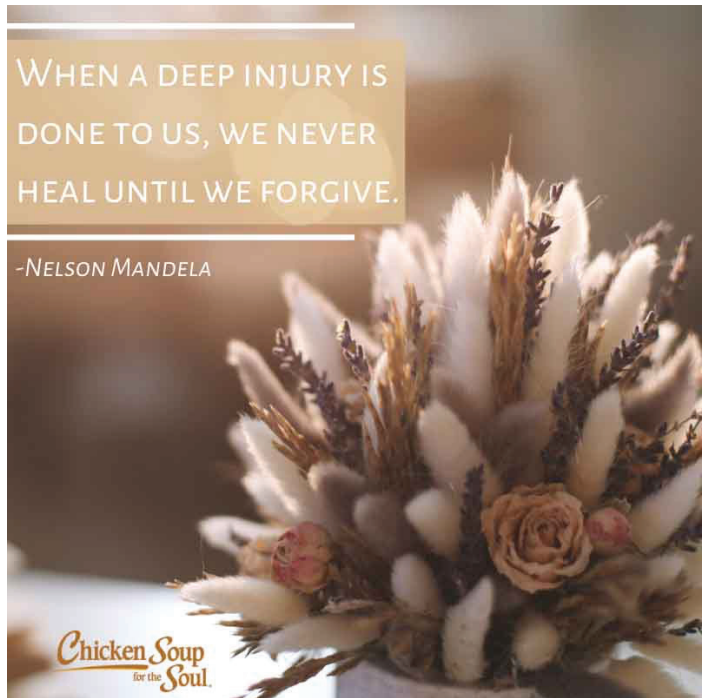


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Thursday, December 5, 2019

7:00pm: MS/HS Christmas Concert at GHS Gymnasium

Friday, December 6, 2019

State Oral Interp at Yankton High School

(Rescheduled to 12-13-19) 4:15pm: Basketball: Girls 7th/8th Game (Rescheduled from 11-21-19) hosts Britton-Hecla JH

7th Grade @ 4:15 and 8th Grade @ 5:15

Saturday, December 7, 2019

9 a.m. to Noon: Santa Day at Professional Management Services

11:00am: Basketball: Girls Varsity Jamboree vs. Warner @ Warner High School

11:00am: Basketball: Boys Varsity Jamboree vs. Warner @ Warner High School

State Oral Interp at Yankton High School

10:00am: Wrestling: Varsity Tournament at Clark Junior-Senior High School

10:00am: Basketball: Girls 7th/8th Jamboree at Groton Area High School

4 p.m. to 7 p.m.: Olive Grove Tour of Homes

9:00pm- 11:30pm: FBLA Winter Semi-Formal at the GHS Gymnasium

Sunday, December 8, 2019

2:00pm- 6:00pm - Open Gym - Groton Area High School Arena

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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Groton C&MA Church Christmas Program

Good News Ahead...The Signs of Christmas will be presented Dec.15th at 5pm at Groton Christian & Missionary Alliance Church, 706 N. Main St., Groton, SD. A full Christmas dinner with turkey, ham and all the trimmings is a gift to the public. In the program Mr. T (the school crossing guard) is directing traffic at the Live Nativity at his church and his tour turns into something no one quite expects! Through catchy scripture-based songs the kids and adult choirs will display important scripture lessons about the many signs of Christ's birth as foretold by the prophets. You will experience the Christmas story and see that the signs of Christmas point ONE WAY to Jesus and enjoy a delicious dinner! All ages are welcome!

Update on Jean Rounds

ROCHESTER, MINN. – U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds (R-S.D.) and his wife, Jean, today provided the following update on Jean's cancer treatment:

This week, Mike and Jean traveled to the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., after Jean experienced pain in her right leg. Doctors found a hematoma at the site of her surgical incision. It was determined that this was causing pressure on her sciatic nerve. It was likely caused by blood thinners she was taking following November's successful surgery to remove the remaining portion of the tumor after the chemo treatments were complete. She underwent surgery on Wednesday to remove the hematoma and will remain at the hospital for the next several days.

"While this is an unexpected hurdle, we are grateful that there are no concerns about the cancer at this time," said Mike and Jean. "We continue to be lifted by the thoughts and prayers of so many and thank those who have supported us throughout this process. Keep the prayers coming!"

Following six successful rounds of chemo, Jean underwent surgery last month to remove the remaining portion of her tumor. She will undergo radiation treatment in the coming months as she finishes her anticipated course of treatment.

Groton Prairie Mixed

Team Standings: Cheetahs 15, Shih Tzus 14, Coyotes 13, Chipmunks 11, Foxes 10, Jackelopes 9

Men's High Games: Brad Waage 221, Randy Stanley 211, Roger Spanier 209, 200 & Ron Belden 205

Women's High Games: Nicole Kassube 189, 167, Karen Spanier 168, Sue Stanley 158

Men's High Series: Roger Spanier 608, Brad Waage 523, Brad Larson 513

Women's High Series: Nicole Kassube 478, Karen Spanier 467, Sue Stanley 435

Groton Coffee Cup League

Team Standings: Biker Chix 35 winner of first half, James Valley 28½, Ten Pins 21½, Kens 19.

High Games: Nancy Radke 179, 175; Mayme Baker 163; Mary Jane Jark 155.

High Series: Nancy Radke 501, Mayme Baker 441, Vickie Kramp 430.

Conde National League

Team Standings: Mets 38 winners of first half, Pirates 29½, Giants 24, Cubs 24, Braves 23½, Tigers 17.

High Men's Games: Lance Frohling 244, 225; Troy Lindberg 198; Ryan Bethke 189.

Men's High Series: Lance Frohling 649, Troy Lindberg 534, Ryan Bethke 508.

Women's High Games: Vickie Kramp 176, Mary Larson 173, Joyce Walter 154.

Women's High Series: Mary Larson 473, Vickie Kramp 456, Nancy Radke 426.

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Today



Mostly Cloudy

High: 34 °F

Tonight



Mostly Cloudy

Low: 8 °F

Friday



Decreasing
Clouds

High: 28 °F

Friday
Night



Partly Cloudy

Low: 16 °F

Saturday



Mostly Cloudy

High: 33 °F

Three Day Outlook

Today



Highs: 32-38° F
Lows: 3-18° F

Friday



Highs: 23-39° F
Lows: 14-22° F

Saturday



Highs: 31-45° F
Lows: 18-25° F

Dry weather continues into the weekend before some light snow is possible Sunday night into Monday morning. Temperatures vary a bit over the next few days with warmer temperatures further west and cooler temperatures further east.

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Today in Weather History

December 5, 1960: A storm dropped snow on the entire region from the morning of the 4th to the late afternoon of the 5th, with the highest amounts in the western, central and north central parts of South Dakota. Five to 10 inches of snow fell in these areas. The snow, blown by winds of 30 to 40 mph, caused extensive drifting of streets and highways. A brief period of freezing rain preceded the snow and added to hazardous driving conditions on roads. Schools were closed for one to two days, with 27 towns reporting closed schools in the Aberdeen area alone. Telephone and power disruption was widespread in central and north central counties of the state, as poles and wires were broken by a combination of ice, snow, and the wind. The storm produced mostly rain in the extreme eastern counties of South Dakota into west central Minnesota, with a narrow band of freezing rain preceding light snow immediately to the west. No serious automobile accidents or property damage was reported in this area of freezing rain and light snow.

December 5, 1976: Cold Canadian air moved across South Dakota during the day on Sunday, December 5th. High winds gusted to 63 mph at Philip and 55 mph at Rapid City. One to two inches of snow fell over all of South Dakota; however, many counties in the southeast, south central, and east-central parts of the state received amounts varying from three to five inches. After this storm, nighttime temperatures fell to below zero. Snowfall amounts included 2 inches at Pierre, Aberdeen, and Watertown; and 3 inches at Redfield and Clear Lake.

December 5, 1886: A southern storm dumped heavy snow up into far southwest Virginia. The storm dumped 11 inches in Montgomery Alabama and 22.5 inches in Knoxville, TN. It also dropped 25 inches in Rome, Georgia, and 26 inches in Asheville, North Carolina.

December 5, 1953: A tornado outbreak occurred over northeastern Louisiana, southeastern Arkansas, and western Mississippi on this day. At least four confirmed tornadoes touched down. The strongest tornado was rated F5 as it destroyed the town of Vicksburg, Mississippi. This tornado first touched down just west of the Mississippi River in East Madison Parish in Louisiana. The tornado crossed the Mississippi River and tore through the downtown area of Vicksburg. On the ground for seven miles, this tornado caused 38 deaths, 270 injuries, and cost an estimated \$25 million in damages in 1953. Estimated cost adjusted for inflation in 2013 Dollars would be over \$200 million. The NWS Office in Jackson, Mississippi has an interactive track map of this event which includes photos and personal accounts.

1886 - A big snowstorm in the southeastern U.S. produced 11 inches at Montgomery AL, 18.5 inches at Rome GA, and 22.5 inches at Knoxville TN. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1941 - The temperature at Enosburg Falls soared to 72 degrees to establish a state record for Vermont for the month of December. (The Weather Channel)

1953 - A killer tornado hit Vicksburg, MS, killing 38 persons, injuring 270 others, and causing 25 million dollars damage, the most damage since the forty-seven days of continuous shelling the town received in the Civil War. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Heavy snow blanketed parts of the north central U.S., and freezing drizzle produced a coat of ice up to half an inch thick in northwestern Minnesota and eastern North Dakota. Snowfall totals ranged up to seven inches at Grand Rapids MN, and 12 inches at Seney MI. High winds in the north central U.S. gusted to 63 mph at Pellston MI, and reached 70 mph at Makinaw Bridge MI. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - There was only a "flurry" of activity, as for much of the nation winter remained on hold. The cold and snow of winter was primarily confined to the northeastern U.S. Five cities in the north central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, including Norfolk NE with a reading of 65 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - A warm Pacific storm system brought high winds and heavy rain to western Washington and western Oregon. Up to ten inches of rain deluged the western slopes of the Cascade Mountain Range in Washington State over a three day period, and 500 persons had to be evacuated due to flooding along the Skagit River. Up to five inches of rain drenched northwest Oregon, and winds gusted to 71 mph at Netarts. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

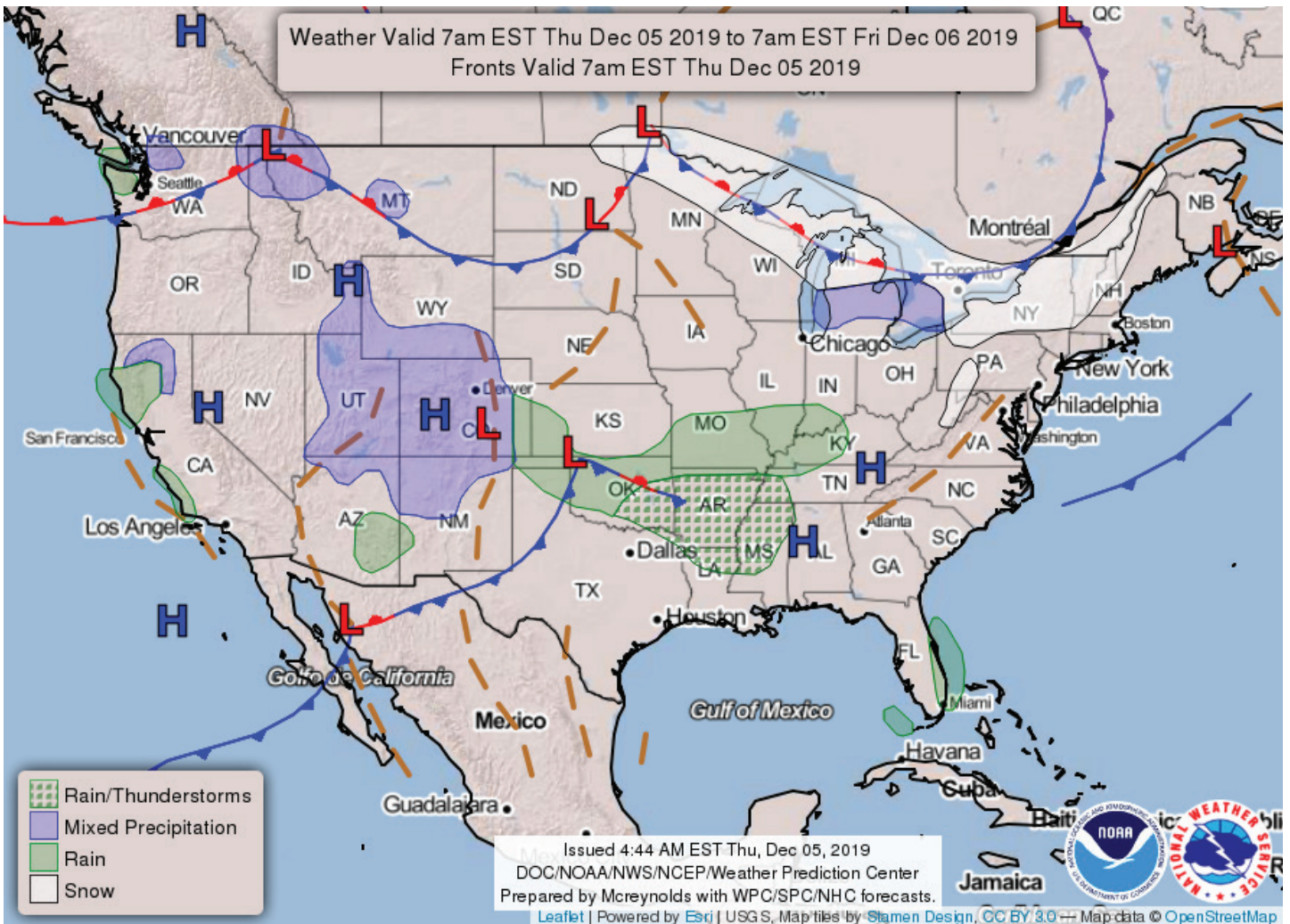
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 37 °F at 3:30 PM
Low Temp: 17 °F at 7:53 AM
Wind: 10 mph at 10:09 PM
Day Rain: 0.00

Record High: 57° in 1939
Record Low: -25° in 2005
Average High: 29°F
Average Low: 9°F
Average Precip in Dec.: 0.07
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 21.27
Precip Year to Date: 27.95
Sunset Tonight: 4:51 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:58 a.m.



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HOW TO GAIN UNDERSTANDING

James the Fifth of Scotland ruled his subjects quite differently than other rulers did. Historians say that he would often lay aside his royal robes, put on the clothes of an ordinary man, work as they worked and live as they lived. His disguise allowed him to move freely among his people without being recognized.

He did this, we are told, to gain an understanding of their needs and problems, sorrows and difficulties. Then, when he returned to his throne, he would have a clearer insight of his subjects and was better able to rule over them with compassion and care.

That is what Jesus, the King of kings, did. He laid aside His glory. Paul writing of this said, "Though he was God, He did not demand and cling to His right as God. He made himself nothing, He took the humble position of a slave and appeared in human form!"

It is common for most of us to be selfish and express our pride by "demanding our rights!" We want what we think is "rightfully" ours for any number of reasons. We believe that we have earned something or deserve something and therefore demand something!

But not Jesus. He laid aside every right that was rightfully His in order to serve others. As His followers, we are to live as He lived. We must develop an attitude of love and humility, and willingly and sacrificially, serve others as our Lord did!

Prayer: We thank You, Lord, for becoming like one of us and for going through everything that we go through. Knowing this enables us to know You do care. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Psalm 2:5-8 I will declare the decree: The Lord has said to Me, 'You are My Son, Today I have begotten You. Ask of Me, and I will give You The nations for Your inheritance, And the ends of the earth for Your possession.

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2019 Groton SD Community Events

- 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

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Dakota Cash

04-11-18-22-35

(four, eleven, eighteen, twenty-two, thirty-five)

Estimated jackpot: \$352,000

Lotto America

34-38-45-47-51, Star Ball: 10, ASB: 2

(thirty-four, thirty-eight, forty-five, forty-seven, fifty-one; Star Ball: ten; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$5.55 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$285 million

Powerball

08-27-44-51-61, Powerball: 14, Power Play: 3

(eight, twenty-seven, forty-four, fifty-one, sixty-one; Powerball: fourteen; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$120 million

Dominant North Dakota State happy at FCS level

By DAVE KOLPACK Associated Press

FARGO, N.D. (AP) — It's only natural to ask two questions of a North Dakota State team that has won seven of the last eight Football Championship Subdivision titles and garnered the No. 1 seed again this year after blowing out nearly every opponent despite having a new coach and freshman quarterback at the helm.

Is it starting to get a little routine in Fargo? Does management think it's time to move up to the Football Bowl Subdivision and face tougher competition?

The answers are yes and no.

While university president Dean Bresciani, athletic director Matt Larsen and Bison Football Players Association members say they haven't heard anyone clamoring to make the move to the upper echelon of college football, they haven't heard much cheering from fans in the second halves this season either. That's because many of them are gone by that time.

Bresciani said many of the second-half no-shows are students and people with short attention spans, adding that Alabama has tried unsuccessfully to deal with a similar problem. Larsen acknowledged he is bothered by the mass exodus and doesn't understand why people who shell out big bucks for tickets don't want to get their money's worth.

Some former Bison football players have even been spotted heading to the exits before the fourth quarter.

However, none of them see all this as a symbol of boredom that comes with sustained success. They note the 19,000-seat Fargodome sells out for every game, the booster club continues to thrive even though its members are asked to open their wallets wider and Bison nation turns Frisco, Texas, into South Fargo, North Dakota, for FCS championship games.

Bresciani puts it this way: Ticket-holders are "'satisfied with the product'" and simply leaving early.

"I get it at some level," Larsen added. "But whether you are the second team or third string guy and you're working just as hard as the starter, to have people leave at halftime or the third quarter because they don't think it's worth watching, I struggle with that."

Josh Swanson, a North Dakota State alumnus and self-proclaimed "super fan" who hosts a game day

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radio show in Fargo called "Herd it Hear," said the Bison dominance is beyond that of Alabama's in the FBS. The school should "strike when the iron is hot" and advance to the next level, he said.

"Winning championships is great and the athletic department and the teams should be incredibly proud of that," Swanson said. "But I think North Dakota State could go into any Group of Five conference now and compete for a conference title and a spot in the Cotton Bowl. As a fan, I think that's something we should aspire to."

Bresciani said he believes most people interested in a move up are under the impression that North Dakota State would be playing schools from the Power Five conferences, like Alabama, rather than the Group of Five teams, like Boise State or Wyoming. He said the Bison, with a current athletic budget of about \$25 million, could not find the revenue to compete with Power Five teams. Alabama's athletic revenue is about \$177 million.

That would leave the Group of Five conferences, which does not sound appealing to the university leader who would have to get on board to make it work.

"I don't think anyone wants to see us play the University of Akron," Bresciani said.

He noted that North Dakota State already is receiving a lot of national attention with wins over seven FBS schools — six of them Power Five teams — in the last decade. NDSU is also proud of making two appearances as the host school and one as the visiting school for ESPN's popular "College GameDay" show.

North Dakota Gov. Doug Burgum, a North Dakota State graduate and former Bison football cheerleader, said he loved attending the victories over the FBS teams, but added that Bison football is already a national brand because of the FCS titles, GameDay shows and numerous players who have advanced to the NFL.

"You never say never, but it's a fun ride with NDSU being competitive nationally every year in FCS," Burgum said. "Ask me again after the Bison play the University of Oregon next fall in Eugene."

The Bison, who received a bye in the first round of the FCS playoffs, are 28-point favorites for Saturday's second-round game against Nicholls State at the Fargodome. Asked about the powerful Bison offense led by freshman sensation Trey Lance, who has not thrown an interception in college, Colonels coach Tim Rebowe compared them to a Power Five team.

"I think we saw a little bit of one when we played this team called Kansas State earlier in the year," Rebowe said of the Wildcats, whose first-year coach Chris Klieman was leading the Bison to another national title at this time last year.

South Dakota governor backs funding to plug abandoned wells

BUFFALO, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem has allocated \$727,700 in her proposed 2021 fiscal year budget to plug 40 abandoned gas wells in the state.

In many cases in which wells aren't properly plugged before being abandoned, they can pose a risk of explosions, groundwater contamination and surface leaks, The Rapid City Journal reported.

State environmental regulators have said the orphaned wells do not pose an immediate environmental risk, but Noem said during a news conference that she wants the situation to be resolved as quickly as possible.

The wells were drilled in 2006 by a Texas limited partnership called Spyglass Cedar Creek. Six years later, Spyglass suffered from falling natural gas prices, bankruptcy and lawsuits that led state regulators to revoke the company's permits for the wells.

The state Department of Environment and Natural Resources estimated that the cost of plugging the wells and reclaiming the surface area around them will be \$887,000.

Though Noem's proposal does not cover the plugging of the wells entirely, a Noem staffer said the remainder of the funding would be sought through legislation.

Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorials
By The Associated Press undefined

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Madison Daily Leader, Dec. 2

Private plane crashes need to be reduced

Airplane crashes are relatively rare, but attention needs to be given to reduce general aviation crashes to a much lower level.

Nine family members of an Idaho family were killed near Chamberlain Saturday in a private plane crash. Three people were killed Sunday when a private plane crashed near San Antonio, Texas.

Commercial airplane travel is incredibly safe, with a fatality occurring only about once every four million flights. But general aviation (noncommercial) fatal crashes are more common. In fact, about 97% of all fatal crashes are in general aviation.

According to ABC News, there are about five private plane crashes each day in the United States, although not all involve fatalities. Nevertheless, about 500 people are killed each year in private plane crashes.

The National Transportation Safety Board has placed improvement of general aviation safety on its "most wanted" list.

There are many factors that contribute to private plane accidents, including pilot training, weather, airplane inspections, miscommunication and others.

We recognize that putting the same restrictions on private flying that is in place for commercial flying would essentially end most private flying. But we do believe safety can be improved dramatically and still allow hobby and private flying to take place.

Such improvements will need to come from both regulators and private pilots themselves. Federal rules can be strengthened, and pilot compliance should be improved. It can't happen overnight, but it needs to start happening right away.

Aberdeen American News, Nov. 30

Battle against meth will take more than marketing

Meth. We're on it.

So says a South Dakota advertising campaign against the rising use of methamphetamine in our state.

That message went, well, let's call it spiral viral. It not only went viral nationally on social media, but spiraled into an ad campaign shown on national TV and featured on talk radio and in newspapers far and wide.

It hit its mark by generating discussion and publicity beyond anyone's wildest imagination. If the old adage that there's no such thing as bad publicity is true, well ... this is off the charts.

Now, for the bad news. Our state has been mocked to death over this campaign.

We have become the butt of jokes from our neighboring states, nationally known talk show hosts and everyone on the internet who has an opinion — which is everyone on the internet. And not for the first time. You might remember the "Don't Jerk and Drive" campaign from a few years back about safe driving on snowy roads. It was met with a similar reception. The state might be getting a little too cute (if that's the right word) with the message it's sending out.

But there's nothing cute about methamphetamine addiction or other forms of substance abuse. So let's hope the message is not lost in the avalanche of jokes.

Drug abuse not only hurts the abuser, but deeply shakes those around the abuser. And it leads to just crimes, but violent crimes.

And there is more bad news — this is more stinging than some criticism. We, the taxpayers of this state, paid \$1.4 million for this campaign, which was designed by an out-of-state agency.

That \$1.4 million pill would have been easier to swallow had it been paid to an in-state marketing firm. Especially during this holiday season when we would like all of our residents to shop locally.

But before we even opened up state coffers to start such a campaign, shouldn't we have asked ourselves a critical question or two? Like is this meth campaign worth it?

It raises awareness of a problem that everyone already knew was a problem. But it doesn't come with any new solutions.

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We are all supposed to be “on” the problem, but how do we do that without a plan of attack?

Maybe we should have spent the \$1.4 million on formulating a plan of attack. Get some of the smartest people in the state and most knowledgeable people about the meth problem together. Let them formulate a plan and take it to our communities.

Or perhaps it could have gone to agencies that provide badly needed addiction services.

Without question, the ad campaign is well-intentioned. And the expenditure shows the state is serious about the methamphetamine epidemic. Those are the positives regardless of the campaign’s success or reception, and they should be noted.

South Dakota has a meth crisis that affects every community in the state, Gov. Kristi Noem has said. Meth accounted for more than 3,600 statewide arrests in 2018. About one-third of the people we have locked up in this state are incarcerated because of drugs.

So far, Noem said the ad campaign has achieved desired results. People are definitely talking about meth and South Dakota, and the campaign has survived several national news cycles.

Also, Noem has pointed out the state’s new OnMeth.com website has been visited by thousands of South Dakotans. The site has a “get involved” section — clicked on by many, according to Noem — that suggests practical ways to combat meth in your community.

The website also lists treatment resources.

We have a long battle ahead of us against meth and other opioids. There are no easy answers or quick fixes via ad campaigns or more meetings.

A recent Los Angeles Times story reported that South Dakota should forget the ridicule over its campaign and focus on changing a drug law:

“South Dakota is the only state that classifies ingestion of illegal substances as a felony, a hard-line approach that has widely been shown to make it harder to break the cycle of addiction.

“Even if a user manages to go clean, a felony conviction makes it more difficult to find a job, especially one with health insurance, increasing the chances of a relapse,” according to the story.

The law in effect criminalizes addiction, said Libby Skarin, policy director for South Dakota’s American Civil Liberties Union.

Other leaders in South Dakota think such watering down of the state’s drug laws would be disastrous. They say changing ingestion to a misdemeanor would create problems, such as making prosecutions more difficult.

Regardless of your stand on the changes to laws or the campaign, let this be your takeaway: We need an aggressive assault against meth, opioids and other harmful drugs on all fronts. And then we must take that fight to our communities to battle drug abuse.

Together.

Black Hills Pioneer, Spearfish, Nov. 16

Law enforcement officers should be exempt from Marsy’s Law

In 2016, South Dakota voters approved Constitutional Amendment S, also known as The South Dakota Marsy’s Law Crime Victim Rights Amendment, by about 60% to 40%.

The intent of the bill was to protect victims of crimes by expanding their rights of privacy, being informed of the judicial process, among others.

However, it proved to have unintended consequences that were immediate and hard-hitting. Even car insurance companies trying to settle claims for vehicle accidents were stymied in obtaining information because the knee-jerk reaction from law enforcement was to withhold all information about victims of crimes.

Fortunately, then-Attorney General Marty Jackley issued an opinion stating that victims of crimes needed to opt into the law rather than be automatically enrolled into it.

In June 2018, Constitutional Amendment Y guaranteed these changes as it was approved by nearly 80% of the voters.

But there is still one glaring loophole that needs to be closed.

Law enforcement officers, who in the line of duty, claim to be victims of crimes, or have taken actions that may be questioned regarding justification may opt into Marsy's Law and have their names withheld from release.

This should not be the case.

Law enforcement officers have an all too often thankless job — long days, dangerous work, and being forced to interact with society's problems. We thank all of our officers for their work and dedication to our citizens and their efforts to make our communities a better place to live.

Since Marsy's Law was implemented in South Dakota, several law enforcement officers have opted into its protection after being involved in on-duty shootings. Most recently, two Sioux Falls police officers opted into Marsy's Law after they were involved in an Oct. 6 shooting. The South Dakota Attorney General's Office determined that both Officer 1 and Officer 2, as listed in the report, were justified in their actions — only Officer 2 fired his duty weapon striking Trent Wagner three times after he pointed a revolver at them and fired a single shot.

Pulling the trigger to protect yourself or others should not be taken lightly. That goes for police officers or a member of the public. The person who fires that shot needs to own it — that includes whether the bullet hits its intended target or not.

Law enforcement officers should be held to the highest standard. And that standard, when firing their weapons in the line of duty, should be mandatory identification.

Our state already has a fantastic, independent investigation system in place for officer-involved shootings. Within 30 days, the Attorney General's Office releases a report on the shootings following an investigation by the South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigation. In that report includes officer statements, public statements, toxicology reports on by the suspects and officers, inventories of weapons and ammunition — both expended and live rounds — and more. What's needed in that report, is the identity of officers involved.

This is a direct nod to the transparency in government, accountability, and the public's right to know information about public servants actions while doing the public's work.

1 dead, 1 injured in Sioux Falls house fire

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — One person has died and another has been injured in the first fatal fire in Sioux Falls since January.

A man and woman escaped from the burning home Monday night, but another woman was trapped on the second floor, fire officials said.

Firefighters encountered 20-foot high flames when they arrived on scene.

"The first arriving crew made entry through the front door and attempted to make their way up the stairs but were driven back by heavy flames," Battalion Chief Matt McAreavey said.

Firefighters then used ladders on the back exterior of the house to try to reach the second floor but were called down by the on-scene commander because of heavy flames.

After crews knocked down the fire, they entered the home and found the woman who was pronounced dead on the scene, according to the Argus Leader. A dog also died in the fire.

The man who escaped the fire with injuries was taken to the hospital. The other woman who survived was not injured.

The cause of the fire is under investigation.

Pelosi to deliver public statement on Trump impeachment

By LISA MASCARO and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi announced Thursday she would deliver an unusual public statement on the status of the House impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump.

On Wednesday, Pelosi met behind closed doors with her Democratic caucus, asking, "Are you ready?"

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The answer was a resounding yes, according to those in the room.

Democrats are charging toward a Christmastime vote on removing the 45th president, a situation Pelosi hoped to avoid but which now seems inevitable. She is to make a public statement on impeachment at 9 a.m.

Three leading legal scholars testified Wednesday to the House Judiciary Committee that Trump's attempts to have Ukraine investigate Democratic rivals are grounds for impeachment, bolstering the Democrats' case.

A fourth expert called by Republicans warned against rushing the process, arguing this would be the shortest of impeachment proceedings, with the "thinnest" record of evidence in modern times, setting a worrisome standard.

Trump is alleged to have abused the power of his office by putting personal political gain over national security interests, engaging in bribery by withholding \$400 million in military aid Congress had approved for Ukraine; and then obstructing Congress by stonewalling the investigation.

Across the Capitol, the polarizing political divide over impeachment, only the fourth such inquiry in the nation's history, was on display.

Democrats in the House say the inquiry is a duty. Republican representatives say it's a sham. And quietly senators of both parties conferred on Wednesday, preparing for an eventual Trump trial.

"Never before, in the history of the republic, have we been forced to consider the conduct of a president who appears to have solicited personal, political favors from a foreign government," said Rep. Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., chair of the Judiciary panel, which would draw up articles of impeachment.

Nadler said Trump's phone July 25 call seeking a "favor" from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy wasn't the first time he had sought foreign help to influence an American election, noting Russian interference in 2016. He warned against inaction with a new campaign underway.

"We cannot wait for the election," he said. "If we do not act to hold him in check, now, President Trump will almost certainly try again to solicit interference in the election for his personal political gain."

Trump, attending a NATO meeting in London, called the hearing a "joke" and doubted many people would watch because it's "boring."

Once an outsider to the GOP, Trump now has Republicans' unwavering support. They joined in his name-calling the Judiciary proceedings a "disgrace" and unfair, the dredging up of unfounded allegations as part of an effort to undo the 2016 election and remove him from office.

"You just don't like the guy," said Rep. Doug Collins of Georgia, the top Republican on the panel. Trump rewarded some of his allies with politically valuable presidential tweets as the daylong hearing dragged into the evening.

At their private meeting Wednesday, Democratic lawmakers also delivered a standing ovation to Rep. Adam Schiff, whose 300-page Intelligence Committee report cataloged potential grounds for impeachment, overwhelmingly indicating they want to continue to press the inquiry rather than slow its advance or call a halt for fear of political costs in next year's congressional elections.

Meanwhile, Trump's team fanned out across the Capitol with Vice President Mike Pence meeting with House Republicans and White House officials conferring with Senate Republicans to prepare for what could be the first presidential impeachment trial in a generation.

White House Counsel Pat Cipollone, who has declined for now to participate in the House proceedings, relayed Trump's hope that the impeachment effort can be stopped in the House and there will be no need for a Senate trial, which seems unlikely.

White House officials and others said Trump is eager to have his say. Sen. Roy Blunt, R-Mo., said, "He feels like he has had no opportunity to tell his side of the story."

Trump lambastes the impeachment probe daily and proclaims his innocence of any wrongdoing at length, but he has declined to testify before House hearings or answer questions in writing.

At the heart of the inquiry is his July phone call asking Ukraine to investigate rival Democrats including Joe Biden as he was withholding aid from the ally, which faced an aggressive Russia on its border.

At Wednesday's session, three legal experts called by Democrats said impeachment was merited.

Noah Feldman, a Harvard Law School professor, said he considered it clear that the president's con-

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duct met the definition of "high crimes and misdemeanors." Said Michael Gerhardt, a University of North Carolina law professor, "If what we're talking about is not impeachable ... then nothing is impeachable."

The only Republican witness, Jonathan Turley, a law professor at George Washington University, dissented from the other legal experts. He said the Democrats were bringing a "slipshod impeachment" case against the president, but he didn't excuse Trump's behavior.

"It is not wrong because President Trump is right," Turley said. "A case for impeachment could be made, but it cannot be made on this record."

New telephone records released with the House report deepened Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani's known involvement in what investigators call the "scheme."

Asked about that, Trump told reporters he doesn't know why Giuliani was calling the White House Office of Management and Budget, which was withholding the military aid to Ukraine.

"You have to ask him," Trump said. "Sounds like something that's not so complicated. ... No big deal."

Based on two months of investigation sparked by a still-anonymous government whistleblower's complaint, the Intelligence Committee's impeachment report found that Trump "sought to undermine the integrity of the U.S. presidential election process and endangered U.S. national security." When Congress began investigating, it says, Trump obstructed the investigation like no other president in history.

Republicans defended the president in a 123-page rebuttal claiming Trump never intended to pressure Ukraine when he asked for investigations of Biden and his son.

While liberal Democrats are pushing the party to incorporate the findings from former special counsel Robert Mueller's report on Russian interference in the 2016 election and other actions by Trump, more centrist and moderate Democrats prefer to stick with the Ukraine matter as a simpler narrative that Americans understand.

Democrats could begin drafting articles of impeachment in a matter of days, with a Judiciary Committee vote next week. The full House could vote by Christmas. Then the matter would move to the Senate for a trial in 2020.

Associated Press writers Matthew Daly, Zeke Miller, Alan Fram, Andrew Taylor, Colleen Long, Eric Tucker and Padmananda Rama contributed to this report.

58 migrants dead after boat capsizes off Mauritania

By **AHMED MOHAMED SALEM, CARLEY PETESCH and SAMY MAGDY** Associated Press

NOUAKCHOTT, Mauritania (AP) — Scores of migrants who swam through rough Atlantic Ocean waters to safety from a capsized boat while 58 others drowned were receiving care Thursday in Mauritania after one of the deadliest disasters this year among people making the perilous journey to Europe.

The boat that left Gambia a week ago had been carrying at least 150 people, including women and children. It was headed toward Spain's Canary Islands when it tried to approach the Mauritanian coast to get fuel and food, Laura Lungarotti, chief of mission in the West African nation with the U.N. migration agency, told The Associated Press.

"Many drowned. The ones who survived swam up to the Mauritanian coast close to the city of Nouadhibou," she said. "The Mauritanian authorities are very efficiently coordinating the response with the agencies currently present" in the northern city.

At least 83 people swam to shore, the agency said, while Mauritanian authorities said security forces found 85 survivors. Interior Minister Mohamed Salemould Merzoug said 10 people were taken to a hospital for "urgent" treatment.

Local authorities continued to search for an unknown number of missing people.

The survivors were receiving care in accordance with "human solidarity, fraternity and African hospitality," the minister's statement said. It said the boat held as many as 180 people, most of them aged 20 to 30.

Mauritania will open an investigation into those responsible for "this drama" including possible trafficking networks, the statement said.

While thousands once died off Mauritania's coast in attempts to reach the Canary Islands between 2005 and 2010, that later calmed, the statement said. But in recent months authorities have detained boats mostly carrying hundreds of migrants from Senegal, which neighbors Gambia, it said.

Survivors said the boat that capsized had left Gambia on Nov. 27.

There was no immediate statement from authorities in Gambia, where tens of thousands of people have set off in hopes of reaching Europe in recent years. Despite the country's small size, more than 35,000 Gambians arrived in Europe between 2014 and 2018, according to the U.N. migration agency.

A 22-year oppressive rule by former President Yahya Jammeh severely affected the country's economy, especially for youth, and contributed greatly to the exodus. Since Jammeh fled into exile in January 2017 after a surprise election loss, European countries have been pushing to return asylum seekers.

But Gambia's economy still suffers. The coastal nation was shaken earlier this year by the collapse of British travel company Thomas Cook. At the time, Gambia's tourism minister said the government convened an emergency meeting on the collapse, while some Gambians said the shutdown could have a devastating impact on tourism, which contributes more than 30% of the country's GDP.

Petesch reported from Dakar, Senegal. Magdy reported from Cairo.

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Booker's critical test? Languishing campaign plots rebound

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE and STEVE PEOPLES Associated Press

NEWARK, N.J. (AP) — The news of Kamala Harris' sudden departure from the presidential race came during an all-staff conference call led from Cory Booker's campaign headquarters in Newark, the New Jersey city that he led for seven years and that propelled him to national fame. Within hours, Booker dictated a message calling Harris "my friend and my sister," and a directive was issued to show her team respect at a difficult moment.

The campaign also scheduled a high-profile speech in Iowa.

Booker's aides have been careful to emphasize that the New Jersey senator isn't looking to capitalize on the collapse of his Senate colleague's White House bid. But they're also aware that for a campaign languishing in the polls, this may be one of their last opportunities to turn things around.

"We have all the kindling on the fire. All it takes is one match, and I think we will take off," Booker campaign manager Addisu Demissie said in an interview with The Associated Press.

They hope that Thursday's speech in Des Moines, Iowa's capital city, could be the spark. With less than two months before the Iowa caucuses open the Democratic contest, Booker plans to talk about what Harris' departure means for the party. He's also expected to argue that he's best positioned to take on President Donald Trump because he can rebuild the multiracial coalition that twice elected Barack Obama, a theme Harris hit last month during what would be her final debate performance.

Booker, who is black, will likely critique the dwindling diversity of the Democratic field. On Wednesday, he blasted a process that led to a field with "more billionaires ... than black people."

It's a last-ditch attempt by a candidate who has struggled to gain traction — and could face pressure to leave the race if he doesn't qualify for the next debate this month. Even some of his supporters, such as Iowa state Rep. Jennifer Konfrst, are skeptical about whether he can make it, with just eight days remaining until the qualification window closes.

"The polling threshold is tough," she said.

The most recent Des Moines Register/CNN poll of likely Iowa caucusgoers, conducted in mid-November, showed Booker with just 3% support, around where he's been throughout his campaign.

Carol Fowler, a veteran South Carolina Democratic activist, said that Booker recently received a warm reception during an event she hosted for him at her home — but that missing the debate would be dire for his campaign.

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"I think any of them, at this point, who don't get in the debate, it's hard for them to make a case for themselves for why they should stay in," she said. "And I think if they don't make the debate, they won't be able to raise money to keep going."

This wasn't supposed to be Booker's conundrum. As Newark's mayor, he garnered headlines for shoveling snow and saving a woman from a house fire. His narrative as an Ivy League-educated Rhodes scholar with a compelling personal background and rhetorical skills compared to those of Obama only solidified his status as a Democratic rising star.

But if moving to the Senate was intended to bolster Booker's credentials for an eventual presidential campaign, that hasn't panned out. Pete Buttigieg, another mayor educated at top universities who also earned a Rhodes scholarship, has instead emerged as the fresh face in the race.

Booker's also faced challenges raising money during the campaign, posting a middle-of-the-pack \$6 million haul in the third quarter after making a last-minute fundraising plea in which he warned supporters he'd have to raise nearly \$2 million or drop out of the race. Those fundraising struggles mean Booker hasn't been able to run paid advertising until this past weekend, when he launched a six-figure digital and radio ad buy.

Within his campaign, there's an awareness that they're entering a do-or-die phase. One person said Booker staffers have made it known in recent weeks that they're considering their next steps in case Booker's campaign ends soon.

Booker is among several candidates who have quietly begun to reach out to Harris' donors after her departure, according to a donor with direct knowledge of the outreach. The New York-based donor, who has worked with Booker in the past and had ties to the Harris campaign, reports early signs that Harris' financial backers in the New York area are more inclined to move toward Joe Biden or Buttigieg. There is a concern, the donor said, that Booker's consistent message of hope and unity simply doesn't match the mood of the Democratic primary electorate or Democratic donors, who want a nominee who can take the fight to Trump.

The donor and person familiar with the staffing considerations spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss private conversations.

Demissie said Booker has enough cash to keep his campaign afloat until the caucuses, but warned that "if we want to keep growing our campaign, the answer is no, we need to be robustly funded headed into February."

He also dismissed critiques of Booker's message and said that if the senator received as much media attention as some of the top-tier contenders do, he'd be just as competitive.

"Our challenge has always been how do you grab that attention," Demissie said.

But for some Booker supporters, it's time for him to be more aggressive. Steve Phillips, a major Democratic donor and longtime Booker friend who ran a recently shuttered super PAC for the candidate, said the main challenge is convincing voters in the early states that Booker can beat Trump. Booker is facing skepticism, Phillips said, in part because he's black.

"He does need to more explicitly tackle the elephant in the room, which is this electability argument," he said.

Phillips, who is African American, said that Buttigieg is "subliminally, at least, tied to the picture of the candidate that voters would want." He suggested that was behind some of Booker's fundraising struggles — and that the candidate needs to confront those beliefs head-on.

To that effect, another pro-Booker super PAC unaffiliated with Phillips recently began airing a television ad in Iowa directly contrasting Booker's experience with what they framed as Buttigieg's lack thereof.

Philip Swibinski, a spokesman for the super PAC United We Win, said that the group sees an opening for Booker among moderates and that the organization has plans to launch ads focused on African American voters in South Carolina as well. The super PAC will hold onto some cash, however, so it can continue to support Booker beyond the debate qualification deadline.

Regardless of what happens in the coming days, Booker's top aides said they still expect him to be in

the race on Feb. 3, when Iowans make their choices at the first-in-the-nation caucuses.

"We want to be in this thing till people actually vote, and I think that's what people want, too," Demissie said. "We want to give the voters a chance to pick Cory Booker, and that means staying in this thing till February."

Catch up on the 2020 election campaign with AP experts on our weekly politics podcast, "Ground Game."

Hong Kong residents living with tear gas worry of effects

By EILEEN NG Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — By day, the small commercial kitchen in a Hong Kong industrial building produces snacks. At night, it turns into a secret laboratory assembling a kit for pro-democracy protesters seeking to detox after repeated exposure to tear gas.

Volunteers seated around a kitchen island sort and pack multicolored pills into small resealable bags. At another table, a woman makes turmeric pills by dipping gelatin capsules into a shallow dish of the deep orange spice.

"Police have used so much tear gas and people are suffering," said the owner of the kitchen, speaking on condition of anonymity because she fears repercussions for her business. "We want to especially help frontline protesters, who have put their lives on the line for the city."

Hong Kong police have fired more than 10,000 tear gas canisters to quell violent protests that have rocked the city for six months. The movement's demands include fully democratic elections and an investigation into police use of force, including tear gas.

Its heavy and prolonged use in Hong Kong — one of the world's most densely populated cities and known for its concrete jungle of high-rises — is unusual and has sparked health fears.

While there's no evidence of long-term health effects, it's also largely untested territory.

"I don't think there have been circumstances where there has been this level of repeated exposure for people to tear gas. What's going on in Hong Kong is pretty unprecedented," said Alistair Hay, a British toxicologist from the University of Leeds.

Police have fired it in cramped residential areas and near hospitals, shopping malls and schools, affecting not only protesters but also children, the elderly and the sick.

Some worry that tear gas residue could stick for days or weeks to asphalt, walls, ventilation ducts and other places. Parents, schools and various community groups have demanded to know the chemical makeup of the gas — which police won't divulge — so they can clean up properly.

In the absence of official information, some parents have stopped taking their kids to parks, and online tips urge mothers to refrain from breastfeeding for a few hours if they are exposed to the gas. Many avoided fresh fruits after a wholesale market that supplies half of the city's supply was gassed last month.

New daily rituals include using a baking soda solution to bathe, wash clothes and clean surfaces. Tips shared by protesters include not bathing in hot water after exposure as it is believed it will open pores and let the chemicals seep in.

The kitchen owner making detox kits said she wants to help protesters, who often avoid seeking treatment at hospitals to hide their identity and avoid possible arrest.

The kits contain capsules that include vitamins and other natural ingredients and are packed into a small pouch with 10 bottles of a cloudy caramel-colored drink that contains an antioxidant said to be an immune-system booster. They come with instructions for a 10-day detoxification program that includes no alcohol and smoking.

It has not been scientifically tested for treating tear gas symptoms, but the kitchen owner claimed that feedback was positive from a first batch distributed to frontline protesters through a clandestine network of first-aid and social workers.

Hay, the toxicologist, said that excessive concentrations of CS gas, a common tear gas component, and residue that persists in the environment could cause prolonged symptoms and health complications for

vulnerable groups.

A survey in August by a group of doctors of some 170 reporters covering the protests found most of them had difficulty breathing, persistent coughing or coughed up blood, skin allergies and gastrointestinal symptoms such as diarrhea or vomiting, according to Hong Kong media reports.

Further spooking residents are reports that the tear gas could emit dioxin, a cancer-causing substance. Hay said he wasn't aware of any cases of tear gas producing dioxin, although it could in theory be released if the canister burns above 250 degrees Celsius (480 degrees Fahrenheit).

Government officials say that any toxin found could come from the many street fires set off by protesters. They refuse to reveal the components of the gas, citing operational sensitivities.

The Chinese University of Hong Kong, where more than 1,000 rounds of tear gas were fired on a single day last month, hired an independent laboratory to test air, water and soil samples. Preliminary tests reportedly showed no harmful substances.

Nonetheless, a high school near the campus hired professional experts to decontaminate its grounds.

A 17-year-old volunteer helping make the detox kits said he has joined many protests and often experienced stomach cramps, nausea and rashes for days after being gassed. During a rally in June, he said couldn't breathe and thought he was going to die.

Another volunteer said she can see clouds of tear gas in the streets below her apartment in Mongkok, a hot spot for protests, and smell it even with her windows closed.

She doesn't have the courage to join the protests, she said, but feels she must contribute.

Both spoke on condition of anonymity, fearing retribution in a city that has become starkly divided by the violent protests.

Associated Press writer Kelvin Chan in London contributed to this story.

France shuts down: Mass strike hits trains, Eiffel Tower

By ANGELA CHARLTON and SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — The Eiffel Tower shut down, France's vaunted high-speed trains stood still and teachers walked off the job as unions launched nationwide strikes and protests Thursday over the government's plan to overhaul the retirement system.

Paris authorities barricaded the presidential palace and deployed 6,000 police as activists - many in yellow vests representing France's year-old movement for economic justice - gathered for a major march through the capital.

Organizers hope for a mass outpouring of anger at President Emmanuel Macron for his centerpiece reform, seen as threatening the hard-fought French way of life. Macron himself remained "calm and determined" to push it through, according to a top presidential official.

The Louvre Museum warned of strike disruptions, and Paris hotels struggled to fill rooms. Many visitors - including the U.S. energy secretary - canceled plans to travel to one of the world's most-visited countries amid the strike.

Unprepared tourists discovered historic train stations standing empty Thursday, with about nine out of 10 of high-speed TGV trains canceled. Signs at Paris' Orly Airport showed "canceled" notices, as the civil aviation authority announced 20% of flights were grounded.

Some travelers showed support for the striking workers, but others complained about being embroiled in someone else's fight.

"I arrived at the airport this morning and I had no idea about the strike happening, and I was waiting for two hours in the airport for the train to arrive and it didn't arrive," said vacationer Ian Crossen, from New York. "I feel a little bit frustrated. And I've spent a lot of money. I've spent money I didn't need to, apparently."

Vladimir Madeira, a Chilean tourist who had traveled to Paris for vacation, said the strike has been "a nightmare." He hadn't heard about the protest until he arrived in Paris, and transport disruptions had foiled

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his plans to travel directly to Zurich on Thursday.

Beneath the closed Eiffel Tower, tourists from Thailand, Canada and Spain echoed those sentiments.

Subway stations across Paris were shuttered, complicating traffic - and prompting many commuters to use shared bikes or electric scooters despite near-freezing temperatures. Many workers in the Paris region worked from home or took a day off to stay with their children, since 78% of teachers in the capital were on strike.

Bracing for possible violence and damage along the route of the Paris march, police ordered all businesses, cafes and restaurants in the area to close. Authorities also issued a ban on protests on the Champs-Elysees avenue, around the presidential palace, parliament and Notre Dame Cathedral.

Police carried out security checks of more than 3,000 people arriving for the protest and detained 18 even before it started. Embassies warned tourists to avoid the protest area.

Elsewhere around France, thousands of red-vested union activists marched through cities from Marseille on the Mediterranean to Lille in the north.

The big question is how long the strike will last. Transport Minister Elisabeth Borne said she expects the travel troubles to be just as bad Friday.

Unions say it's an open-ended movement and hope to keep up momentum at least for a week, in hopes of forcing the government to make concessions.

Public sector workers fear Macron's reform will force them to work longer and shrink their pensions. And they see this fight as crucial to saving France's social safety net. Some private sector workers welcome the reform, but others support the strike.

Joseph Kakou, who works an overnight security shift in western Paris, walked an hour across the city to get home to the eastern side of town Thursday morning.

"It doesn't please us to walk. It doesn't please us to have to strike," Kakou told The Associated Press said. "But we are obliged to, because we can't work until 90 years old."

To Macron, the retirement reform is central to his plan to transform France so it can compete globally in the 21st century. The government argues France's 42 retirement systems need streamlining.

While Macron respects the right to strike, he "is convinced that the reform is needed, he is committed, that's the project he presented the French in 2017" during his election campaign, the presidential official said. The official was not authorized to be publicly named.

After extensive meetings with workers, the high commissioner for pensions is expected to detail reform proposals next week, and the prime minister will release the government's plan days after that.

Claire Parker, Alex Turnbull, Nicolas Garriga, Mstyslav Chernov, Francois Mori in Paris contributed to this report.

10 Things to Know for Today

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

1. **CONSTITUTIONAL EXPERTS MAKE IMPEACHMENT CASE** Legal scholars testify that Trump's attempts to have Ukraine investigate Democratic rivals are grounds for impeachment, yet an expert called by Republicans warned against rushing the process.

2. **SAILOR KILLS 2 CIVILIANS AT PEARL HARBOR SHIPYARD** Just days before the 78th anniversary of the Japanese attack, an active duty U.S. sailor opens fire on three civilian employees, killing two and then taking his own life.

3. **'THOSE DON'T NEED TO STAY'** New Zealand leader Jacinda Ardern says gun reform was essential after the Christchurch massacres and tells the AP she hopes artificial intelligence will help stop such attacks from being streamed online.

4. **UK ELECTION FULL OF DIRTY TRICKS, POLITICAL CLICKS** Britain's biggest political parties are bombarding voters with misleading social media messages after the government failed to act.

5. **'MANY DROWNED'** Scores of migrants are receiving care in Mauritania after swimming through rough

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Atlantic waters to safety after a Gambian boat capsized, killing 58.

6. CORY BOOKER EYES NEW OPPORTUNITY The New Jersey senator sees an opening to resuscitate his flagging presidential campaign with California Sen. Kamala Harris' departure from the race.

7. WHERE CLIMATE CHANGE IS CAUSING CONCERN Historic cities and towns along the Southeastern U.S. coast are facing an existential crisis as sea levels are creeping up with no sign of stopping.

8. STRIKE BRINGS FRANCE TO STANDSTILL The Eiffel Tower is shut down, high-speed trains are idle and schools are closed because of nationwide strikes and expected protests over the government's retirement reform.

9. WHAT HAS HONG KONG FEARFUL The frequent use of tear gas in the densely populated city is sparking health fears and changing people's eating, bathing and recreational habits to limit their exposure.

10. STAR QBS CHASING HISTORIC MARKS Tom Brady and Drew Brees are pursuing Peyton Manning's NFL record for most touchdown passes in league history.

Historic US towns endured wars, storms. What about sea rise?

By JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press

SWANSBORO, N.C. (AP) — Historic cities and towns along the Southeastern U.S. coast have survived wars, hurricanes, disease outbreaks and other calamities, but now that sea levels are creeping up with no sign of stopping, they face a more existential crisis.

With a total annual budget of \$225 million, Charleston, South Carolina, can't afford the billions of dollars to save itself without federal help. It's counting on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to help surround its downtown peninsula with seawalls, harkening to the barriers the city built when it was founded 350 years ago.

Keeping water off the streets and buildings is even more difficult for smaller towns like Swansboro, North Carolina, with 3,200 people and a \$4 million budget that doesn't account for climate-related sea rise.

The most vulnerable coastal communities sit only a few feet above sea level and are already getting wet at some high tides. Scientists estimate the sea will rise another 2 feet (61 centimeters) to 4 feet (122 centimeters) in the next 50 years.

Municipal leaders say they need billions of state and federal dollars to save block after city block of low-lying homes and businesses. And while even climate change-denying politicians are beginning to acknowledge the inevitable onslaught, city officials worry that those who control the purse strings won't see the urgency of a slowly unfolding catastrophe that's not like a tornado or earthquake.

Founded in 1783, Swansboro became the center of North Carolina's steamboat industry. In 1862, it saw Union troops burn down a Confederate fort guarding the nearby Bouge Inlet to the Atlantic Ocean. Across its quaint downtown on the White Oak River, almost every building boasts a city seal with the date it was built. Most are much older than the gray-haired tourists strolling around, and can't forever withstand the kind of flooding they suffered last year, when Hurricane Florence's sea surge topped 30 inches (76 centimeters) of rain.

Stunned, the town commissioned a report for the future. It said the water's edge may end up a block or two inland from the historic waterfront, and soberly suggested: "Consider retracting services or strategically abandoning infrastructure in areas that are likely to be risky or dangerous."

Local leaders recognize the importance of Swansboro's charm, but its future is largely out of their hands. "We're going to be very, very dependent on outside funding," new Town Manager Chris Seaberg said. "We're trying to preserve the history, but trying to accommodate these new issues that weren't there 100, 200 years ago."

North Carolina passed a law in 2012 preventing the state from forming coastal polices based on sea rise predictions. But Republican control of the legislature is waning, and local leaders say hurricanes Matthew in 2016, Florence in 2018 and Dorian in 2019 — along with changing attitudes toward climate science — appear to be shifting the state's outlook. North Carolina created an Office of Recovery and Resiliency this year to plan for floods and other extreme weather events.

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"There will need to be political stressors to get people to understand the importance of climate change," said Beaufort, North Carolina, Mayor Rett Newton.

An Air Force retiree who is getting his PhD in marine science, Newton sweeps his arm across the Beaufort Channel. One spot is where the pirate Blackbeard scuttled some of his ships 300 years ago. Nearby is where blockade runners hid from British ships while helping supply the U.S. in the War of 1812. And on the horizon is where freed slaves helped Union troops defeat Confederates in 1862.

The historic buildings along Beaufort's waterfront are gleaming now, reflecting millions in new investment. It wasn't like that when Newton grew up in the 1960s amid grimy seafood shops, rundown shacks and fish plants. People wealthy enough to buy waterfront property can always move, Newton said, but escaping the seas will be much harder for poorer residents, who often live on low-lying land handed down through generations, are already beset by social and economic problems.

"I can't tax anyone else. At the local level, we can't tax our way out of this," Newton said, noting his town of 4,200 people collects about \$3.5 million a year in taxes.

Charleston, with state and federal help, is spending \$64 million to raise the lowest part of the seawall guarding its downtown Battery, which should keep that part of the city safe even if the ocean rises more than 6 feet (2 meters) in the next century, Chief Resilience Officer Mark Wilbert said. The city also is spending hundreds of millions of dollars to modernize its storm water system.

But these measures alone probably can't save a city that was once the most heavily fortified in North America, with a system of walls, moats and drawbridges to keep out the Spanish, French, Native Americans, and occasionally the ocean as well.

The city's 7 million visitors each year come looking for old charm along the water, but probably not underfoot. Downpours regularly cause flooding these days, and more than once a week on average, Charleston gets "sunny day" flooding when tides push water onto city streets.

Four of the seven highest water levels recorded in Charleston Harbor have happened in the past four years, pushed by Hurricane Matthew in 2016, Hurricane Irma in 2017 and nor'easter type storms that hit in 2015 and 2018.

"What used to only happen occasionally is happening more often," Wilbert said.

Charleston is working with the Army Corps on solutions, and everyone agrees sea walls aren't the only answer. Also under consideration are flood gates, enhanced pumps and other potential fixes, and the city hopes for plenty of state and federal help to pay for it.

South Carolina highway funds are already going to raise the downtown sea walls, and Republican Gov. Henry McMaster created the South Carolina Floodwater Commission, which is studying freshwater and ocean flooding and exploring the use of artificial reefs to blunt massive waves in hurricanes.

Charleston also plans to seek at least some of the state's tourism taxes on hotel rooms and restaurant meals for flood control. Currently, that money must be spent on tourism.

"You are not going to reverse this. The sea level is going to keep rising," Wilbert said. "It's not something where you can say how much it will cost or when it will end."

Follow Jeffrey Collins on Twitter: @ JSCollinsAP

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

UK election is full of dirty tricks and political clicks

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain is proving a lawless landscape for political mudslingers mining cyberspace for votes in an election that could determine the U.K.'s future relationship with the European Union.

Two years after Britain found itself at the epicenter of a global scandal over the misuse of Facebook data by political campaigns and a year after lawmakers called for sweeping reforms to protect democracy in

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the digital age, the country's biggest political parties are bombarding voters with misleading social media messages after the government failed to act.

The ruling Conservative Party circulated a doctored video that made it look as if an opposition leader had been stumped when asked about his position on Brexit, then during a leaders' debate the party's press office temporarily rebranded its website as a fact-checking service. The Labour Party has also sought to co-opt the roll of independent factchecker, rolling out a website called The Insider, which calls on voters to "trust the facts."

"It's the Wild West out there," said Matt Walsh, who researches digital political communication at the University of Cardiff. "The parties can pretty much do what they want in terms of putting political messages out there and they can do what they want in terms of upsetting social media users."

Britain's electoral laws, like those of most countries, were largely written before the dawn of the internet, meaning social media campaigns are mostly unregulated and open to exploitation by a new generation of political strategists who grew up with the technology. While Russia was able to exploit these loopholes in an effort to disrupt the 2016 U.S. presidential election, the big story of 2019 may be the willingness of Britain's political parties themselves to push the boundaries of truth, transparency and reality.

The stakes couldn't be bigger. Prime Minister Boris Johnson is seeking a mandate to take Britain out of the EU by Jan. 31. Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn promises a second referendum that could block Brexit, along with left wing economic policies including the nationalization of railways, water companies and broadband networks. And tactics applied in the British campaign are but a harbinger of how digital misinformation could affect other coming votes, including next year's U.S. presidential election.

The U.K. House of Commons' media committee last year called for widespread changes to electoral laws, which it said weren't "fit for purpose" in the 21st century. The report followed an 18-month inquiry into fake news and data manipulation by political campaigns, which was triggered by concerns about Russian interference in western elections. The probe helped fuel a scandal about how consultancy Cambridge Analytica used Facebook data to target voters during Donald Trump's 2016 run for the White House.

The government's failure to act on the committee's recommendations leaves voters at the mercy of unscrupulous campaign operatives at a time when more and more people are turning to social media for news and information. Since there are no sanctions for misbehavior - other than having your post removed from Twitter, Facebook or Google - the campaigns have realized there's little downside to posting doctored videos or misleading information.

"You aren't seeing any blowback from that. It's almost the opposite," said Zvika Krieger, head of technology policy at the World Economic Forum. "(Being misleading) gets more attention. There's a perverse incentive to post as much misleading information as possible. It's a very worrying trend."

While misinformation is not new in political campaigns, digital data is improving exponentially political campaigns' ability to tailor messages to voters based on their behavior online. And this comes at a time when parties are devoting more resources to digital communications.

The Conservatives spent 3.98 million pounds (\$5.17 million) on social media and data-driven advertising during the last general election campaign in 2017, up 71% from the previous election in 2015, according to research by Tactical Tech, a Berlin-based group that seeks to mitigate the impact of technology on society. Labour's digital spending more than tripled to 1.47 million pounds in the same period.

But it is hard to know how to regulate digital campaigning as it is difficult to get a complete picture of how and where parties focus their digital spending.

The campaign that has pushed the limits furthest this year is the Conservatives.

First, they took a TV news interview with Labour's Brexit spokesman, Keir Starmer, and edited it to make it appear that he couldn't answer a question about the party's position on leaving the EU. The video has been viewed more than 1.1 million times. Then, during a leaders' debate last month, the party's press office temporarily rebranded its Twitter feed "factcheckUK" and used the account to attack Corbyn's comments.

Will Moy, chief executive of Full Fact, a real fact-checking website, criticized the stunt.

"It was an attempt to mislead voters, and I think it is inappropriate and misleading for a serious political

party to behave that way," he said at the time.

Caught unprepared in 2017, when social media helped Labour to a better-than-expected performance, the Conservative Party this year brought in a New Zealand-based firm called Topham Guerin to sharpen its online message.

Sean Topham and Ben Guerin, both in their 20s, helped Scott Morrison become Australia's prime minister in 2018 with a strategy to flood online platforms with hundreds of posts with a consistent message. They specialized in memes with tacky messages that would riff off events like the finale of the cult show "Game of Thrones." People would laugh - and share.

The content wasn't slick, but it was plentiful.

"You're going to slap some Calibri font on some ... re-used meme and you're going to publish it and you're going to get on to the next one," Guerin told a conference in May in Sydney. "And you know what? Their content is going to do better than the thing your poor graphic designer spent a week on. Sad but true."

While such posts may draw laughter and wry comments as readers share them, they have serious implications for society.

Even as candidates are lowering the bar on what they are willing to do or say, campaigns are increasing their sophistication in using data from a wide variety of sources to micro-target voters with custom-made messages. At the same time, improvements in technology are making it easier to manipulate audio and video in ways that are invisible to the untrained eye, Krieger said.

"As our lives get more and more connected - smart cities and sensors and movie-watching preferences, smart appliances - campaigns are going to be able to target people with frightening levels of consistency," he said. "You can push voters in the direction you want them to go. ..."

"It's going to provide a critical threat to democracy."

Jo Kearney contributed to this report.

Libyan officials collect evidence of Russian fighters in war

By MAGGIE MICHAEL Associated Press

TRIPOLI, Libya (AP) — Officials in Libya's U.N.-supported government say they plan to confront Moscow over the alleged deployment of Russian mercenaries fighting alongside their opponents in the country's civil war.

Libyan and U.S. officials accuse Russia of deploying fighters through a private security contractor, the Wagner Group, to key battleground areas in Libya in the past months.

They say the Russian fighters are backing commander Khalifa Hifter, whose forces have been trying for months to capture the capital Tripoli. The U.N.-supported Government of National Accord is based in Tripoli.

The GNA has documented between 600 to 800 Russian fighters in Libya and is collecting their names in a list to present to the Russian government, according to Khaled al-Meshri, the head of the Tripoli-based government's Supreme Council of State.

"We are going to visit Russia after we collect all evidence and present to the authorities and see what they say," al-Meshri told The Associated Press last week. He did not say when that visit would take place.

Moscow has repeatedly denied playing any role in Libya's fighting.

Hifter's self-styled Libyan National Army — made up of army units, ultraconservative Salafists, and tribesmen — launched its offensive on Tripoli in April after seizing much of eastern Libya from Islamic militants and other rivals in recent years. Hifter is backed by the United Arab Emirates and Egypt, as well as France and Russia, while the Tripoli-based government receives aid from Turkey, Qatar and Italy.

Libya was plunged into chaos when a NATO-backed uprising toppled longtime dictator Moammar Gadhafi in 2011. The country is now split between a government in the east, allied with Hifter, and the GNA in Tripoli in the west. Both sides are bolstered by militias. Fighting has stalled in recent weeks, with both sides dug in and shelling one another along Tripoli's southern reaches.

U.S. Assistant Secretary of State for Near East Affairs David Schenker told reporters last week that the

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State Department is working with European partners to impose sanctions on the Russian military contractor responsible for sending fighters to Tripoli.

"The way that this organization of Russians in particular has operated before raises the specter of large-scale casualties in civilian populations," he said.

Schenker's comments came shortly after U.S. officials met with Hifter to press for a cease-fire and "expressed serious concern" over Russia's intervention in the conflict.

But President Donald Trump has sent decidedly mixed messages to Hifter.

Trump voiced support of Hifter when he launched his attempt to take over Tripoli, praising the commanders "anti-terrorism" efforts in a phone conversation. The call was a sharp break with the U.S. policy of supporting Libya's Tripoli-based Prime Minister Fayez Sarraj.

Hifter's offensive dealt a blow to U.N. efforts to bring warring parties together. Al-Meshri called for confidence-building measures and a push toward presidential and parliamentary elections.

"Since Gadhafi's ouster, there have been no presidential elections. People are fed up," he said.

The Russians' presence has further mired an already complex conflict.

Al-Meshri maintains his administration has strong evidence that there are Russians fighters on the ground.

He says that government forces have found cell phones, intercepted communications and seized personal belongings left behind in the chaos of battle. He said flight data show dates and names of Russians moving from Syria to Egypt and then the Jordanian capital of Amman before flying to the eastern Libyan city of Benghazi, Hifter's seat of power. He didn't elaborate or present any of these documents or items to the AP.

Wagner Group is believed to have sent mercenaries to multiple conflicts, including Syria, Ukraine and elsewhere, raising accusations that Moscow is using it to spread its influence. The firm is a military contractor run by Yevgeny Prigozhin, a businessman with close ties to the Kremlin. Russian officials have refused in the past to comment on the firm's activities.

By deploying fighters into Libya, Russia is embroiling itself in another conflict in the Middle East. Russia's military is involved in Syria's civil war, conducting airstrikes and deploying troops and military police. That operation successfully shored up Syrian President Bashar Assad's government and — at a relatively modest cost — helped Moscow expand its clout in the region.

Analysts believe that Russian President Vladimir Putin is trying to find leverage with Western powers in oil-rich Libya. They say he also recognizes that the country is a gateway for many migrants trying to reach European shores.

"Most of this is smoke and mirrors designed to induce fear," said Anas Gamati, founder of the Tripoli-based Sadeq Institute. "Russian influence has done only two things: inflate their size and specter of their power in Libya. They're not positively engaged or trying to play a constructive role with diplomatic or political value."

Officially, Russia continues to maintain a dialogue with both sides. Hifter has visited Moscow several times the past years, and a delegation of the Tripoli-based government met with Putin during a Russia-Africa Economic Forum summit in Sochi in October.

The allegations of Russian interference come amid a renewed push for international players to reach a consensus on Libya.

Germany is working with the United Nations to host a conference on Libya by early 2020. Observers hope that international players could exert enough pressure to stop the fighting.

But others worry that Hifter's appetite for territory and power might prove too large. Former GNA defense minister Mahdi al-Barghathi, who left in the government in July, says the only way toward peace is for Hifter to be left with no powerful friends, and no other options. Otherwise, al-Barghathi said Hifter will be set to become another Gadhafi.

"We don't want to go back to square one," he said.

As long as international powers remain divided, Libya's conflict risks continuing to play out as the world's latest proxy war, some observers warn.

"Putin would like nothing more than to keep Europe busy and divided over Libya, scared of illegal immigration, paralyzed by right-wing populism that threatens the very idea of the EU," said Mohammed Eljareh, an analyst who runs Libya Outlook, a consulting company on Libyan affairs.

"All of this is music to Putin's ears," he said.

Associated Press writers Matt Lee in Washington, Vladimir Isachenkov in Moscow and Isabel DeBre in Cairo contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected to show that the Sochi meeting was in October, not March.

AP Interview: New Zealand PM aims to limit spread of hate

By NICK PERRY Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — New Zealand's prime minister said she will do all she can to stop a man accused of killing 51 Muslim worshippers from spreading his message of hate at his trial, while she hopes artificial intelligence will one day stop such attacks from being broadcast online.

In an interview with The Associated Press on Thursday, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern described how she made decisions after the March 15 attacks at two Christchurch mosques, including introducing sweeping gun reforms and starting a global discussion on keeping violent extremism from the internet.

Australian white supremacist Brenton Tarrant, 29, has been charged with 51 counts of murder, 40 counts of attempted murder and one count of terrorism in the attacks and goes on trial next June.

Ardern said she thought he would try to use the trial to promote his views.

"It's clear that a part of this individual's motivation is creating a platform for himself. I think that's absolutely clear," she said. "And I think every opportunity we can to deprive the alleged terrorist of that should be utilized."

She said she was limited in what she could do but was encouraged by the pledge of New Zealand's major media outlets to avoid promoting white supremacist ideology when covering the trial.

Ardern said she stood by her decision to never speak the alleged gunman's name.

"If someone's motivated by infamy, then you deprive them of it," she said.

The gunman livestreamed his attack on Facebook. Ardern said she hoped artificial intelligence could be used to stop future attacks from being broadcast, and that everybody had a responsibility to prevent such broadcasts from continuing to happen.

"Even Facebook have made moves around the way that they utilize livestreaming and who can access it," she said. "In the future, I believe we can actually use AI technology increasingly."

Ardern said she was traveling in a van on the outskirts of the North Island town of New Plymouth when she first heard about the attacks.

"The scale of it and the magnitude of it took some time to come to grips with," she said.

Farid Ahmed, whose wife Husna was killed in the attack on the Al Noor mosque, said New Zealanders were initially confused about what to think. But a week later at Muslim prayers in Christchurch, Ardern gave a nationally televised speech that Ahmed said united people with three simple words: "We are one."

"It was so beautiful, in just one sentence," Ahmed said.

Ardern said she still had the piece of paper where she'd hurriedly written her sentiments after the attack, words that would later resonate around the world.

"To me, it should have been the most unextraordinary thing to say. It was just my instinct around the way New Zealanders would be feeling," she said. "Yes, this was an attack, very explicitly on our Muslim community. But they were our Muslim community. I just felt that needed to be said straight away."

Ardern said nobody at the time was really analyzing what they were doing or saying, they were just responding, often with great compassion. She said everybody felt emotional at the time but she couldn't let that get in the way of doing her job.

"I did the best I could at making sure that I didn't let anyone down. I needed to keep going and keep focused and keep working on behalf of those families," she said. "But yeah, of course, undeniably it had an impact on me."

Ardern vowed to change New Zealand's gun laws after the attacks, and less than a month later all but

one of the country's 120 lawmakers voted in favor of banning assault weapons.

"In my view, we are just total pragmatists," Ardern said. "So when we saw the scale, and magnitude, and impact of these types of weapons utilized in this way, even those who legitimately hold weapons, said 'Actually, we don't need those. Those don't need to stay.'"

A gun buyback scheme that ends later this month has seen 37,000 newly banned weapons turned over to police, although some estimates indicate there could be many thousands of banned guns that haven't been turned in. Ardern said she felt the buyback had been a success.

"Those are tens of thousands of guns that are no longer in circulation," she said. "And that is a good thing."

In a speech after the attacks, Ahmed told a crowd of about 20,000 people in Christchurch that he forgave the man who killed his wife. He said he didn't want to have a heart burning with anger and hatred.

Ardern said Ahmed was an extraordinary man. Asked if she could ever forgive the gunman, Ardern turned the focus back on those who were at the mosques.

"No one is more central to what happened on the 15th of March than those who were directly affected," Ardern said. "So it's not for me to give."

Sailor kills 2 civilians, self at Pearl Harbor shipyard

By **CALEB JONES, JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER and AUDREY McAVOY** Associated Press

PEARL HARBOR, Hawaii (AP) — An active duty U.S. sailor whose submarine was docked at Pearl Harbor opened fire on three civilian employees Wednesday, killing two and then taking his own life just days before dignitaries and veterans descend on the base for the 78th anniversary of the Japanese attack.

The commander of Navy Region Hawaii, Rear Adm. Robert Chadwick, said he didn't know the motive behind the shooting at the Hawaii base's naval shipyard that left the third civilian Department of Defense employee hospitalized.

It also wasn't known if the sailor and the three male civilians had any type of relationship, or what the motive was for the shooting, Chadwick said.

"We have no indication yet whether they were targeted or if it was a random shooting," Chadwick said.

The sailor was assigned to the fast attack submarine USS Columbia, which is at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam for maintenance. Details about the sailor were not immediately released.

It wasn't immediately known what type of weapon was used or how many shots were fired. Chadwick said that was part of the investigation. Personal weapons are not allowed on base.

Names of the victims won't be released until next of kin have been notified.

"Our thoughts are with the families of the victims and everyone involved. I can say that we are mobilizing support services for naval shipyard personnel as well as everyone else who may be affected by this tragic event," Chadwick said.

The base went into lockdown around 2:30 p.m. when the first active shooter reports were received. The base reopened a few hours later. Witnesses were still being interviewed hours after the shooting.

The shipyard repairs, maintains and modernizes the ships and submarines of the U.S. Pacific Fleet, which is headquartered at Pearl Harbor. The base is the home port for 10 destroyers and 15 submarines. It also hosts Air Force units.

Hawaii Gov. David Ige said the White House has offered assistance from federal agencies and that the state is also ready to help if needed.

"I join in solidarity with the people of Hawaii as we express our heartbreak over this tragedy and concern for those affected by the shooting," Ige said in a statement.

The shipyard is across the harbor from the Pearl Harbor National Memorial, which on Saturday will mark the 78th anniversary of the Japanese bombing that propelled the U.S. into World War II. More than 2,300 Americans died in the attack on Dec. 7, 1941.

The shipyard has played a key role in naval history, most notably during World War II. Shipyard workers were given just days to repair the USS Yorktown, an aircraft carrier severely damaged during the Battle of the Coral Sea in 1942 because the Navy needed to quickly send the ship to Midway to meet Japanese

forces there.

Some 1,400 shipyard workers labored around the clock for almost 72 hours to patch the carrier together. The planes the Yorktown delivered to Midway sank one of the four aircraft carriers Japan sent to the battle and helped destroy two others. The Battle of Midway turned the tide of the war in the United States' favor.

Impeachment takeaways: History lessons, partisan feuds

By ERIC TUCKER and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The next phase of the impeachment inquiry of President Donald Trump moved to the House Judiciary Committee on Wednesday with public hearings featuring professors of law who discussed the constitutional origins of Congress' impeachment power.

Three of the lawyers were chosen by Democrats, one by Republicans, and the experts split much like the committee, along partisan lines, over whether Trump committed an impeachable offense when he asked the president of Ukraine to investigate his political rival Joe Biden.

The lofty arguments about the Constitution were frequently interrupted by partisan sniping among committee members.

Here are some takeaways from the hearing:

REPUBLICAN DISRUPTION

Republicans allied with the president used the hearing to force procedural votes and delay the proceedings, adding to an unruly atmosphere even with the professors' academic recounting of constitutional principles.

GOP members interrupted House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler and the expert witnesses, calling for more Republican witnesses, for a postponement of the hearing and for House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff to be called to testify. Schiff led the investigation into Trump's dealings with Ukraine.

The top Republican on the Judiciary panel, Georgia Rep. Doug Collins, said the impeachment process is a "sham." And he said the committee had been sidelined as other panels led the impeachment investigation.

"What a disgrace to this committee, to have the committee of impeachment simply take from other committees and rubber stamp," Collins said.

Collins also criticized the quick pace of the impeachment probe. Democrats hope to hold a final vote by Christmas.

"If you want to know what's really driving this, there are two things — a clock and a calendar," Collins said.

HIGH CRIMES AND MISDEMEANORS

The four law professors who testified brought history lessons to the hearing, with talk of American Founding Fathers and British monarchs, of the 18th-century Constitutional Convention and the 20th-century impeachment proceedings of Presidents Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton.

Their testimony had a contemporary purpose, too, as Democrats look to bolster the argument for impeachment by having outside constitutional experts make the case that Trump committed an impeachable offense.

Three of the witnesses made clear they thought Trump's conduct met the definition of an abuse of power that the constitutional framers had in mind for removal of a commander in chief. They said the president's interaction with Ukraine amounted to high crimes and misdemeanors, the impeachment standard set out in the Constitution.

"If what we are talking about is not impeachable," said Michael Gerhardt, a University of North Carolina law professor, "then nothing is impeachable."

Pamela Karlan, a Stanford Law School professor, said the Founding Fathers were particularly concerned about foreign interference in American politics.

"The very idea that a president might seek the aid of a foreign government in his reelection campaign

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would have horrified them," Karlan said. "But based on the evidentiary record, that is what President Trump has done."

The lone dissenter was Jonathan Turley, a George Washington University professor, who said that although he is not a supporter of the president, he found the case against Trump legally weak and warned that it would "collapse" amid an absence of criminal intent.

BRIBERY IN THE CONSTITUTION

The three Democratic witnesses agreed that Trump could be impeached for bribery as it is defined in the Constitution. Democrats have hinted that bribery could be one of the articles of impeachment.

Noah Feldman of Harvard Law School said the "clear sense" of the framers on bribery was "when the president corruptly asked for or received something of value to him from someone who could be affected by his official office."

"So if the House of Representatives and the members of this committee were to determine that getting the investigations either announced or undertaken was a thing of value to President Trump, that was what he sought, then this committee and this House could safely conclude that the president had committed bribery under the Constitution," Feldman said.

Karlan said that if Congress concludes that Trump asked for the investigations of Biden and his son to aid his reelection, "then yes, you have bribery here."

Turley disagreed, warning against using a "boundless interpretation" of bribery.

"The statement has been made, not just by these witnesses but Chairman Schiff and others, that this is a clear case of bribery. It's not," Turley said.

ANY QUESTIONS?

There may have been four law professors at the hearing, but many of the lawmakers limited their questions to witnesses summoned by their own party — and some asked none at all.

Several GOP lawmakers, bypassing the chance to pose questions to witnesses, used their five-minute allotments with speeches that defended the president and attacked the impeachment proceedings as partisan and rushed.

Republican Rep. Jim Jordan of Ohio praised the testimony of Turley, the GOP-selected witness, but didn't actually direct any questions to him.

Republican Rep. John Ratcliffe of Texas asked a series of questions of Turley but also chose to ignore the three witnesses Democrats relied on to make their impeachment case.

Democrats mostly did the same, focusing their queries to witnesses brought in by their party. Rep. Cedric Richmond, of Louisiana, brought up Turley several times but asked other witnesses — not him — about his testimony.

Still, there were some notable exceptions, such as when Republican Rep. Matt Gaetz of Florida challenged the witnesses on what he said were Democratic biases and anti-Trump leanings. He asked Gerhard and Karlan about contributions they'd made to Democrats including President Barack Obama.

He also asked all the witnesses to raise their hands if they had personal knowledge of the events at hand; none did.

"And let the record reflect no personal knowledge of a single fact," Gaetz said.

When it was his turn, Rep. Eric Swalwell, a California Democrat, confronted Turley directly on his past statements — and even legal involvement — in prior impeachment proceedings.

MUELLER IN THE MIX

Democrats have been debating whether to include an article on obstruction of justice as laid out in the report by special counsel Robert Mueller.

That report, released in April, laid out potential acts of obstruction but declined to make a determination one way or the other about whether the president had illegally subverted the Russia investigation, with Mueller citing Justice Department guidelines that a sitting president cannot be charged with a crime. He

essentially left it up to Congress to decide.

On Wednesday, Nadler signaled that he believes Mueller's findings should be included, saying in his opening statement that Trump took "extraordinary and unprecedented steps" to obstruct the special counsel's investigation.

He said that Trump not only "welcomed foreign interference in the 2016 election" — the focus of Mueller's investigation — but also "demanded it for the 2020 election."

Democrats haven't yet decided whether to include Mueller's investigation in any articles of impeachment. But many members have argued that it should be included.

AP FACT CHECK: Trump suddenly loses interest in stock market

By CALVIN WOODWARD and HOPE YEN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump offered a faulty take on the Constitution's grounds for impeachment Wednesday as he wrapped up a NATO summit marked by his misstatements on several fronts.

Among them, he claimed that he pays no attention to the stock market despite plentiful evidence that he treats that indicator as the pulse of his presidency. Or at least he did, until stocks took a thrashing.

A look at some of his comments from London:

TRUMP, on French President Emmanuel Macron's assertion that NATO is suffering "brain death": "He's taken back his comments very much so on NATO." — remarks Wednesday with Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte.

THE FACTS: No, Macron did not back off what Trump had called a "very, very nasty" statement about NATO. He conspicuously stood by it, before the summit, after it and when face to face with Trump in a tense joint news conference. If anything, Macron appeared to relish the provocation he had brought on.

"I do stand by it," he said Tuesday as Trump looked on. "I assume full responsibility for it," he said Wednesday. And he tweeted: "The comments I made about NATO prompted a debate among members of the alliance. This dialogue is a very good thing." He likened himself to an ice-breaker smashing through ice.

Macron characterized NATO as brain dead last month, citing a lack of U.S. leadership and confusion in the alliance about what its fundamental missions should be. He said the U.S. was turning its back on NATO and — in light of Trump's unexpected announcement in October that he would withdraw troops from Syria — doing no coordination with allies on strategic decision-making.

On Wednesday, Macron mildly praised the summit as "constructive" while emphasizing that the fundamentals that sparked his complaint had not been resolved.

TRUMP: "If the stock market goes up or down — I don't watch the stock market. I watch jobs." — remarks during NATO summit after stocks fell sharply Tuesday before rallying Wednesday.

THE FACTS: This is not true. Trump watches the stock market. He uses the stock market as a leading barometer of his presidency, giving the subject a rest only when the market's performance is down.

On a good day, he will tweet about it. Otherwise, his rally speeches and White House remarks are laced with references to the market's growth since he became president. He takes credit for gains and blames losses on other things, like Democrats.

Trump tweeted about the stock market more than a dozen times in November as it repeatedly edged into record highs.

"Enjoy!" he tweeted several times. "Spend your money well!"

On one occasion, his boastfulness became too much even for him. He tweeted: "Stock Markets (all three) hit another ALL TIME & HISTORIC HIGH yesterday! You are sooo lucky to have me as your President." Then he added: "(just kidding!)."

TRUMP: "The word 'impeachment' is a dirty word, and it's a word that was only supposed to be used in special occasions: high crimes and misdemeanors. In this case, there was no crime whatsoever. Not even a little tiny crime. There was no crime whatsoever, and they know it." — remarks with Conte on Wednesday.

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THE FACTS: That's a misrepresentation of the conditions for impeaching a president. The constitutional grounds for impeachment do not require any crime to have been committed. In setting the conditions — treason, bribery or high crimes and misdemeanors — the founders said explicitly that a consequential abuse of office — crime or not — was subject to the impeachment process they laid out.

Months after the 1787 Constitutional Convention, Alexander Hamilton explained in the Federalist Papers that a commonly understood crime need not be the basis of impeachment. Offenses qualifying for that step "are of a nature ... POLITICAL, as they relate chiefly to injuries done immediately to the society itself," he wrote.

As they move toward drafting articles of impeachment, though, Democrats are alleging crimes involving obstruction of justice as part of their case that Trump abused his office.

TRUMP, on his July 25 call with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy: "All you have to do is listen to the call or read the call. We had it transcribed perfectly. But he was — he said, no pressure, no nothing. There was no nothing." — remarks Wednesday with Conte.

THE FACTS: Trump misleads in suggesting that Zelenskiy didn't have any concerns about the call. Nor was the call "transcribed perfectly;" only a rough transcript was released by the White House.

While Zelenskiy initially said there was no discussion of a quid pro quo, he said in an interview Monday with Time that Trump should not have blocked military aid to Ukraine. Zelenskiy also criticized Trump for casting the country as corrupt, saying it sends a concerning message to international allies.

On that call discussing military aid, Trump asked Zelenskiy to investigate Trump's political rivals in the U.S. "Look I never talked to the president from the position of a quid pro quo," Zelenskiy said. "But you have to understand. We're at war. If you're our strategic partner, then you can't go blocking anything for us. I think that's just about fairness."

On corruption, Zelenskiy said it unfairly undermines support for the country.

"Everyone hears that signal," he said. "Investments, banks, stakeholders, companies, American, European, companies that have international capital in Ukraine, it's a signal to them that says, 'Be careful, don't invest.' Or, 'Get out of there.'"

It's true that in early October, Zelenskiy had told reporters "there was no pressure or blackmail from the U.S." But he did not state Trump had done "nothing" wrong, even as he let his criticisms simmer before surfacing them.

In any event, Zelenskiy knew months before the call that much-needed U.S. military support might depend on whether he was willing to help Trump by investigating Democrats.

EDITOR'S NOTE — A look at the veracity of claims by political figures.

Associated Press writers Sylvie Corbet in Paris and Darlene Superville in Washington contributed to this report.

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Huawei asks court to throw out US telecom funds ban

By SAM McNEIL Associated Press

SHENZHEN, China (AP) — Chinese tech giant Huawei is asking a U.S. federal court to throw out a rule that bars rural phone carriers from using government money to purchase its equipment on security grounds.

The lawsuit announced Thursday is Huawei Technologies Ltd.'s second legal challenge this year to Trump administration efforts to reduce its already minimal U.S. market presence. The company is scrambling to preserve its global sales of smartphones and network gear following sanctions announced in May that limit access to U.S. components and technology.

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Huawei, which says it is employee-owned and has no government ties, denies U.S. accusations it is a security risk and might facilitate Chinese spying.

Huawei is at the center of U.S.-Chinese tension over Beijing's technology ambitions and complaints the communist government steals or pressures foreign companies to hand over know-how.

Huawei's lawsuit in U.S. federal court in New Orleans says the Federal Communications Commission acted improperly when it voted last month to bar rural carriers from using government subsidies to buy equipment from Huawei or its Chinese rival, ZTE Corp.

The decision "is based on politics, not security," Huawei's chief legal officer, Song Liuping, told a news conference.

The lawsuit says the FCC exceeded its authority by making national security judgments, designated Huawei a threat without evidence and violated its own procedures by adopting a rule without citing a legal basis.

American courts have traditionally been reluctant to second-guess government judgments about national security.

In a separate lawsuit filed in March, Huawei is asking a federal court in Texas to strike down a ban on the U.S. government using its equipment or dealing with any contractor that does.

Meanwhile, U.S. prosecutors are trying to extradite Huawei's chief financial officer from Canada to face charges she lied to banks about dealings with Iran.

Chinese authorities say the United States is exaggerating security concerns to block a potential competitor. Huawei warned the FCC rule will hurt rural American carriers, which buy the Chinese vendor's equipment because other major suppliers such as Nokia and Ericsson are more expensive.

Song said that while potential lost sales are minimal, if the rule is allowed to stand, Huawei might suffer "reputational losses" that will "have a further impact on our business."

Huawei's U.S. sales plunged after a congressional panel warned in 2012 the company and ZTE were security risks and told carriers to avoid them. However, its sales in Europe and developing markets in Asia and Africa have risen steadily.

Huawei earlier reported its global sales rose 24.4% in the first nine months of 2019 over a year earlier to 610.8 billion yuan (\$86 billion).

The Trump administration imposed curbs in May that threaten to disrupt Huawei's sales of smartphones and network gear by blocking access to U.S. technology and components including Google's music, maps and other mobile services.

The Trump administration has announced a series of limited reprieves that allow vendors to supply technology needed to support wireless networks in rural areas.

In November, Huawei started selling a folding smartphone, the Mate X, made without U.S.-supplied processor chips or Google apps. The company also has unveiled a smartphone operating system it says can replace Google's Android if necessary.

Drug can curb dementia's delusions, researchers find

By MARILYNN MARCHIONE AP Chief Medical Writer

SAN DIEGO (AP) — A drug that curbs delusions in Parkinson's patients did the same for people with Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia in a study that was stopped early because the benefit seemed clear.

If regulators agree, the drug could become the first treatment specifically for dementia-related psychosis and the first new medicine for Alzheimer's in nearly two decades. It targets some of the most troubling symptoms that patients and caregivers face — hallucinations that often lead to anxiety, aggression, and physical and verbal abuse.

Results were disclosed Wednesday at a conference in San Diego.

"This would be a very important advance," said one independent expert, Dr. Howard Fillit, chief science officer of the Alzheimer's Drug Discovery Foundation.

Although the field is focused on finding a cure for dementia and preventing future cases, "there is a

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huge unmet need for better treatment” for those who have it now, said Maria Carrillo, the Alzheimer’s Association’s chief science officer.

The drug is pimavanserin, a daily pill sold as Nuplazid by Acadia Pharmaceuticals Inc. It was approved for Parkinson’s-related psychosis in 2016 and is thought to work by blocking a brain chemical that seems to spur delusions.

About 8 million Americans have dementia, and studies suggest that up to 30% of them develop psychosis. “It’s terrifying,” said Dr. Jeffrey Cummings of the Cleveland Clinic Lou Ruvo Center for Brain Health in Las Vegas. “You believe that people might be trying to hurt you. You believe that people are stealing from you. You believe that your spouse is unfaithful to you. Those are the three most common false beliefs.”

He consults for Acadia and helped lead the study, which included about 400 people with dementia and psychosis. All were given a low dose of the drug for three months, and those who seemed to respond or benefit were then split into two groups. Half continued on the drug and the others were given dummy pills for six months or until they had a relapse or worsening of symptoms. Neither the patients nor their doctors knew who was getting what.

Independent monitors stopped the study when they saw that those on dummy pills were more than twice as likely as those on the drug to relapse or worsen — 28% versus nearly 13%.

There were relatively few serious side effects — 5% in the drug group and 4% in the others. Headaches and urinary tract infections were more common among those on the drug. Two deaths occurred, but study leaders said neither was related to the drug.

Carrillo said the study was small, but the drug’s effect seemed large, and it’s not known whether the federal Food and Drug Administration would want more evidence to approve a new use.

Current anti-psychotic medicines have some major drawbacks and are not approved for dementia patients. “They’re often used off label because we have very few other options,” Fillit said.

All carry warnings that they can raise the risk of death in elderly patients, as does Nuplazid.

Cost could be an issue — about \$3,000 a month. What patients pay can vary depending on insurance coverage.

Marilynn Marchione can be followed on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/MMarchioneAP>

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute’s Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Trump aims for role of NATO statesman but mars unity message

By **ZEKE MILLER and AAMER MADHANI** Associated Press

WATFORD, England (AP) — Aiming to play the role of global statesman as the impeachment drama was unfolding in Washington, President Donald Trump instead shattered NATO’s professed message of unity at its 70th anniversary celebration in England and put his personal and policy differences with alliance members on stark display.

Trump called Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau “two-faced” and French President Emmanuel Macron “nasty” during a 52-hour trip that exposed the alliance’s divisions on military budgets and relations with Turkey, as well as the U.S. leader’s own unconventional ways on the world stage.

At the same time, he found it difficult to leave behind events in Washington, lashing out as House Democrats resumed their push for impeachment over Trump’s call for Ukraine to investigate a political rival. He said it was “sad” that Democrats were pushing ahead with the inquiry when “there was no crime whatsoever and they know it.”

Trump, looking to showcase foreign policy wins as he heads into an election year, offered a more optimistic outlook for NATO’s future. He took credit for boosting the share of NATO nations that are meeting the alliance’s goal of spending 2% of gross domestic on defense and sought to pressure more countries to increase their military budgets. But he also put a spotlight on his administration’s lingering to-do list:

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ending a China trade war he instigated, passing the U.S.-Mexico-Canada agreement as well as trade deals with the European Union and Britain.

A day after Trudeau was overheard gossiping about Trump during a reception at Buckingham Palace, Trump called the Canadian leader "two-faced." In an unguarded conversation, Trudeau told leaders, including Macron and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, that "he takes a 40-minute press conference off the top," an apparent reference to Trump's long and unscheduled question-and-answer session with journalists earlier that day. Trudeau also said, seemingly about his meeting with Trump, "You just watched his team's jaws drop to the floor."

Trump fired back during a Wednesday afternoon meeting with German Chancellor Angela Merkel. He suggested that the Canadian's overheard comments were precipitated by Trump's decision to highlight the fact that Canada falls short of NATO goals on defense spending.

"The truth is that I called him out on the fact that he's not paying 2% and I guess he's not very happy about it," Trump said. Later, seeming to relish the spat, Trump remarked, "That was funny when I said that guy was two-faced."

Relations between Trump and Macron, once the American president's closest European ally, deteriorated a day earlier in feisty exchanges on live television.

First, Trump slammed what he called "very, very nasty" comments by Macron, who had lamented NATO's "brain death" under Trump's leadership of the U.S. Then, in a later meeting on the sidelines of the summit, Macron rebuked Trump over his insistence that Europe repatriate its citizens who fought with the Islamic State group, as well as his unilateral decision to withdraw American troops from northeast Syria.

Trump's shift on Syria had cleared the way for a Turkish assault on Kurdish fighters who had been allied with the west in the fight against IS militants. There was more disagreement between Trump and European leaders over Turkey. Macron, in particular, wanted the alliance to do more to confront Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan over his incursion into Syria and his purchase of Russian surface-to-air missiles.

On Wednesday, Trump falsely claimed that Macron had taken back his comments about NATO's "brain death," even though the French leader said he stood by them.

It was far from the only inconsistency highlighted during two days of summitry.

Trump, who has celebrated every new stock market high, claimed that he didn't pay too much heed to the market after stocks tumbled following his remarks that a China trade deal may not come until after Election Day. He also claimed it was his decision not to more quickly reach an agreement with China, as relations have soured over U.S. support for pro-Democracy protests in Hong Kong. Previously, Trump had said it was China that would rather wait for the election results.

Trump also declared NATO to be the healthiest it's ever been even as the alliance is grappling with fundamental questions about its funding and whether its requirement for mutual defense still makes sense as it confronts threats that now extend beyond Russia to a rising China and international terrorism.

Trump has resisted some European efforts to put more pressure on Erdogan, whom he met with on the sidelines of the summit. The president praised the Turkish leader despite widespread calls in Washington and Europe for the Turkish government to suffer consequences for its actions in Syria and decision to buy the Russian air defense system.

The president abruptly canceled a news conference that would have played out at the same time as the impeachment hearing in Washington. But he insisted he's unconcerned about the inquiry, with Democrats facing a mountainous climb to remove Trump from office. While Democrats hold the majority in the House, Republicans control the Senate and not one GOP lawmaker in the upper chamber has signaled support for ousting Trump. An impeachment conviction in the Senate would require 67 votes out of 100.

Still, Trump lashed out at Democratic lawmakers for scheduling the hearing while he was overseas and predicted low ratings for testimony from constitutional experts.

"These people, you almost question whether or not they love our country," Trump said of the Democrats.

Democrats argue that Trump acted improperly when he pressed Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to open an investigation of former Vice President Joe Biden and his son's dealings in the eastern European

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nation. Hunter Biden sat on the board of a Ukrainian energy company.

During his meeting with Merkel, Trump told reporters he didn't know why his personal attorney Rudy Giuliani was speaking with the White House Office of Management and Budget — a revelation that was included in phone records published in the House Intelligence Committee's impeachment report.

"I really don't know," he said. Trump encouraged reporters to ask Giuliani about the calls, but insisted they are "no big deal."

Trump has frequently criticized NATO members for falling well short in doing their financial part through the first three years of his presidency, and he was eager to take credit for recent increases in defense spending by alliance members.

After a NATO summit last year, he called for members to devote at least 4% of GDP to military spending and took particular aim at Merkel, whom he accused of paying Russia "billions of dollars for gas and energy" while failing to meet her nation's commitment on defense spending.

At this year's summit, he told reporters, "I don't think, frankly, before us, that NATO was changing at all, and NATO is really changing right now."

But while NATO leaders emphasized unity, Trump convened his own sub-group of the alliance — limited to only those who had met the defense spending target.

"We call them affectionately those two percent-ers," he said of the nine nations assembled out of the soon-to-be 30-member alliance. "So this is a lunch that's on me."

Trump returned to the White House Wednesday night.

Miller reported from London.

Follow Miller and Madhani on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/zekejmilller> and <https://twitter.com/AamerISmad>
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Classic Blue is Pantone Color Institute's color of the year

By **LEANNE ITALIE** Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — In these uneasy times, as we move along to a new decade, the Pantone Color Institute has reached back in time to calming, confident Classic Blue as its color of the year for 2020.

The color is an anchor offering stability, constancy and connection, said Laurie Pressman, vice president of the global purveyors of color consulting, trendspotting and analysis.

"It's a reassuring presence," she told The Associated Press ahead of Wednesday's reveal.

Akin to maritime blue — not indigo and brighter than navy — Classic Blue evokes a feeling of vast expanse, Pressman said of the shade also known as Pantone 19-4052.

Pressman and her team scoured the worlds of art, fashion and home decor, along with commercial, graphic and industrial design, to come up with the pick, as they have since Cerulean became the inaugural color of the year for the milestone 2000.

But Classic Blue isn't just about nostalgia, she said. Creators around the globe are putting out modern takes for runways, mobile phones, kitchen appliances and the paint of pricey, forward-looking cars and motorcycles.

At Wednesday's launch event, Pressman insisted the color was in no way a nod to the hue associated with the Democratic Party, though she knew the question would surface.

"This was not a political move for us. This is global. We do not look at color through a political lens. We look at our life through a colorful lens," she told the AP.

Pantone chose Living Coral for 2019 and Ultra Violet the year before that.

Whether as throwback or harbinger of things to come, Classic Blue harkens back to when things "seemed simpler, seemed more comfortable, but at the same time not suggesting that it be done in a way that it was then," Pressman said.

Cerulean, which heralded the new millennium, is the color of the daytime sky, while Classic Blue is the sky at dusk as the new decade commences.

"It has depth to it, but it's a color of anticipation because we're looking ahead," Pressman said. "The day is over. We're looking forward to the evening. What's going to come?"

Classic Blue is a vibrant yet non-aggressive and easily relatable color, she said. It's also among nature's anthocyanin pigments possessing antioxidant and other health-fostering benefits.

Think blueberries.

"Many of us feel stressed, completely overloaded," Pressman said. "We live these 24/7 lifestyles. We're anxious. There's so much uncertainty and unrest, no matter where you are. With that we've seen this whole increased focus on wellness and self-care."

The timeless color is also gender neutral and seasonless, mixing well with other shades throughout the spectrum yet making a strong statement on its own. It also works well in a range of textures.

"It's a color that can take on different appearances through different applications, finishes and textures," Pressman said, lending itself to everything from lustrous sheens to sparkly sequins.

The anointed blue also plays into the sustainability movement.

"We have all this focus on buy less, buy good, so people aren't throwing things into a landfill," Pressman said. "You read about buying things to last and this is a timeless blue shade. It's always there and you're comfortable with it, like blue jeans."

For offices, it offers an air of security, she said. For kitchens, it's a top accent color in appliances and walls. Classic Blue is a mainstay color in stemware, dishes and other tabletop staples as a trusted expression of elegance, she said.

"Everybody's comfortable with blue," Pressman said. "We know it. We like it."

Police chief firing puts spotlight on cops who let him go

By SOPHIA TAREEN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — When fellow officers discovered Chicago's police chief asleep behind the wheel of his running SUV, they did not conduct any sobriety tests and let their boss drive home — a decision that has thrown a spotlight on what happens when one officer confronts another on patrol.

Many details of that mid-October encounter are still unclear. But the incident led Mayor Lori Lightfoot to fire Superintendent Eddie Johnson, and it could lead to discipline for the officers who were there.

When it comes to police pulling over police, the unwritten rule has long been one of professional courtesy: Don't call attention to the incident over the radio and maybe offer a ride home, particularly if no one else is involved. But that practice has been increasingly called into question, amid calls for better police accountability and expanded use of body cameras. Police argue that they use similar discretion with ordinary citizens, but critics say officers often get a pass and protect their own at all costs.

For officers, pulling over a fellow cop can be an awkward dilemma, one that's magnified when it's the head of one of the nation's largest police departments.

"It's a worst-nightmare situation for a police officer to encounter their superior or chief who has been drinking," said Philip Stinson, a criminal justice professor at Bowling Green State University in Ohio. "They're damned if they do, and they're damned if they don't in terms of how they respond or act."

On one hand, there's the fear of retaliation for speaking out. On the other, there's possible punishment for engaging in a cover-up.

Officers responding to a 911 call found Johnson slumped behind the wheel of his car not far from his South Side home early on Oct. 17. Local reports say he reportedly displayed his badge and waved the responding officers off. Johnson initially blamed an issue with blood pressure medication, but has since apologized for a lapse of judgement without elaborating. He also told Lightfoot he had a couple of drinks with dinner earlier that evening.

An investigation into Johnson's actions, which has reportedly extended to other officers, is ongoing.

Police argue they have a discretionary power and that similar thinking is used when they encounter other motorists, like giving a grandmother a pass for running a stop sign or offering a warning. When it comes to the boss, there's particular sensitivity.

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"The officer on the scene is the only one who knows the right thing to do," said former Chicago police Lt. Robert Weisskopf. "He doesn't have to enforce every law to the utmost degree, that's a robot."

In Johnson's case, he had well-known medical problems, Weisskopf said. The former superintendent, who was set to retire at the end of the year, underwent a kidney transplant and had been hospitalized for a blood clot, factors a responding officer would already know.

But not everyone is buying it.

Lightfoot, a former federal prosecutor whose campaign promises included police reform, said firing Johnson sent a message about changing the culture in the department, which like other law enforcement agencies has a code of silence.

"Perhaps in years past, someone in Mr. Johnson's circumstances would have been allowed to simply retire," Lightfoot said. "The old Chicago way must give way to the new reality."

Still, there's no agreement on exactly what officers should do. Like most policies for the nation's 18,000 police departments, there's no standard practice.

Michael Scott, an Arizona State University criminology and criminal justice professor, said most departments with criteria would request that a supervisor be contacted or sent to the scene.

The increase in the use of video, through body cameras and dashcams, has also complicated things. Cameras make officers less likely to give people a pass, but they can also be easily turned off.

"As policing has become increasingly public, and as the public becomes less trusting of the police," officers have moved "toward less informal resolution of incidents like this and toward a more formal resolution," said Scott, a former police chief.

Some police departments have addressed the issue head-on.

Denver police state in their 776-page police manual that "whenever it becomes likely that probable cause exists to arrest or to file charges" against a fellow officer or firefighter, internal affairs must be "notified immediately." The department came under fire in 2011 when an independent monitor suggested that Denver police do not arrest fellow officers for drunken driving unless they are involved in crashes.

A rulebook for Chicago officers does not spell out the issue specifically, and a police spokesman did not return messages seeking comment.

Charles Wexler, executive director of the Police Executive Research Forum, said officers should treat everyone they pull over the same, but the situation is always complicated when it's a fellow officer.

"These are no win situations," he said.

Deadly defect found in another version of Takata airbags

TOM KRISHER AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — A new and distinct problem has been discovered in air bags made by the now bankrupt company Takata which has led to at least one death.

The recently discovered malfunction is different than the defect that led to at least 24 deaths and hundreds of injuries worldwide, though the result, like the earlier issue, leads to air bags that can explode and hurl shrapnel, killing or injuring people.

Takata is adding about 1.4 million front driver inflators to recalls in the U.S., according to government documents posted Wednesday.

BMW is warning owners of some older 3-series cars to stop driving them.

A driver in Australia was killed by an airbag malfunction, while another Australian and a driver in Cyprus were injured, according to government documents.

Included in the recall Wednesday are more than 116,000 BMW 3-Series cars from the 1999 to 2001 model years. About 8,000 definitely have faulty inflators and should be parked, BMW said. The rest can still be driven.

In addition, certain Audi, Honda, Toyota and Mitsubishi vehicles made from 1995 to 2000 also are being recalled, but information on which models was not available Wednesday.

Unlike previous recalls, the Takata non-azide inflators do not use volatile ammonium nitrate to fill the

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air bags in a crash. But the air bag propellant can still deteriorate over time when exposed to moisture and explode too fast, blowing apart the inflator body. They also might not fully inflate to protect people in a crash.

Takata says in government documents that it made about 4.5 million of the inflators worldwide but only a portion are still in use because the vehicles are so old. The faulty inflators have problems with insufficient seals.

Toyota and Honda said they're still figuring out which models will have to be recalled. U.S. safety regulators said they were told by Mitsubishi that the only U.S. vehicle affected is the 1998 through 2000 Montero. A company spokesman was seeking more information.

In a statement, Audi said it is investigating whether any 1997 to 1999 model year A4, A6, A8, or TT vehicles are affected in the U.S.

The U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration said in a statement that it is in discussions with automakers about the recalls. It urged owners to search for recalls in the coming weeks by entering their vehicle identification number at www.nhtsa.dot.gov/recalls

In the BMW recalls, the company is recommending that people stop driving certain 1999 323i and 328i sedans made from July of 1998 through January of 1999. Spokesman Oleg Satanovsky said those cars have inflators that were made at a Takata factory and are known to be faulty because they were manufactured before production improvements.

The company also is recalling another 34,000 323i and 328i sedans from 1999-2000 and 323Ci and 328Ci coupes from the 2000 model year. These cars were made from March of 1998 through March of 2000 and have inflators made at two Takata plants that could be defective. Satanovsky says these cars will be inspected and some could get new inflators.

A third group of cars, just over 74,000, is being recalled. This group includes 323i, 325i, 328i, 330i sedans from the 1999 through 2001 model years. They were produced from May 1999 through July of 2000 and may have had air bag inflators replaced by defective ones. They also will be inspected.

BMW is still developing a remedy for the problem, but the company intends to replace faulty inflators with new ones. The company says owners will be notified when parts are available.

The recall is another in a long saga of problems with Takata inflators that sent the company into bankruptcy.

Nineteen automakers are recalling about 70 million inflators in what has become the largest string of automotive recalls in U.S. history. The company is recalling about 100 million inflators worldwide.

Most of the recalled inflators use ammonium nitrate to create a small explosion and inflate the air bags. But the chemical deteriorates when exposed to high temperatures and humidity and can burn too fast, blowing apart the canister designed to contain the explosion.

The remnants of Takata were purchased by Chinese-owned Key Safety Systems for \$1.6 billion (175 billion yen). A message was left seeking comment from the successor company, Joyson Safety Systems.

This story has been corrected to clarify that only about 8,000 of the recalled BMW vehicles should not be driven

Florida Republican: 'We should hang' treasonous Democrats

By TAMARA LUSH and BRENDAN FARRINGTON Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — Local and national GOP leaders distanced themselves Wednesday from a Florida congressional candidate who sent a fundraising letter stating that "anti-American radical Democrats" should be hung for treason.

George Buck, one of six Republican primary candidates for Florida's 13th Congressional District, referred to several Democrats but in particular to Congresswoman Ilhan Omar, D-Minnesota. Omar was born in Somalia and came to the U.S. as a child.

In the recent letter to potential donors, he said that "we should hang" Omar and other "traitors" for

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"abusing our system to destroy our country." He mentioned "tin foil hat accusations" against President Donald Trump, but didn't elaborate.

Buck's letter cited an unverified story that Omar is an asset of a foreign government who passed information to another foreign government. Omar has denied the report, calling it "outlandishly absurd" in a statement.

"For all their false, tin-foil-hat accusations of President Trump, the Democrats have foreign assets among their most outspoken leadership!" the letter read. "We should hang these traitors where they stand. I have no tolerance for those who are abusing our system to destroy our country."

Buck previously had been on the National Republican Congressional Committee's "Young Guns" program, which mentors and supports candidates in races across the country. Chris Pack, the committee's communications director, said in an email Wednesday that House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy decided to remove Buck from the program with the support of NRCC Chairman Tom Emmer.

Todd Jennings, chairman of Republicans in Pinellas County, linked via Facebook to a Tampa Bay Times report on the letter, and wrote: "There is no room for this kind of rhetoric in either political party. No one should ever condone a candidate's call for violence."

The 13th Congressional District is in Pinellas County, on Florida's Gulf Coast. It encompasses the city of St. Petersburg, which is also the hometown of the incumbent Democrat, Charlie Crist, a former Florida governor. Whoever wins the GOP primary in 2020 will face Crist again.

Buck did not respond to an email sent via his website or to a telephone message. Buck initially told the Times he didn't write the email, though it was signed by him. "I would never talk like that," he said.

In a follow-up statement, Buck appeared to stand by the campaign's email. "Anyone who commits treason against the United States should be tried to the full extent of the law," Buck said, adding that death is a possible punishment for treason. He declined to elaborate.

Buck was the GOP nominee in 2018, but lost the general election to Crist, a St. Petersburg Democrat who was a Republican when he was the state's governor.

The letter also criticized Crist, as well as Congresswomen Rashida Tlaib, D-Michigan, and Ayanna Pressley, D-Ohio.

Tony Di Matteo, the former chairman of the Pinellas County Republican Party, said he didn't think the negative rhetoric would help Republicans raise campaign funds for the race. But he said the eventual GOP winner will face a formidable opponent in Crist.

"Bashing someone that's in the state of Minnesota, I don't think that helps you in Florida," he said. "And my opinion, even with Trump at the top of the ballot I don't think anyone's going to beat Charlie Crist. He's a tremendous campaigner and raises a lot of money."

Ukrainian gas chief meets with prosecutors probing Giuliani

By **DESMOND BUTLER** and **MICHAEL BIESECKER** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal prosecutors have interviewed the head of Ukraine's state-owned gas company as part of an investigation into the business dealings of President Donald Trump's personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani and two of Giuliani's business associates.

Andriy Kobolyev met voluntarily with representatives of the Justice Department, according to lawyer Lanny Breuer, who represents the chief executive officer of Naftogaz, Ukraine's biggest natural gas provider.

"The Department of Justice requested an interview with Andriy Kobolyev," said Breuer. "He agreed and has voluntarily talked with the government attorneys."

Breuer, who provided comment following an inquiry by The Associated Press, declined to say when or where the interview took place. A person familiar with the details said Kobolyev met with the prosecutors in London. The person was not authorized to publicly discuss the federal investigation and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Federal prosecutors in New York are investigating Giuliani's business dealings, including whether the former New York City mayor failed to register as a foreign agent, according to people familiar with the matter.

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They were not authorized to discuss the investigation publicly and spoke on the condition of anonymity. Giuliani's Soviet-born associates, Lev Parnas and Igor Fruman, were arrested Oct. 9 at an airport outside Washington while trying to board a flight to Europe with one-way tickets. They were later indicted by federal prosecutors on charges of conspiracy, making false statements and falsification of records.

Jim Margolin, a spokesman for the U.S. attorney's office in the Southern District of New York, declined to comment.

According to a federal indictment, Parnas and Fruman are alleged to have been key players in Giuliani's efforts this year to spur the Ukrainian government to investigate Democratic presidential contender Joe Biden and his son Hunter.

The efforts by Parnas and Fruman included helping to arrange a January meeting in New York between Giuliani and Yuri Lutsenko, Ukraine's top prosecutor at the time, as well as other meetings with government officials.

While the House impeachment hearings have focused narrowly on Giuliani's role in pursuing Ukrainian investigations into Democrats, the interest of federal prosecutors in interviewing Naftogaz executives including Kobolyev suggests they are conducting a broader review of the business dealings of Giuliani and his associates.

The Associated Press reported Oct. 7 that while they were working with Giuliani to push for investigating the Bidens, Parnas and Fruman were leveraging political connections to Trump and other prominent Republicans as part of an effort to enrich themselves.

As part of that effort, Parnas and Fruman in March approached Naftogaz executive Andrew Favorov at an energy conference in Houston and tried to recruit him to be their partner in a new venture to export up to 100 tanker shipments a year of U.S. liquefied gas into Ukraine, where Naftogaz is the largest distributor, according to two people Favorov later briefed on the details.

As part of the plan, Parnas suggested backing Favorov to replace Kobolyev, his boss. Parnas is reported to have also told Favorov that Trump planned to remove the U.S. ambassador to Ukraine, Marie Yovanovitch, and replace her with someone more open to aiding their business interests. Yovanovitch was recalled to Washington in May.

AP reported last month that Favorov also met voluntarily with federal prosecutors in New York as part of their investigation. CNN first reported on Wednesday that Kobolyev had been interviewed.

Giuliani, who has described Parnas and Fruman as his clients, has denied involvement in the two men's efforts to forge a gas deal in Ukraine.

Associated Press writers Tom Hays in New York and Michael Balsamo contributed to this report.

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

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

'Star Trek' writer, story editor DC Fontana dead at age 80

NEW YORK (AP) — D.C. Fontana, a writer and story editor for the original "Star Trek" television series and later a contributor to "Star Trek: The Next Generation" and other related projects, has died at age 80.

Fran Evans, a family friend, told The Associated Press that she died Tuesday after a brief illness.

Dorothy Catherine Fontana, who used the initials D.C. after struggling to find work in a male-dominated industry, had befriended "Star Trek" creator Gene Roddenberry and rose from secretary to story editor for the 1960s show. Her credits included such episodes as "Journey to Babel" and "Friday's Child" and Leonard Nimoy would praise her for broadening the back story of Mr. Spock's Vulcan culture. William Shatner, who starred as Capt. James T. Kirk, tweeted that Fontana was a "pioneer" and added that "her work will continue to influence for generations to come."

A native of Sussex, New Jersey, Fontana worked on a wide range of other TV shows, from "Bonanza" and "Ben Casey," along with "Star Trek: The Next Generation" and "Star Trek: New Voyages." She also wrote the "Star Trek" novel "Vulcan's Glory," about Spock's first mission on the U.S.S. Enterprise.

Once-a-month birth control pill? Experiment works in animals

By LAURAN NEERGAARD AP Medical Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Birth control pills work great if women remember to take them every day but missing doses can mean a surprise pregnancy. Now scientists have figured out how to pack a month's supply into one capsule.

The trick: A tiny star-shaped gadget that unfolds in the stomach and gradually releases the drug.

The experimental capsule is still years away from drugstores, but researchers reported Wednesday that it worked as designed in a key test in animals. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is investing \$13 million for further development of the once-a-month pill, in hopes of eventually improving family planning options in developing countries.

"It has a lot of potential," said Dr. Beatrice Chen, a family planning specialist at the University of Pittsburgh, who wasn't involved in the new research. "Birth control is not one-size-fits-all," and women need more options.

Today, women who want the convenience of long-lasting contraception can choose among various devices, from a weekly patch to a monthly vaginal ring to an IUD that lasts for years.

It wasn't clear that "the Pill" — one of the most popular forms of birth control because it's cheap and easy to use — ever could join that list. Pills of all sorts generally pass through the body in a day.

A team from the lab of Massachusetts Institute of Technology inventor Robert Langer engineered a fix to protect pills from the harsh environment of the digestive system.

"We developed this capsule system that looks like a starfish, that can stay in the stomach several days, weeks, even a month at a time," said Dr. Giovanni Traverso of Boston's Brigham and Women's Hospital, a senior author of the study.

The star-shaped device has six arms, and each holds a certain medication dose. The device is folded inside an ordinary-sized capsule. Swallow the capsule and stomach acid dissolves the coating, letting the star unfold. It's too big to fit through the stomach's exit but not big enough to cause an obstruction. As medication dissolves out of each of the arms, the device breaks down until it can safely pass through the digestive system.

Langer and Traverso's team first used the technology to try turning daily drugs for malaria and HIV into capsules that lasted a week or two. They also are experimental, but longer-lasting pills one day could help patients with serious diseases better stick with treatment.

A logical next attempt: A month-long oral contraceptive.

First, they had to tweak the star-shaped device. They made it stronger and turned to long-lasting contraceptive implants for the materials to hold the hormone ingredient and let it gradually seep out.

Then they tested the contraceptive capsules in pigs, which have human-like digestive systems. The experimental capsules released the contraceptive fairly consistently for up to four weeks, and the amount in the pigs' bloodstream was similar to what daily tablets deliver, MIT lead authors Ameya Kirtane and Tiffany Hua reported in the journal *Science Translational Medicine*.

Lyndra Therapeutics Inc., a Massachusetts company co-founded by Langer and Traverso, is further developing the monthly pill and multiple other uses for the technology.

To be most useful, the capsule should be designed to emit three weeks of contraception and then allow for a woman's period, like a month's supply of birth control pills does, Traverso said. That would alert women when it was time to take another monthly dose.

Pittsburgh's Chen cautioned that more safety testing is required, including how well the experimental capsule breaks down and what's the proper dose of different hormones, before this can be tested in women. Other questions include whether the device dissolves in the same way in different people.

But if it pans out, Chen said it would be exciting to try combining both contraception and HIV drugs into the same capsule, particularly for developing countries where women are at high risk of the virus that causes AIDS.

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Surprising 1st results from NASA's sun-skimming spacecraft

By **MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer**

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — NASA's sun-skimming spacecraft, the Parker Solar Probe, is surprising scientists with its unprecedented close views of our star.

Scientists released the first results from the mission Wednesday. They observed bursts of energetic particles never seen before on such a small scale as well as switchback-like reversals in the out-flowing solar magnetic field that seem to whip up the solar wind.

NASA's Nicola Fox compared this unexpected switchback phenomenon to the cracking of a whip.

"They're striking and it's hard to not think that they're somehow important in the whole problem," said Stuart Bale of the University of California, Berkeley, who was part of the team.

Researchers said they also finally have evidence of a dust-free zone encircling the sun. Farther out, there's so much dust from vaporizing comets and asteroids that one of 80 small viewfinders on one instrument was pierced by a grain earlier this year.

"I can't say that we don't worry about the spacecraft. I mean, the spacecraft is going through an environment that we've never been before," Fox said.

Launched in 2018, Parker has come within 15 million miles (25 million kilometers) of the sun and will get increasingly closer — within 4 million miles (6 million kilometers) — over the next six years. It's completed three of 24 orbits of the sun, dipping well into the corona, or upper atmosphere. The goal of the mission is to shed light on some of the mysteries surrounding the sun.

Parker will sweep past Venus on Dec. 26 for the second gravity-assist of the \$1.5 billion mission and make its fourth close solar encounter in January.

The findings in the journal *Nature* were made during a relatively quiet phase of solar activity.

"We're just starting to scratch the surface of this fascinating physics," said Princeton University's David McComas, the chief scientist of one of the spacecraft's instruments.

As Parker gets even closer to its target, the sun will go through an active phase "so we can expect even more exciting results soon," University College London's Daniel Verscharen wrote in an accompanying editorial. Verscharen was not part of the mission.

Over the summer, Fox shared these early results with solar astrophysicist Eugene Parker, 92, professor emeritus at the University of Chicago for whom the spacecraft is named. He expressed excitement — "wow" — and was keen to be involved.

It's the first NASA spacecraft to be named after a person still alive. Parker attended its launch last year from Cape Canaveral.

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Judge dismisses lawsuit in John Dillinger exhumation case

By **RICK CALLAHAN Associated Press**

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — A nephew of 1930s gangster John Dillinger needs a cemetery's permission to exhume the notorious criminal's Indianapolis gravesite to prove whether he's actually buried there, a judge ruled Wednesday in dismissing the nephew's lawsuit against the cemetery.

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Marion County Superior Court Judge Timothy Oakes granted Crown Hill Cemetery's motion to dismiss Michael Thompson's lawsuit, saying Indiana law requires the cemetery's consent.

"The limited question before the Court today is whether disinterment may occur under this section of the statute without cemetery approval. Court finds that the statutory requirements for this section of the statute are clear in that disinterment requires the cemetery owner to give consent before disinterment may occur," Oakes wrote.

He added that Indiana law "does not require that the cemetery have a valid, rational, or meaningful reason" for withholding its consent.

Thompson sued the cemetery in August after it objected to his plans to exhume the grave as part of a television documentary. Thompson has said he has evidence Dillinger's body may not be buried there, and that he may not have been the man FBI agents fatally shot outside a Chicago theater on July 22, 1934. The History Channel dropped out of the planned documentary in September.

Attorneys for Crown Hill Cemetery call that "a decades-old conspiracy theory." They opposed the exhumation, saying in court documents that Indiana's Legislature has granted cemetery owners the right to "protect its gravesites from unwarranted disturbance."

Alice McKenzie Morical, an attorney for Crown Hill Cemetery's management company, said during Wednesday's hearing that there was an autopsy after Dillinger's fatal shooting and relatives identified him before his burial.

"His close family believed it was him and they wanted him in the family plot," she said.

The cemetery's management company said in a statement that it's pleased with Wednesday's ruling and it "continues to object to the disinterment of John Dillinger."

The FBI insists it's a "myth" that its agents didn't kill Dillinger and that "a wealth of information supports Dillinger's demise," including fingerprint matches.

Thompson obtained an Indiana State Department of Health permit in October that calls for the remains to be exhumed on Dec. 31.

Thompson's attorney, Andrea Simmons, told the court that her client obtained a large number of FBI files that raise serious questions about whether it is Dillinger's body buried at the hilltop cemetery.

"There is strong reason to believe that he's not the person in the grave," she said.

Oakes said Wednesday that he questioned the cemetery's contention that the exhumation would be disruptive.

"I don't buy into the cemetery's reasons, but under the statute they don't have to have a reason that is rational," he said.

Oakes dismissed the lawsuit without prejudice. Under Indiana law, Thompson's attorney have 10 days to file an amended complaint citing a different section of Indiana's law governing exhumations or 30 days to appeal the decision to a higher court.

"It may be several weeks before a final decision is made what to do next," Simmons said in a statement.

A few days after his 1934 burial, Dillinger's father had his casket covered with a protective cap of concrete and scrap iron topped by four reinforced-concrete slabs to prevent vandals from trying to dig him up, according to Susan Sutton, a historian with the Indiana Historical Society.

Some surviving family members still object to Thompson's plan.

Dillinger's great-great niece, Stephanie Samuels, said after Wednesday's hearing that she and other relatives planned to file a formal complaint objecting to any exhumation.

"This should never have gotten this far. I think it's very disgraceful to the family, everything to do with it," she said. "And there is very much family against this."

Jimmy Carter released from Georgia hospital

Associated Press undefined

AMERICUS, Ga. (AP) — Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter was released from a hospital Wednesday after being treated for a urinary tract infection.

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Carter, 95, was discharged from Phoebe Sumter Medical Center in Americus, Georgia, Carter Center spokeswoman Deanna Congileo said.

"He said he looks forward to further rest and recovery at home in Plains, Georgia," Congileo said. "He and Mrs. Carter wish everyone peace and joy this holiday season."

Carter has overcome several health challenges in recent years.

He was diagnosed with melanoma in 2015, announcing that the cancer had spread to other parts of his body. After partial removal of his liver, treatment for brain lesions, radiation and immunotherapy, he said he was cancer-free.

A fall last spring required him to get hip replacement surgery.

Then on Oct. 6, he hit his head in another fall and received 14 stitches, but still traveled to Nashville, Tennessee, to help build a Habitat for Humanity home shortly thereafter. He fractured his pelvis in another fall later that month and was briefly hospitalized.

Last month, Carter was released from Emory University Hospital in Atlanta after recovering from surgery to relieve pressure on his brain caused by bleeding from a fall.

Google co-founders step aside as antitrust scrutiny heats up

By RACHEL LERMAN AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Google's co-founders are relinquishing their executive positions just as state and federal regulators, not to mention the Department of Justice and Congress, are taking a keen interest in the possible abuse of its privacy practices and market power.

But their long foreshadowed successor, Sundar Pichai, has been well prepped to serve as the public face of the company.

Larry Page and Sergey Brin are stepping down as CEO and president, respectively, of Google parent company Alphabet. The move caps more than two decades during which the pair have shepherded the one-time startup they founded in a Silicon Valley garage. Pichai, who has been Google's CEO since 2015, will now also head up Alphabet. The company isn't filling Brin's position as president.

Google is facing increasing criticism and investigations from authorities in the U.S. and Europe about its privacy practices and the nature of its many-legged business. That will now fall to Pichai to wrangle and push through, though Page might not be totally off the hook.

Democratic presidential candidate Elizabeth Warren, a senator from Massachusetts, tweeted a message aimed at Page on Wednesday: "Quick reminder: We do still expect you to testify before Congress. And changing your title while staying on the board and retaining effective control of it will not exempt you from accountability."

Page and Brin still hold a majority of voting shares of Alphabet. Each became \$1 billion richer Wednesday as Alphabet stock increased more than 2%. According to Forbes magazine, they already had a net worth of more than \$50 billion apiece.

Last year, Google raised hackles in Congress by refusing to send Page or Pichai to a hearing on Russian manipulation of internet services to sway U.S. elections. Congressional officials left an empty chair for Page at the witness table; top executives from Facebook and Twitter, meanwhile, turned up to testify. Offended lawmakers derided Google as "arrogant."

Although longtime tech analyst Tim Bajarin of Creative Strategies said he doesn't believe Brin and Page are leaving "because the fire is getting hotter," he said Pichai's role at Google has been preparing him for the increased government scrutiny.

Brin and Page, both 46, have noticeably backed out of the spotlight already. Both stopped making appearances earlier this year at the regular question-and-answer sessions with employees, and Page didn't attend this summer's Alphabet shareholders meeting even though he was still in the CEO role.

Meanwhile, Alphabet has been positioning Pichai as the de facto leader, making him the top executive voice at shareholders meetings and on earnings call. It was Pichai who testified before Congress last December, defending the company against claims from Republicans that the search service is biased against

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conservatives. Recently, Pichai changed the format of the employee question-and-answer sessions from a weekly occurrence to a monthly one.

The executive shakeup will likely have little impact on the business, analysts from Cowen and Co. wrote in a note Tuesday. They called Pichai's Alphabet appointment a "formality."

Pichai assured employees in an internal email that his new job wouldn't mean he was taking a step back from Google.

"I will continue to be very focused on Google and the deep work we're doing to push the boundaries of computing and build a more helpful Google for everyone," he wrote.

Pichai, a 47-year-old immigrant from India, has worked at the company for 15 years, serving as a leader in projects to build Google's Chrome browser and overseeing Android. Pichai, who has an engineering background, took over as the head of Google's products before being promoted to CEO when Alphabet was created in 2015. He is known as a soft-spoken and respected manager.

Alphabet still boasts Google as its central fixture and key moneymaker. But it's also made up of what are known as "other bets," or longshot projects. That includes drone company Wing and self-driving car firm Waymo.

In its early days, Google focused on only one business — cataloging the growing internet. Page and Brin started Google soon after they met as Stanford University graduate students in 1995.

The company has now become one of the most influential companies in the world. Google dominates online search and digital advertising and makes the world's most widely used operating system for smartphones, Android. It's hard to make it through a whole day without using one of Google's services — ranging from online tools to email, cloud computing systems, phones and smart speaker hardware.

As Google grew, it faced more pressure from privacy advocates over its collection and use of personal information to target advertising. It also has faced allegations that it abuses its dominance in search and online advertising to push out rivals. The company is the subject of numerous inquiries from Congress, the Department of Justice, U.S. state attorneys general and European authorities.

Page and Brin, in announcing the news Tuesday, said the company has "evolved and matured" in the two decades since its founding. Both promised to stay active as board members and shareholders.

Google's longest serving CEO is still Eric Schmidt, the former executive brought into the role in 2001 as a so-called "adult supervisor" for Brin and Page. Schmidt stepped into the position as the company's board worried about the relative inexperience of Brin and Page to manage the growing company. He remained CEO until 2011, when Page once again became chief executive. Schmidt stayed on the board until this year.

AP Technology Writers Mae Anderson in New York and Barbara Ortutay in San Francisco contributed to this story.

Rapper T.I.'s remarks spark NY bill to end virginity tests

By MARINA VILLENEUVE Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — New York could bar doctors from performing so-called virginity tests under legislation prompted by the rapper T.I.'s controversial claim that he has a gynecologist check his daughter's hymen annually.

Assemblywoman Michaelle Solages said Tuesday the bill she submitted last month would prohibit medical professionals from performing or supervising such examinations, though it's unclear how common they are in the U.S. New York would also consider it sexual assault when such tests are performed outside of a medical setting.

"It's medically unnecessary," the Democrat said. "It's often painful, humiliating, traumatic. All in all, it's a form of violence against women."

Her bill has attracted support from three Democratic lawmakers, and Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo's administration officials called the practice "disturbing." Solages said no other states have such bans.

The World Health Organization, U.N. Women and the U.N. Human Rights office called for the end of the

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tests worldwide last year. They said the testing often involves inspecting the hymen or inserting fingers into the vagina.

T.I., also known as Clifford Joseph Harris, Jr., drew criticism when he said in a November episode of the podcast "Ladies like Us" that he asked a gynecologist to check his teenage daughter's hymen shortly after her birthday each year. She is now 18.

"I put a sticky note on the door: 'Gyno. Tomorrow. 9:30,'" Harris said.

After his comments prompted backlash on social media, he told Jada Pinkett Smith on the Facebook interview show Red Table Talk he'd been exaggerating and that "he was never in any exam room."

Phone and email messages were left with Harris' publicist Tuesday.

Experts say such testing is painful and that there's no evidence such testing shows whether a woman or girl has had vaginal intercourse.

"There is no test that can tell you whether someone had intercourse, whether consensually or non-consensually," Ranit Mishori, professor of family medicine at Georgetown University School of Medicine and senior medical adviser for Physicians for Human Rights.

Mishori said there's a mistaken belief that you can tell whether someone's had vaginal intercourse from a tear in a hymen, which can also tear from tampons or physical activity. Some women lack a hymen, a membrane that partly covers vaginas and can also change as a girl matures due to hormonal change.

"It's of course not only impossible to tell for sure, but also a violation of woman's rights," said retired obstetrician-gynecologist Jaana Rehnstorm, who is the founder and president of gender equality non-profit The Kota Alliance.

Such testing stems from cultural concerns about a woman's "purity" or "marriageability," Mishori said.

"If a woman is not a 'virgin,' her prospects of being married, her prospects of securing a family, her prospects of being thought of as an upstanding citizen can go down the drain," she said. "But these are very sexist ideas about women and sexuality."

But criminalizing the practice is "misguided," Mishori said.

"I think the solution is we have to think about education, we have to think about changing social norms," she said. "We have to think about breaking down stigma and educating not only the patients in front of us but the family members and community members."

"I think unfortunately, if you ban it or if you criminalize it, it will drive it underground," she said.

Such examinations have been documented in at least 20 countries. The extent of whether they are performed in the U.S. is unclear, though Mishori said that physicians have shared anecdotes of patients and parents requesting such testing.

"This happens in different communities — not just migrant or immigrant communities, but also maybe very, very religious communities," she said.

American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists President Ted Anderson has said the organization does not have guidance on so-called virginity testing. "As a medical organization, ACOG releases guidance on medically indicated and valid procedures," he said in a statement.

Solages called the practice "barbaric" and based on the idea that women are men's property. She said just one instance, such as T.I.'s, of such an examination happening is enough for a ban.

"Whether he was being serious or he was being sarcastic, he brought to the limelight that this is happening in the U.S.," she said.

Texas judge orders border wall fundraiser not to build

By NOMAAN MERCHANT Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — A local judge in South Texas has ordered supporters of President Donald Trump not to build their planned private border wall on a section of land near the Rio Grande.

State District Judge Keno Vasquez on Tuesday issued a temporary restraining order against We Build the Wall, which raised \$25 million after promising to build its own private barrier. Vasquez set a Dec. 17 hearing for We Build the Wall and its founder, Brian Kolfage, to appear in court in the South Texas city of

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Edinburg.

We Build the Wall announced on Facebook last month that it was starting construction on private land next to the Rio Grande, the river that separates the U.S. and Mexico in Texas. It posted videos that showed a construction foreman describing plans to install posts a short distance from the riverbank.

The announcement drew immediate criticism from the nonprofit National Butterfly Center, which is located near the site and filed the motion for the temporary restraining order. Wall opponents who say private construction could worsen erosion or push floodwaters onto other people's property in a storm.

The butterfly center and the advocacy group EarthJustice issued a statement Wednesday calling We Build the Wall's plans "illegal."

"The incredible biodiversity found here, supported and enhanced by 17 years of labor and millions of dollars of investment, is integral to the health of a fragile, but vibrant ecosystem and warrants protection against this unlawful incursion," said Dr. Jeffrey Glassberg, president of the North American Butterfly Association, in a statement.

The plans also drew the attention of the International Boundary and Water Commission, an agency set up by the U.S. and Mexico under treaty obligations where both sides agree to cooperate on any changes to the riverbank that could affect the other side.

The commission has asked We Build the Wall and Fisher Industries, its construction partner, for more information. Kolfage on Wednesday re-affirmed that his organization won't begin construction until it gets the commission's approval.

Kolfage said We Build the Wall overcame local opposition on its first project — less than 1 mile (1.6 kilometers) built near El Paso, Texas — that included pushback from officials and the water commission. So far, the construction in Sunland Park, New Mexico, is the only barrier the group has built since its founding in December 2018.

"The courts will prevail in our favor because, obviously, what we're doing is legal," he said, adding that claims to the contrary were "100% false."

668,000 will lose food stamp benefits under new work rules

By JULIET LINDERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Hundreds of thousands of Americans who rely on the federal food stamp program will lose their benefits under a new Trump administration rule that will tighten work requirements for recipients.

The move by the administration is the latest in its attempt to scale back the social safety net for low-income Americans. It is the first of three proposed rules targeting the Supplemental Nutrition Program, known as SNAP, to be finalized. The program feeds more than 36 million people.

The plan, announced Wednesday, will limit states from exempting work-eligible adults from having to maintain steady employment in order to receive benefits.

The Agriculture Department estimates the change would save roughly \$5.5 billion over five years and cut benefits for roughly 688,000 SNAP recipients. That's down from its original estimate that 750,000 people would lose benefits.

Under current rules, work-eligible able-bodied adults without dependents and between the ages of 18 and 49 can currently receive only three months of SNAP benefits in a three-year period if they don't meet the 20-hour work requirement. But states with high unemployment rates or a demonstrable lack of sufficient jobs can waive those time limits.

The new rule imposes stricter criteria states must meet in order to issue waivers. Under the plan, states can only issue waivers if a city or county has an unemployment rate of 6% or higher. The waivers will be good for one year and will require the governor to support the request.

The final rule will be published in the federal register Thursday, and go into effect in April.

Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue said the rule will help move people "from welfare to work."

"We want to encourage people by giving them a helping hand, but not an infinitely giving hand," he said.

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Congressional Democrats and advocates for the poor were quick to condemn the administration's actions. Sen. Debbie Stabenow, D-Mich., said the plan will only serve to punish workers whose jobs are seasonal or unreliable.

"This administration is out of touch with families who are struggling to make ends meet by working seasonal jobs or part time jobs with unreliable hours," said Stabenow, the top Democrat on the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry.

House Republicans unsuccessfully pushed to include SNAP work requirement provisions in last year's farm bill. Stabenow said "there's a reason" they didn't make it into the final version.

Robert Greenstein, president of the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, said the rule would disproportionately affect minorities. He urged better job training and a higher minimum wage instead.

"Denying them basic food and nutrition is not the route that a fair and compassionate administration of either party should take," he said in a statement.

Over the past year the Agriculture Department has proposed three significant changes to the food stamp program. In addition to restricting time limit waivers, the USDA has proposed eliminating broad-based categorical eligibility, a measure that allows recipients of certain non-cash public benefits to automatically qualify for food stamps, and changing how utility costs are factored into benefit calculations.

Brandon Lipps, deputy under secretary for the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food Nutrition and Consumer Services, did not say when the department will finalize the other two proposed rules.

The Urban Institute in a study released last month estimated that taken together, the three measures would affect roughly 2.2 million households, and 3.7 million individual beneficiaries.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., blasted the Trump administration's efforts to reduce public benefits.

"Instead of combating food insecurity for millions, connecting workers to good-paying jobs or addressing income inequality, the administration is inflicting their draconian rule on millions of Americans across the nation who face the highest barriers to employment and economic stability," Pelosi said in a statement.

James D. Weill, president of the Food Research and Action Center, said the plan is "deeply flawed and ill-conceived" and would lead to higher rates of hunger and poverty.

"The final rule would cause serious harm to individuals, communities, and the nation while doing nothing to improve the health and employment of those impacted by the rule," he said.

SNAP isn't the only public benefits program the Trump administration is trying to shrink. Last year the administration announced it would allow states to impose work requirements on Medicaid recipients. Department of Housing and Urban Development Secretary Ben Carson also considered a proposal that would have tripled rents for the poorest Americans and allowed local governments to implement work requirements on those receiving housing assistance, but ultimately backed off the plan.

Associated Press reporter Hope Yen contributed to this report.

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Associated Press reporter Hope Yen contributed to this report.

Israeli PM, meeting Pompeo, calls for more pressure on Iran

By ARON HELLER Associated Press

LISBON, Portugal (AP) — Israel's prime minister on Wednesday praised the tough U.S. sanctions on

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Iran, saying the financial pressure has sparked protests against Tehran's influence across the region and urging even stronger action.

Speaking alongside U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo before their meeting, Netanyahu said "the first subject I will raise is Iran, the second subject is Iran and so is the third."

"Iran is increasing its aggression as we speak," he added. "We are actively engaging in countering that aggression."

Israel considers Iran to be its greatest enemy, citing its military entrenchment in neighboring Syria and its support for militant groups across the region. Israel also accuses Iran of trying to develop a nuclear bomb — a charge Iran denies.

Earlier, Netanyahu said the U.S. sanctions were creating political and economic problems for Iran, and that while he has given up on European countries joining in the campaign, there is still a "wide spectrum" of options for ratcheting up the pressure.

Pompeo expressed support for recent protests in Iran, saying "these are people that are seeking freedom and a reasonable way to live, and they recognize the threat that's posed by the kleptocrats who are running the Islamic Republic of Iran."

Netanyahu last year welcomed the U.S. withdrawal from the international nuclear deal with Iran along with subsequent American sanctions. The sanctions, targeting Iran's vital oil sector, have hit the Iranian economy hard.

In recent weeks, Iranian forces have reportedly killed over 200 people in demonstrations against rising fuel prices. Demonstrations have also rocked pro-Iran governments in Lebanon and Iraq, forcing leaders in both countries to resign.

"We're seeing the Iranian empire totter. We see demonstrations in Tehran, demonstrations in Baghdad, demonstrations in Beirut," Netanyahu said earlier. "It's important to increase this pressure against Iranian aggression."

The Israeli leader said he would raise other issues with Pompeo, insisting the strong support shown by the Trump administration creates a rare opportunity for Israel to pursue other initiatives.

He is eager for a political boost at a time when he is facing legal and political struggles at home. Netanyahu last month was indicted on a series of corruption charges, and the country appears to be barreling toward an unprecedented third election in under 12 months.

Netanyahu's visit with Pompeo was their first since the secretary of state announced a new American doctrine last month that does not consider Israeli settlements a violation of international law. It was the latest in a string of diplomatic gifts to Netanyahu by the Trump administration.

The Israeli leader said he was "very grateful" for the statement on settlements.

Netanyahu had earlier said he would discuss his proposal to annex the Jordan Valley, a strategic part of the West Bank. Such a move would draw condemnation from the Palestinians and much of the world and almost certainly extinguish any remaining Palestinian hopes of gaining independence.

The Palestinians seek all of the West Bank, captured by Israel in 1967, as the heartland of their hoped-for state.

Pompeo did not respond to a question about the Jordan Valley.

Netanyahu also said he would discuss a proposed joint defense treaty with the Americans. The talks may also touch on an Israeli initiative to formalize already warming ties with Gulf states, who consider Iran a common enemy, by signing non-belligerency agreements.

There has been no indication that the Gulf states are on board, or that it has even been formally proposed to them.

The Trump administration already has delivered a number of landmark victories to Netanyahu, recognizing contested Jerusalem as Israel's capital and recognizing Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights, which it captured from Syria in 1967.

At the same time, the U.S. has cut hundreds of millions of dollars of aid to the Palestinians while shuttering the Palestinian diplomatic mission in Washington. The Palestinians have severed most ties with the U.S. and pre-emptively rejected a peace plan the Trump administration says it has prepared. It has not

said when it will release the plan.

The trip gave Netanyahu a brief respite as he fights for political survival in the wake of two inconclusive elections and a damning corruption indictment.

Neither Netanyahu nor his main rival, former military chief Benny Gantz, has been able to secure a parliamentary majority since September elections. If they cannot find a way out of the crisis by Dec. 11, new elections would be triggered.

Most observers believe a unity government between their parties, which together control a majority of seats in parliament, is the best way out of the crisis. But Gantz and his partners have ruled out a power-sharing rotation with a prime minister accused of serious crimes.

Israel's attorney general last month indicted Netanyahu for fraud, breach of trust and accepting bribes in three separate cases.

It is the first time in Israeli history that a sitting prime minister has been charged with a crime. Unlike mayors or regular ministers, the prime minister is not required by Israeli law to resign if indicted. Netanyahu is vowing to remain in office, where he is best positioned to fight the charges.

But lacking a parliamentary majority, and with the first signs of a rebellion brewing within his own ruling Likud party, he has entered the most uncertain chapter of his lengthy career.

Holidays bring phishing scam surge aimed at small business

By **JOYCE M. ROSENBERG AP Business Writer**

NEW YORK (AP) — The email looked legitimate, so Danielle Radin clicked on the link it contained, expecting to have her products included in a holiday gift guide.

"I instantly regretted it," says Radin, owner of Mantra Magnets, a website that sells wellness products. "It took me to some random website that looked like those pop-ups telling you that you've won the lottery."

Within days of that click three weeks ago, Radin began getting notifications that people in Ecuador, China and elsewhere were trying to access her email account. She wasn't surprised; she knew her San Diego-based small business had been the target of a phishing scam.

While cybercriminals strike at any time of the year, they're particularly active during the holiday and income tax filing seasons when computer users expect to see more emails — and scammers are increasingly targeting individual small businesses with phishing scams, sending messages that look legitimate but do harm instead. An unsuspecting owner or employee clicks on a link or attachment and like Radin finds that malicious software has invaded their PCs.

Cybersecurity experts find that criminals who used to blanket thousands of computer users in hopes of fooling a handful have refined their methods. Scammers find small businesses through websites, social media sites and by combing email address books. They also mine personal data from breaches at retailers and other large companies. Then, using a process called social engineering, they construct emails that increasingly look realistic, as if they truly come from a boss, colleague, friend, potential client or vendor, a bank and even the IRS.

"In the last year or two they've been running more professional campaigns," says Perry Toone, owner of Thexyz, an email service provider based in Toronto. "It can take a couple of minutes for me to determine that they're phishing scams. That tells me they're doing a very good job."

Radin believes the scammers found her through her website or a blog. Like many small businesses, she has an email address on her site, and the scammers figured out that she might be interested in selling via a holiday gift guide. But finding a target is one thing; the scam won't work unless it tricks an email recipient into clicking. Even those who are tech savvy can sometimes let their guard down. Radin was duped even though she's the author of "Everyone's Been Hacked," a book sold online.

Often a scam succeeds because there's just a shred of doubt in a computer user — the email is realistic enough that an owner or employee feels they need to read it. Sometimes a staffer clicks out of fear or a sense of responsibility, says Rahul Telang, a professor of information systems at Carnegie Mellon University's Heinz College.

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"It might not sound very personal, but you have an idea that you should go ahead — you feel like the email is coming from the boss," he says.

Computer users may not be looking as closely as they should at an email — there can be subtle signs that a message is trouble. Terry Cole, owner of Cole Informatics, a company whose work includes cybersecurity, recalls getting an email that truly seemed to be from a colleague. He was one of several people in the industry to receive it.

"It said that this colleague had sent me a secure private message that was ready for me to read and included a link to click. This was absolutely consistent with my normal experiences communicating with him," says Cole, whose company is located in Parsons, Tennessee.

Cole didn't do in that instance what he usually does and advises everyone to do: check the email address to be sure it's completely correct. When he clicked on the link, it took him to a bogus website claiming to be connected with Microsoft and asking him for his ID and password. He went no further and suffered no damage to his PC.

The holidays provide scammers with extra opportunities: emailed greeting cards, package shipment notices, offers of discounts — all of them false. Cybercriminals also seek personal information from owners and employees under the guise of needing them to create a W-2 or 1099 tax form; at this time of year, business owners' thoughts are turning to taxes.

"Something that claims to know you, your name, where you work and wants you to take some action is harder to spot," says Sherrod DeGrippo, senior director of threat research and detection at Proofpoint, a cybersecurity company based in Sunnyvale, California.

A common scam at holiday time is an email purportedly from the boss telling a staffer to go buy gift cards and email the numbers back, DeGrippo says.

"When it appears to come from a boss or CEO, I think there is that tendency among employees to follow those directions. They're playing on their emotions," she says.

Often, a scam succeeds in getting an employee to click on a personal email while on a company PC — many workers check their personal email while at work. Even though the email came through on a personal message, it's the company's machine that can be infected.

Companies can protect themselves in part by restricting employees' access to personal email sites, Telang says. He also suggests seminars to help staffers understand the risks that even legitimate-looking emails can present.

Some of the scams aim at monitoring a user's keystrokes. So anyone accessing a company or personal account of any sort can be giving a criminal access to their money or sensitive personal data. One tool to prevent a bank account from being emptied or a credit card maxed out is to have accounts with multifactor authentication; that requires a password and a separate code sent to a different device and that is different for each login.

Follow Joyce Rosenberg at www.twitter.com/JoyceMRosenberg. Her work can be found here: <https://apnews.com>

Trump calls Trudeau 'two-faced' as palace gossip goes viral

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

WATFORD, England (AP) — NATO leaders professed unity on Wednesday at a summit near London — but a spat over off-the-cuff chit chat at a royal reception rattled their show of solidarity.

U.S. President Donald Trump branded the leader of America's northern neighbor "two-faced" after Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau appeared to gossip about Trump in comments caught on camera and microphone.

Trudeau was seen standing in a huddle with French President Emmanuel Macron, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte and Britain's Princess Anne, daughter of Queen Elizabeth II at Tuesday evening's Buckingham Palace reception for NATO leaders.

Trudeau could be heard saying incredulously, "he takes a 40-minute press conference off the top."

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Trudeau confirmed that was a reference to Trump's long and unscheduled question-and-answer session with journalists earlier Tuesday.

Trudeau also said: "You just watched his team's jaws drop to the floor." He explained Wednesday that was in reference to Trump's decision to hold the next Group of Seven meeting at Camp David, the presidential retreat.

Footage of the palace reception was recorded by a pool camera. The clip was posted online by Canadian broadcaster CBC and has been viewed more than 5 million times.

Speaking Wednesday at the summit venue in Watford, outside London, Trump said Trudeau was likely upset that the U.S. president had broached the fact that Canada falls short of the NATO target of spending 2% of its gross domestic product on defense.

"Well he's two-faced," Trump told reporters. "And honestly, with Trudeau he's a nice guy, I find him to be a very nice guy but you know the truth is that I called him out on the fact that he's not paying 2% and I guess he's not very happy about it."

Trudeau had a quiet word and a handshake with Trump as he arrived at the summit Wednesday, and later tried to shrug off the episode.

"As you all know, we have a very good and constructive relationship between me and the president," Trudeau told reporters at a news conference.

Asked if the incident had given him pause for thought, Trudeau said that ensuring the focus of attention remained on matters of substance "is something that we're all going to try to do a little harder."

Johnson, meanwhile, professed ignorance when asked by reporters about the conversation.

"That's complete nonsense," he said, adding: "I really don't know what is being referred to there."

Leaders of the 29 NATO states met to mark the 70th anniversary of the military alliance — and trying to patch up differences over defense spending, the alliance's strategic direction and member nation Turkey's military action in northern Syria.

The two-day gathering ended with a show of unity, as the leaders declared their commitment to the alliance's principle of collective defense, saying in their final declaration that "an attack against one Ally shall be considered an attack against us all."

Rob Gillies in Toronto contributed to this report.

Climate simulations are mostly accurate, study finds

By **SETH BORENSTEIN** AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The computer models used to simulate what heat-trapping gases will do to global temperatures have been pretty spot-on in their predictions, a new study found.

After years of hearing critics blast the models' accuracy, climate scientist Zeke Hausfather decided to see just how good they have been. He tracked down 17 models used between 1970 and 2007 and found that the majority of them predicted results that were "indistinguishable from what actually occurred."

"By and large our models have gotten it right, plus or minus a little bit," said Hausfather, a University of California, Berkeley scientist who is climate and energy director at the Breakthrough Institute. "If they get it wrong, it's slightly on the warm side, but I wouldn't read too much into that."

Ten of the 17 were close to the temperatures that actually happened, said Hausfather, lead author of a study in Wednesday's journal *Geophysical Research Letters*.

But scientists actually got the physics right even more than that, Hausfather said. That's because they make two main assumptions when they model what will happen in the future. One is the physics of the atmosphere and how it reacts to heat-trapping gases. The other is the amount of greenhouse gases put into the air.

A few times, scientists were wrong in their predictions about the growth of carbon pollution, saying there would be more of the gases than there actually were, Hausfather said. If they got the amount of heat-trapping gases wrong, they then got the temperatures wrong.

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So Hausfather and colleagues, including NASA climate scientist Gavin Schmidt, looked at how well the models did on just the pure science, taking out the emissions factor. On that count, 14 of the 17 computer models accurately predicted the future.

The scientists also gave each computer simulation a "skill score" that essentially gave a percentage grade to each one. The average grade was a 69%.

One of the earliest computer models, made in 1970, got a 91%. What's so impressive about that is that at the time, climate change wasn't noticeable in the yearly temperature records like it is now, Hausfather said.

Stanford University climate scientist Noah Diffenbaugh, who wasn't part of the study, called the work creative and the results striking.

"Even without knowing what the current level of greenhouse gas concentrations would be, the climate models predicted the evolution of global temperature quite well," Diffenbaugh said in an email.

It's crucial that these models are accurate because "we have one planet Earth, so we can't conduct controlled experiments on the actual climate system," Diffenbaugh said.

The study was released as officials from almost 200 countries meet in Madrid for climate talks.

University of Illinois climate scientist Donald Wuebbles, who also wasn't part of the study, said climate change "deniers do a lot of weird things to misrepresent models. None of those analyses have been valid and they should be ignored. We should no longer be debating the basic science of climate change."

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

US feels the heat as Trump pulls out of global climate pact

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is aiming to make the annual U.N.-sponsored climate talks underway in Madrid the last ones for full participation by the United States, which is the world's No. 1 economy and the second-biggest carbon emitter.

Trump dismisses climate change and he thumbed his nose at previous climate talks by twice sending White House delegations to promote climate-degrading coal. He is due to complete the U.S. withdrawal from the landmark Paris global climate accord on Nov. 4, 2020, the day after next year's U.S. presidential election. If Trump loses that election, the next president could put the brakes on the withdrawal.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and other political and business leaders, scientists and activists are traveling to Spain this week and next to drive home a counter message: U.S. cities, states and businesses representing a sizable chunk of the U.S. population and economy are committed to a global effort to slash emissions.

"We're still in it," Pelosi told reporters at the talks, where she appeared with 14 other congressional Democrats on Monday to call climate change a growing threat to public health, economy and national security in the U.S..

Her comments were echoed by Mandela Barnes, Wisconsin's lieutenant governor.

"Regardless of whether or not we have the support of the nation's highest office or not, this work is going to get done," Barnes said.

This year's conference is expected to focus on fine-tuning the rules for reducing fossil fuel emissions by the roughly 200 signatories of the Paris agreement. It comes ahead of a big push at next year's climate summit for more ambitious emissions-cutting targets.

Experts say the United States' repeated about-faces on the threat of climate change likely have done lasting damage.

Even before Trump repudiated the deal backed by President Barack Obama, George W. Bush's administration renounced the landmark Kyoto emissions protocol, negotiated in the late 1990s during Bill Clinton's presidency, said Nigel Purvis, a State Department climate negotiator under Clinton and Bush.

"The international community has concluded the United States is an unreliable partner," Purvis said.

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Although the United States served formal notice last month that it intends to become the first country to withdraw from the Paris accord, it technically remains a participant until next Nov. 4.

Marcia Bernicat, a senior State Department official, is leading the official U.S. delegation.

The administration is taking part to ensure a level playing field that protects U.S. interests," the State Department said in a statement.

Advocates of the Paris accord say the U.S. withdrawal will leave American businesses to compete internationally under carbon-cutting rules set by other countries.

Behind the scenes, U.S. diplomats have played a helpful role despite the planned U.S. withdrawal, pushing for transparency and solid rules as countries commit to specific targets for cutting emissions, delegates from other nations say privately.

Publicly, Trump has catered to his base at the yearly talks. That includes dispatching a team to the 2017 and 2018 climate meetings to stage side events promoting coal-fired power production, one of the main sources of climate-wrecking emissions.

His administration stood by fossil fuels "unapologetically," White House energy envoy Wells Griffith said at the U.S. pro-fossil fuel event at last year's talks in Poland. That drew chants from the audience of "Shame on you!"

Griffith, who helped broker a coal deal in Ukraine, apparently refused a request by House impeachment investigators to discuss administration actions there. A woman who answered the phone at Griffith's office Tuesday said no one there would say whether he planned to appear this year's climate negotiations.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo last month repeated Trump's argument that the Paris accord was an economic burden for the United States. Pompeo said technological innovation and the free market have made for continued U.S. declines in climate-changing emissions.

It's true U.S. carbon emissions are still falling under Trump, according to a study by Global Carbon Project, a group of international scientists who track emissions.

The United States saw emissions drop 1.7% from 2018 to 2019, the same decline as in the European Union, even as China led in a 0.6% rise in emissions globally over the last year, the study said.

U.S. experts say the drop in U.S. fossil fuel emissions is due in part to the decline of coal-fired power plants, losers in marketplace competition against cheaper natural gas and renewable sources despite Trump's 2016 campaign pledges to save coal.

The 2018 midterm elections, which gave Democrats control of the House, showed that embracing top-down government action to cut fossil fuel emissions can be part of a winning platform, at least in some parts of the country.

In August 2017, 46% of Americans opposed U.S. withdrawal from the international agreement, while 29% supported it, according to a poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center and the Energy Policy Institute at the University of Chicago.

This August, another AP-NORC poll found nearly two-thirds of Americans said the federal government should bear a lot of responsibility for combating climate change.

"We hope ... this is only a temporary farewell" for the U.S., German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said last month at a diplomatic conference.

Regardless, he said, other governments can't count on Americans sorting out a lasting climate policy anytime soon.

Ultimately, said Carla Frisch, a former energy policy expert at the Department of Energy under three U.S. administrations, U.S. climate action demands U.S. climate regulation, making cutting emissions the law and policy of the land.

"We have to be all in," Frisch said. "We also need the federal government, to get where we need to go."

Associated Press writers Frank Jordans in Berlin, and Seth Borenstein and Hannah Fingerhut in Washington contributed to this report.

France shuts down: Mass strike hits trains, Eiffel Tower

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By **ANGELA CHARLTON and SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press**

PARIS (AP) — The Eiffel Tower shut down, France's vaunted high-speed trains stood still and teachers walked off the job as unions launched nationwide strikes and protests Thursday over the government's plan to overhaul the retirement system.

Paris authorities barricaded the presidential palace and deployed 6,000 police as activists - many in yellow vests representing France's year-old movement for economic justice - gathered for a major march through the capital.

Organizers hope for a mass outpouring of anger at President Emmanuel Macron for his centerpiece reform, seen as threatening the hard-fought French way of life. Macron himself remained "calm and determined" to push it through, according to a top presidential official.

The Louvre Museum warned of strike disruptions, and Paris hotels struggled to fill rooms. Many visitors - including the U.S. energy secretary - canceled plans to travel to one of the world's most-visited countries amid the strike.

Unprepared tourists discovered historic train stations standing empty Thursday, with about nine out of 10 of high-speed TGV trains canceled. Signs at Paris' Orly Airport showed "canceled" notices, as the civil aviation authority announced 20% of flights were grounded.

Some travelers showed support for the striking workers, but others complained about being embroiled in someone else's fight.

"I arrived at the airport this morning and I had no idea about the strike happening, and I was waiting for two hours in the airport for the train to arrive and it didn't arrive," said vacationer Ian Crossen, from New York. "I feel a little bit frustrated. And I've spent a lot of money. I've spent money I didn't need to, apparently."

Vladimir Madeira, a Chilean tourist who had traveled to Paris for vacation, said the strike has been "a nightmare." He hadn't heard about the protest until he arrived in Paris, and transport disruptions had foiled his plans to travel directly to Zurich on Thursday.

Beneath the closed Eiffel Tower, tourists from Thailand, Canada and Spain echoed those sentiments.

Subway stations across Paris were shuttered, complicating traffic - and prompting many commuters to use shared bikes or electric scooters despite near-freezing temperatures. Many workers in the Paris region worked from home or took a day off to stay with their children, since 78% of teachers in the capital were on strike.

Bracing for possible violence and damage along the route of the Paris march, police ordered all businesses, cafes and restaurants in the area to close. Authorities also issued a ban on protests on the Champs-Elysees avenue, around the presidential palace, parliament and Notre Dame Cathedral.

Police carried out security checks of more than 3,000 people arriving for the protest and detained 18 even before it started. Embassies warned tourists to avoid the protest area.

Elsewhere around France, thousands of red-vested union activists marched through cities from Marseille on the Mediterranean to Lille in the north.

The big question is how long the strike will last. Transport Minister Elisabeth Borne said she expects the travel troubles to be just as bad Friday.

Unions say it's an open-ended movement and hope to keep up momentum at least for a week, in hopes of forcing the government to make concessions.

Public sector workers fear Macron's reform will force them to work longer and shrink their pensions. And they see this fight as crucial to saving France's social safety net. Some private sector workers welcome the reform, but others support the strike.

Joseph Kakou, who works an overnight security shift in western Paris, walked an hour across the city to get home to the eastern side of town Thursday morning.

"It doesn't please us to walk. It doesn't please us to have to strike," Kakou told The Associated Press said. "But we are obliged to, because we can't work until 90 years old."

To Macron, the retirement reform is central to his plan to transform France so it can compete globally in the 21st century. The government argues France's 42 retirement systems need streamlining.

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While Macron respects the right to strike, he "is convinced that the reform is needed, he is committed, that's the project he presented the French in 2017" during his election campaign, the presidential official said. The official was not authorized to be publicly named.

After extensive meetings with workers, the high commissioner for pensions is expected to detail reform proposals next week, and the prime minister will release the government's plan days after that.

Claire Parker, Alex Turnbull, Nicolas Garriga, Mstyslav Chernov, Francois Mori in Paris contributed to this report.

Asian shares rise on optimism about US-China trade deal

By YURI KAGEYAMA AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Asian shares were rising Thursday amid renewed hopes a U.S. trade deal with China may be nearing, despite tough recent talk from President Donald Trump.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 gained 0.7% to 23,300.03 in early trading, while Australia's S&P/ASX 200 added nearly 1.0% to 6,671.90. South Korea's Kospi inched up nearly 0.1% to 2,070.44. Hong Kong's Hang Seng was up 0.6% at 26,228.38, while the Shanghai Composite rose 0.7% to 2,897.99.

Shares on Wall Street finished higher, with the gains snapped a three-day losing streak for the S&P 500. The U.S. market has swung sharply for months on every hint of progress about talks between the world's largest economies, and Asian regional indexes have tended to reflect those fluctuations.

In the latest development, Bloomberg News reported that U.S. negotiators expect a "Phase 1" trade agreement to be completed before U.S. tariffs are set to rise on Chinese products Dec. 15.

The report came a day after Trump said he wouldn't mind waiting until after the 2020 elections for a deal, a remark that officials reportedly called off the cuff but nevertheless sent markets skidding.

"The trade war will be the key driver of sentiment in the immediate few weeks," DBS Group analysts wrote in a report.

The S&P 500 rose 19.56 points, or 0.6%, to 3,112.76. Despite recovering some losses, the index is still down 0.9% for the week.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed 146.97 points, or 0.5%, to 27,649.78. The Nasdaq composite gained 46.03 points, or 0.5%, to 8,566.67. The Russell 2000 index of smaller company stocks picked up 11.27 points, or 0.7%, to 1,613.90.

ENERGY:

Benchmark U.S. crude lost 21 cents to \$58.22 a barrel. It climbed \$2.33, or 4.2%, to \$58.43 per barrel Wednesday, as members of OPEC prepare to meet later this week and vote on production levels. Brent crude, the international standard, slipped 7 cents to \$62.93.

CURRENCIES:

The dollar rose to 108.91 Japanese yen from 108.68 yen Wednesday. The euro weakened slightly to \$1.1084 from \$1.1088.

AP Business Writers Alex Veiga and Stan Choe contributed.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Thursday, Dec. 5, the 339th day of 2019. There are 26 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 5, 2013, Nelson Mandela, the anti-apartheid leader who became South Africa's first black president, died at age 95.

On this date:

In 1791, composer Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart died in Vienna, Austria, at age 35.

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In 1848, President James K. Polk triggered the Gold Rush of '49 by confirming that gold had been discovered in California.

In 1901, movie producer Walt Disney was born in Chicago.

In 1932, German physicist Albert Einstein was granted a visa, making it possible for him to travel to the United States.

In 1933, national Prohibition came to an end as Utah became the 36th state to ratify the 21st Amendment to the Constitution, repealing the 18th Amendment.

In 1945, five U.S. Navy torpedo bombers mysteriously disappeared after taking off from Fort Lauderdale, Florida, on a training mission with the loss of all 14 crew members; "The Lost Squadron" contributed to the legend of the Bermuda Triangle.

In 1952, the Great Smog of London descended on the British capital; the unusually thick fog, which contained toxic pollutants, lasted five days and was blamed for causing thousands of deaths.

In 1994, Republicans chose Newt Gingrich to be the first GOP speaker of the House in four decades.

In 1998, James P. Hoffa claimed the Teamsters presidency after challenger Tom Leedham conceded defeat in the union's presidential election.

In 2002, Strom Thurmond, the oldest and (until Robert Byrd overtook him) longest-serving senator in history, celebrated his 100th birthday on Capitol Hill. (In toasting the South Carolina lawmaker, Senate Republican leader Trent Lott seemed to express nostalgia for Thurmond's segregationist past; the resulting political firestorm prompted Lott to resign his leadership position.)

In 2003, the two makers of flu shots in the United States, Chiron and Aventis Pasteur, announced they had run out of vaccine and would not be able to meet a surge in demand.

In 2008, the Labor Department reported that an alarming half-million jobs had vanished in Nov. 2008 as unemployment hit a 15-year high of 6.7 percent. A judge in Las Vegas sentenced O.J. Simpson to 33 years in prison (with eligibility for parole after nine) for an armed robbery at a hotel room. (Simpson was released to parole on Oct. 1, 2017.)

Ten years ago: A jury in Perugia, Italy convicted American student Amanda Knox and her former Italian boyfriend, Raffaele Sollecito (rah-fy-EHL'-ay soh-LEH'-chee-toh), of murdering Knox's British roommate, Meredith Kercher, and sentenced them to long prison terms. (After a series of back-and-forth rulings, Knox and Sollecito were definitively acquitted in 2015 by Italy's highest court.) A nightclub blaze in Perm, Russia, killed more than 150 people. Spain won the Davis Cup for the second straight year.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama announced his choice of Ashton Carter to be the new U.S. secretary of defense. NASA's newest space vehicle, Orion, accomplished its first test flight, shooting out more than 3,600 miles from Earth for a hyperfast, hot return. Rolling Stone magazine issued an apology and cast doubt on its story of a young woman who said she'd been gang-raped at a fraternity party at the University of Virginia. The magazine said it had since learned of "discrepancies" in her account.

One year ago: Former President George H.W. Bush was mourned at a memorial service at Washington National Cathedral attended by President Donald Trump and former Presidents Barack Obama, Bill Clinton and Jimmy Carter along with their spouses; former president George W. Bush was among the speakers, eulogizing his dad as "the brightest of a thousand points of light." Canadian authorities said they had arrested the chief financial officer of China's Huawei (WAH'-way) Technologies for possible extradition to the United States on fraud charges. (Meng Wanzhou awaits extradition hearings scheduled for January, 2020.) Wisconsin Republican lawmakers passed measures to weaken the incoming Democratic governor and attorney general.

Today's Birthdays: Singer Little Richard is 87. Author Joan Didion is 85. Author Calvin Trillin is 84. Actor Jeroen Krabbe (yeh-ROHN' krah-BAY') is 75. Opera singer Jose Carreras is 73. Pop singer Jim Messina is 72. College Football Hall of Famer and former NFL quarterback Jim Plunkett is 72. World Golf Hall of Famer Lanny Wadkins is 70. Actress Morgan Brittany is 68. Actor Brian Backer is 63. Pro and College Football Hall of Famer Art Monk is 62. Country singer Ty England is 56. Rock singer-musician John Rzeznik (REZ'-nihk) (The Goo Goo Dolls) is 54. Country singer Gary Allan is 52. Comedian-actress Margaret Cho is 51. Writer-director Morgan J. Freeman is 50. Actress Alex Kapp Horner is 50. Actress Kali Rocha is 48. Rock musician

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Regina Zernay (Cowboy Mouth) is 47. Actress Paula Patton is 44. Actress Amy Acker is 43. Actor Nick Stahl is 40. Actor Adan Canto is 38. Rhythm-and-blues singer Keri Hilson is 37. Actor Gabriel Luna is 37. Actor Frankie Muniz is 34. Actor Ross Bagley is 31. Milwaukee Brewers All-Star outfielder Christian Yelich is 28.

Thought for Today: "Talent hits a target no one else can hit; Genius hits a target no one else can see."
— Arthur Schopenhauer, German philosopher (1788-1860).

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