roads to oil fields.

In the oil-rich city of Nasiriyah, 31 protesters were killed overnight and 215 wounded by security forces who fired to drive them away from key bridges, security and medical officials said Thursday. Demonstrators had been blocking Nasr and Zaitoun bridges leading to the city center for several days. Security forces moved in late Wednesday to open the main thoroughfare.

By Thursday afternoon, special forces were transferred from neighboring Najaf and Diwanieh provinces to Nasiriyah to contain the violence, security officials said.

Amnesty International denounced the violence, calling it a bloodbath that "must stop now."

"The scenes from Nasiriyah this morning more closely resemble a warzone than city streets and bridges. This brutal onslaught is just the latest in a long series of deadly events where Iraqi security forces meted out appalling violence against largely peaceful protesters," said Lynn Maalouf, Middle East research director for the rights groups.

In Basra, security forces were deployed in the city's main roads to prevent protesters from staging sit-ins on important avenues.

Basra's streets were open as of Thursday morning, but highways leading to the two main Gulf commodities ports in Umm Qasr and Khor al-Zubair remained closed. Schools and official public institutions were also closed.

Separately, the U.S. Embassy denounced a recent decision by Iraq's media regulator to suspend nine television channels, calling for the Communications and Media Commission to reverse its decision. The embassy's Thursday statement also condemned attacks and harassment against journalists.

Local channel Dijla TV had its license suspended Tuesday for its coverage of the protests, and its office was closed and equipment confiscated, according an official from one of the channels under threat. Other channels have been asked by the regulatory commission to sign a pledge "agreeing to adhere to its rules," said the official, who requested anonymity out of fear of reprisal.

The Islamic State extremist group, meanwhile, claimed responsibility for Tuesday's coordinated bombings in three Baghdad neighborhoods that killed five people. The bombings, which occurred far from Tahrir square where demonstrators are camped, was the first apparent coordinated attack since anti-government protests began.

After wind scare, balloons fly in Macy's Thanksgiving parade

By **SABRINA CASERTA** Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The beloved balloons flew, but lower than usual, in a windy Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade after an anxious weather watch.

Wind had threatened to ground the giant inflated characters. But officials announced less than an hour before Thursday's start time that the balloons could fly, if in a down-to-Earth way.

As the parade continued — even while city emergency officials sent out a public alert about wind gusts — handlers struggled with some giant balloons and pulled them close to the ground. Meanwhile, winds did keep giant balloons out of Philadelphia's Thanksgiving Day parade.

The Macy's parade balloons might have been lowered, but Susan Koteen's spirits weren't. She has traveled from Florida, three years in a row, to see the parade.

"We love it. Because it's exciting, it's patriotic, and it just — it warms your heart," she said.

Spectators lined up a half-dozen deep along the route on a gusty fall day, with leaves and confetti swirl-

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ing in the wind.

A "Green Eggs and Ham" balloon joined the lineup, Smokey Bear returned for the first time since 1993, and spectators got to see new versions of favorites Snoopy and SpongeBob SquarePants.

A smaller new balloon, Japanese artist Yayoi Kusama's "Love Flies Up to the Sky," and two star-shaped balloons ultimately didn't make the lineup because of tears and stress from inflation before the parade, Macy's said. A giant Ronald McDonald balloon also tore before the parade and was pulled out midway through, the company said. The McDonald's character had a visibly deflated leg.

Macy's spokesman Orlando Veras called the parade "a fantastic event despite these minor challenges."

During the middle of the parade, the wind was 13 mph (21 kph) with gusts up to 32 mph (51 kph), according to the National Weather Service.

City rules require balloons to be grounded if sustained winds exceed 23 mph (37 kph) and gusts exceed 34 mph (55 kph). The balloons have been grounded only once for weather-related reasons, in 1971.

On Thursday, in a windy spot near the start of the 2.5-mile (4-kilometer) route, a Nutcracker balloon knocked into a handler, who fell down but then continued along. A Grinch balloon touched some trees as it passed a corner, drawing an "ooh!" from the crowd.

To parade-goer Kate O'Connor, the wind was "scary, especially around the corners — they're like wind tunnels."

It was still cool to see the balloons up close, "but they're really meant to be seen from underneath," said the resident of Newtown, Connecticut, who comes to the parade every other year with her daughter, Megan, 8.

Joanna Mammen and her family came from Bradford County in northern Pennsylvania to revisit the parade she attended every year while growing up in the Bronx.

"My favorite float, as a kid, was Santa Claus," said Mammen, 69. "Most of the other floats from that time, the kids these days wouldn't even recognize. But it's a beautiful tradition, to come out and experience the crowd."

It was a first-time experience for her husband, Bill. And for him, it was all about sharing the fun with the couple's son, Jason, and 2-year-old grandson, Lincoln.

"Thanksgiving is not just about the people I love. It is the people I love," he said.

Willie Brown traveled from Dallas to see the parade, particularly entertainers Ciara and Kelly Rowland.

"This was really a bucket list item for me, Macy's Day Parade in New York City," the 23-year-old said. "You grow up seeing glimpses on TV, but it's something I knew I needed to experience."

The parade, one of the city's most popular events, features about 8,000 marchers, two dozen floats, entertainers and marching bands, ending with an appearance from Santa Claus.

The character balloons can go as high as 55 feet (16 meters) off the ground and as low as 10 feet (3 meters).

The rules requiring them to be grounded in high winds came after a "Cat in the Hat" balloon blew into a lamppost near Central Park in 1997, critically injuring a woman.

In 2005, an M&M's balloon smacked into a lamppost in Times Square, causing cuts and bruises to a woman in a wheelchair and her 11-year-old sister.

In 2017, a gust on an otherwise calm day sent a smaller balloon into a tree branch. That one popped and fell harmlessly onto the crowd.

Associated Press writers Julie Walker and Jennifer Peltz contributed to this report.

Opponents attack Johnson's character as UK election looms

By JILL LAWLESS and DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain's opposition parties intensified attacks on Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Thursday with two weeks to go until election day, as polls suggested the U.K. leader's Conservatives have a substantial lead.

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Johnson was accused of running scared of scrutiny after he declined to take part in a debate alongside his main opponent, Jeremy Corbyn of the Labour Party, and other party leaders, and refused to commit to a one-on-one TV interview.

For Thursday's climate change-themed debate, broadcaster Channel 4 put Earth-shaped ice sculptures atop podiums in place of Johnson and Brexit Party leader Nigel Farage, who also declined to appear.

With most polls showing a double-digit lead for Johnson's Conservatives, the party is keen to limit the prime minister's opportunities for gaffes and slip-ups.

As well as skipping the climate debate, Johnson is the only main leader not to have agreed — so far — to a one-on-one interview with BBC journalist Andrew Neil. Corbyn was subjected to an intense grilling by Neil earlier this week about allegations of anti-Semitism within the Labour Party.

The Conservatives complained to Britain's broadcast regulator after Channel 4 refused to let another government minister appear instead of Johnson at the climate debate. The channel said it was a leaders-only event.

Those taking part promised to slash Britain's carbon emissions to zero, though the parties have set different target dates: 2030 in the case of the Green Party, "within the 2030s" for Labour and 2045 for the Liberal Democrats and Scottish National Party. The Conservatives say they will do it by 2050.

Johnson insisted Thursday that he would do "many, many interviews over the course of the next few days and I'm sure that people are having all sorts of conversations right now about who I'm going to be talking to, when and where, and I look forward to it very much."

Jo Swinson, leader of the centrist Liberal Democrats, earlier accused Johnson of spewing serial falsehoods and dragging the office of prime minister "through the mud."

She said Johnson can't be trusted because he vowed to lead Britain out of the European Union by Oct. 31 - and didn't - and said he would never ask the EU to delay Brexit - but did.

"Boris Johnson is not fit to be prime minister not just because he doesn't care, not just because he lies, but also because he is complicit in stoking division and fear in our communities," Swinson told supporters during a speech in London.

Johnson has faced questions about his character throughout the campaign. The prime minister has a history of making offensive remarks, including a newspaper column last year in which he compared women who wear face-covering veils to "letter boxes."

The Labour Party unearthed an article Johnson wrote in the conservative weekly magazine, *The Spectator*, in 1995 in which he called the children of single mothers "ill-raised, ignorant, aggressive and illegitimate."

Johnson accused his opponents of trying to "disinter and distort pieces that are almost 25 years old."

He also said he had "never tried to deceive the public and I've always tried to be absolutely frank."

Labour, meanwhile, is struggling to satisfy supporters who oppose Brexit, as well as those who want to leave the EU.

The party says that if it wins the election it will negotiate a new divorce deal with the EU, then give voters a choice in a new referendum between leaving the bloc on those new terms or remaining.

A respected economic think-tank cast doubt Thursday on the spending pledges of both main parties, Conservatives and Labour, concluding that neither was being honest with voters.

The Institute for Fiscal Studies warned it was "highly likely" that a Conservative government would end up spending more than the party's platform implied, while Labour would not be able to deliver on a promise to raise investment and revenue without taxing middle-income earners, rather than just the rich and on big business.

"Neither is a properly credible prospectus," IFS director Paul Johnson said.

Parties court the approval of the IFS, seeking its imprimatur on their spending plans. But the think-tank concluded the promises didn't match the math.

The IFS analysis outlined the scope of the main parties' drastically different views of the future, arguing the choice between the Conservatives and Labour could "hardly be starker." With the exception of health, the IFS concluded that if the Conservatives formed the next government, public spending would be 14%

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lower in 2023-24 than it was when the party took office in 2010.

"No more austerity perhaps, but an awful lot baked in," the IFS's Johnson said of the Tories.

Labour on the other hand, would raise both taxes and spending to peacetime highs. The party has pledged a sweeping expansion of the state, including the nationalization of the railways and key utilities.

"Labour would not be able to deliver investment spending increases on the scale they promise," the IFS director said. "The public sector doesn't have the capacity to ramp up that much, that fast."

Britons will vote Dec. 12 to fill all 650 seats in the House of Commons. Johnson wants to secure a majority in the election so he can push through the Brexit divorce deal he negotiated last month with the EU. Under the terms of that deal, the U.K. would leave the EU on Jan. 31 but remain part of the EU's single market, and bound by the bloc's rules, until the end of 2020.

Follow AP's full coverage of Brexit and British politics at <https://www.apnews.com/Brexit>

Today in History By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Friday, Nov. 29, the 333rd day of 2019. There are 32 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 29, 1963, President Johnson named a commission headed by Earl Warren to investigate the assassination of President Kennedy.

On this date:

In 1890, the first Army-Navy football game was played at West Point, New York; Navy defeated Army, 24-0.

In 1910, British explorer Robert F. Scott's ship Terra Nova set sail from New Zealand, carrying Scott's expedition on its ultimately futile — as well as fatal — race to reach the South Pole first.

In 1929, Navy Lt. Cmdr. Richard E. Byrd, pilot Bernt Balchen, radio operator Harold Gougeon and photographer Ashley McKinney made the first airplane flight over the South Pole.

In 1947, the U.N. General Assembly passed a resolution calling for the partitioning of Palestine between Arabs and Jews; 33 members, including the United States, voted in favor of the resolution, 13 voted against while 10 abstained. (The plan, rejected by the Arabs, was never implemented.)

In 1952, President-elect Dwight D. Eisenhower secretly left on a trip to Korea, keeping his campaign promise to assess the ongoing conflict first-hand.

In 1961, Enos the chimp was launched from Cape Canaveral aboard the Mercury-Atlas 5 spacecraft, which orbited earth twice before returning.

In 1981, actress Natalie Wood drowned in a boating accident off Santa Catalina Island, California, at age 43.

In 1987, a Korean Air 707 jetliner en route from Abu Dhabi to Bangkok was destroyed by a bomb planted by North Korean agents with the loss of all 115 people aboard.

In 1991, 17 people were killed in a 164-vehicle pileup during a dust storm on Interstate 5 near Coalinga (koh-LING'-guh), California. Actor Ralph Bellamy died in Santa Monica, California, at age 87.

In 2000, bracing the public for more legal wrangling, Vice President Al Gore said in a series of TV interviews that he was prepared to contest the Florida presidential vote until "the middle of December."

In 2001, George Harrison, the "quiet Beatle," died in Los Angeles following a battle with cancer; he was 58.

In 2008, Indian commandos killed the last remaining gunmen holed up at a luxury Mumbai hotel, ending a 60-hour rampage through India's financial capital by suspected Pakistani-based militants that killed 166 people.

Ten years ago: A gunman shot and killed four Lakewood, Washington, police officers at a coffee shop (suspect Maurice Clemmons was shot to death by a Seattle police officer two days later). Iran approved plans to build 10 industrial scale uranium enrichment facilities in defiance of U.N. demands it halt enrich-

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ment. Swiss voters approved a constitutional ban on construction of new minarets, the iconic mosque towers. Francesco and Edoardo Molinari of Italy became the first brother combination to win the World Cup of Golf.

Five years ago: An Egyptian judge dismissed murder charges against former President Hosni Mubarak (HOHS'-nee moo-BAH'-rahk) and acquitted his security chief over the killings of protesters during Egypt's 2011 uprising. Pope Francis stood in two minutes of silent prayer facing east inside one of Istanbul's most important religious sites, the 17th-century Sultan Ahmet mosque, on the second leg of his three-day visit to Turkey.

One year ago: As he headed to the Group of 20 Nations summit in Argentina, President Donald Trump abruptly canceled a planned meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin, citing Russia's seizure of Ukrainian vessels. (Trump and Putin ended up talking briefly on the sidelines of the summit.) In a surprise guilty plea, former Trump lawyer Michael Cohen confessed that he lied to Congress about a Moscow real estate deal he pursued on Trump's behalf during the 2016 campaign. China's government ordered a halt to work by a medical team that claimed to have helped make the world's first gene-edited babies. U.S. health officials reported that suicides and drug overdoses pushed up U.S. deaths in 2017 and drove a continuing decline in how long Americans are expected to live.

Today's Birthdays: Hall of Fame sportscaster Vin Scully is 92. Blues singer-musician John Mayall is 86. Actress Diane Ladd is 84. Songwriter Mark James is 79. Composer-musician Chuck Mangione is 79. Country singer Jody Miller is 78. Pop singer-musician Felix Cavaliere (The Rascals) is 77. Former Olympic skier Suzy Chaffee is 73. Actor Jeff Fahey is 67. Movie director Joel Coen is 65. Actor-comedian-celebrity judge Howie Mandel is 64. Former Homeland Security Director Janet Napolitano (neh-pahl-ih-TAN'-oh) is 62. Former Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel is 60. Actress Cathy Moriarty is 59. Actress Kim Delaney is 58. Actor Tom Sizemore is 58. Actor Andrew McCarthy is 57. Actor Don Cheadle is 55. Actor-producer Neill Barry is 54. Musician Wallis Buchanan is 54. Pop singer Jonathan Knight (New Kids on the Block) is 51. Rock musician Martin Carr (Boo Radleys) is 51. Actress Jennifer Elise Cox is 50. Baseball Hall of Famer Mariano Rivera is 50. Actor Larry Joe Campbell is 49. Rock musician Frank Delgado (Deftones) is 49. Actress Paola Turbay is 49. Contemporary Christian singer Crowder is 48. Actress Gena Lee Nolin is 48. Actor Brian Baumgartner is 47. Actor Julian Ovenden is 44. Actor Chadwick Boseman is 43. Actress Anna (AH'-nuh) Faris is 43. Gospel singer James Fortune is 42. Actress Lauren German is 41. Rapper The Game is 40. Actress Janina Gavankar is 39. Rock musician Ringo Garza is 38. Actor-comedian John Milhiser is 38. Actor Lucas Black is 37. Actor Diego Boneta is 29. Actress Lovie Simone (TV: "Greenleaf") is 21.

Thought for Today: "When you've seen beyond yourself, then you may find, peace of mind is waiting there." — George Harrison (1943-2001).

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