

# Groton Daily Independent

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"WE WILL OPEN THE BOOK. ITS PAGES ARE BLANK. WE ARE GOING TO PUT WORDS ON THEM OURSELVES. THE BOOK IS CALLED OPPORTUNITY AND ITS FIRST CHAPTER IS NEW YEAR'S DAY."

-EDITH LOVEJOY PIERCE



**Skating Rink is Closed Today**

## Did you know Premium E30 . . .

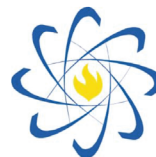
- ✓ Has a 94 Octane Rating ...  
...Higher than Premium
- ✓ Maintains OR Increases fuel mileage, on average
- ✓ \$3 - \$5 Per Tank Fuel Savings
- ✓ No Check Engine Lights
- ✓ No Mechanical Issues
- ✓ Increased Horsepower

Results are based on test by Glacial Lakes Energy

**Fill Up with  
Premium E30 as you travel  
this holiday season and make  
it a New Year's Resolution  
to use E30! It's good for your  
vehicle and it's good for the  
environment!**



**We are Challenging  
You to try  
Premium E30 in  
your non-flex  
fuel vehicle**



**Glacial Lakes  
Energy, LLC**  
Corn ♪ Ethanol ♪ Feed  
Watertown & Mina, SD

**OPEN:** Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

## Blizzards in South Dakota

A blizzard is more than just a storm: it can bring with it fear, sorrow, loss, cold, hunger and a place in the history books.

Elizabeth Bacon Custer had been told that the climate of Dakota Territory was "eight months of winter and four of very late fall." She probably felt that statement was only slightly exaggerated when she, her husband, Gen. George Armstrong Custer, and the 7th Cavalry arrived in Yankton, Dakota Territory, in April 1873. Soon after they arrived, the air grew chilly, the sun disappeared, and rain began to fall. The storm turned into a blizzard.

"The air was so thick with the whirling, tiny particles (of snow) that it was almost impossible to see one's hand held out before one. The snow was fluffy and thick, like wool, and fell so rapidly, and seemingly from all directions, that it gave me a feeling of suffocation as I stood outside," Custer wrote in "Boots and Saddles."

"In All its Fury" contains accounts of a blizzard that struck on Jan. 12, 1888. One of the stories is that of O.H. VanDyke. He was on his way to his farm eight miles south of Woonsocket with a load of coal when the storm hit. He turned his horses loose and burrowed into a snowbank with less than a foot of snow covering him for protection.

"To think that any person could live in a hole like that, with the thermometer standing at 35 below zero, seems unbelievable. Such is the case, however. I was dressed just warm enough for ordinary weather. So I lay there, tried to pray and sing, and even punched myself to keep awake," VanDyke recalled.

When he finally crawled out of the snow, his feet were frozen and his clothes were as stiff as boards. Having no choice but to try to walk to safety or perish, VanDyke made his way to a farmhouse. A doctor was able to save all but two toes on his left foot.

Others were not as fortunate as VanDyke. About 178 people in South Dakota perished in the blizzard, according to the monthly bulletin of the South Dakota State Historical Society.

The blizzard of Jan. 12, 1888, was dubbed the "Children's Blizzard" due to the high proportion of children numbered among the storm's victims.

A storm that struck the afternoon of Monday, Jan. 21, 1952, also affected children.

"It struck the Rosebud country so suddenly that many teachers and their pupils were marooned at the school houses or nearby homes for the duration of the storm. Occupants of stalled cars on the highways

SOUTH DAKOTA  
  
HISTORY & HERITAGE



**Plowing snow the winter before 1952 flood." It was taken on a country road off U.S. Highway 83 south of Selby the first day of Operation "Snow Bound.** South Dakota State Historical Society – State Archives photo.

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sought shelter in the nearest farm home or sat it out in the cars the full thirty hours or more," wrote Ethel L. Hellman in "Blizzard Strikes the Rosebud."

Forrest Huddle, a rancher in southwest Tripp County, found cattle caught in fence corners and along fence lines and frozen. The breathing of the cattle formed a heavy coating of ice on the lower and upper jaws, which caused them to smother.

While making an aerial search for missing neighbors, Huddle could see dead cattle strung for nearly five miles and estimated 100 dead. Cattle continued to die for the next few days.

Mrs. W.E. Farran shared a story in "Blizzard Strikes the Rosebud" about her son, Robert. On the second day of the storm, Robert left home at 9:30 a.m. to check on cattle about three miles away from their house. He found 40 dead. He had not returned home by noon. Feeling that Robert was near, his father went into the yard and saw Robert walking right on past the house, his face a solid mass of ice.

"Nine of our cattle died later. We have fifteen head left. But we have much to be thankful for – our son made it home," Mrs. Farran wrote.

Hellmann also compiled stories of people's experiences in a storm 14 years later that was rated as the worst in the history of the Dakotas. The storm swept into western South Dakota on Wednesday, March 2, 1966, and continued across the state until Saturday, March 5.

The Eagle Butte News reported, "At the end of the three day storm, we had received approximately 30 inches of snow, with winds up to 80 miles per hour. Most of the time, it was virtually impossible to see even across the street. Many people were snowed in their homes, that is, snow was piled so high in front of doors that it was impossible to get out without going through a window, or calling upon outside help to shovel them out. Nearly all streets in town were blocked with drifts up to fifteen feet high."

Mrs. S.S. Long of Timber Lake's account of the storm in "Dakota Blizzards of 1966" told how the storm splintered the limbs on their 50-year-old grove of trees. She felt they fared better than many neighbors, whose barn roofs caved in under the weight of snow.

She concluded her account with, "We have been here since 1910 and have gone through numerous blizzards but we hope we or none of our neighbors will see one like it again."

But despite our most fervent wishes, winter in South Dakota usually brings with it a blizzard or two.

This moment in South Dakota history is provided by the South Dakota Historical Society Foundation, the nonprofit fundraising partner of the South Dakota State Historical Society at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. Find us on the web at [www.sdhsf.org](http://www.sdhsf.org). Contact us at [info@sdhsf.org](mailto:info@sdhsf.org) to submit a story idea.



## Ten Remarkable Decisions by the South Dakota Supreme Court: The Best and Worst of 2019

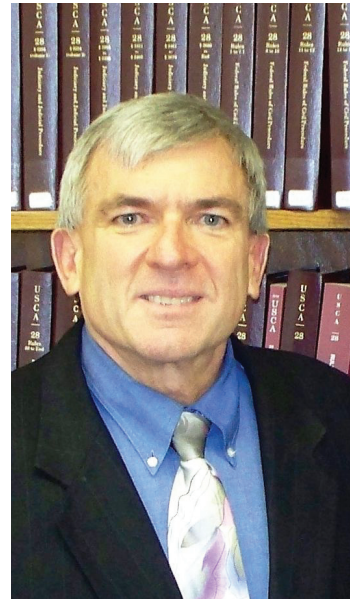
By: Roger Baron, Professor Emeritus and Sarah Baron Houy, Esquire

(Introductory Note by Roger: As informal reporter of the SD Supreme Court decisions, I have tracked what I believe are the most remarkable decisions of 2019. I am grateful to Sarah Baron Houy for assistance in co-authoring this report with me.)

In our humble opinion, Decisions 1-3 are remarkable because of their negative result and impact on South Dakota citizens; Decisions 4-10 are remarkable because of their positive result and impact on South Dakota citizens. Comments and observations set forth below are ours alone. They do not represent the views of the law school or of the University of South Dakota.

#1. Victim of Pit Bull Attack Denied Jury Trial. RIDLEY v. SIOUX EMPIRE PIT BULL RESCUE, 2019 S.D. 48. Plaintiff was viciously attacked by a pit bull as she was walking in a state park. Plaintiff did nothing to provoke the attack, which occurred when the pit bull broke free of its collar. Plaintiff sued the owner of the pit bull and the two persons in whose care the pit bull had been entrusted. The trial court granted summary judgment for the Defendants on the basis of affidavits. The SD Supreme Court affirmed in a 3-2 ruling. This case demonstrates the power of the motion for summary judgment. It also demonstrates that justice in this tragic situation has been decided by judges and not a jury. We believe that Justice Severson's comment, found in his dissenting opinion (in which Justice Kern joined), is spot on: "[T]he jury (not this Court) must consider and weigh [the] evidence."

#2. Taxpayer Denied Remedy for Taxes Wrongfully Assessed and Wrongfully Collected by Meade County. MATTER OF TAX REFUND OF HUNT COS., 2019 S.D. 26. In this case, Meade County was permitted to retain thousands (perhaps tens of thousands) of dollars wrongly collected because it had improperly assessed real property leased by the taxpayer from the federal government. Meade County taxed the leasehold interest at over \$35 million (the fee simple valuation), far in excess of the leasehold interest of around \$14-15 million. Meade County denied relief in this action for abatement and refund. The trial judge agreed that Meade County was in the wrong but denied relief upon a narrow and technical reading of the relevant statutes. The SD Supreme Court affirmed in a 3-1 decision. This case is significant because the judicial branch allowed Meade County to retain wrongfully collected tax proceeds. Our system of checks and balances failed. Furthermore, this decision provides incentive to taxing authorities and sends the message that they may act in derogation of the law and get away with it. We believe Justice Jensen's dissenting opinion was the right approach: "I would reverse and remand to the circuit court. I would direct the County to determine the amount of invalid tax paid by Hunt on the exempt portion of the federal government's fee interest for the tax years 2012 to 2014. The County should then exercise its discretion under SDCL 10-18-1



**Roger Baron**  
Professor Emeritus



**Sarah Baron Houy**  
Esquire

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and SDCL 10-18-1.1 to consider whether any portion of the taxes paid by Hunt on the exempt property should be refunded.”

#3. Same Sex Spouse Denied Benefits. *ANDERSON v. S.D. RETIREMENT SYS.*, 2019 S.D. 11: This decision affirmed the lower court’s ruling denying survivor benefits for a deceased retired police officer to a same-sex spouse. The ruling is sound under applicable statutes and retirement fund provisions, because the partners were not lawfully permitted to be married in SD at the time the employee retired on May 1, 2012. But, this couple had been living together in SD since 1988; they were lawfully married under Iowa law in 2009; and, they went through a marriage ceremony again in 2015, some 23 days after the United States Supreme Court legalized same sex marriages in this country. Nonetheless, benefits were denied because their 2009 Iowa marriage was unlawful in South Dakota on the date the employee retired, May 1, 2012. This case makes our list because it is incredibly sad and we believe the result is manifestly unfair. Edmund Burke is credited with saying, “In a democracy, the majority of the citizens is capable of exercising the most cruel oppressions upon the minority.” This decision bears witness to Burke’s observation.

# 4. 4th Amendment’s Fruit of Poisonous Tree Doctrine Upheld. *STATE v. TENOLD*, 2019 S.D. 66. This case is significant because it is a strong vindication of the 4th Amendment rights of a South Dakota citizen. This is a unanimous decision, overturning the trial court’s adverse ruling for a criminal defendant who was unlawfully stopped by police. Additionally, this decision brings teeth to the 4th Amendment in South Dakota by enforcing the fruit of the poisonous tree doctrine. Admittedly, there have been times in the past when one might have wondered if the SD Supreme Court would step up and aggressively enforce the 4th Amendment in state court criminal prosecutions. This opinion is a breath of fresh air and a sign that the 4th Amendment is alive and well in South Dakota.

#5. SD Supreme Court Provides Timely and Cogent Answer to Important Issue Pending in Federal Court. *BRIGGS v. BRIGGS*, 2019 S.D. 37: This decision answers a question certified to it by the U.S. District Court for South Dakota, to wit: “Whether South Dakota recognizes tortious interference with inheritance or expectancy of inheritance.” The SD Supreme Court’s answer is, “No.” This decision makes our list because it illustrates the favorable interplay that can exist between federal courts and state courts. Kudos to the federal judge for certifying this question and kudos to the SD Supreme Court for providing a cogent and timely answer to an important question.

# 6. Rule of Civil Procedure Invoked to Permit Decision on the Merits. *HUBER v. HANSON CTY. PLANING COMM’N.*, 2019 S.D. 64. This decision reverses the trial court and allows an inappropriately filed petition for writ of prohibition to proceed as petition for writ of certiorari. This is a good decision, resting upon the flexibility in pleading afforded in Rule 8 (SDCL 15-6-8). One of us having taught Civil Procedure for 30 years is especially drawn to this decision. We are both fans of judicial opinions that foster decisions on the merits and not upon technicalities.

#7. Public Duty Rule Restricted to Law Enforcement and Public Safety Issues. *MAHER v. CITY OF BOX ELDER*, 2019 S.D. 15: The trial court granted summary judgment for the City on the basis of the public duty rule in regard to claim by plaintiff (owner of a mobile home park) for damages for the breakage of his water lines, alleging negligent operation of the City water system. The SD Supreme Court reversed and remanded, finding the public duty rule not applicable because it is limited to issues involving law enforcement and public safety. The basis of the public duty rule is that undertakings of law enforcement relate to “a general duty to the entire public, not to plaintiffs as individuals.” Typically, the application of the public duty rule arises when a plaintiff is injured by the misconduct of a 3rd party but argues that such misconduct might have been prevented by law enforcement personnel. The proprietary act of providing water and negligence therein is governed by the general principals of tort law and is not subject to the

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public duty rule. The SD Supreme Court has addressed many cases involving applications of the public duty rule over the last several years, and this opinion presents a nice review of those decisions. This case makes our list because the public duty rule is fascinating and full of nuances.

# 8. Subrogation Denied to Insurer Seeking to Collect from Its Own Insured. *JAMES v. STATE FARM*, 2019 S.D. 31. This decision holds that an automobile insurer is not permitted to be subrogated against one of its own insureds – a tortfeasor who injured another insured, who received payments from his “medical payments” coverage. The SD Supreme Court rests its ruling primarily on a failure of policy language to support such a claim, but the opinion also observes that, “One limitation to the doctrine of subrogation, however, is the anti-subrogation rule, a defense that prohibits insurers from suing their own insureds to recover a loss.” The opinion cites Nebraska authority in support of this anti-subrogation principal. This case makes our list because subrogation is one of our favorite topics. Subrogated recoveries are not reflected in insurance premiums and constitute windfall profits for insurers.

#9. Attorney Fees Assessed on Basis Frivolous/Malicious Prosecution Statute. *HEALY v. OSBORNE*, 2019 S.D. 56. In this “bitter family dispute,” the trial court ruled for the defendants and awarded them attorney fees and costs of \$83,295.42. The SD Supreme Court affirmed and awarded an additional amount of \$25,067.33 for appellate attorney fees. This case makes my list because the attorney fee awards were premised on the rarely-invoked SDCL 15-17-51 which authorizes such awards when the action filed by the Plaintiff is “frivolous or brought for malicious purposes.” [Note, in this case the plaintiff had, inter alia, propounded “a total of 2,304 discovery requests to six different defendants.”]

#10. Presumptive Probation Must Be Extended to Repeat Offender. *STATE v. ROEDDER*, 2019 S.D. 9. This case reversed the trial court because of its refusal to consider presumptive suspended sentencing under SDCL 22-6-11. The trial court found that this Defendant was ineligible to receive the presumptive suspended sentencing consideration because he was on parole and had five prior felony convictions. The SD Supreme Court disagreed and held that the trial court must nonetheless find “aggravating circumstances” to justify departure from the presumption. The result in this case is fascinating and justified by the statutory language.

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## Upcoming Events

### Thursday, January 2, 2020

No School-Christmas Break

6:30 p.m.: Girls' basketball hosts Britton-Hecla. Varsity game ONLY starting at 6:30 p.m.

### Friday, January 3, 2020

Big Question Debate

No School-Christmas Break

5 p.m.: 7th/8th grade wrestling tournament at Milbank

6:30 p.m.: Boys' Basketball at Britton. Junior varsity at 6:30 p.m. followed by varsity game.

### Saturday, January 4, 2020

9:30 a.m.: Wrestling Tournament at Webster

### Sunday, January 5, 2020

2:00pm- 6:00pm: Open Gym at GHS Arena

### Monday, January 6, 2020

School resumes

6:30 p.m.: Boys' Basketball hosts Webster Area. JV starts at 6:30 p.m. followed by varsity game.

### Tuesday, January 7, 2020

7 p.m.: City Council Meeting at the Groton Community Center

UDFL Student Congress at Groton Area High School

6 p.m.: Wrestling Tri-angular at Oakes, N.D.

6:30 p.m.: Girls' Basketball hosts Aberdeen Roncalli. JV starts at 6:30 p.m. followed by varsity game.

(This game has a date change - it was originally scheduled for January 24th.)

### Thursday, January 9, 2020

6:00 p.m.: Wrestling at Redfield

### Friday, January 10, 2020

Basketball double header hosting Hamlin (Girls junior varsity at 4 p.m., Boys junior varsity at 5 p.m., Girls varsity at 6:30 p.m., Boys varsity to follow)

### Saturday, January 11, 2020

12:30 p.m.: Girls' Varsity Basketball Classic at Redfield. Groton Area vs. St. Francis Indian School

Boys at Varsity Classic at the Sanford Pentagon

10 a.m.: Wrestling at Miller Tournament

### Sunday, January 12, 2020

2:00pm- 6:00pm: Open Gym at GHS Arena

### Monday, January 13, 2020

6 p.m.: Junior high basketball games at Warner. 7th grade at 6 p.m., 8th grade at 7 p.m.

6 p.m.: Junior high wrestling tournament in Groton

7 p.m.: School Board Meeting

### Tuesday, January 14, 2020

5:15 p.m.: Combined 7th/8th grade boys basketball game vs. Aberdeen Christian at the Aberdeen Civic Arena

6:30 p.m.: Boys' basketball game at Aberdeen Christian High School. Junior varsity at 6:30 p.m. followed by varsity game.

### Wednesday, January 15, 2020

8:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m.: MathCounts at Aberdeen Simmons Middle School

### Thursday, January 16, 2020

6:30 p.m.: Girls' Basketball hosts Sisseton. JV game at 6:30 p.m. followed by varsity game.

### Friday, January 17, 2020

Silver Bowl Debate at Sioux Falls

No School - Faculty Inservice

6 p.m.: Boys' basketball at Sisseton. JV game at 6 p.m. followed by varsity game.



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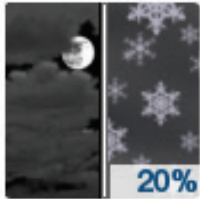
**New Year's Day**



Mostly Cloudy

**High: 36 °F**

**Tonight**



Mostly Cloudy then Slight Chance Snow

**Low: 24 °F**

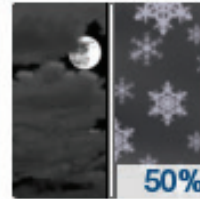
**Thursday**



Partly Sunny

**High: 29 °F** ↓

**Thursday Night**



Mostly Cloudy then Chance Snow

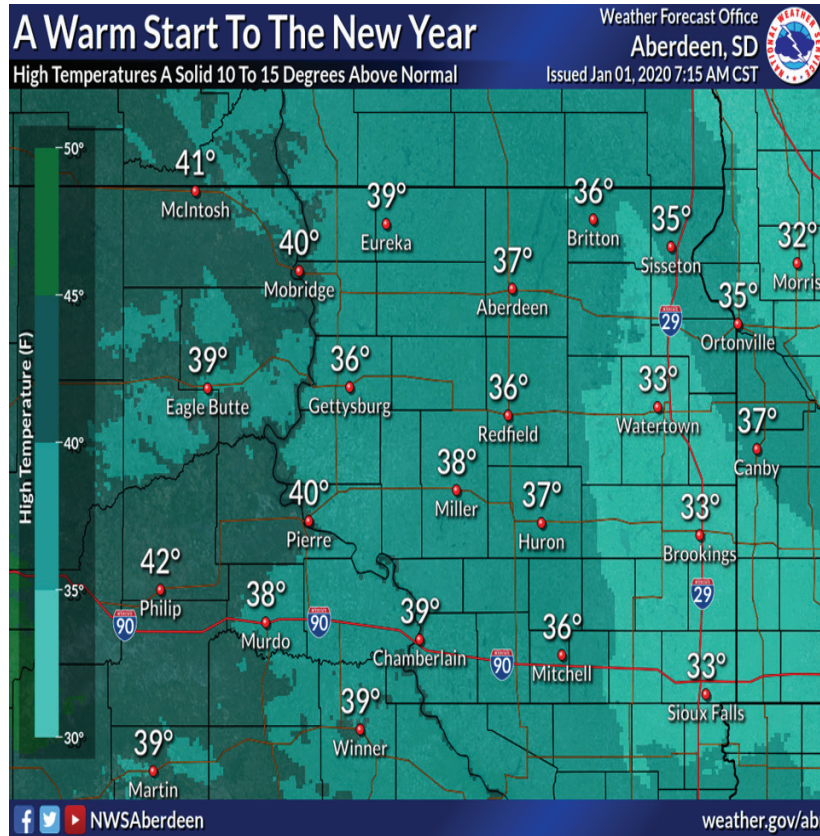
**Low: 21 °F**

**Friday**



Chance Snow then Partly Sunny

**High: 29 °F**



The first day of 2020 should be a warm one. High temperatures today, despite the expansive snowfield, should reach into the 30s for most of us.



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## Today in Weather History

January 1, 1960: The winter storm began on New Year's Eve as a low-pressure center moved from Colorado northeast to the Great Lakes. Snowfall ranged from 5 to 10 inches across central and northeast South Dakota. High winds on the 1st and 2nd caused low visibilities and drifted highways over affecting holiday travel. There were scattered power and telephone outages due to breakage from wind and ice. The storm wined down in the afternoon of the 2nd.

1864: A historic cold blast of air charged southeast from the Northern Plains to Ohio Valley. Chicago had a high temperature of -16°. A farmer near Hometown, Indiana, reported the same high temperature as Chicago, with a low of 21 degrees below zero. He remarked "rough day" in his weather diary. Minneapolis had a temperature of 25 degrees below zero at 2 PM. St. Louis, Missouri saw an overnight low of 24 degrees below zero. The Mississippi was frozen solid with people able to cross it.

1886: Norway's coldest night on record occurred as the low temperature dropped to -60.5°F at Karasjok. Meteorologisk Institutt.

1934 - Heavy rain which began on December 30th led to flooding in the Los Angeles Basin area of California. Flooding claimed the lives of at least 45 persons. Walls of water and debris up to ten feet high were noted in some canyon areas. Rainfall totals ranged up to 16.29 inches at Azusa, with 8.26 inches reported in Downtown Los Angeles. (The Weather Channel)

1935: The Associated Press Wire Photo Service made its debut, delivering the great weather maps, twice each day to newspapers across the country. The first photo transmitted was a plane crash in the Adirondack of New York on this day. The plane crashed during the evening hours on December 28, but the rescue did not occur until New Year's Day. Click [HERE](#) for more information from the New York History Blog.

1949 - A six day blizzard began over the Northern Rockies and the Great Plains. The storm produced the most adverse weather conditions in the history of the west. (David Ludlum)

1964: A snowstorm struck the Deep South on December 31st, 1963 through January 1st, 1964. Meridian MS received 15 inches of snow, 10.5 inches blanketed Bay St Louis MS, and 4.5 inches fell at New Orleans, LA. The University of Alabama Head Football Coach "Bear" Bryant said that the only thing that could have messed up his team's chances in the Sugar Bowl against Ole Miss in New Orleans, LA was a freak snowstorm. Well, much to his chagrin, 4.5 inches of snow fell the night before the big game. Alabama won the game 12-7 anyway. Freezing temperatures then prevailed for New Year's Day. NWS Nashville and NWS Huntsville.

1979 - The temperature at Maybell CO plunged to 60 degrees below zero to tie the state record set back in 1951 at Taylor Park. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A winter storm brought rain and snow and high winds to the Southern and Middle Atlantic Coast Region. The storm, which occurred in a period of unusually high astronomical tides, produced a tide of 9.4 feet at Myrtle Beach SC (their highest since Hurricane Hazel in 1954) which caused a total of 25 million dollars damage in South Carolina. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Arctic cold gripped the north central U.S. The morning low of 31 degrees below zero at Alamosa CO was a record for the date. Squalls in the Great Lakes Region produced 17 inches of snow at Elmira NY. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Those who woke up New Year's morning unable to see much farther than the end of their nose had a good excuse, at least in the central U.S., as dense fog prevailed from Texas to Wisconsin. (National Weather Summary)

1999: The start of 1999 was ushered in with snow, ice, and freezing weather across central and south-central Nebraska. On New Year's Day, a steady snowfall along and north of Interstate 80 dumped from 1 to 5 inches of snow. By late morning, freezing drizzle developed southeast of Hastings and eventually coated area roads with a layer of ice. Light snow later that evening made travel even more treacherous. Several accidents occurred on the Interstates and Highway 30. Once the ice and snow ended, arctic air spilled across the area abroad 20 to 30 mph north winds. Blowing and drifting of the fallen snow caused reduced visibilities for a time on the 2nd. Temperatures dropped to 5 to 15 below zero through midday the 3rd.



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## A GOOD NAME FOR THE NEW YEAR

"Mr. Edison," said his secretary, "we just had a customer call and complain about a defective battery that we manufactured." Surprised at the news, Thomas Edison wondered what might have caused the problem. Realizing that other batteries would have the same problem, he wondered what he should do. Discouraged, but not defeated, he began a large advertising campaign, asking people to return their defective batteries for a complete refund. The amount involved in the transaction was staggering. However, the money he lost meant nothing to him after he compared the cost of the recall to the value he placed on his name and reputation.

It is critical for Christians to have an honorable and respected name. Whatever we do, whatever we say, or wherever we go, we are representatives of the Lord Jesus Christ. If we fail to live lives of grace and beauty, honesty and integrity, purity and righteousness, our witness will be disregarded, our motives questioned, and our testimony impaired. And, when that occurs, God's name is dishonored, and His message disgraced.

Living righteous lives will eliminate our need to worry about being exposed or not living up to what God expects of us. He calls us to live lives that are consistent with His Word, to follow Him and His eternal directions carefully. Great riches are worthless if we get them dishonestly or by deceiving others. "Earning" a good name by honoring God is worth much more than money.

Prayer : Father, we ask You to work in us and through us so that we may represent You faithfully in all we do and say. May we earn a good name to honor You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Proverbs 22:1 Choose a good reputation over great riches; being held in high esteem is better than silver or gold.



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## 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)
- 04/26/2020 Father/Daughter dance.
- 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)
- Bingo: every Wednesday at the Legion Post #39

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## News from the Associated Press

### Man arrested in Sioux Falls casino robbery

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Sioux Falls police say a man was arrested after allegedly robbing a casino by dousing a clerk with gasoline and threatening to light the employee on fire.

The Argus Leader reports police responded to a report of a man walking into a casino near downtown around 8 a.m. on Tuesday, throwing a cup of gasoline on the clerk and threatening to light her on fire if she didn't give him cash from the register.

Police say she complied and he left the scene with an undisclosed amount of money.

Detectives found and arrested the 70-year-old man at a hotel. He faces charges of first-degree robbery and aggravated assault.

Police say the man was identified because he was wearing the same shoes and coat caught on surveillance video of the robbery.

### SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Mega Millions

30-44-49-53-56, Mega Ball: 11, Megaplier: 3

(thirty, forty-four, forty-nine, fifty-three, fifty-six; Mega Ball: eleven; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$55 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$220 million

### Tuesday's Scores

By The Associated Press

#### BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

Elk Point-Jefferson 75, Irene-Wakonda 57

Stanley County 64, Jones County 61

Big Bo Classic

Potter County 63, Langford 49

Rapid City Christian 67, North Central Co-Op 27

Wolsey-Wessington 62, Waverly-South Shore 37

Chadron Tournament

Championship

Custer 54, Chadron, Neb. 50

Etringer Classic

Arlington 69, Milbank 45

Baltic 79, Deubrook 76

Castlewood 82, Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 75, OT

Dell Rapids 67, Dell Rapids St. Mary 64

Estelline/Hendricks 57, Deuel 53

Garretson 54, Elkton-Lake Benton 46, OT

Hamlin 45, Flandreau 43

Lake Preston 58, Chester 30

Madison 45, Colman-Egan 42

Sioux Valley 75, DeSmet 60

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Parkston Classic  
Bon Homme 51, Menno 42  
Dakota Valley 78, Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 46  
Parker 55, Platte-Geddes 49  
**GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL**  
Hanson 40, Avon 32  
Irene-Wakonda 52, Elk Point-Jefferson 44  
Jones County 48, Stanley County 24  
Langford 60, Potter County 37  
Big Bo Classic  
Waverly-South Shore 53, Wolsey-Wessington 47  
Chadron Tournament  
Championship  
Custer 36, Valentine, Neb. 17  
Parkston Classic  
Corsica/Stickney 54, Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 51  
Redfield 55, Canistota-Freeman 45  
Scotland 66, Parker 34

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

## Casino robbery suspect threatened to set fire to cashier

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A 70-year-old man robbed a Sioux Falls casino Tuesday after threatening to set the cashier on fire, police said.

Police were called to the casino near Sioux Falls around 8 a.m. Police said the man threw a cup of gasoline on the clerk, then threatened to set her on fire. She gave the suspect cash from the register, and he left the building.

Police later arrested the suspect at a hotel. Detectives noticed the man was wearing the same shoes the robber wore in the surveillance video. The same coat worn during the robbery was found in his room.

The man faces charges of first-degree robbery and aggravated assault.

## Governor appoints Rapid City businesswoman to state Senate

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Gov. Kristi Noem has appointed a Rapid City businesswoman to fill a vacant Senate seat for the 2020 legislative session.

Noem named Jessica Castleberry on Tuesday to take the seat that opened when Republican Lyndi DiSanto resigned in November.

Castleberry runs several preschools in Rapid City and is an instructor at Black Hills State University. She serves on the Rapid City Area Schools Strategic Planning Committee and was previously president of the South Dakota Association for the Education of Young Children.

Noem called Castleberry “an accomplished businesswoman and a proven public servant.”

## Noem: Weather among biggest challenges in first year

By Stephen Groves Associated Press

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Gov. Kristi Noem said the storms, tornadoes and flooding that devastated communities across the state was one of the biggest challenges she faced in her first year in office, in a wide-ranging interview in which she also promised to focus on growing the economy and improving her working relationship with lawmakers in the new year.

The first-term Republican governor called it “a difficult year, all in all, for the state” due to flooding that



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strained state resources and had her administration working overtime and traveling thousands of miles to respond to disasters. Noem said she had successes, naming her work to encourage foster families, address drug addiction and spread broadband internet access in rural areas.

And she also called herself "teachable," a nod to some lawmakers who said she failed to communicate well on some policy decisions.

The former congresswoman took office in January last year, and almost as soon as the Legislature ended found herself leading the state's response to severe storms in March and April that laid the foundation for what seemed a year of flooding.

South Dakota recorded the highest amount of precipitation in its history, beating the previous mark set in 1915. By the end of November, South Dakota already had more than 30 inches (76.2 centimeters) of precipitation, topping 1915's mark of just under 28 inches (71.12 centimeters), according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Floods and tornadoes caused millions of dollars' worth of damage and the state led the nation in unplanted farmland.

"You're focused on getting priorities and the state budget passed, and immediately went into getting people through a crisis situation and helping them recover," Noem said.

The state got four presidential disaster declarations, in addition to the Oglala Sioux Tribe receiving one for storms and flooding. Noem's administration is offering loans to counties, towns and tribes to fund recovery.

Noem acknowledged concerns about more flooding in 2020 with the forecast calling for a wet winter. That could add to the difficulty for farmers, who left nearly 4 million acres unplanted. The slump in the state's largest industry affected South Dakota's economy and budget.

Noem said she'll respond by focusing on "growing our economy together" next year.

When asked to assess her first year in office, Noem declined to grade herself. She said she wanted to remain "teachable" and acknowledged she could do a better job communicating "so that people know not just what we're doing, but why and the reason behind it."

Legislative leaders from both parties said they were sometimes frustrated by a disjointed relationship between Noem's administration and the Republican-dominated legislature. Senate Majority Leader Kris Langer, a Republican from Dell Rapids, said she felt Noem's second session would be smoother, with legislation on mental health and addiction treatment in the works and both Noem and majority Republicans in support.

Senate Minority Leader Troy Heinert, D-Mission, worried that the recent departure of the governor's chief of staff would be a setback heading into the session.

Noem drew national attention in November for the state's "Meth: We're on it" campaign, which received some snickers on social media. She defended the campaign, saying it was achieving its goal of drawing attention to a serious problem. Noem said she knew the campaign was "provocative," but was surprised by the amount of attention it received. She plans to follow the \$1.4 million ad campaign with funding for addiction treatment and law enforcement.

To get that funding, the legislature will have to pass it in the budget. The session begins on Jan. 14 when Noem will deliver her second State of the State address.

## Park fees increase in South Dakota

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The entrance fee for South Dakota parks will increase in the new year for the first time since 2014.

The South Dakota Department of Game, Fish and Parks says fee increases will generate another \$3 million in revenue to maintain and repair park amenities and roads and bridges, said GFP deputy secretary Kevin Robling.

"We need to make sure our parks are meeting the high standards of excellence that all our park visitors expect, now and for generations to come," Robling said.

Annual licenses to state parks will be \$36 with a daily fee of \$8. In campgrounds, prime campsites will increase to \$26, preferred sites to \$23 and modern to \$20. Fees for non-electric, tent-only sites will be

going down in some cases. These sites will now be \$15 statewide.

A 7-day motorcycle pass to Custer State Park will be \$20.

## Man accused in fatal reservation shooting held without bail

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A man accused in a fatal shooting on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation will remain in jail until he goes to trial.

Federal Magistrate Judge Daneta Wollmann Monday ordered Colton Bagola detained without bond after determining he would be a flight risk and a danger to the community.

Bagola, 26, was arrested Dec. 20 following a brief standoff with law enforcement in Rapid City. He's accused of killing 30-year-old Sloane Bull Bear in Pine Ridge on Dec. 17. Bagola has pleaded not guilty in federal court to second-degree murder.

During an initial appearance last week, Assistant Public Defender Thomas Diggins asked Wollmann to hold a detention hearing to decide whether Bagola should be jailed or released. But, Friday Diggins filed a document saying his client consented to detention and the hearing was canceled.

Family members tipped law enforcement on Bagola's whereabouts, resulting in his arrest.

Bagola shot Bull Bear early in the morning during a gathering at a Pine Ridge apartment after he made comments about wanting or needing to kill someone, the Rapid City Journal reported.

## Australia sending aid to wildfire towns as death toll rises

By TRISTAN LAVALETTE Associated Press

PERTH, Australia (AP) — Australia deployed military ships and aircraft Wednesday to help communities ravaged by apocalyptic wildfires that have left at least 17 people dead nationwide and sent thousands of residents and holidaymakers fleeing to the shoreline.

Navy ships and military aircraft were bringing water, food and fuel to towns where supplies were depleted and roads were cut off by the fires. Authorities confirmed three bodies were found Wednesday at Lake Conjola on the south coast of New South Wales, bringing the death toll in the state to 15.

More than 175 homes have been destroyed in the region.

Some 4,000 people in the coastal town of Mallacoota fled to the shore as winds pushed a fire toward their homes under a sky darkened by smoke and turned blood-red by flames. Stranded residents and vacationers slept in their cars, and gas stations and surf clubs transformed into evacuation areas. Dozens of homes burned before winds changed direction late Tuesday, sparing the rest of the town.

Victoria Emergency Commissioner Andrew Crisp told reporters the Australian Defence Force was moving naval assets to Mallacoota on a supply mission that would last two weeks and helicopters would also fly in more firefighters since roads were inaccessible.

"I think that was our biggest threat in terms of what are we doing with the children if we need to go in the water to protect ourselves given the fact that they are only 1, 3 and 5," tourist Kai Kirschbaum told ABC Australia. "If you're a good swimmer it doesn't really matter if you have to be in the water for a longer time, but doing that with three kids that would have been, I think, a nightmare."

Conditions cooled Wednesday, but the fire danger remained very high across the state, where four people are missing.

"We have three months of hot weather to come. We do have a dynamic and a dangerous fire situation across the state," Crisp said.

In the New South Wales town of Conjola Park, 89 properties were confirmed destroyed and cars were melted by Tuesday's fires. More than 100 fires were still burning in the state Wednesday, though none were at an emergency level. Seven people have died this week, including a volunteer firefighter, a man found in a burnt-out car and a father and son who died in their house.

Firefighting crews took advantage of easing conditions on Wednesday to restore power to critical infrastructure and conduct some back burning, before conditions were expected to deteriorate Saturday as

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high temperatures and strong winds return.

"There is every potential that the conditions on Saturday will be as bad or worse than we saw yesterday," New South Wales Rural Fire Service Deputy Commissioner Rob Rogers said.

The early and devastating start to Australia's summer wildfires has led authorities to rate this season the worst on record and reignited debate about whether Prime Minister Scott Morrison's conservative government has taken enough action on climate change. Australia is the world's largest exporter of coal and liquefied natural gas, but Morrison rejected calls last month to downsize Australia's lucrative coal industry.

Morrison won a surprise third term in May. Among his government's pledges was to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 26% to 28% by 2030 — a modest figure compared to the center-left opposition Labor party's pledge of 45%.

The leader of the minor Australian Greens party, Richard Di Natale, demanded a royal commission, the nation's highest form of inquiry, on the wildfire crisis.

"If he (Morrison) refuses to do so, we will be moving for a parliamentary commission of inquiry with royal commission-like powers as soon as parliament returns," Di Natale said in a statement.

About 5 million hectares (12.35 million acres) of land have burned nationwide over the past few months, with at least 17 people dead and more than 1,000 homes destroyed.

Some communities canceled New Year's fireworks celebrations, but Sydney's popular display over its iconic harbor controversially went ahead in front of more than a million revelers. The city was granted an exemption to a total fireworks ban in place there and elsewhere to prevent new wildfires.

Smoke from the wildfires meant Canberra, the nation's capital, on Wednesday had air quality more than 21 times the hazardous rating to be reportedly the worst in the world.

The smoke has also wafted across the Tasman Sea and into New Zealand.

## Police, protesters clash in New Year's rally in Hong Kong

HONG KONG (AP) — Hundreds of thousands of people packed Hong Kong streets for an annual New Year's Day protest march as the monthslong pro-democracy movement extended into 2020 with further violence between police and demonstrators.

At least five people were arrested for criminal damage as hard-line, black-clad youths broke off from the main group of marchers and attacked banks and ATM machines with spray paint, hammers and Molotov cocktails. They smashed crossing lights, ripped bricks from sidewalks and barricaded roads in the downtown financial district.

Banks and businesses identified with mainland China have been frequent targets of hardcore protesters.

Police used pepper spray, tear gas and a water cannon to drive off the demonstrators, although a government statement said officers were "deploying the minimum necessary force."

March participants were asked to "disperse soon after it ends and not to take part in any illegal or violent acts that may occur."

"To safeguard the rule of law and public peace, the police will enforce the law strictly," the statement said.

The march was eventually called off at 6:15 p.m. at the request of police, although thousands remained in the area and many had yet to set off from the starting point at Victoria Park.

The massive rally followed overnight clashes between police and protesters on New Year's Eve in a densely populated shopping district. Police also used tear gas, pepper spray and water cannons to break up groups of demonstrators who blocked traffic and lit fires in the street in the working class district of Mong Kok.

Hong Kong toned down its New Year's celebrations amid the protests that began in June and which have dealt severe blows to the city's retail, tourism and nightlife sectors.

Eric Lai, the vice convener of the march organizer, the Civil Human Rights Front, said he hoped to avoid a recurrence of the previous night's violence.

"We hope that the police can facilitate us, rather than provoking us, and to fire tear gas and water cannon at us," he said.

Such marches have often devolved at their conclusion into violence. Both sides have been accused of



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provoking clashes, and nearly 6,500 protesters as young as 12 have been arrested in scores of incidents on streets, in shopping malls and on college campuses.

Recent protests have drawn participants from across Hong Kong society, sometimes numbering more than 1 million and packing the downtown area from Victoria Park to the government office complex a short distance away. Many of those joining in are concerned about an erosion of the former British colony's civil liberties it was promised after being handed over to Chinese rule in 1997, along with a shortage of well-paying jobs and a yawning divide between the city's ruling class and those merely getting by amid soaring housing costs.

This year's event appeared to be significantly larger than in past years, although estimates of the numbers of participants often vary widely between organizers and police.

The protests began in June over proposed legislation that could have allowed residents to be extradited to China where they could face possible torture and unfair trials. The legislation was withdrawn, but not before the protests expanded to wider calls for reforms in the semi-autonomous Chinese territory.

Protesters Tuesday also gathered at the Prince Edward subway station where police four months ago had rushed in, beating and tear gassing demonstrators who had no way to flee. That incident is among many cited by demonstrators as cases of police abuse for which no one has been held accountable.

The protests show no sign of ending despite an overwhelming victory by anti-establishment candidates in recent elections for district representatives, although their frequency and the level of violence has dropped off somewhat.

In her New Year's address, Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam said the months of protests had brought "sadness, anxiety, disappointment and even rage," and she vowed to tackle underlying social and economic problems in the coming year.

Lam said she would "listen humbly" to help bring an end to the protests but also reinforced the importance of the "one country, two systems" framework under which China rules Hong Kong and which brooks no challenge to the ruling Communist Party's ultimate authority.

In his own New Year's address, Chinese President Xi Jinping referred to the protests, saying "Hong Kong's prosperity and stability is the wish of Hong Kong compatriots and the expectation for the people of the motherland."

## Trump deploys more troops to Mideast after US embassy attack

By **ROBERT BURNS** and **ELLEN KNICKMEYER** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Charging that Iran was "fully responsible" for an attack on the U.S. Embassy in Iraq, President Donald Trump ordered about 750 U.S. soldiers deployed to the Middle East as about 3,000 more prepared for possible deployment in the next several days.

No U.S. casualties or evacuations were reported after the attack Tuesday by dozens of Iran-supported militiamen. U.S. Marines were sent from Kuwait to reinforce the compound.

Defense Secretary Mark Esper said Tuesday night that "in response to recent events" in Iraq, and at Trump's direction, he authorized the immediate deployment of the infantry battalion from the Army's 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He did not specify the soldiers' destination, but a U.S. official familiar with the decision said they will go to Kuwait.

"This deployment is an appropriate and precautionary action taken in response to increased threat levels against U.S. personnel and facilities, such as we witnessed in Baghdad today," Esper said in a written statement.

Additional soldiers from the 82nd Airborne's quick-deployment brigade, known officially as its Immediate Response Force, were prepared to deploy, Esper said. The U.S. official, who provided unreleased details on condition of anonymity, said the full brigade of about 4,000 soldiers may deploy.

The 750 soldiers deploying immediately were in addition to 14,000 U.S. troops who had deployed to the Gulf region since May in response to concerns about Iranian aggression, including its alleged sabotage of commercial shipping in the Persian Gulf. At the time of the attack the U.S. had about 5,200 troops in Iraq,

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mainly to train Iraqi forces and help them combat Islamic State extremists.

The breach of the U.S. Embassy compound in Baghdad on Tuesday was a stark demonstration that Iran can still strike at American interests despite Trump's economic pressure campaign. It also revealed growing strains between Washington and Baghdad, raising questions about the future of the U.S. military mission there.

"They will pay a very BIG PRICE! This is not a Warning, it is a Threat. Happy New Year!" Trump tweeted Tuesday afternoon, though it was unclear whether his "threat" meant military retaliation. He thanked top Iraqi government leaders for their "rapid response upon request."

American airstrikes on Sunday killed 25 fighters of an Iran-backed militia in Iraq, the Kataeb Hezbollah. The U.S. said those strikes were in retaliation for last week's killing of an American contractor and the wounding of American and Iraqi troops in a rocket attack on an Iraqi military base that the U.S. blamed on the militia. The American strikes angered the Iraqi government, which called them an unjustified violation of its sovereignty.

While blaming Iran for the embassy breach, Trump also called on Iraq to protect the diplomatic mission.

"Iran killed an American contractor, wounding many," he tweeted from his estate in Florida. "We strongly responded, and always will. Now Iran is orchestrating an attack on the U.S. Embassy in Iraq. They will be held fully responsible. In addition, we expect Iraq to use its forces to protect the Embassy, and so notified!"

Even as Trump has argued for removing U.S. troops from Mideast conflicts, he also has singled out Iran as a malign influence in the region. After withdrawing the U.S. in 2018 from an international agreement that exchanged an easing of sanctions for curbs on Iran's nuclear program, Trump ratcheted up sanctions.

Those economic penalties, including a virtual shut-off of Iranian oil exports, are aimed at forcing Iran to negotiate a broader nuclear deal. But critics say that pressure has pushed Iranian leaders into countering with a variety of military attacks in the Gulf.

Until Sunday's U.S. airstrikes, Trump had been measured in his response to Iranian provocations. In June, he abruptly called off U.S. military strikes on Iranian targets in retaliation for the downing of an American drone.

Robert Ford, a retired U.S. diplomat who served five years in Baghdad and then became ambassador in Syria, said Iran's allies in the Iraqi parliament may be able to harness any surge in anger among Iraqis toward the United States to force U.S. troops to leave the country. Ford said Trump miscalculated by approving Sunday's airstrikes on Kataeb Hezbollah positions in Iraq and Syria — strikes that drew a public rebuke from the Iraqi government and seem to have triggered Tuesday's embassy attack.

"The Americans fell into the Iranian trap," Ford said, with airstrikes that turned some Iraqi anger toward the U.S. and away from Iran and the increasingly unpopular Iranian-backed Shiite militias.

The tense situation in Baghdad appeared to upset Trump's vacation routine in Florida, where he is spending the holidays.

Trump spent just under an hour at his private golf club in West Palm Beach before returning to his Mar-a-Lago resort in nearby Palm Beach. He had spent nearly six hours at his golf club on each of the previous two days. Trump spoke with Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi and emphasized the need for Iraq to protect Americans and their facilities in the country, said White House spokesman Hogan Gidley.

Trump is under pressure from some in Congress to take a hard-line approach to Iranian aggression, which the United States says included an unprecedented drone and missile attack on the heart of Saudi Arabia's oil industry in September. More recently, Iran-backed militias in Iraq have conducted numerous rocket attacks on bases hosting U.S. forces.

Sen. Tom Cotton, an Arkansas Republican and supporter of Trump's Iran policy, called the embassy breach "yet another reckless escalation" by Iran.

Tuesday's attack was carried out by members of the Iran-supported Kataeb Hezbollah militia. Dozens of militiamen and their supporters smashed a main door to the compound and set fire to a reception area, but they did not enter the main buildings.

Sen. Bob Menendez of New Jersey, senior Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, blamed

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Iran for the episode and faulted Trump for his "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran.

"The results so far have been more threats against international commerce, emboldened and more violent proxy attacks across the Middle East, and now, the death of an American citizen in Iraq," Menendez said, referring to the rocket attack last week.

By early evening Tuesday, the mob had retreated from the compound but set up several tents outside for an intended sit-in. Dozens of yellow flags belonging to Iran-backed Shiite militias fluttered atop the reception area and were plastered along the embassy's concrete wall along with anti-U.S. graffiti. American Apache helicopters flew overhead and dropped flares over the area in what the U.S. military called a "show of force."

The embassy breach was seen by some analysts as affirming their view that it is folly for the U.S. to keep forces in Iraq after having eliminated the Islamic State group's territorial hold in the country.

A U.S. withdrawal from Iraq is also a long-term hope of Iran, noted Paul Salem, president of the Washington-based Middle East Institute.

And it's always possible Trump would "wake up one morning and make that decision" to pull U.S. forces out of Iraq, as he announced earlier with the U.S. military presence in neighboring Syria, Salem said. Trump's Syria decision triggered the resignation of his first defense secretary, retired Gen. Jim Mattis, but the president later amended his decision and about 1,200 U.S. troops remain in Syria.

Trump's best weapon with Iran is the one he's already using — the sanctions, said Salem. He and Ford said Trump would do best to keep resisting Iran's attempt to turn the Iran-U.S. conflict into a full-blown military one. The administration should also make a point of working with the Iraqi government to deal with the militias, Ford said.

For the president, Iran's attacks — directly and now through proxies in Iraq — have "been working that nerve," Salem said. "Now they really have Trump's attention."

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Associated Press writers Matthew Lee, Darlene Superville and Sagar Meghani contributed to this report.

## Lawmakers pledge ERA will pass in Virginia. Then what?

By SARAH RANKIN and DAVID CRARY Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Supporters of the Equal Rights Amendment are so confident Virginia is on the verge of becoming the critical 38th state to ratify the gender equality measure, they are already making plans for how they will celebrate.

But that jubilation could be largely symbolic. Despite broad support for the amendment in the state, the ERA's prospects nationally are substantially more complicated.

The proposed 28th amendment to the U.S. Constitution faces a host of likely legal challenges and vehement opposition from conservative activists who depict the ERA as a threat to their stances on abortion and transgender rights.

The passage of time is also a factor. When the measure passed Congress in 1972, lawmakers attached a 1977 ratification deadline to it, then extended it to 1982. While the Democrat-controlled House of Representatives is likely to extend the deadline again, the Republican-controlled Senate may balk, increasing the chances of litigation. Lawsuits also could be waged over an attempt by five states in the 1970s to rescind their initial support for the amendment.

At least one legal challenge is already underway. Alabama, Louisiana and South Dakota filed a lawsuit in federal court in mid-December seeking to prevent the U.S. archivist from accepting a new ratification.

In Virginia, the ERA's future is bright: Democrats who seized control of the state legislature in November say there is unanimous support in both their House and Senate caucuses.

"It will pass," Virginia House Speaker-elect Eileen Filler-Corn said pointedly at a recent news conference attended by cheering advocates, some of whom have been working on the issue for decades.

Virginia supporters have framed ERA ratification as a chance to rebut the state's long history of racist and intolerant policies.

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In the past, Virginia “fought against desegregation ... fought against interracial marriage ... fought against women’s right to vote,” said Jennifer Carroll Foy, chief patron of the House ratification resolution who is also a member of the black caucus and one of the first women admitted to the historically all-male Virginia Military Institute. “And it is only poetic justice that now we stand on the right side of history and finally give women their full constitutional equality.”

After a ratification vote, Virginia is expected to submit copies of the state’s resolution to the U.S. archivist. State Attorney General Mark Herring said when that happens, he will include legal arguments in support of the ERA.

Herring, who personally supports the proposed amendment, said his office has been preparing for a long time for potential challenges to Virginia’s ratification.

“If we have to go to court, I won’t hesitate,” he said.

Emily Martin, general counsel for the National Women’s Law Center — which supports the ERA — is uncertain what lies ahead. But she hopes that a campaign for ERA ratification will kindle a new surge of women’s activism comparable to the women’s marches of 2016 and the subsequent emergence of the #MeToo movement.

“Mobilization around ensuring women’s equality is really important at this moment when the Trump administration is going backward in so many ways that are harmful to women and girls,” she said, referring to President Donald Trump.

Some of the ERA-related arguments surfacing now are similar to those that flared in the 1970s. Would ratification mean that women, as well as men, are subject to the military draft? Would it undermine workplace laws intended to protect women?

But some of the liveliest debate over the coming months will likely deal with two hot-button social issues that have evolved significantly since the ‘70s: abortion access and the rights of transgender people.

While abortion has been legal nationwide since the Supreme Court’s *Roe v. Wade* ruling in 1973, many Republican-controlled states have passed tough anti-abortion laws in recent years and are hopeful the high court might repeal or weaken *Roe*.

Anti-abortion activists worry that the ERA, if ratified, would be used by abortion-rights supporters to quash abortion restrictions on grounds they specifically discriminate against women.

“That’s the whole reason ERA has been brought back,” said Anne Schlafly Cori of the conservative advocacy group Eagle Forum. “The proponents are concerned about *Roe* being stripped away by the Supreme Court, so they’re trying to shoehorn the ERA into the Constitution.”

“Any vote for the ERA is a vote for abortion,” said Cori, whose mother, Eagle Forum founder Phyllis Schlafly, spearheaded a highly successful opposition movement to the amendment in the ‘70s.

Martin affirmed that abortion access is a key issue for many ERA supporters; she said adding the amendment to the constitution would enable courts to rule that restrictions on abortion “perpetuate gender inequality.”

The issue of transgender rights was far from the spotlight in the 1970s, but is likely to be a divisive topic in the coming ERA debate. Some ERA opponents are trying to kindle alarm over the possibility that the amendment would be used to ensure nationwide protections for transgender women seeking to use women-only restrooms and locker rooms.

“The ERA would be used to impose the most radical consequences of the new ‘gender revolution,’ which allows men to declare themselves women and vice versa,” said Penny Nance, CEO of Concerned Women for America, another conservative advocacy group.

Jennifer Boylan, a transgender writer who teaches at Barnard College in New York City, depicted such rhetoric as “the hysteria of right-wing scaremongers.”

“The ERA won’t take away anyone’s rights; it will simply make the country a little fairer,” she said.

Among the Virginia lawmakers who will soon vote on the ERA is Danica Roem, the first openly transgender person to be elected and seated in a state legislature.

“Equality for women is about equality for all women,” she said. “LGBTQ women are women. And we’re



not going away.”

Crary reported from New York.

## Fire kills more than 30 animals at zoo in western Germany

By KIRSTEN GRIESHABER Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — A fire at a zoo in western Germany in the first minutes of 2020 killed more than 30 animals, including apes, monkeys, bats and birds, authorities said. Police said the fire may have been caused by sky lanterns launched to celebrate the new year.

Several witnesses reported that they had seen the cylindrical paper lanterns with little fires inside flying in the night sky shortly after midnight Wednesday near the Krefeld zoo, Gerd Hoppmann, the city's head of criminal police told reporters.

“People reported seeing those sky lanterns flying at low altitude near the zoo and then it started burning,” Hoppmann said.

Police and firefighters received the first emergency calls at 12:38 a.m.

The zoo near the Dutch border said that the entire ape house burned down and more than 30 animals, including five orangutans, two gorillas, a chimpanzee and several monkeys, as well as fruit bats and birds, were killed.

Only two chimpanzees could be rescued from the flames by firefighters. They suffered burns but are in stable condition, zoo director Wolfgang Dressen said.

“It's close to a miracle that Bally, a 40-year-old female chimpanzee, and Limbo, a younger male, survived this inferno,” Dressen said, adding that many animal handlers were in shock at the devastation.

“We have to seriously work through the mourning process,” Dressen said. “This is an unfathomable tragedy.”

The zoo director also said that many of the dead animals were close to extinction in the wild.

The zoo said that in addition to the two rescued chimpanzees, the Gorilla Garden near to the Ape House didn't go up in flames and that gorilla Kidogo and six other members of his family group are alive.

Criminal police officer Hoppmann said that the use of sky lanterns is illegal in Krefeld and most other parts of Germany and asked that the people who launched them or people who witnessed anything should come forward to police.

Germans usually welcome in the new year with fireworks at midnight and private persons are allowed to buy and launch fireworks. Sky lanterns, however, are both illegal and uncommon in Germany.

Sky lanterns, which are sometimes also called Chinese lanterns, are a sort of hot-air balloon made of paper. They have been used in Asia for celebratory events for centuries.

Hoppmann said investigators found some used lanterns on the ground that hadn't burned entirely. They were 34 centimeters (13.4 inches) long, made out of white paper with an opening at the bottom where a small fire would have been suspended. The fire heats the air inside, making them fly and shine at night.

Hoppmann said some of the lanterns had handwritten notes on them.

The Krefeld zoo was opened in 1975 and attracts some 400,000 visitors each year. It will remain closed on Wednesday.

## Cheers, tears, prayers for 2020: A new decade is ushered in

Revelers around the globe are bidding farewell to a decade that will be remembered for the rise of social media, the Arab Spring, the #MeToo movement and, of course, President Donald Trump. A look at how the world is ushering in 2020:

NEW YORK

Fireworks burst and confetti fell as throngs of revelers cheered the start of 2020 in New York City's Times Square.

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In one of the globe's most-watched New Year's Eve spectacles, the crowd counted down the last seconds of 2019 as a luminescent crystal ball descended down a pole.

About 3,000 pounds (1,360 kilograms) of confetti showered the sea of attendees, many of whom were also briefly rained on earlier in the evening as they waited in security pens for performances by stars including rap-pop star Post Malone, K-pop group BTS, country singer Sam Hunt and singer-songwriter Alanis Morissette.

The crowds packed into the heart of Manhattan mouthed lyrics and waved yellow and purple balloons in a frenzy as midnight approached.

"It was a dream, I wanted to do it so this year a lot of people helped me to get here so I'm here, and I'm thankful for that," said Mariemma Mejias, 48, who flew to New York for the festivities from San Juan, Puerto Rico.

The fun was evident, but some important global issues were driven home as well.

Spotlighting efforts to combat climate change, high school science teachers and students pressed the button that begins the famous 60-second ball drop and countdown to the new year.

## RIO DE JANEIRO

About 3 million people welcomed 2020 at Brazil's iconic Copacabana beach as almost 34,000 pounds (15,420 kilograms) of colorful fireworks went off for 14 minutes after midnight.

Rio de Janeiro holds one of the biggest New Year parties in the world, with music, drinks and religious rituals on the shores. Many dress in white in a traditional sign of their hope for peace. About 2,000 policemen are working to ensure party-goers are safe. Authorities say only minor incidents have been reported so far.

Many locals and tourists are expected to stick around Copacabana until Wednesday's sunrise for their first dip of the year in the ocean, expecting to wash away their troubles from 2019. Summer in Rio often brings high temperatures early on.

The party in Sao Paulo, Brazil's metropolis, took about 2 million people to Paulista Avenue, the city's main road. Nearly all the 6,000 pounds (2,720 kilograms) of fireworks used there were silent so pets did not get too bothered by the noise.

## PARIS

A joyful crowd of Parisians and tourists walked, biked and used scooters to reach the Champs-Elysees for the new year celebrations, in a city with almost no public transport amid massive strikes.

Revelers converged at the famous avenue to watch a light show at the Arc de Triomphe, followed by a fireworks display at midnight. Paris police set up a security perimeter around the Champs-Elysees area with a ban on alcohol and traffic restrictions.

All metro lines in the French capital were closed except for two automatic lines, and only a few night buses were running, as Tuesday marked the 27th consecutive day of transport strikes against President Emmanuel Macron's plans to overhaul the French pension system.

## ROME

Pope Francis delighted tourists and Romans in St. Peter's Square on Tuesday night when he took a stroll to admire the Nativity scene. Shouts of "Pope! Pope!" and "Happy New Year!" resounded as families rushed to catch a glimpse of him or thrust out their infant in hopes he would pat their heads or pinch their cheeks.

One woman grabbed the pope's hand and pulled him toward her to shake it. Francis, 83, exclaimed and then struck the woman's hand twice to free his hand.

At a New Year's Eve Vespers service in St. Peter's Basilica, Francis urged people to practice more solidarity and to "build bridges, not walls." Since becoming pontiff in 2013, Francis has preached openness — a reform-minded agenda that has irritated a small but vocal group of ultra-conservatives in the church.

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## HONG KONG

Revelers as well as pro-democracy protesters flocked to sites across Hong Kong to usher in 2020.

The semi-autonomous Chinese city has toned down New Year's celebrations amid the monthslong demonstrations. The protests have repeatedly sparked pitched battles with police and have taken their toll on Hong Kong's nightlife and travel industries.

A fireworks display that traditionally lights up famed Victoria Harbor was canceled amid safety concerns, while some roads were closed and barriers set up in the Lan Kwai Fong nightlife district to control crowds.

## RUSSIA

Russians began the world's longest continuous New Year's Eve with fireworks and a message from President Vladimir Putin urging them to work together in the coming year.

Putin made the call in a short speech broadcast on television just before the stroke of midnight in each of Russia's 11 time zones. The recorded message was followed by an image of the Kremlin Clock and the sound of its chimes. State TV showed footage of extensive festive fireworks in cities of the Far East.

But one holiday tradition was missing in Moscow this year — a picturesque layer of snow. The Russian capital has had an unusually warm December and temperatures in central Moscow as midnight approached were just above freezing.

## AUSTRALIA

More than a million people descended on a hazy Sydney Harbour and surrounding areas to ring in the new year despite the ongoing wildfire crisis ravaging New South Wales, Australia's most populous state.

The 9 p.m. fireworks over Sydney's iconic landmarks was briefly delayed due to strong winds, but revelers clearly enjoyed themselves in a desperately needed tonic for the state.

New South Wales has born the brunt of the wildfire damage, which has razed more than 1,000 homes nationwide and killed 12 people in the past few months.

## NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand's major cities greeted the new year with fireworks as the nation appeared happy to be done with a year of challenges, both natural and man-made.

On March 15, a lone gunman identified killed 51 people and wounded dozens at two mosques in the South Island city of Christchurch. In December, an eruption of volcanic White Island off the east coast of the North Island killed at least 19 tourists and tour guides.

## SAMOA

Fireworks erupted at midnight from Mount Vaea, overlooking the capital, Apia. The end of the year celebration was a time of sadness and remembrance.

A measles epidemic in late 2019 claimed 81 lives, mostly children under 5.

More than 5,600 measles cases were recorded in the nation of just under 200,000. With the epidemic now contained, the Samoa Observer newspaper named as its Person of the Year health workers who fought the outbreak.

## LONDON

Londoners watched a spectacular fireworks display from the banks of the River Thames that was launched from the London Eye and barges near Parliament.

The familiar chimes of London's Big Ben clock tower rung in the new year, even though they have been silent for most of 2019 because of extensive restoration work.

To the north, the multi-day Hogmanay New Year's celebrations in Edinburgh began Monday night with a torchlight parade through the streets of the Scottish capital.

Security was tight in both cities and elsewhere in Britain following a recent extremist attack on London

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Bridge that claimed two lives. Police arrested five men on suspicion of terrorism offenses Monday but said the arrests were not related to the London Bridge attack or to celebrations.

## SOUTH AFRICA

Thousands of revelers gathered at Cape Town's Waterfront area to ring in the new year with music, dancing and fireworks in front of the city's iconic Table Mountain.

In past years, residents of Johannesburg's poor Hillbrow neighborhood would celebrate the New Year by tossing furniture, appliances and even refrigerators from the balconies of high-rise apartment buildings. Police have issued stern warnings, and it appears the dangerous tradition has declined.

In a somber statement, President Cyril Ramaphosa said "while our economy created jobs, these have not been nearly enough to stop the rise in unemployment or the deepening of poverty."

South African singer Yvonne Chaka Chaka was deported from Uganda, where she was to perform at a New Year's Eve event. Ugandan police cited visa issues, but Ugandan media reported it was because she had voiced support for Ugandan pop star Bobi Wine, the most potent opposition challenger to President Yoweri Museveni.

## UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

For nearly 10 minutes, fireworks lit the sky over Dubai's Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest building, as hundreds of thousands gathered downtown to watch the spectacular display.

The New Year's Eve display at the 828-meter-tall (2,716-foot-tall) skyscraper was just one of seven different fireworks shows across the emirate. Tourists, especially from Europe and Russia, flocked to the sunny beaches of Dubai at this time of year to escape the cold, dark winter.

To keep the massive crowds safe, police created walkways around the Burj Khalifa tower for male-only groups to separate them from families and women.

Dubai this year will be hosting Expo 2020, a world fair that brings the most cutting-edge and futuristic technologies.

## JAPAN

People flocked to temples and shrines in Japan, offering incense with their prayers to celebrate the passing of a year and the the first New Year's of the Reiwa era.

Under Japan's old-style calendar, linked to emperors' rules, Reiwa started in May, after Emperor Akihito stepped down and his son Naruhito became emperor. Although Reiwa is entering its second year with 2020, Jan. 1 still marks Reiwa's first New Year's, the most important holiday in Japan.

Stalls at Zojoji Temple in Tokyo sold sweet rice wine, fried noodles and candied apples, as well as little amulets in the shape of mice, the zodiac animal for 2020. Since the Year of the Mouse starts off the Asian zodiac, it's associated with starting anew.

Tokyo will host the 2020 Summer Olympics, an event that is creating much anticipation for the entire nation.

## INDONESIA

Tens of thousands of revelers in Indonesia's capital of Jakarta were soaked by torrential rains as they waited for New Year's Eve fireworks while others in the country were wary of an active volcano.

Festive events along coastal areas near the Sunda Strait were dampened by a possible larger eruption of Anak Krakatau, an island volcano that erupted last year just ahead of Christmas Day, triggering a tsunami that killed more than 430 people.

The country's volcanology agency has warned locals and tourists to stay 2 kilometers (1.3 miles) from the volcano's crater following an eruption Tuesday that blasted ash and debris up to 2,000 meters (6,560 feet) into the air.



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## SOUTH KOREA

Thousands of South Koreans filled cold downtown streets in Seoul ahead of a traditional bell-tolling ceremony near City Hall to send off an exhausting 2019 highlighted by political scandals, decaying job markets and crumbling diplomacy with North Korea.

Dignitaries ringing the old Bosingak bell at midnight included South Korean Major League Baseball pitcher Hyun-Jin Ryu and Pengsoo, a giant penguin character with a gruff voice and blunt personality that emerged as one of the country's biggest TV stars in 2019.

## GERMANY

Hundreds of thousands of revelers were expected to ring in the New Year in front of the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin.

Several German cities including Munich and Hamburg have banned private fireworks amid concerns about the danger and environmental impacts from the increasingly powerful fireworks. A recent poll by the Forsa research institute found 59% of Germans would support a ban on private fireworks in city centers, while 37% were opposed.

## LAS VEGAS

Tourism officials expected more than 300,000 revelers for fireworks fired at midnight from atop seven casinos on the resort-lined Las Vegas Strip. Thousands more were expected for live music and an LED light and sound show at the downtown Fremont Street Experience pedestrian mall.

"I tell people to expect one of the better fireworks they're ever going to see," said Michael Austin, a country music singer from Nashville, Tennessee, who was booked to perform in Las Vegas. "Swarms of people getting along, bringing in the new year."

Juan and Isabel Tinajero, making their first family visit to Las Vegas, said they hoped 2020 brings less stress than 2019.

"I expect a great show," Juan Tinajero said as Isabel pushed a stroller along the Las Vegas Strip sidewalk. "It's Vegas, right?"

## HONOLULU

Revelers packed beaches from Waikiki to the Big Island as Hawaii residents and visitors prepared to ring in the new decade.

A strong winter swell brought heavy waves to north- and west-facing shores of the islands Monday, nearly triggering the iconic Waimea Bay big wave contest named after Hawaiian surfing legend Eddie Aikau.

The waves weren't quite big enough for the green light on the North Shore Oahu surfing competition, but waters across the archipelago saw above-average sets of rollers that some surfers took full advantage of.

On Oahu, people packed the streets of Waikiki, where a fireworks display would welcome 2020. But across the island at Ko Olina and Turtle Bay resorts, people gathered to the sounds of bumping music as tiki torches burned along walkways.

Comedian Bill Maher was spotted leaving one hotel as he prepared for his annual comedy show in Honolulu.

Fireworks displays both big and small were expected across the islands as the sanctioned shows competed with the less legal versions of the explosive festivities in neighborhoods on every island.

At Ko Olina Resort on Oahu's west side, people watched sun dip below the horizon of the Pacific as the sky turned shades of orange and red before a deep blue sky took over. A traditional Hawaii luau was set for later in the evening, with fire and hula dancers set to entertain the crowds.

## US troops fire tear gas at pro-Iran protesters in Iraq

By QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — U.S. troops fired tear gas on Wednesday as hundreds of Iran-backed militiamen and other protesters gathered outside the American Embassy in Baghdad for a second day and set fire to the roof of a reception area inside the compound.

Dozens of Iran-allied militiamen and their supporters had camped out at the gates of the embassy overnight, a day after they broke into the compound, trashing a reception area, smashing windows and spraying graffiti before pulling back.

The U.S. Marines guarding the embassy fired tear gas Wednesday as more crowds arrived and after the protesters lit a fire on the roof of the reception area. Smoke rose from the building. There have been no reports of any injuries since the protests began.

Later, Iraqi soldiers, federal police and elite counterterrorism forces deployed along the fence between the protesters and the compound. There was no friction between the security forces and the demonstrators.

The Popular Mobilization Forces, an umbrella group of state-allied militias, issued a statement calling on its supporters to withdraw from the compound in response to an appeal by the Iraqi government, saying "your message has been received."

Some of the protesters could be seen taking down their tents later Friday, while others vowed to stay. A spokesman for the Kataeb Hezbollah militia, Mohammed Mohieh, told The Associated Press that the sit-in "will continue."

He said they were under pressure from "the presidency and some Iraqi politicians" who want to "please the Americans." But he said the group's supporters would remain until the U.S. ambassador is evicted, the embassy is closed and all American troops leave Iraq.

The militiamen were protesting deadly U.S. airstrikes that targeted Kataeb Hezbollah on Sunday, killing 25 fighters. Those strikes were in response to a rocket attack on an Iraqi army base that killed a U.S. contractor last week. The militia is separate from the Hezbollah militant group in Lebanon, though both are backed by Iran.

The embassy, on the banks of the Tigris River in the government district known as the Green Zone, is the largest U.S. diplomatic mission in the world and one of the most heavily fortified. It has been targeted by rocket and mortar attacks in the past but casualties have been rare.

The violence comes as Iran and its allies across the region have faced unprecedented mass protests in recent months and after heavy U.S. sanctions on Iran that have cratered its economy.

Iraq has seen massive anti-government protests since October fueled by anger at widespread corruption and economic mismanagement, as well as Iran's heavy influence over the country's affairs. Those protesters were not involved in the embassy attack.

President Donald Trump blamed Iran for the attack on the embassy and Defense Secretary Mark Esper later announced the immediate deployment of an infantry battalion of about 750 soldiers from the Army's 82nd Airborne Division to the Middle East. He did not specify their destination, but a U.S. official familiar with the decision said they will go to Kuwait.

Iran has denied any involvement in the attack on the embassy. Foreign Ministry spokesman Abbas Mousavi was quoted by state media on Tuesday as warning the U.S. against any "miscalculation" in the worsening standoff.

In an apparent reference to Trump's allegations of Iranian involvement, Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, was quoted by semi-official media as saying that "if the Islamic Republic makes a decision to confront any country, it will do it directly."

Iran later summoned the Swiss charge d'affaires, who represents American interests in Tehran, to protest what it said was war-mongering by U.S. officials, the state-run IRNA news agency reported.

The U.S. and Iran have vied for influence over Iraq since the 2003 U.S.-led invasion that toppled Saddam Hussein. Iran has close ties to Iraq's Shiite majority and many of its major political factions, and its influence has steadily grown since then.

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Iran helped to mobilize tens of thousands of mostly Shiite militiamen to battle the Islamic State group when it stormed across northern and western Iraq in 2014 as the armed forces collapsed. In the subsequent campaign against the extremists, the U.S. and Iran both provided vital aid to Iraqi forces, who eventually declared victory in December 2017.

The political influence of the Popular Mobilization Forces has risen in recent years, and their allies dominate the parliament and the government. That has made them the target of the anti-government protests.

The anti-government protesters have attacked Iranian diplomatic missions and the local headquarters of parties affiliated with the militias across southern Iraq. They have also set up a major protest camp in central Baghdad.

For weeks, the anti-government protesters have been trying to enter the Green Zone housing the government and the U.S. Embassy, but have been beaten back by security forces, who have killed hundreds of demonstrators.

The militiamen and their supporters, however, were able to quickly enter the Green Zone and mass in front of the embassy, with little if any resistance from authorities.

By Wednesday morning, they had set up a small sit-in of their own, with around 50 tents set up between two main gates about 500 meters (yards) apart. Demonstrators set up a makeshift clinic and cooks with aprons reading "Popular Mobilization Forces logistical support" served meals out of giant pots. Mobile toilets were also set up in the area.

Demonstrators could be seen hurling rocks over the walls of the embassy compound, where U.S. troops responded by firing tear gas from the roofs of buildings. At one point, two armed security guards mounted a structure inside the embassy near the gate and the demonstrators began throwing stones toward them, forcing them to withdraw.

Associated Press writers Amir Vahdat in Tehran, Iran, Bassem Mroue in Beirut and Joseph Krauss in Ramallah, West Bank, contributed to this report.

## **Africa starts 2020 battling extremism, Ebola and hunger**

**By ANDREW MELDRUM Associated Press**

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — A tragic airline crash with far-reaching consequences, cataclysmic cyclones that may be a harbinger of the future, the death of an African icon and a new leader who won the Nobel Peace Prize. These African stories captured the world's attention in 2019 — and look to influence events on the continent in 2020.

The battles against extremist violence and Ebola will also continue to be major campaigns in Africa in the coming year.

The crash of an Ethiopian Airlines jet shortly after takeoff from Addis Ababa in March killed all 157 passengers and crew. The disaster, which claimed the lives of a large number of U.N. officials, involved a Boeing 737 Max jet and came just five months after a similar crash in Indonesia of the same aircraft.

Boeing was inundated with questions about the safety of its plane. After initially claiming that it was safe, the company was forced to ground the plane after many countries refused to let it fly in their airspace. In December Boeing announced that it would suspend production of the jet.

The air crash was a trial for Ethiopia's reformist Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed, who later in the year won the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize for achieving peace with neighboring Eritrea. But Abiy is challenged by often violent ethnic rivalries in his country and elections set for May 2020 will be crucial, analysts say.

Cyclone Idai ripped into Mozambique in March, killing more than 1,300 people, making it "one of the worst weather-related disasters ever to hit the southern hemisphere," according to the U.N. A month later Cyclone Kenneth roared into northern Mozambique, killing more than 50 people.

This was the first time in recorded history that Mozambique had two major cyclones, prompting some to worry that the country, with a 1,000-mile Indian Ocean coastline, may be prone to more storms as a result of climate change.

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Across Mozambique more than 2.5 million people remain in urgent need of assistance, according to the U.N. Mozambique also starts 2020 troubled by ongoing attacks on vehicles in the country's central area and by Islamic extremist attacks in the country's north.

Extremist violence continues to vex Africa from the east to the west.

2019 began with extremist violence. In Kenya in January, insurgents launched an assault on a luxury hotel and shopping complex in Nairobi that killed at least 14 people.

The year came to an end with extremist attacks across the continent.

A bomb in Somalia killed 78 people, including many university students, in the capital, Mogadishu, on Dec. 28, the deadliest attack in years. Somalia's al-Shabab, allied to al-Qaida, claimed responsibility for the bombing.

In Nigeria extremists linked to the Islamic State group circulated a video showing 11 hostages, most of them Christians, being executed. They were thought to be killed on Christmas Day. The extremist group, which calls itself the Islamic State West Africa Province, said the captives were executed as revenge for the killing of Islamic State group leaders in Iraq and Syria in October.

In northern Burkina Faso, jihadists killed 35 civilians, most of them women, and ensuing clashes with security forces left 80 jihadists dead, the West African nation's president announced Dec. 24. That attack came weeks after an attack on a convoy carrying employees of a Canadian mining company in which at least 37 civilians were killed in the country's east. Both attacks were by groups numbering close to 100, indicating the presence of relatively large, well-organized extremist groups.

"The startling deterioration of the security situation in Burkina Faso has been a major development in 2019," said Alex Vines, director of the Africa program at Chatham House, the British think tank. "There's been a dramatic spike in extremist attacks."

Frequent attacks in Burkina Faso's north and east already have displaced more than a half million people, according to the United Nations. While Burkina Faso's military has received training from both former colonizer France and the United States, it starts 2020 with little progress in halting the surge in extremist violence.

Congo starts the year waging a different kind of war — a campaign against Ebola, which has killed more than 2,200 people since August 2018. The medical effort to control the second deadliest Ebola outbreak in history has been severely hampered since the start by the presence of several armed groups in eastern Congo, the epicenter of the epidemic. It was hoped that new vaccines would help control the outbreak more quickly, but the violence has hampered those efforts.

Congo's President Felix Tshisekedi, elected in 2019, said in November that he was optimistic that the Ebola outbreak would be ended before 2020, but the epidemic continues throughout eastern Congo.

South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa, re-elected in 2019, said in a New Year's statement that the need to boost his country's ailing economy and create jobs is his biggest challenge for 2020. Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari, also re-elected, has said that his government has controlled the rebellion by Boko Haram extremists, but violence continues to plague the country's northeast.

Zimbabwe's longtime ruler, Robert Mugabe, died at age 95 in September. Mugabe, the guerrilla leader who fought to end white-minority rule in Rhodesia and then ruled independent Zimbabwe from 1980 until 2017, left a mixed legacy of liberation, repression and economic ruin.

Zimbabwe begins the new year with severe economic problems including inflation estimated at more than 300% and widespread hunger. In an emergency appeal at the end of December, the U.N.'s World Food Program said that even though the southern African country had suffered a drought, Zimbabwe's food shortages are a "man-made" disaster, laying the blame squarely with President Emmerson Mnangagwa's government.

The once-prosperous country staggered to 2020 with power shortages lasting up to 19 hours per day and large parts of the capital, Harare, a city of some 2 million people, going without running water.



## T.S. Eliot letters to muse to be unveiled after 60 years

By CHRISTINA PACIOLLA Associated Press

After more than 60 years spent sealed up in a library storage facility, about 1,000 letters written by poet T.S. Eliot to confidante Emily Hale will be unveiled this week, and scholars hope they will reveal the extent of a relationship that's been speculated about for decades.

Many consider Hale to not only be his close friend, but also his muse, and they hope their correspondence will offer insight into the more intimate details about Eliot's life and work. Students, researchers and scholars can read the letters at Princeton University Library starting Thursday.

"I think it's perhaps the literary event of the decade," says Anthony Cuda, an Eliot scholar and director of the T.S. Eliot International Summer School. "I don't know of anything more awaited or significant. It's momentous to have these letters coming out."

Lifelong friends, Hale and Eliot exchanged letters for about 25 years beginning in 1930. The two met in 1912 in Cambridge, Massachusetts, but did not rekindle their friendship until 1927. Eliot was already living in England and Hale taught drama at U.S. universities, including Scripps College in California.

In 1956, Hale donated the letters under an agreement they wouldn't be opened until 50 years after either her or Eliot's death, whichever came second. Eliot died in 1965. Hale died four years later.

Biographers say Eliot ordered Hale's letters to him to be burned.

Their relationship "must have been incredibly important and their correspondence must have been remarkably intimate for him to be so concerned about the publication," Cuda says.

T.S. Eliot was born in St. Louis, Missouri, in 1888 and gained notoriety as a poet early in life. He was only 26 when "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" became his first professionally published poem.

His best known works include "The Waste Land," "The Hollow Men" and "Four Quartets."

The first poem in the "Quartets" series, called "Burnt Norton," piques the interest of enthusiasts of the poet, says Eliot scholar Frances Dickey, because of lines that suggest missed opportunities and what might have been with his muse. The poem is named after a home in England that Eliot visited with Hale in 1934.

"His relationship with her seems to be deep and meaningful and it's a door he chose not to open," she said.

The letters could also reveal details about Eliot's conversion to Anglicanism, something he deeply cherished, Dickey says.

Dickey, who served as one of the editors on "The Complete Prose of T.S. Eliot", said the poet was deeply ashamed of his marriage to his first wife, Vivienne Haigh-Wood, whom he was with for more than 15 years. Dickey said the letters could reveal just how close he and Hale were and if the two ever considered marriage.

"Was this an epistolary romance they would carry across the Atlantic?" Dickey said. "What role did she play in his emotional life?"

Eliot's letters to Hale began after that first marriage ended. Whatever else she was, Hale was a link to the life Eliot had left behind in the United States as a young man, Dickey said.

"He was really thinking more about the United States and his childhood during the period where he was in correspondence with Hale," says Dickey. "I have a feeling that having a relationship with an American woman helped him to uncover his past in a way."

The unsealed boxes, which also contain photographs, clippings and other ephemera, were actually opened at the library's special collections area called Firestone Library in October for cataloging and digitizing. Daniel Linke, interim head of special collections at the library, was part of the team working on the 14 boxes. He said there was very minimal, if any, reading.

He said that scholars from around the world will be traveling to Princeton in the first days they are available since they are copyrighted and won't be made available online.

"It will be the special collections equivalent of a stampede at a rock concert," Linke said.

## **Trump suggests some flavored vapes may be pulled from market**

PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — President Donald Trump says the federal government will soon announce a new strategy to tackle underage vaping, promising, “We’re going to protect our families, we’re going to protect our children, and we’re going to protect the industry.”

Trump was vague about what the plan would entail but suggested “certain flavors” in cartridge-based e-cigarettes would be taken off the market “for a period of time.”

The Wall Street Journal reported Tuesday that the Food and Drug Administration would ban the sale of most flavored e-cigarettes, such as those sold by Juul and NJOY. E-cigarette pods formulated to taste like tobacco or menthol would still be allowed.

The Journal also reported that tank-based vaping systems, which are less popular among teenagers, would still allow users to custom-mix flavors. The Journal report cited anonymous “people familiar with the matter.”

In September, Trump and his top health officials said they would soon sweep virtually all flavored e-cigarettes from the market because of their appeal to young children and teens. But that effort stalled after vaping lobbyists pushed back and White House advisers told Trump the ban could cost him votes with adults who vape.

Beginning in May, All e-cigarettes will need to undergo FDA review. Only those that can demonstrate a benefit for U.S. public health will be permitted to stay on the market.

On Tuesday, Trump suggested a ban of flavored e-cigarettes might be temporary. “Hopefully, if everything’s safe, they’re going to be going very quickly back onto the market,” he told reporters at his Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida, where he was hosting a New Year’s Eve party.

“People have died from this, they died from vaping,” the Republican president said. “We think we understand why. But we’re doing a very exhaustive examination and hopefully everything will be back on the market very, very shortly.”

But the FDA had already announced that, starting in May, all e-cigarettes will need to undergo a review. And only those that can demonstrate a benefit for U.S. public health will be permitted to stay on the market.

In Florida, Trump added: “Look, vaping can be good from the standpoint — you look at the e-cigarettes, you stop smoking. If you can stop smoking, that’s a big advantage. So, we think we’re going to get it back on the market very, very quickly.”

## **By jumping bail, fugitive Ghosn burns bridges to Japan**

**By YURI KAGEYAMA AP Business Writer**

TOKYO (AP) — By jumping bail, former Nissan Chairman Carlos Ghosn, who had long insisted on his innocence, has now committed a clear crime and can never return to Japan without going to jail.

“So he now has burnt his bridges to Japan,” Stephen Givens, a lawyer and expert on Japan’s legal and corporate systems, said Wednesday. “This is going to end in basically a stalemate with him spending the rest of his life in Lebanon.”

How exactly Ghosn fled surveillance in Japan and popped up in Lebanon, or who might have directed the dramatic escape, remains unclear.

The Tokyo District Court revoked his bail, Japanese media reports said, meaning authorities would seize the 1.5 billion yen (\$14 million) Ghosn had posted on two separate instances to get out of detention.

Ghosn was first arrested in November 2018, released and then rearrested.

The court was closed for the New Year’s holidays and could not be immediately reached for comment.

Ghosn had been out on bail while awaiting trial on various financial misconduct allegations. The trial was expected to start in April. The date had not been set.

How the Japanese authorities might investigate Ghosn’s escape and what action they might take on the apparent security lapses remains unclear.

Ghosn, who is of Lebanese origin and holds French, Lebanese and Brazilian passports, disclosed his location in a statement through his representatives but did not say how he managed to flee Japan. He

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promised to talk to reporters next week.

He said he wanted to avoid "injustice and political persecution."

"I am now in Lebanon and will no longer be held hostage by a rigged Japanese justice system where guilt is presumed, discrimination is rampant, and basic human rights are denied, in flagrant disregard of Japan's legal obligations under international law and treaties it is bound to uphold," the statement said.

His lawyer Junichiro Hironaka denied all knowledge of the escape, saying he was stunned. He said he didn't expect Ghosn to return to Japan.

When asked if Ghosn had taken any of the documents being prepared for the trial, Hironaka acknowledged he hadn't checked but said he seriously doubted Ghosn would care about a trial he had taken such pains to avoid.

Japanese media reports said Wednesday there were no official records of Ghosn's departure from the country, but a private jet had left from a regional airport to Turkey. One report said he sneaked out from his Tokyo home hiding in a case for a musical instrument.

Lebanon's minister for presidential affairs, Selim Jreissati, told the An-Nahar newspaper that Ghosn entered legally at the airport with a French passport and Lebanese ID.

France has reacted with surprise and confusion, denying any knowledge.

Speculation is rife that a foreign or Japanese government, or both, might have been involved, or maybe just looked the other way to allow the escape to rid the public of a potentially embarrassing trial.

With him missing, Ghosn's trial is suspended.

But a trial is still pending against Nissan as a company and Greg Kelly, another Nissan executive. Kelly, an American, has said he is innocent.

Kelly's allegations overlap with those charges against Ghosn related to the underreporting of Ghosn's future compensation. Those charges are less serious than the additional breach of trust accusations against Ghosn.

Ghosn has been charged with breach of trust in having Nissan shoulder his personal investment losses, and diverting payments in Saudi Arabia and Oman for personal gain.

He has repeatedly asserted his innocence, saying authorities trumped up the charges to prevent a fuller merger between Nissan and alliance partner Renault SA.

Follow Yuri Kageyama is on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/yurikageyama>

## Year-end violence highlights danger of worshipping

By GARY FIELDS and DAVID CRARY Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — When a machete-wielding attacker walked into a rabbi's home in Monsey, New York, during Hanukkah and a gunman fired on worshippers at a Texas church 14 hours later, the two congregations in different regions of the country joined a growing list of faith communities that have come under attack in the U.S.

It is a group that crosses denominations and geography and has companions around the world. The frequency of attacks has faith leaders and law enforcement grappling with how to protect people when they are at their most vulnerable.

FBI hate crime statistics show that incidents in churches, synagogues, temples and mosques increased 34.8% between 2014 and 2018, the last year for which FBI data is available.

"For a person bent on hate crime against a particular religion or race, you go to a place where you know a lot of people in that group will be congregating — and vulnerable," said James Alan Fox, a criminologist at Boston's Northeastern University. "One place you can go to find people of a certain religion is where they worship." Most congregations, he said, do not have security.

Three of the deadliest attacks on congregation members have occurred since June 2015, when a gunman killed nine people at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, according

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to a database compiled by The Associated Press, USA TODAY and Northeastern University. The database includes attacks where four or more victims are killed.

However, the database wouldn't include the most recent attacks that have refocused attention on the security vulnerabilities at religious institutions.

The FBI's hate crime highlights list a number of crimes, including a Colorado plot to blow up a synagogue, an Oregon man sentenced to federal prison for targeting a Catholic Church and two guilty pleas in the bombing of an Islamic Center in Minnesota where congregants were worshipping in the mosque.

A five-year compilation of AP reports showed the frequency of attacks countrywide.

Recent stories included the stabbing of an Orthodox Jewish man as he approached the driveway of his synagogue in Monsey in November, as well as a Las Vegas incident where a suspect torched a Buddhist temple, then shot toward at least one monk fleeing the fire.

The data is definitive enough that the FBI invited faith leaders to its Washington, D.C., headquarters last June to discuss how to protect themselves and their congregants from bias-based attacks.

Mark Whitlock Jr., pastor of Reid Temple AME Church in Glenn Dale, Maryland, said his own staff and volunteers have met five times in the last month to discuss safety.

"Our first responsibility is to make sure our congregants have faith in God and second, that they are safe," Whitlock said. "We must not create an environment of fear but we also must not fail to recognize things do happen and evil is present."

Reid has a paid security staff of about 20 who wear uniforms and are armed. There are volunteers as well, made up of former and current federal agents, law enforcement officers and military who also provide security, Whitlock said.

Even with the protection, he is watchful. On Sunday, he was in the pulpit and saw the security force reacting to something. They explained later it was a stranger they wanted to identify.

"When you're looking at thousands of people and you see your security force walking around, your mind begins to wonder," he said.

The new spate of anti-Semitic attacks has added to the sense of urgency that's been felt by Jewish security experts since the 2018 massacre at Pittsburgh's Tree of Life synagogue, where 11 people were killed.

"The greatest adversary we truly face is not an external threat, it's a sense of denial," said Michael Masters, national director of the Secure Community Network. It was formed by leading Jewish organizations in 2004 to coordinate a response to security threats.

"The conversation prior to Pittsburgh was whether safety and security was necessary," Masters said. "Now it's a question of how do we effectuate that — there's now a reality that these events can happen anywhere."

Sunday's attack in White Settlement, Texas, in which the gunman was shot dead by a highly trained leader of the church's security team, came barely two years after more than two dozen people were killed at a church in Sutherland Springs, Texas. That remains the deadliest shooting at a house of worship in the U.S. in modern times.

The two Texas attacks have heightened worries among churchgoers in neighboring Oklahoma, said the Rev. Derrek Belase, a former police officer turned pastor who coordinates security training for the more than 480 United Methodist churches in Oklahoma.

"Texas is close to home for us," Belase said. "People see it on the news and think, 'That could be us.'"

Under Oklahoma law, houses of worship are among the places where adults are allowed to carry firearms, whether concealed or openly. Churches may ask worshippers not to bring guns with them, but Belase says that's not a common request.

When Belase is advising churches on security, his core recommendations are to work in tandem with local law enforcement, be wary of for-profit security consultants, and be sure that members of any church security team are thoroughly trained.

The security team leader in White Settlement "wasn't just a guy with a gun," Belase said. "He was trained to do that."

Pardeep Singh Kaleka, executive director of the Interfaith Conference of Greater Milwaukee, said his



own Sikh temple has armed guards and an evacuation plan, the result of a 2012 attack in Oak Creek, Wisconsin, that killed six worshippers, including his father. He said the conference members talk regularly about how to prevent the next tragedy. "All faiths want to remain open, Buddhists, Sikhs, Muslims, Jews, Christians, but you also have to be vigilant and institute safety protocols."

Associated Press researcher Rhonda Shafner in New York contributed to this report.

Associated Press religion coverage receives support from the Lilly Endowment through the Religion News Foundation. The AP is solely responsible for this content.

## North Korea's Kim touts strategic weapon amid stall in talks

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Expressing deep frustration over stalled nuclear talks, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un warned of unspecified "shocking" action and that his country will soon reveal a new "strategic weapon" to the world as it bolsters its nuclear deterrent in face of "gangster-like" U.S. pressure.

Kim also said North Korea was no longer obligated to maintain a self-imposed suspension on the testing of nuclear weapons and intercontinental ballistic missiles, which President Donald Trump has touted as a major diplomatic accomplishment. But Kim gave no clear indication that a resumption of such tests was impending and appeared to leave the door open for eventual negotiations.

Kim has used the diplomatic stalemate to expand his military capabilities by intensifying tests of shorter-range weapons. His arsenal is now estimated to include 40-50 nuclear bombs and various delivery systems, including solid-fuel missiles designed to beat missile-defense systems and developmental ICBMs potentially capable of reaching the U.S. mainland.

Kim has also strengthened his negotiating position, moving the diplomacy closer to an arms reduction negotiation between nuclear states rather than talks that would culminate in a unilateral surrender of the weapons he sees as his strongest guarantee of survival.

Lee Sang-min, spokesman for South Korea's Unification Ministry, said North Korea carrying out its threat to showcase a new strategic weapon would be unhelpful for diplomacy.

Strategic weapons usually refer to nuclear-capable delivery systems such as ICBMs, but North Korea otherwise has been vague about what new arms it would display. It announced in December that it performed two "crucial" tests at its long-range rocket launch site that would further strengthen its nuclear deterrent.

Kim's comments published in state media Wednesday were made at a key, four-day meeting of the ruling Workers' Party's Central Committee as talks between Washington and Pyongyang have faltered over disagreements on disarmament steps and the removal of sanctions.

Some experts say North Korea, which has always been sensitive about electoral changes in U.S. government, will avoid serious negotiations in the coming months as it watches how Trump's impending impeachment trial over his dealings with Ukraine affects U.S. presidential elections in November.

Kim may instead seek to strengthen his leverage by promoting a united front with Beijing and Moscow, Pyongyang's traditional supporters, which seek to establish themselves as major stakeholders in North Korean diplomacy. Both have called for the U.N. Security Council to consider easing sanctions on the North to spur progress in nuclear negotiations.

Kim last year had said the North would pursue a "new way" if the Trump administration doesn't make concessions to salvage the negotiations by the end of December. Kim's defiant words entering 2020 indicate his "new way" could look very much like the old one — a patient determination to wait out sanctions and pressure, which will possibly weaken over time, while cementing the country's status as a nuclear state.

Kim at the party meeting declared the North will never give up its security for economic benefits in the face of what he described as increasing U.S. hostility and nuclear threats, the Korean Central News Agency said.

"(Kim) said that we will never allow the impudent U.S. to abuse the DPRK-U.S. dialogue for meeting its

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sordid aim but will shift to a shocking actual action to make it pay for the pains sustained by our people so far and for the development so far restrained," the agency said, referring to the North by its formal name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Kim added that "if the U.S. persists in its hostile policy toward the DPRK, there will never be the denuclearization on the Korean Peninsula and the DPRK will steadily develop necessary and prerequisite strategic weapons for the security of the state until the U.S. rolls back its hostile policy," KCNA said.

"(Kim) confirmed that the world will witness a new strategic weapon to be possessed by the DPRK in the near future, declaring that we cannot give up the security of our future just for the visible economic results ... now that hostile acts and nuclear threat against us are increasing," it said.

Trump late Tuesday urged Kim to stick to his alleged commitment to denuclearize. The leaders after their first summit in Singapore in June 2018 issued a vague statement on a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula without when and how it would occur.

"Look, he likes me, I like him, we get along," Trump said as he walked into a New Year's party at Mar-a-Lago. "But he did sign a contract, he did sign an agreement talking about denuclearization ... I think he's a man of his word so we're going to find out, but I think he's a man of his word."

North Korea has held to its self-imposed moratorium on nuclear and ICBM testing since 2018, though last year it ended a 17-month pause in ballistic activity by testing a slew of solid-fuel weapons that potentially expanded its capabilities to strike targets in South Korea and Japan, including U.S. military bases there.

While Kim gave no clear indication he was abandoning negotiations entirely or restarting the suspended tests, he said North Korea's efforts to bolster its deterrent will be "properly coordinated" depending on future U.S. attitudes.

Koh Yu-hwan, a North Korean expert at Seoul's Dongguk University, said it would be irrational for Pyongyang to risk shattering its negotiations with Washington by resuming ICBM tests when Beijing and Moscow are campaigning for eased sanctions.

"When you are developing an unfinished nuclear program, you conduct test after test in efforts to manufacture a crisis that would force your rival into negotiating, which was North Korea's previous pattern of behavior," said Koh, an adviser to South Korean President Moon Jae-in.

"But once you reached a strategic (nuclear) status and need to consolidate it, you do it quietly while holding back provocative tests, like the way India and Pakistan did it," Koh said.

Kim did warn there were no longer grounds for the North to be "unilaterally bound" to its moratorium, criticizing the United States for expanding sanctions, continuing military exercises with South Korea and providing the South with advanced weaponry.

The allies have scaled down their major military exercises since 2018 to create space for diplomacy, but North Korea considers such drills to be rehearsals for an invasion and insists even the smaller drills violate agreements between the leaders. The North has also criticized the allies over South Korea's recent acquisition of advanced U.S. F-35 fighter jets.

The extensive KCNA report from the party meeting may have replaced a New Year's speech like Kim has given in past years announcing major changes in security and economic policies. No speech was broadcast as of Wednesday afternoon, though Koh said a broadcast or statement could come later.

Kim touched on economic issues in his remarks to the party meeting, saying his nation was prepared for a "long confrontation" with the United States and vowing to build "internal strength" to withstand sanctions.

Kim called for his people to stay resilient in a struggle for "self-reliance" and lamented unmet goals in economic objectives laid out in 2019, calling for significant improvements in agricultural production and removal of unspecified "evil practices and stagnation" across industries including coal mining, electricity production, machinery and railway transport.

## Climate change, Brexit divorce: EU faces challenges in 2020

By RAF CASERT Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — December served up a warning of the massive challenges ahead for the European Union.

Freak storms wreaked havoc on parts of southern Europe, showing how the impact of extreme weather will drive the bloc's thinking and climate change policy over the coming years. The EU has already said it wants to spend effort and money to remain the global driver of measures to fight climate change.

The United States also threatened sanctions against companies working on a gas pipeline from Russia to Germany, again showing that the trans-Atlantic alliance between EU nations and the U.S. stands for less and less in the age of power politics.

And across the Channel, a rare December election in Britain brought Conservative Prime Minister Boris Johnson a solid majority to back up his efforts to "get Brexit done." As things stand, Britain on Jan. 31 is scheduled to become the first nation ever to leave the EU.

All these challenges will need a strong coordinated response from the EU's soon-to-be 27 nations if they want to live up to their goal of having a bigger global impact.

"Europe must raise its voice more strongly in the world," German Chancellor Angela Merkel said in her New Year's message.

Yet as time goes by, such European messages have become ever more plaintive and homegrown issues demand attention.

EU headquarters in Brussels, looking ahead to 2020, is now beset by tireless bickering over a fraction of the 1% of gross national income that the nations are supposed to spend on the EU during the bloc's 2021-2027 budget period. As populism in Europe has turned the EU and its perceived elites into a pet target, national leaders are wary of being seen by voters as too generous toward Brussels.

EU Parliament President David Sassoli stressed the need for a budget deal "as quickly as possible in order to avoid delays in implementing the Union's policies and programs."

Many, however, fear the year 2020 will get partly wasted on intricate EU budgetary maneuvering. That would leave the EU — for all its mighty trading bloc, aid spending and diplomatic footprint — still hitting well below its weight when it comes to global issues.

"Europeans are in danger of becoming hapless playthings in a tussle for pre-eminence between China, Russia, and the United States," wrote former Swedish foreign minister Carl Bildt and Mark Leonard in a sobering account for the European Council on Foreign Relations think tank.

Such a conclusion might seem counter-intuitive, considering how the EU has bounced back over the past few years and what it is striving for over the next decade.

It staved off Greece's exit from the shared euro currency and helped several other EU nations recover from staggering debt crises. It was a major player in getting both the landmark 2015 Paris climate accord and the Iran nuclear deal signed. And it stood united as Britain lurched through three years of political turmoil over its impending Brexit divorce from the bloc.

In many ways, 2020 could mark a bright new dawn for the EU. A new regime is in place, with Germany's Ursula von der Leyen taken over as European Commission president and Belgium's Charles Michel the new Council President.

In addition, the Brexit will-they-or-won't-they drama has also turned a corner. The U.K. is set to leave on Jan. 31 and while the following trade talks will be tense and exacting, it's hardly the stuff that will liven up newspaper headlines. Tensions still could arise between EU nations with widely disparate economic interests in trading with Britain.

But political shoals lurk. The year still could see a flare-up between EU headquarters and Poland and Hungary, two eastern member states where many feel the democratic credentials on which the bloc is built are being openly flaunted.

EU policies on climate change, the pre-eminent issue where the EU wants to lead the world, are facing domestic challenges. Coal-burning Poland is resisting calls to move more quickly in fighting climate change and farmers and workers in the Netherlands, France and beyond have protested new laws aiming to curb

pollution. An EU summit in December had to go through linguistic contortions to claim a deal on an overall commitment to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050.

Outside EU borders, the United States has gone from a trusted ally under former President Barack Obama to an unpredictable partner under Donald Trump, who pulled out of the Paris climate accord that the EU was instrumental in brokering.

Strong recent disagreements over Iran policy and NATO show the trans-Atlantic rift is widening between the allies.

"Existing powers are going down new paths alone," von der Leyen said in a thinly veiled criticism of the United States.

The EU is still a staunch defender of multilateralism and seeking global compromise. That approach is being tested daily, however, as China and the United States vie for economic and military supremacy and Russian leader Vladimir Putin seeks to undermine democracies and extend his nation's influence around the globe.

"The resurgence in great power competition has put pressure on the EU's dream of a multilateral world order," Bildt and Leonard wrote. "The EU wants to play softball in a hardball world."

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

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## Protesters attack US Embassy in Baghdad after airstrikes

By QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — Angered by deadly airstrikes targeting an Iran-backed militia, dozens of Iraqi Shiite militiamen and their supporters broke into the U.S. Embassy compound in Baghdad on Tuesday, smashing a main door and setting fire to a reception area in one of the worst attacks on the embassy in recent memory.

Flames rose from inside the compound and U.S. soldiers on the roof of the main embassy building pointed guns at protesters. American guards fired tear gas, and palls of smoke rose over the embassy grounds.

A man on a loudspeaker urged the mob not to enter the compound, saying, "The message was delivered."

The State Department said all American personnel were safe and that there were no plans to evacuate the embassy.

Defense Secretary Mark Esper later announced the immediate deployment of an infantry battalion of about 750 soldiers from the Army's 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, to the Middle East. He did not specify their destination, but a U.S. official familiar with the decision said they will go to Kuwait.

Esper said additional soldiers from the 82nd Airborne's quick-deployment brigade, known officially as its Immediate Response Force, are prepared to deploy over the next several days. The U.S. official, who provided unreleased details on condition of anonymity, said the full brigade of about 4,000 soldiers may deploy.

"This deployment is an appropriate and precautionary action taken in response to increased threat levels against U.S. personnel and facilities, such as we witnessed in Baghdad today," Esper said in a written statement.

The 750 soldiers deploying immediately are in addition to 14,000 U.S. troops sent to the Gulf region since May in response to concerns about Iranian aggression.

The breach at the embassy followed U.S. airstrikes on Sunday that killed 25 fighters of the Iran-backed militia in Iraq, the Kataeb Hezbollah. The U.S. military said the strikes were in retaliation for last week's killing of an American contractor in a rocket attack on an Iraqi military base that the U.S. blamed on the militia.

President Donald Trump blamed Iran for the embassy breach and called on Iraq to protect the diplomatic mission.



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"Iran killed an American contractor, wounding many. We strongly responded, and always will. Now Iran is orchestrating an attack on the U.S. Embassy in Iraq. They will be held fully responsible. In addition, we expect Iraq to use its forces to protect the Embassy, and so notified!" he tweeted from his estate in Palm Beach, Florida.

By early evening, the protesters had retreated from the compound but set up several tents outside where they said they intended to stage a sit-in. Dozens of yellow flags belonging to Iran-backed Shiite militias fluttered atop the reception area and were plastered along the embassy's concrete wall along with anti-U.S. graffiti. American Apache helicopters flew overhead and dropped flares over the area.

Trump, who is spending the holiday week at his Florida home, is in "close touch" and receiving regular updates from his national security team, said White House press secretary Stephanie Grisham. She echoed the sentiment contained in Trump's tweet earlier Tuesday.

"As the president said, Iran is orchestrating this attack, and they will be held fully responsible," Grisham said in an emailed statement. "It will be the president's choice how and when we respond to their escalation."

The developments also represent a major downturn in Iraq-U.S. relations that could further undermine U.S. influence in the region and American troops in Iraq and weaken Washington's hand in its pressure campaign against Iran.

Iraq has long struggled to balance its ties with the U.S. and Iran, both allies of the Iraqi government. But the government's angry reaction to the U.S. airstrikes and its apparent decision not to prevent the protesters from reaching the embassy signaled a sharp deterioration of U.S.-Iraq relations.

Iraqi security forces made no effort to stop the protesters as they marched to the heavily fortified Green Zone after a funeral for those killed in the airstrikes. The demonstrators were allowed to pass through a security checkpoint leading to the area.

The marchers, many of them in militia uniforms, shouted "Down, down USA!" and "Death to America" and "Death to Israel" outside the compound, hurling water and stones over its walls. The mob set fire to three trailers used by security guards and some tried to scale the walls.

Others then smashed the gates used by cars to enter, and dozens pushed into the compound. The protesters stopped in a corridor after about 5 meters (16 feet), and were only about 200 meters away from the main building.

The sprawling embassy compound enjoys a prominent position on the banks of the Tigris River in the heart of the Iraqi capital. Resembling a fortified college campus, the complex is rimmed with thick blast walls and cylindrical watch towers, lending it the look of a modern-day castle.

Gates visitors use to enter the complex consist of an airlock-like vestibule fortified with heavy doors and bulletproof glass. Even if protesters breached the first set of doors, they would have to force past heavily armed military contractors and U.S. Marine guards and a second set of heavy doors before entering the main compound.

Numerous buildings are inside the walls, including dormitories for staff, well-stocked dining and recreation facilities, and a power station.

The protesters taunted the embassy's security staff, which remained behind glass windows in the gates' reception area. They hung a poster on the wall declaring "America is an aggressor" and sprayed graffiti on the wall and windows reading, "Closed in the name of the resistance."

"This is a victory in retaliation to the American airstrike. This is the initial retaliation, God willing, there will be more," said Mahmoud, a fighter with the Imam Ali Brigades who was carrying a black bag filled with electricity cables that he said he took from the reception area.

A video obtained by the AP showed militiamen trashing the reception area and taking away paperwork.

The embassy, on its Facebook page, urged American citizens not to approach the compound and "to review their personal security and emergency preparedness."

An Iraqi employee at the embassy told the AP that the embassy's security team had evacuated some local staff from a rear gate while others left by helicopters and the rest remained inside "safe" areas

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within the embassy. The employee spoke on condition of anonymity because of not being authorized to speak to journalists.

The U.S. ambassador was traveling outside Iraq at the time of the attack and planned to return, the State Department said.

Some commanders of militia factions loyal to Iran joined the protesters outside the embassy in a strikingly bold move. Among them was Qais al-Khizali, the head of one of the most powerful Iranian-backed Shiite militias in Iraq who is on a U.S. terror list, and Hadi al-Amiri, the head of the state-sanctioned paramilitary Popular Mobilization Units, the umbrella group for the Iran-backed militias.

Jaafar al-Husseini, a spokesman for Kataeb Hezbollah, said the protesters had no intention of storming the embassy. He told the AP that the sit-in will continue "until American troops leave Iraq and the embassy is closed."

The U.S. airstrikes — the largest targeting an Iraqi state-sanctioned militia in recent years — and the subsequent calls by the militia for retaliation, represent a new escalation in the proxy war between the U.S. and Iran playing out in the Middle East.

The attack also outraged the Iraqi government, which said it will reconsider its relationship with the U.S.-led coalition — the first time it has said it will do so since an agreement was struck to keep some U.S. troops in the country. It called the attack a "flagrant violation" of its sovereignty.

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Associated Press writers Darlene Superville in West Palm Beach, Florida, Adam Schreck in Chicago, Samya Kullab in New York and Zeina Karam in Beirut contributed to this report.

## Final goodbye: Recalling influential people who died in 2019

By **BERNARD McGHEE** Associated Press

A lauded writer who brought to light stories overshadowed by prejudice. An actress and singer who helped embody the manufactured innocence of the 1950s. A self-made billionaire who rose from a childhood of Depression-era poverty and twice ran for president.

This year saw the deaths of people who shifted culture through prose, pragmatism and persistence. It also witnessed tragedy, in talent struck down in its prime.

In 2019, the political world lost a giant in U.S. Rep. Elijah E. Cummings. He was born the son of a sharecropper, became a lawyer, then an influential congressman and champion of civil rights.

Cummings, who died in October, was chairman of one of the U.S. House committees that led an impeachment inquiry of President Donald Trump and was a formidable advocate for the poor in his Maryland district.

Another influential political figure, U.S. Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens, died in July. Stevens was appointed to the high court as a Republican but became the leader of its liberal wing and a proponent of abortion rights and consumer protections.

Wealth, fame and a confident prescription for the nation's economic ills propelled H. Ross Perot's 1992 campaign against President George H.W. Bush and Democratic challenger Bill Clinton. He recorded the highest percentage for an independent or third-party candidate since 1912. He died in July.

The death of Toni Morrison in August left a chasm in the publishing world, where she was a "literary mother" to countless writers. She helped elevate multiculturalism to the world stage and unearthed the lives of the unknown and unwanted. She became the first black woman to receive the Nobel literature prize and was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2012.

Among those in the scientific world who died in 2019 was Soviet cosmonaut Alexei Leonov, the first person to walk in space. Leonov died in October. Others include scientist Wallace Smith Broecker, who died in February and popularized the term "global warming" as he raised early alarms about climate change.

In April, Hollywood lost director John Singleton, whose 1991 film "Boyz n the Hood" was praised as a realistic and compassionate take on race, class, peer pressure and family. He became the first black director to receive an Oscar nomination and the youngest at 24.

Doris Day, a top box-office draw and recording artist who died in May, stood for the 1950s ideal of inno-

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cence and G-rated love, a parallel world to her contemporary Marilyn Monroe. She received a Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2004.

The year also saw the untimely deaths of two young rappers, leaving a feeling of accomplishments unfulfilled. Grammy-nominated Nipsey Hussle was killed in a shooting in Los Angeles in March. Juice WRLD, who launched his career on SoundCloud before becoming a streaming juggernaut, died in December after being treated for opioid use during a police search.

Here is a roll call of some influential figures who died in 2019 (cause of death cited for younger people, if available):

## **JANUARY**

Eugene "Mean Gene" Okerlund, 76. His deadpan interviews of pro wrestling superstars like "Macho Man" Randy Savage, the Ultimate Warrior and Hulk Hogan made him a ringside fixture in his own right. Jan. 2.

Bob Einstein, 76. The veteran comedy writer and performer known for "The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour," "Curb Your Enthusiasm" and his spoof daredevil character Super Dave Osborne. Jan. 2.

Daryl Dragon, 76. The cap-wearing "Captain" of Captain & Tennille who teamed with then-wife Toni Tennille on such easy listening hits as "Love Will Keep Us Together" and "Muskrat Love." Jan. 2.

Harold Brown, 91. As defense secretary in the Carter administration, he championed cutting-edge fighting technology during a tenure that included the failed rescue of hostages in Iran. Jan. 4.

Jakiw Palij, 95. A former Nazi concentration camp guard who spent decades leading an unassuming life in New York City until his past was revealed. Jan. 9.

Carol Channing, 97. The ebullient musical comedy star who delighted American audiences in almost 5,000 performances as the scheming Dolly Levi in "Hello, Dolly!" on Broadway and beyond. Jan. 15.

John C. Bogle, 89. He simplified investing for the masses by launching the first index mutual fund and founded Vanguard Group. Jan. 16.

Lamia al-Gailani, 80. An Iraqi archaeologist who lent her expertise to rebuilding the National Museum's collection after it was looted in 2003. Jan. 18.

Nathan Glazer, 95. A prominent sociologist and intellectual who assisted on a classic study of conformity, "The Lonely Crowd," and co-authored a groundbreaking document of non-conformity, "Beyond the Melting Pot." Jan. 19.

Antonio Mendez, 78. A former CIA technical operations officer who helped rescue six U.S. diplomats from Iran in 1980 and was portrayed by Ben Affleck in the film "Argo." Jan. 19.

Harris Wofford, 92. A former U.S. senator from Pennsylvania and longtime civil rights activist who helped persuade John F. Kennedy to make a crucial phone call to the wife of Martin Luther King Jr. during the 1960 presidential campaign. Jan. 21.

Russell Baker, 93. The genial but sharp-witted writer who won Pulitzer Prizes for his humorous columns in The New York Times and a moving autobiography of his impoverished Baltimore childhood. He later hosted television's "Masterpiece Theatre" on PBS. Jan. 21. Complications after a fall.

Michel Legrand, 86. An Oscar-winning composer and pianist whose hits included the score for the '60s romance "The Umbrellas of Cherbourg" and the song "The Windmills of Your Mind" and who worked with some of the biggest singers of the 20th century. Jan. 26.

Kim Bok-dong, 92. A South Korean woman who was forced as a girl into a brothel and sexually enslaved by the Japanese military during World War II, becoming a vocal leader at rallies that were held every Wednesday in Seoul for nearly 30 years. Jan. 28.

James Ingram, 66. The Grammy-winning singer who launched multiple hits on the R&B and pop charts and earned two Oscar nominations for his songwriting. Jan. 29.

Donald S. Smith, 94. He produced the controversial anti-abortion film "The Silent Scream" and, with help from Ronald Reagan's White House, distributed copies to every member of Congress and the Supreme Court. Jan. 30.

Harold Bradley, 93. A Country Music Hall of Fame guitarist who played on hundreds of hit country records and along with his brother, famed producer Owen Bradley, helped craft "The Nashville Sound." Jan. 31.

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## FEBRUARY

Kristoff St. John, 52. An actor best known for playing Neil Winters on the CBS soap opera "The Young and the Restless." Feb. 4. Heart disease.

Anne Firor Scott, 97. A prize-winning historian and esteemed professor who upended the male-dominated field of Southern scholarship by pioneering the study of Southern women. Feb. 5.

Frank Robinson, 83. The Hall of Famer was the first black manager in Major League Baseball and the only player to win the MVP award in both leagues. Feb. 7.

John Dingell, 92. The former congressman was the longest-serving member of Congress in American history at 59 years and a master of legislative deal-making who was fiercely protective of Detroit's auto industry. Feb. 7.

Albert Finney, 82. The British actor was the Academy Award-nominated star of films from "Tom Jones" to "Skyfall." Feb. 8.

Jan-Michael Vincent, 73. The "Airwolf" television star whose sleek good looks belied a troubled personal life. Feb. 10.

Gordon Banks, 81. The World Cup-winning England goalkeeper who was also known for blocking a header from Pele that many consider the greatest save in soccer history. Feb. 12.

Betty Ballantine, 99. She was half of a groundbreaking husband-and-wife publishing team that helped invent the modern paperback and vastly expand the market for science fiction and other genres through such blockbusters as "The Hobbit" and "Fahrenheit 451." Feb. 12.

Lyndon LaRouche Jr., 96. The political extremist who ran for president in every election from 1976 to 2004, including a campaign waged from federal prison. Feb. 12.

Andrea Levy, 62. A prize-winning novelist who chronicled the hopes and horrors experienced by the post-World War II generation of Jamaican immigrants in Britain. Feb. 14.

Lee Radziwill, 85. She was the stylish jet setter and socialite who found friends, lovers and other adventures worldwide while bonding and competing with her sister Jacqueline Kennedy. Feb. 15.

Armando M. Rodriguez, 97. A Mexican immigrant and World War II veteran who served in the administrations of four U.S. presidents while pressing for civil rights and education reforms. Feb. 17.

Wallace Smith Broecker, 87. A scientist who raised early alarms about climate change and popularized the term "global warming." Feb. 18.

Karl Lagerfeld, 85. Chanel's iconic couturier whose accomplished designs and trademark white ponytail, high starched collars and dark enigmatic glasses dominated high fashion for the past 50 years. Feb. 19.

David Horowitz, 81. His "Fight Back!" syndicated program made him perhaps the best-known consumer reporter in the U.S. Feb. 21.

Peter Tork, 77. A talented singer-songwriter and instrumentalist whose musical skills were often overshadowed by his role as the goofy, lovable bass guitarist in the made-for-television rock band The Monkees. Feb. 21.

Stanley Donen, 94. A giant of the Hollywood musical who, through such classics as "Singin' in the Rain" and "Funny Face," helped provide some of the most joyous sounds and images in movie history. Feb. 21.

Jackie Shane, 78. A black transgender soul singer who became a pioneering musician in Toronto where she packed nightclubs in the 1960s. Feb. 21.

Katherine Helmond, 89. An Emmy-nominated and Golden Globe-winning actress who played two very different matriarchs on the ABC sitcoms "Who's the Boss?" and "Soap." Feb. 23.

Charles McCarry, 88. An admired and prescient spy novelist who foresaw passenger jets as terrorist weapons in "The Better Angels" and devised a compelling theory for JFK's assassination in "The Tears of Autumn." Feb. 26.

Jerry Merryman, 86. He was one of the inventors of the handheld electronic calculator. Feb. 27. Complications of heart and kidney failure.

Ed Nixon, 88. The youngest brother of President Richard Nixon who was a Navy aviator and geologist and spent years promoting his brother's legacy. Feb. 27.



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Andre Previn, 89. The pianist, composer and conductor whose broad reach took in the worlds of Hollywood, jazz and classical music. Feb. 28.

## MARCH

John Shafer, 94. The legendary Northern California vintner was part of a generation that helped elevate sleepy Napa Valley into the international wine powerhouse it is today. March 2.

Keith Flint, 49. The fiery frontman of British dance-electronic band The Prodigy. March 4. Found dead by hanging in his home.

Luke Perry, 52. He gained instant heartthrob status as wealthy rebel Dylan McKay on "Beverly Hills, 90210." March 4. Stroke.

Juan Corona, 85. He gained the nickname "The Machete Murderer" for hacking to death dozens of migrant farm laborers in California in the early 1970s. March 4.

Ralph Hall, 95. The former Texas congressman was the oldest-ever member of the U.S. House and a man who claimed to have once sold cigarettes and Coca-Cola to the bank-robbing duo of Bonnie and Clyde in Dallas. March 7.

Carmine "the Snake" Persico, 85. The longtime boss of the infamous Colombo crime family. March 7.

Vera Bila, 64. A Czech singer dubbed the Ella Fitzgerald of Gypsy music or the Queen of Romany. March 12. Heart attack.

Birch Bayh, 91. A former U.S. senator who championed the federal law banning discrimination against women in college admissions and sports. March 14.

Dick Dale, 83. His pounding, blaringly loud power-chord instrumentals on songs like "Miserlou" and "Let's Go Trippin'" earned him the title King of the Surf Guitar. March 16.

Jerrie Cobb, 88. America's first female astronaut candidate, the pilot pushed for equality in space but never reached its heights. March 18.

Scott Walker, 76. An influential singer, songwriter and producer whose hits with the Walker Brothers in the 1960s included "The Sun Ain't Gonna Shine Anymore." March 22.

Rafi Eitan, 92. A legendary Israeli Mossad spy who led the capture of Holocaust mastermind Adolf Eichmann. March 23.

Larry Cohen, 77. The maverick B-movie director of cult horror films "It's Alive" and "God Told Me To." March 23.

Michel Bacos, 95. A French pilot who's remembered as a hero for his actions in the 1976 hijacking of an Air France plane to Uganda's Entebbe airport. March 26.

Valery Bykovsky, 84. A pioneering Soviet-era cosmonaut who made the first of his three flights to space in 1963. March 27.

Agnes Varda, 90. The French New Wave pioneer who for decades beguiled, challenged and charmed moviegoers in films that inspired generations of filmmakers. March 29. Cancer.

Ken Gibson, 86. He became the first black mayor of a major Northeast city when he ascended to power in riot-torn Newark, New Jersey, about five decades ago. March 29.

Billy Adams, 79. A Rockabilly Hall of Famer who wrote and recorded the rockabilly staple "Rock, Pretty Mama." March 30.

Nipsey Huddle, 33. A Grammy-nominated rapper. March 31. Killed in a shooting.

## APRIL

Sydney Brenner, 92. A Nobel Prize-winning biologist who helped decipher the genetic code and whose research on a roundworm sparked a new field of human disease research. April 5.

Ernest F. "Fritz" Hollings, 97. The silver-haired Democrat who helped shepherd South Carolina through desegregation as governor and went on to serve six terms in the U.S. Senate. April 6.

Cho Yang-ho, 70. Korean Air's chairman, whose leadership included scandals such as his daughter's infamous incident of "nut rage." April 7.

Marilynn Smith, 89. One of the 13 founders of the LPGA Tour whose 21 victories, two majors and endless support of her tour led to her induction into the World Golf Hall of Fame. April 9.

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Richard "Dick" Cole, 103. The last of the 80 Doolittle Tokyo Raiders who carried out the daring U.S. attack on Japan during World War II. April 9.

Charles Van Doren, 93. The dashing young academic whose meteoric rise and fall as a corrupt game show contestant in the 1950s inspired the movie "Quiz Show" and served as a cautionary tale about the staged competitions of early television. April 9.

Monkey Punch, 81. A cartoonist best known as the creator of the Japanese megahit comic series Lupin III. April 11.

Georgia Engel, 70. She played the charmingly innocent, small-voiced Georgette on "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" and amassed a string of other TV and stage credits. April 12.

Bibi Andersson, 83. The Swedish actress who starred in classic films by compatriot Ingmar Bergman, including "The Seventh Seal" and "Persona." April 14.

Owen Garriott, 88. A former astronaut who flew on America's first space station, Skylab, and whose son followed him into orbit. April 15.

Alan García, 69. A former Peruvian president whose first term in the 1980s was marred by financial chaos and rebel violence and who was recently targeted in Latin America's biggest corruption scandal. April 17. Apparent suicide.

Lorraine Warren, 92. A world-wide paranormal investigator and author whose decades of ghost-hunting cases with her late husband inspired such frightening films as "The Conjuring" series and "The Amityville Horror." April 18.

Mark Medoff, 79. A provocative playwright whose "Children of a Lesser God" won Tony and Olivier awards and whose screen adaptation of his play earned an Oscar nomination. April 23.

John Havlicek, 79. The Boston Celtics great whose steal of Hal Greer's inbound pass in the final seconds of the 1965 Eastern Conference final against the Philadelphia 76ers remains one of the most famous plays in NBA history. April 25.

Damon J. Keith, 96. A grandson of slaves and figure in the civil rights movement who as a federal judge was sued by President Richard Nixon over a ruling against warrantless wiretaps. April 28.

Richard Lugar, 87. A former U.S. senator and foreign policy sage known for leading efforts to help the former Soviet states dismantle and secure much of their nuclear arsenal but whose reputation for working with Democrats cost him his final campaign. April 28.

John Singleton, 51. A director who made one of Hollywood's most memorable debuts with the Oscar-nominated "Boyz n the Hood" and continued over the following decades to probe the lives of black communities in his native Los Angeles and beyond. April 29. Taken off life support after a stroke.

Ellen Tauscher, 67. A trailblazer for women in the world of finance who served in Congress for more than a decade before joining the Obama administration. April 29. Complications from pneumonia.

Peter Mayhew, 74. The towering actor who donned a huge, furry costume to give life to the rugged-and-beloved character of Chewbacca in the original "Star Wars" trilogy and two other films. April 30.

## MAY

John Lukacs, 95. The Hungarian-born historian and iconoclast who brooded over the future of Western civilization, wrote a best-selling tribute to Winston Churchill, and produced a substantial and often despairing body of writings on the politics and culture of Europe and the United States. May 6.

Peggy Lipton, 72. A star of the groundbreaking late 1960s TV show "The Mod Squad" and the 1990s show "Twin Peaks." May 11. Cancer.

Leonard Bailey, 76. The doctor who in 1984 transplanted a baboon heart into a tiny newborn dubbed "Baby Fae" in a pioneering operation that sparked both worldwide acclaim and condemnation. May 12.

Cardinal Nasrallah Butros Sfeir, 98. The former patriarch of Lebanon's Maronite Christian church who served as spiritual leader of Lebanon's largest Christian community through some of the worst days of the country's 1975-1990 civil war. May 12.

Doris Day, 97. The sunny blond actress and singer whose frothy comedic roles opposite the likes of Rock Hudson and Cary Grant made her one of Hollywood's biggest stars in the 1950s and '60s and a symbol

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of wholesome American womanhood. May 13.

Tim Conway, 85. The impish second banana to Carol Burnett who won four Emmy Awards on her TV variety show, starred in "McHale's Navy" and later voiced the role of Barnacle Boy for "Spongebob Squarepants." May 14.

I.M. Pei, 102. The versatile, globe-trotting architect who revived the Louvre with a giant glass pyramid and captured the spirit of rebellion at the multi-shaped Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. May 16.

Niki Lauda, 70. A Formula One great who won two of his world titles after a horrific crash that left him with serious burns and went on to become a prominent figure in the aviation industry. May 20.

Binyavanga Wainaina, 48. One of Africa's best-known authors and gay rights activists. May 21. Illness.

Judith Kerr, 95. A refugee from Nazi Germany who wrote and illustrated the best-selling "The Tiger Who Came to Tea" and other beloved children's books. May 22.

Murray Gell-Mann, 89. The Nobel Prize-winning physicist who brought order to the universe by helping discover and classify subatomic particles. May 24.

Claus von Bulow, 92. A Danish-born socialite who was convicted but later acquitted of trying to kill his wealthy wife in two trials that drew intense international attention in the 1980s. May 25.

Prem Tinsulanonda, 98. As an army commander, prime minister and adviser to the royal palace, he was one of Thailand's most influential political figures over four decades. May 26.

Richard Matsch, 88. A federal judge who ruled his courtroom with a firm gavel and a short temper and gained national respect in the 1990s for his handling of the Oklahoma City bombing trials. May 26.

Bill Buckner, 69. A star hitter who made one of the biggest blunders in baseball history when he let Mookie Wilson's trickler roll through his legs in the 1986 World Series. May 27.

Thad Cochran, 81. A former U.S. senator who served 45 years in Washington and used seniority to steer billions of dollars to his home state of Mississippi. May 30.

Patricia Bath, 76. A pioneering ophthalmologist who became the first African American female doctor to receive a medical patent after she invented a more precise treatment of cataracts. May 30. Complications of cancer.

Leon Redbone, 69. The blues and jazz artist whose growly voice, Panama hat and cultivated air of mystery made him seem like a character out of the ragtime era or the Depression-era Mississippi Delta. May 30.

Frank Lucas, 88. The former Harlem drug kingpin whose life and lore inspired the 2007 film "American Gangster." May 30.

## JUNE

Leah Chase, 96. A New Orleans chef and civil rights icon who created the city's first white-tablecloth restaurant for black patrons, broke the city's segregation laws by seating white and black customers, and introduced countless tourists to Southern Louisiana Creole cooking. June 1.

Dr. John, 77. The New Orleans singer and piano player who blended black and white musical styles with a hoodoo-infused stage persona and gravelly bayou drawl. June 6.

John Gunther Dean, 93. A veteran American diplomat and five-time ambassador forever haunted by his role in the evacuation of the U.S. Embassy in Cambodia during the dying days of the Khmer Republic. June 6.

Sylvia Miles, 94. An actress and Manhattan socialite whose brief, scene-stealing appearances in the films "Midnight Cowboy" and "Farewell, My Lovely" earned her two Academy Award nominations. June 12.

Lew Klein, 91. A broadcast pioneer who helped create "American Bandstand" and launched the careers of Dick Clark and Bob Saget. June 12.

Pat Bowlen, 75. The Denver Broncos owner who transformed the team from also-rans into NFL champions and helped the league usher in billion-dollar television deals. June 13.

Charles Reich, 91. The author and Ivy League academic whose "The Greening of America" blessed the counterculture of the 1960s and became a million-selling manifesto for a new and euphoric way of life. June 15.

Gloria Vanderbilt, 95. The intrepid heiress, artist and romantic who began her extraordinary life as the "poor little rich girl" of the Great Depression, survived family tragedy and multiple marriages and reigned

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during the 1970s and '80s as a designer jeans pioneer. June 17.

Jim Taricani, 69. An award-winning TV reporter who exposed corruption and served a federal sentence for refusing to disclose a source. June 21. Kidney failure.

Judith Krantz, 91. A writer whose million-selling novels such as "Scruples" and "Princess Daisy" engrossed readers worldwide with their steamy tales of the rich and beautiful. June 22.

Dave Bartholomew, 100. A giant of New Orleans music and a rock n' roll pioneer who, with Fats Domino, co-wrote and produced such classics as "Ain't That a Shame," "I'm Walkin'" and "Let the Four Winds Blow." June 23.

Beth Chapman, 51. The wife and co-star of "Dog the Bounty Hunter" reality TV star Duane "Dog" Chapman. June 26.

## JULY

Tyler Skaggs, 27. The left-handed pitcher who was a regular in the Los Angeles Angels' starting rotation since late 2016 and struggled with injuries repeatedly in that time. July 1. Choked on his own vomit and had a toxic mix of alcohol and painkillers fentanyl and oxycodone in his system.

Lee Iacocca, 94. The auto executive and master pitchman who put the Mustang in Ford's lineup in the 1960s and became a corporate folk hero when he resurrected Chrysler 20 years later. July 2.

Eva Kor, 85. A Holocaust survivor who championed forgiveness even for those who carried out the Holocaust atrocities. July 4.

Joao Gilberto, 88. A Brazilian singer, guitarist and songwriter considered one of the fathers of the bossa nova genre that gained global popularity in the 1960s and became an iconic sound of the South American nation. July 6.

Cameron Boyce, 20. An actor best known for his role as the teenage son of Cruella de Vil in the Disney Channel franchise "Descendants." July 6. Seizure.

Martin Charnin, 84. He made his Broadway debut playing a Jet in the original "West Side Story" and went on to become a Broadway director and a lyricist who won a Tony Award for the score of the eternal hit "Annie." July 6.

Artur Brauner, 100. A Polish-born Holocaust survivor who became one of post-World War II Germany's most prominent film producers. July 7.

Rosie Ruiz, 66. The Boston Marathon course-cutter who was stripped of her victory in the 1980 race and went on to become an enduring symbol of cheating in sports. July 8. Cancer.

H. Ross Perot, 89. The colorful, self-made Texas billionaire who rose from delivering newspapers as a boy to building his own information technology company and twice mounted outsider campaigns for president. July 9. Leukemia.

Rip Torn, 88. The free-spirited Texan who overcame his quirky name to become a distinguished actor in television, theater and movies, such as "Men in Black," and win an Emmy in his 60s for "The Larry Sanders Show." July 9.

Fernando De la Rúa, 81. A former Argentine president who attracted voters with his image as an honest statesman and later left as the country plunged into its worst economic crisis. July 9.

Johnny Kitagawa, 87. Better known as Johnny-san, he was a kingpin of Japan's entertainment industry for more than half a century who produced famous boy bands including Arashi, Tokio and SMAP. July 9.

Jim Bouton, 80. The former New York Yankees pitcher who shocked and angered the conservative baseball world with the tell-all book "Ball Four." July 10.

Jerry Lawson, 75. For four decades, he was the lead singer of the eclectic cult favorite a cappella group the Persuasions. July 10.

Pernell Whitaker, 55. An Olympic gold medalist and four-division boxing champion who was regarded as one of the greatest defensive fighters ever. July 14. Hit by a car.

L. Bruce Laingen, 96. The top American diplomat at the U.S. Embassy in Tehran when it was overrun by Iranian protesters in 1979 and one of 52 Americans held hostage for more than a year. July 15.

Edith Irby Jones, 91. The first black student to enroll at an all-white medical school in the South and later



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the first female president of the National Medical Association. July 15.

John Paul Stevens, 99. The bow-tied, independent-thinking, Republican-nominated justice who unexpectedly emerged as the Supreme Court's leading liberal. July 16.

Johnny Clegg, 66. A South African musician who performed in defiance of racial barriers imposed under the country's apartheid system decades ago and celebrated its new democracy under Nelson Mandela. July 16.

Elijah "Pumpsie" Green, 85. The former Boston Red Sox infielder was the first black player on the last major league team to field one. July 17.

Rutger Hauer, 75. A Dutch film actor who specialized in menacing roles, including a memorable turn as a murderous android in "Blade Runner" opposite Harrison Ford. July 19.

Paul Krassner, 87. The publisher, author and radical political activist on the front lines of 1960s counterculture who helped tie together his loose-knit prankster group by naming them the Yippies. July 21.

Robert M. Morgenthau, 99. A former Manhattan district attorney who spent more than three decades jailing criminals from mob kingpins and drug-dealing killers to a tax-dodging Harvard dean. July 21.

Li Peng, 90. A former hard-line Chinese premier best known for announcing martial law during the 1989 Tiananmen Square pro-democracy protests that ended with a bloody crackdown by troops. July 22.

Art Neville, 81. A member of one of New Orleans' storied musical families, the Neville Brothers, and a founding member of the groundbreaking funk band The Meters. July 22.

Chris Kraft, 95. The founder of NASA's mission control. July 22.

Mike Moulin, 70. A former Los Angeles police lieutenant who came under fire for failing to quell the first outbreak of rioting after the Rodney King beating verdict. July 30.

Harold Prince, 91. A Broadway director and producer who pushed the boundaries of musical theater with such groundbreaking shows as "The Phantom of the Opera," "Cabaret," "Company" and "Sweeney Todd" and won a staggering 21 Tony Awards. July 31.

## AUGUST

D.A. Pennebaker, 94. The Oscar-winning documentary maker whose historic contributions to American culture and politics included immortalizing a young Bob Dylan in "Don't Look Back" and capturing the spin behind Bill Clinton's 1992 presidential campaign in "The War Room." Aug. 1.

Henri Belolo, 82. He co-founded the Village People and co-wrote their classic hits "YMCA," "Macho Man" and "In the Navy." Aug. 3.

Nuon Chea, 93. The chief ideologue of the communist Khmer Rouge regime that destroyed a generation of Cambodians. Aug. 4.

Toni Morrison, 88. A pioneer and reigning giant of modern literature whose imaginative power in "Be-loved," "Song of Solomon" and other works transformed American letters by dramatizing the pursuit of freedom within the boundaries of race. Aug. 5.

Sushma Swaraj, 67. She was India's former external affairs minister and a leader of the ruling Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party. Aug. 6.

Peter Fonda, 79. The actor was the son of a Hollywood legend who became a movie star in his own right after both writing and starring in the counterculture classic "Easy Rider." Aug. 16.

Richard Williams, 86. A Canadian-British animator whose work on the bouncing cartoon bunny in "Who Framed Roger Rabbit" helped blur the boundaries between the animated world and our own. Aug. 16.

Cedric Benson, 36. A former NFL running back who was one of the most prolific rushers in NCAA and University of Texas history. Aug. 17. Motorcycle crash.

Kathleen Blanco, 76. She became Louisiana's first female elected governor only to see her political career derailed by the devastation of Hurricane Katrina. Aug. 18.

David H. Koch, 79. A billionaire industrialist who, with his older brother Charles, was both celebrated and demonized for transforming American politics by pouring their riches into conservative causes. Aug. 23.

Ferdinand Piech, 82. The German auto industry power broker was the longtime patriarch of Volkswagen AG and the key engineer of its takeover of Porsche. Aug. 25.

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Baxter Leach, 79. A prominent member of the Memphis, Tennessee, sanitation workers union whose historic strike drew the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. to the city where he was assassinated. Aug. 27.

Jim Leavelle, 99. The longtime Dallas lawman who was captured in one of history's most iconic photographs escorting President John F. Kennedy's assassin as he was fatally shot. Aug. 29.

Valerie Harper, 80. She scored guffaws, stole hearts and busted TV taboos as the brash, self-deprecating Rhoda Morgenstern on back-to-back hit sitcoms in the 1970s. Aug. 30.

## SEPTEMBER

Jimmy Johnson, 76. A founder of the Muscle Shoals Sound Studios and guitarist with the famed studio musicians "The Swampers." Sept. 5.

Robert Mugabe, 95. The former Zimbabwean leader was an ex-guerrilla chief who took power when the African country shook off white minority rule and presided for decades while economic turmoil and human rights violations eroded its early promise. Sept. 6.

Robert Frank, 94. A giant of 20th-century photography whose seminal book "The Americans" captured singular, candid moments of the 1950s and helped free picture-taking from the boundaries of clean lighting and linear composition. Sept. 9.

T. Boone Pickens, 91. A brash and quotable oil tycoon who grew even wealthier through corporate takeover attempts. Sept. 11.

Bacharuddin Jusuf Habibie, 83. A former Indonesian president who allowed democratic reforms and an independence referendum for East Timor following the ouster of the dictator Suharto. Sept. 11.

Eddie Money, 70. The rock star known for such hits as "Two Tickets to Paradise" and "Take Me Home Tonight." Sept. 13. Esophageal cancer.

Phyllis Newman, 86. A Tony Award-winning Broadway veteran who became the first woman to host "The Tonight Show" before turning her attention to fight for women's health. Sept. 15.

Ric Ocasek, 75. The Cars frontman whose deadpan vocal delivery and lanky, sunglasses look defined a rock era with chart-topping hits like "Just What I Needed." Sept. 15.

Cokie Roberts, 75. The daughter of politicians and a pioneering journalist who chronicled Washington from Jimmy Carter to Donald Trump for NPR and ABC News. Sept. 17. Complications from breast cancer.

David A. Jones Sr., 88. He invested \$1,000 to start a nursing home company that eventually became the \$37 billion health insurance giant Humana Inc. Sept. 18.

Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, 83. The former Tunisian president was an autocrat who led his small North African country for 23 years before being toppled by nationwide protests that unleashed revolt across the Arab world. Sept. 19.

John Keenan, 99. He was the police official who led New York City's manhunt for the "Son of Sam" killer and eventually took a case-solving confession from David Berkowitz. Sept. 19.

Barron Hilton, 91. A hotel magnate who expanded his father's chain and became a founding owner in the American Football League. Sept. 19.

Howard "Hopalong" Cassady, 85. The 1955 Heisman Trophy winner at Ohio State and running back for the Detroit Lions. Sept. 20.

Karl Muentner, 96. A former SS soldier who was convicted in France of a wartime massacre but who never served any time for his crimes. Sept. 20.

Sigmund Jaehn, 82. He became the first German in space at the height of the Cold War during the 1970s and was promoted as a hero by communist authorities in East Germany. Sept. 21.

Jacques Chirac, 86. A two-term French president who was the first leader to acknowledge France's role in the Holocaust and defiantly opposed the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003. Sept. 26.

Joseph Wilson, 69. The former ambassador who set off a political firestorm by disputing U.S. intelligence used to justify the 2003 Iraq invasion. Sept. 27.

José José, 71. The Mexican crooner was an elegant dresser who moved audiences to tears with melancholic love ballads and was known as the "Prince of Song." Sept. 28.

Jessye Norman, 74. The renowned international opera star whose passionate soprano voice won her

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four Grammy Awards, the National Medal of Arts and the Kennedy Center Honor. Sept. 30.

Samuel Mayerson, 97. The prosecutor who took newspaper heiress Patty Hearst to court for shooting up a Southern California sporting goods store in 1974 and then successfully argued for probation, not prison, for the kidnapping victim-turned terrorist. Sept. 30.

## OCTOBER

Karel Gott, 80. A Czech pop singer who became a star behind the Iron Curtain. Oct. 1.

Diogo Freitas do Amaral, 78. A conservative Portuguese politician who played a leading role in cementing the country's democracy after its 1974 Carnation Revolution and later became president of the U.N. General Assembly. Oct. 3.

Diahann Carroll, 84. The Oscar-nominated actress and singer who won critical acclaim as the first black woman to star in a non-servant role in a TV series as "Julia." Oct. 4. Cancer.

Ginger Baker, 80. The volatile and propulsive drummer for Cream and other bands who wielded blues power and jazz finesse and helped shatter boundaries of time, tempo and style in popular music. Oct. 6.

Rip Taylor, 88. The madcap, mustached comedian with a fondness for confetti-throwing who became a television game show mainstay in the 1970s. Oct. 6.

Robert Forster, 78. The handsome and omnipresent character actor who got a career resurgence and Oscar nomination for playing bail bondsman Max Cherry in "Jackie Brown." Oct. 11. Brain cancer.

James Stern, 55. A black activist who took control of one of the nation's largest neo-Nazi groups — and vowed to dismantle it. Oct. 11. Cancer.

Alexei Leonov, 85. The legendary Soviet cosmonaut who became the first person to walk in space. Oct. 11.

Scotty Bowers, 96. A self-described Hollywood "fixer" whose memoir offered sensational accounts of the sex lives of such celebrities as Katharine Hepburn, Cary Grant and the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. Oct. 13.

Harold Bloom, 89. The eminent critic and Yale professor whose seminal "The Anxiety of Influence" and melancholy regard for literature's old masters made him a popular author and standard-bearer of Western civilization amid modern trends. Oct. 14.

Elijah E. Cummings, 68. A sharecropper's son who rose to become a civil rights champion and the chairman of one of the U.S. House committees leading an impeachment inquiry of President Donald Trump. Oct. 17. Complications from longstanding health problems.

Alicia Alonso, 98. The revered ballerina and choreographer whose nearly 75-year career made her an icon of artistic loyalty to Cuba's socialist system. Oct. 17.

Bill Macy, 97. The character actor whose hangdog expression was a perfect match for his role as the long-suffering foil to Bea Arthur's unyielding feminist on the daring 1970s sitcom "Maude." Oct. 17.

Marieke Vervoort, 40. A Paralympian who won gold and silver medals in 2012 at the London Paralympics in wheelchair racing and two more medals in Rio de Janeiro. Oct. 22. Took her own life after living with pain from a degenerative spinal disease.

Sadako Ogata, 92. She led the U.N. refugee agency for a decade and became one of the first Japanese to hold a top job at an international organization. Oct. 22.

Kathryn Johnson, 93. A trailblazing reporter for The Associated Press whose intrepid coverage of the civil rights movement and other major stories led to a string of legendary scoops. Oct. 23.

Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi, believed to be 48. He sought to establish an Islamic "caliphate" across Syria and Iraq, but he might be remembered more as the ruthless leader of the Islamic State group who brought terror to the heart of Europe. Oct. 26. Detonated a suicide vest during a raid by U.S. forces.

John Conyers, 90. The former congressman was one of the longest-serving members of Congress whose resolutely liberal stance on civil rights made him a political institution in Washington and back home in Detroit despite several scandals. Oct. 27.

Ivan Milat, 74. His grisly serial killings of seven European and Australian backpackers horrified Australia in the early '90s. Oct. 27.

Vladimir Bukovsky, 76. A prominent Soviet-era dissident who became internationally known for exposing Soviet abuse of psychiatry. Oct. 27.

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Kay Hagan, 66. A former bank executive who rose from a budget writer in the North Carolina Legislature to a seat in the U.S. Senate. Oct. 28. Illness.

John Walker, 82. An Arkansas lawmaker and civil rights attorney who represented black students in a long-running court fight over the desegregation of Little Rock-area schools. Oct. 28.

John Witherspoon, 77. An actor-comedian who memorably played Ice Cube's father in the "Friday" films. Oct. 29.

## NOVEMBER

Walter Mercado, 88. A television astrologer whose glamorous persona made him a star in Latin media and a cherished icon for gay people in most of the Spanish-speaking world. Nov. 2. Kidney failure.

Gert Boyle, 95. The colorful chairwoman of Oregon-based Columbia Sportswear Co. who starred in ads proclaiming her "One Tough Mother." Nov. 3.

Ernest J. Gaines, 86. A novelist whose poor childhood on a small Louisiana plantation germinated stories of black struggles that grew into universal tales of grace and beauty. Nov. 5.

Werner Gustav Doehner, 90. He was the last remaining survivor of the Hindenburg disaster, who suffered severe burns to his face, arms and legs before his mother managed to toss him and his brother from the burning airship. Nov. 8.

Charles Rogers, 38. The former Michigan State star and Detroit Lions receiver was an All-American wide receiver who was the school's all-time leader in touchdown catches. Nov. 11.

Raymond Poulidor, 83. The "eternal runner-up" whose repeated failure to win the Tour de France helped him conquer French hearts and become the country's all-time favorite cyclist. Nov. 13.

Walter J. Minton, 96. A publishing scion and risk taker with a self-described "nasty streak" who as head of G.P. Putnam's Sons released works by Norman Mailer and Terry Southern, among others, and signed up Vladimir Nabokov's scandalous "Lolita." Nov. 19.

Jake Burton Carpenter, 65. The man who changed the game on the mountain by fulfilling a grand vision of what a snowboard could be. Nov. 20. Complications stemming from a relapse of testicular cancer.

Gahan Wilson, 89. His humorous and often macabre cartoons were a mainstay in magazines including Playboy, the New Yorker and National Lampoon. Nov. 21.

Cathy Long, 95. A Louisiana Democrat who won her husband's U.S. House seat after his sudden death in 1985 and served one term. Nov. 23.

John Simon, 94. A theater and film critic known for his lacerating reviews and often withering assessment of performers' physical appearance. Nov. 24.

William Doyle Ruckelshaus, 87. He famously quit his job in the Justice Department rather than carry out President Richard Nixon's order to fire the special prosecutor investigating the Watergate scandal. Nov. 27.

Yasuhiro Nakasone, 101. The former Japanese prime minister was a giant of his country's post-World War II politics who pushed for a more assertive Japan while strengthening military ties with the United States. Nov. 29.

Irving Burgie, 95. A composer who helped popularize Caribbean music and co-wrote the enduring Harry Belafonte hit "Day-O (The Banana Boat Song)." Nov. 29.

## DECEMBER

Allan Gerson, 74. A lawyer who pursued Nazi war criminals and pioneered the practice of suing foreign governments in U.S. courts for complicity to terrorism. Dec. 1.

Juice WRLD, 21. A rapper who launched his career on SoundCloud before becoming a streaming juggernaut and rose to the top of the charts with the Sting-sampled hit "Lucid Dreams." Dec. 8. Died after being treated for opioid use during a police search.

René Auberjonois, 79. A prolific actor best known for his roles on the television shows "Benson" and "Star Trek: Deep Space Nine" and his part in the 1970 film "M.A.S.H." playing Father Mulcahy. Dec. 8.

Caroll Spinney, 85. He gave Big Bird his warmth and Oscar the Grouch his growl for nearly 50 years on "Sesame Street." Dec. 8.

Paul Volcker, 92. The former Federal Reserve chairman who in the early 1980s raised interest rates to historic highs and triggered a recession as the price of quashing double-digit inflation. Dec. 8.



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Pete Frates, 34. A former college baseball player whose battle with Lou Gehrig's disease helped inspire the ALS ice bucket challenge that has raised more than \$200 million worldwide. Dec. 9.

Marie Fredriksson, 61. The female half of the Swedish pop duo Roxette that achieve international success in the late 1980s and 1990s. Dec. 9.

Kim Woo-choong, 82. The disgraced founder of the now-collapsed Daewoo business group whose rise and fall symbolized South Korea's turbulent rapid economic growth in the 1970s. Dec. 9. Pneumonia.

Danny Aiello, 86. The blue-collar character actor whose long career playing tough guys included roles in "Fort Apache, the Bronx," "Moonstruck" and "Once Upon a Time in America" and his Oscar-nominated performance as a pizza man in Spike Lee's "Do the Right Thing." Dec. 12.

Robert Glenn "Junior" Johnson, 88. The moonshine runner turned NASCAR driver who won 50 races as a driver and 132 as an owner and was part of the inaugural class inducted into the NASCAR Hall of Fame in 2010. Dec. 20.

Elizabeth Spencer, 98. A grande dame of Southern literature who bravely navigated between the Jim Crow past and open-ended present in her novels and stories, including the celebrated novella "Light In the Piazza." Dec. 22.

Lee Mendelson, 86. The producer who changed the face of the holidays when he brought "A Charlie Brown Christmas" to television in 1965 and wrote the lyrics to its signature song, "Christmas Time Is Here." Dec. 25. Congestive heart failure.

Jerry Herman, 88. The Tony Award-winning composer who wrote the cheerful, good-natured music and lyrics for such classic shows as "Mame," "Hello, Dolly!" and "La Cage aux Folles." Dec. 26.

Don Imus, 79. The disc jockey whose career was made and then undone by his acid tongue during a decadeslong rise to radio stardom and abrupt plunge after a nationally broadcast racial slur. Dec. 27. Complications from lung disease.

This story has been corrected to reflect that Toni Morrison won the Nobel Prize in literature for career achievement, not for her novel "Beloved."

## Attack on US Embassy in Iraq shows stark choices for Trump

By **ROBERT BURNS** and **ELLEN KNICKMEYER** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The attack on the U.S. Embassy compound in Baghdad by Iran-supported militiamen Tuesday is a stark demonstration that Iran can still strike at American interests despite President Donald Trump's economic pressure campaign. Trump said Iran would be held "fully responsible" for the attack, but it was unclear whether that meant military retaliation.

"They will pay a very BIG PRICE! This is not a Warning, it is a Threat. Happy New Year!" Trump tweeted later in the afternoon. He also thanked top Iraqi government leaders for their "rapid response upon request."

Defense Secretary Mark Esper later announced that "in response to recent events" in Iraq, and at Trump's direction, he authorized the immediate deployment of an infantry battalion of about 750 soldiers from the Army's 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, to the Middle East. He did not specify their destination, but a U.S. official familiar with the decision said they will go to Kuwait.

Esper said additional soldiers from the 82nd Airborne's quick-deployment brigade, known officially as its Immediate Response Force, are prepared to deploy over the next several days. The U.S. official, who provided unreleased details on condition of anonymity, said the full brigade of about 4,000 soldiers may deploy.

"This deployment is an appropriate and precautionary action taken in response to increased threat levels against U.S. personnel and facilities, such as we witnessed in Baghdad today," Esper said in a written statement.

The 750 soldiers deploying immediately are in addition to 14,000 U.S. troops who have deployed to the Gulf region since May in response to concerns about Iranian aggression, including its alleged sabotage of commercial shipping in the Persian Gulf.

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Tuesday's breach of the embassy compound in Baghdad, which caused no known U.S. casualties or evacuations, revealed growing strains between Washington and Baghdad, raising questions about the future of the U.S. military mission there. The U.S. has about 5,200 troops in Iraq, mainly to train Iraqi forces and help them combat Islamic State extremists.

The breach followed American airstrikes Sunday that killed 25 fighters of an Iran-backed militia in Iraq, the Kataeb Hezbollah. The U.S. said those strikes were in retaliation for last week's killing of an American contractor and the wounding of American and Iraqi troops in a rocket attack on an Iraqi military base that the U.S. blamed on the militia. The American strikes angered the Iraqi government, which called them an unjustified violation of its sovereignty.

Trump blamed Iran for the embassy breach and called on Iraq to protect the diplomatic mission even as the U.S. reinforced the compound with Marines from Kuwait.

"Iran killed an American contractor, wounding many," he tweeted from his estate in Florida. "We strongly responded, and always will. Now Iran is orchestrating an attack on the U.S. Embassy in Iraq. They will be held fully responsible. In addition, we expect Iraq to use its forces to protect the Embassy, and so notified!"

Even as Trump has argued for removing U.S. troops from Mideast conflicts, he also has singled out Iran as a malign influence in the region. After withdrawing the U.S. in 2018 from an international agreement that exchanged an easing of sanctions for curbs on Iran's nuclear program, Trump ratcheted up sanctions.

Those economic penalties, including a virtual shut-off of Iranian oil exports, are aimed at forcing Iran to negotiate a broader nuclear deal. But critics say that pressure has pushed Iranian leaders into countering with a variety of military attacks in the Gulf.

Until Sunday's U.S. airstrikes, Trump had been measured in his response to Iranian provocations. In June, he abruptly called off U.S. military strikes on Iranian targets in retaliation for the downing of an American drone.

Robert Ford, a retired U.S. diplomat who served five years in Baghdad and then became ambassador in Syria, said Iran's allies in the Iraqi parliament may be able to harness any surge in anger among Iraqis toward the United States to force U.S. troops to leave the country. Ford said Trump miscalculated by approving Sunday's airstrikes on Kataeb Hezbollah positions in Iraq and Syria — strikes that drew a public rebuke from the Iraqi government and seem to have triggered Tuesday's embassy attack.

"The Americans fell into the Iranian trap," Ford said, with airstrikes that turned some Iraqi anger toward the U.S. and away from Iran and the increasingly unpopular Iranian-backed Shiite militias.

The tense situation in Baghdad appeared to upset Trump's vacation routine in Florida, where he is spending the holidays.

Trump spent just under an hour at his private golf club in West Palm Beach before returning to his Mar-a-Lago resort in nearby Palm Beach. He had spent nearly six hours at his golf club on each of the previous two days. Trump spoke with Iraqi Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi and emphasized the need for Iraq to protect Americans and their facilities in the country, said White House spokesman Hogan Gidley.

Trump is under pressure from some in Congress to take a hard-line approach to Iranian aggression, which the United States says included an unprecedented drone and missile attack on the heart of Saudi Arabia's oil industry in September. More recently, Iran-backed militias in Iraq have conducted numerous rocket attacks on bases hosting U.S. forces.

Sen. Tom Cotton, an Arkansas Republican and supporter of Trump's Iran policy, called the embassy breach "yet another reckless escalation" by Iran.

Tuesday's attack was carried out by members of the Iran-supported Kataeb Hezbollah militia. Dozens of militiamen and their supporters smashed a main door to the compound and set fire to a reception area, but they did not enter the main buildings.

Sen. Bob Menendez of New Jersey, senior Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, blamed Iran for the episode and faulted Trump for his "maximum pressure" campaign against Iran.

"The results so far have been more threats against international commerce, emboldened and more violent proxy attacks across the Middle East, and now, the death of an American citizen in Iraq," Menendez

said, referring to the rocket attack last week.

By early evening Tuesday, the mob had retreated from the compound but set up several tents outside for an intended sit-in. Dozens of yellow flags belonging to Iran-backed Shiite militias fluttered atop the reception area and were plastered along the embassy's concrete wall along with anti-U.S. graffiti. American Apache helicopters flew overhead and dropped flares over the area in what the U.S. military called a "show of force."

The U.S. also was sending 100 or more additional Marines to the embassy compound to support its defenses.

The embassy breach was seen by some analysts as affirming their view that it is folly for the U.S. to keep forces in Iraq after having eliminated the Islamic State group's territorial hold in the country.

A U.S. withdrawal from Iraq is also a long-term hope of Iran, noted Paul Salem, president of the Washington-based Middle East Institute.

And it's always possible Trump would "wake up one morning and make that decision" to pull U.S. forces out of Iraq, as he announced earlier with the U.S. military presence in neighboring Syria, Salem said. Trump's Syria decision triggered the resignation of his first defense secretary, retired Gen. Jim Mattis, but the president later amended his decision and about 1,200 U.S. troops remain in Syria.

Trump's best weapon with Iran is the one he's already using — the sanctions, said Salem. He and Ford said Trump would do best to keep resisting Iran's attempt to turn the Iran-U.S. conflict into a full-blown military one. The administration should also make a point of working with the Iraqi government to deal with the militias, Ford said.

For the president, Iran's attacks — directly and now through proxies in Iraq — have "been working that nerve," Salem said. "Now they really have Trump's attention."

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Associated Press writers Matthew Lee, Darlene Superville and Sagar Meghani contributed to this report.

## **Lawyers: Robert Durst wrote incriminating 'cadaver' note**

**By BRIAN MELLEY Associated Press**

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Lawyers for New York real estate heir Robert Durst acknowledge he penned a note tipping off police to the location of the body of a friend he's accused of killing, according to court documents.

In a court filing last week in Los Angeles Superior Court, lawyers for Durst conceded he had written the note directing police to the home where his best friend, Susan Berman, was shot point-blank in the back of the head just before Christmas of 2000.

Durst, 76, pleaded not guilty to murder in Berman's death but told a documentary film crew that the letter could only have been sent by the killer.

The revelation he sent the note was made in a joint filing by defense lawyers and prosecutors of stipulations they've agreed to before his trial scheduled for Feb. 10. Attorneys for Durst said they made the concession as a strategic decision after the judge agreed to admit the evidence based on analysis by handwriting experts.

The defense, which had long denied he wrote the note, said they still plan to challenge that ruling on appeal. Attorney Dick DeGuerin told The Associated Press that the defense won't comment on the stipulation.

"This does not change the facts that Bob Durst didn't kill Susan Berman and he doesn't know who did," DeGuerin said.

Durst killed Berman because he feared his friend and unofficial spokeswoman was going to tell police what she knew about the mysterious disappearance of his wife, Kathleen, in New York in 1982, prosecutors said.

The note sent to the Beverly Hills Police Department on the same day Berman was killed has been considered a smoking gun in the case since the bombshell finale of "The Jinx: The Life and Deaths of Robert Durst" aired on HBO in 2015.

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Durst was shown the note written in block letters that only included the address of Berman's house and the word "cadaver." He denied writing the note but said "only the killer could have written" it. The envelope was addressed with Beverly misspelled "Beverley."

Filmmakers then confronted him with a letter he sent Berman a year earlier that appeared to have identical handwriting, including the same misspelling.

"I wrote this one but I did not write the cadaver one," Durst insisted. But moments later, he couldn't tell the two apart. After an awkward moment in which he blinked, burped and put his head in his hands, he denied being the killer.

The interview then ended and Durst walked into a bathroom unaware he was still wearing a live microphone. He was heard muttering to himself: "You're caught! What the hell did I do? Killed them all, of course."

One law enforcement official, who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the investigation was ongoing, said analysis linking Durst to the letters was the key new evidence presented to prosecutors before his arrest.

Durst was nabbed on the eve of the broadcast in New Orleans, where he was staying in a hotel under a pseudonym and appeared to be making plans to leave the country.

After Berman's death, Durst went into hiding in Galveston, Texas, where he disguised himself as a mute woman in a boarding house. He killed his neighbor, Morris Black, in 2001 in what he claimed was self-defense after the men struggled over a gun. He then chopped up the man's body and disposed of it at sea.

Durst was acquitted of murder in that case. Prosecutors claim Black was killed after he learned Durst's real identity.

Deputy District Attorney John Lewin plans to present evidence at trial that the killings of Black and Berman were both part of an effort to cover up the slaying of Kathleen Durst years earlier.

Kathleen Durst's body has never been found and she was declared dead two years ago. Robert Durst, reportedly worth \$100 million, is considered the prime suspect in her presumed killing but has never been charged.

Witnesses who testified in pretrial hearings said Berman told them Durst acknowledged killing his wife and that she helped him cover up the crime. They also testified that Berman said if anything happened to her, Durst would be responsible.

The defense also stipulated that Durst wrote a note found in a trash can in a bedroom at the home the couple shared in Westchester County, New York, where they had been staying just before Durst said he last saw his wife.

Referred to as the "dig note," it appears to be a list including the words "town dump," "dig" and "shovel."

## Minister: Texas gunman grew angry in past over cash requests

By JAKE BLEIBERG and JAMIE STENGLE Associated Press

DALLAS (AP) — The congregation at a Texas church where two people were fatally shot had repeatedly given food to the gunman, according to the pastor, but had declined to give money to him, angering a man who court records show was deemed mentally incompetent for trial in 2012.

It's unclear whether Keith Thomas Kinnunen's extensive criminal record and psychological history would have barred him from legally buying the shotgun he used during Sunday's attack at the West Freeway Church of Christ in the Fort Worth-area town of White Settlement.

Kinnunen, 43, shot worshippers Richard White and Anton "Tony" Wallace in the sanctuary before a member of the church's volunteer security team shot and killed him, according to police and witnesses.

Minister Britt Farmer told The Christian Chronicle that he recognized Kinnunen after seeing a photo of him without the fake beard, wig, hat and long coat he wore as a disguise to the service.

Kinnunen visited the congregation several other times this year and was given food but denied money, the minister said.

"We've helped him on several occasions with food," Farmer said in the interview. "He gets mad when we won't give him cash."



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Farmer declined to speak to The Associated Press on Tuesday.

Authorities have said Kinnunen's motive remains under investigation and they declined to comment on how he obtained the gun he used, though a Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives spokeswoman said it had successfully traced the weapon.

Court records portray Kinnunen as being deeply troubled long before Sunday's attack.

In 2012, a district judge in Oklahoma ruled him mentally incompetent to stand trial and ordered him committed to a psychiatric facility for treatment.

Kinnunen was charged with felony assault and battery with a dangerous weapon after he attacked the owner of a Chickasha, Oklahoma, doughnut shop in 2011, court records state. He was separately charged with arson that year after allegedly starting a fire in a cotton field by tying tampons soaked in lamp oil to the crop.

Earlier on the day of that fire, Kinnunen soaked a football in the accelerant, lit it on fire and threw it back and forth with his son, who was a minor, according to the arrest affidavit. The boy told police he was afraid his father would get mad if he asked to stop.

A forensic psychologist who examined Kinnunen in 2012 for both cases wrote that "Kinnunen currently evidences signs that are consistent with a substantial mental illness and that meet the inpatient criteria of a 'person requiring treatment.'"

Records show that Kinnunen was found competent to stand trial in February 2013. However, both criminal cases were ultimately reduced to misdemeanors, to which he pleaded guilty.

One of Kinnunen's ex-wives, Cynthia L. Glasgow-Voegle, also filed for a protective order against him in 2012, Oklahoma records show.

"Keith is a violent, paranoid person with a long line of assault and battery w/ and without firearms," Glasgow-Voegle said in the petition. She also wrote that Kinnunen was prone to religious fanaticism and "says he's battling a demon."

Kinnunen got "more and more" into drugs and "it messed with his head" during their marriage, Angela Holloway, whose divorce from him was finalized in 2011, told the AP.

Holloway, a 44-year-old Fort Worth resident, said she hadn't spoken to Kinnunen in years and learned from news reports that he was the church attacker. She said she and Kinnunen used to attend church together and that there were times he appeared to be off drugs, but that he was frightening by the end of their six-year marriage.

"He was really disturbed," Holloway said.

She said that she doesn't know whether Kinnunen was ever diagnosed with a mental illness and that she wasn't sure whether he could legally have guns, but that he consistently did.

"I don't know how he got them; I just know that he did have them," she said.

In 2016, Kinnunen was arrested in New Jersey and charged with unlawful possession of a firearm. He eventually pleaded guilty to the lesser crime of criminal trespass, court records show. In Texas, he was charged with aggravated assault in 2008 but pleaded down to misdemeanor deadly conduct.

Federal law defines nine categories that would prohibit someone from being legally allowed to own or possess a firearm. They include being convicted of any felony charge or misdemeanor domestic violence, being subject to a restraining order or active warrants, being addicted to drugs, and being involuntarily committed to a mental health institution or being found by a court to be "a mental defective." However, it remained unclear whether Kinnunen qualified under any of the categories.

Despite a judge's initial finding that Kinnunen was mentally incompetent to stand trial in Oklahoma, that wouldn't necessarily have prevented him from legally purchasing a firearm, said Edwin Walker, a Houston-based attorney for U.S. & Texas Law Shield, a company that provides legal protection to gun owners.

"If he had only misdemeanors and none of those were for domestic violence, and his competency had been restored by judicial decree, then yes, he would have been able to purchase a firearm," Walker said.

Seconds after Kinnunen opened fire in the church, Jack Wilson, a 71-year-old firearms instructor, shot him once in the head.

The actions of Wilson and other armed churchgoers drew praise from some Texas lawmakers and gun-

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rights advocates. Texas officials hailed the state's gun laws, including a measure enacted in 2019 that affirmed the right of licensed handgun holders to carry a weapon inside places of worship unless a facility bans them.

"We can't prevent every incident, we can't prevent mental illness from occurring, and we can't prevent every crazy person from pulling a gun, but we can be prepared like this church was," Texas Attorney General Ken Paxton told reporters Monday.

President Donald Trump tweeted Monday night and Tuesday morning about the attack, both times highlighting the role of armed citizens in stopping the shooter. "If it were not for the fact that there were people inside of the church that were both armed, and highly proficient in using their weapon, the end result would have been catastrophic. A big THANK YOU to them!" Trump tweeted.

But other Texas lawmakers, while praising the churchgoers' actions, called for a special legislative session to address gun violence after a devastating year that included mass shootings in El Paso and the West Texas cities of Odessa and Midland.

"We must respect the Second Amendment while also working together to keep guns out of the hands of those who wish to do harm to Texans worshiping in a church, attending school or shopping for their children," state Sen. Beverly Powell, D-Fort Worth, said in a statement.

Associated Press writers Paul J. Weber in Austin, Jill Bleed in Little Rock, Arkansas, Sean Murphy in Oklahoma City, David Porter in Elizabeth, New Jersey, and news researcher Rhonda Shafner in New York contributed to this report.

## Stocks close out best year since 2013; S&P 500 soars 28.9%

By ALEX VEIGA AP Business Writer

Wall Street closed the books Tuesday on a blockbuster 2019 for stock investors, with the broader market delivering its best returns in six years.

The S&P 500 finished with a gain of 28.9% for the year, or a total return of 31.5%, including dividends. The Nasdaq composite rose 35.3%. For both indexes it was the best annual performance since 2013. Technology stocks helped power those gains by vaulting 48%.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average gained 22.3%, led by Apple.

Along the way, the three major indexes set more record highs than in 2018 and kept the longest bull market for stocks going.

"We had a remarkable year of returns in the stock market," said Keith Buchanan, portfolio manager at Globalt Investments. "Things are much different going into 2020 than they were going into 2019."

Wall Street's record-shattering ride in 2019 was not without its bumps.

The market got off to a roaring start in January after Federal Reserve Chairman Jay Powell said the central bank would be "patient" with its interest rate policy following four increases in 2018. That encouraged investors who had been worried the Fed would continue hiking rates. Those concerns helped fuel a sell-off in the final quarter of 2018 that knocked the S&P 500 nearly 20% lower by December of that year.

January's rally helped set the tone for a year in which the market responded to every downturn with a more sustained upswing. Along the way, stocks kept setting records — 35 of them for the S&P 500 index, 22 for the Dow and 31 for the Nasdaq.

By the end of the year, the Fed had completely reversed course and cut rates three times in what Powell called a pre-emptive move against any impact a sluggish global economy and the U.S.-China trade war might have on U.S. economic growth.

The market also overcame a late-summer slump caused by fears that the U.S. economy could be headed for a recession. Those concerns eased as investors drew encouragement from surprisingly good third-quarter corporate earnings and data showing the economy was not slowing as much as economists had feared.

"You fast-forward 12 months and now we're going into 2020 and the sentiment seems like it's fairly the

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opposite," Buchanan said. "There are fairly rosy expectations and there's not a consensus that a recession is coming in a very near term."

A truce in the 17-month U.S.-China trade war helped keep investors in a buying mood through the end of the year. Washington and Beijing announced in December they reached an agreement over a "Phase 1" trade deal that calls for the U.S. to reduce tariffs and China to buy larger quantities of U.S. farm products.

On Tuesday, President Donald Trump tweeted that he will sign the initial trade deal with China at the White House next month. He also said he plans to travel to Beijing at a later date to open talks on other sticking points in the U.S.-China trade relationship that remain to be worked out, including Chinese practices the U.S. complains unfairly favor its own companies.

A last-minute burst of buying reversed an early dip the major indexes Tuesday. Stocks ended the day broadly higher, led by gains in technology, health care and financial companies. Industrial stocks and household goods makers lagged the most. Bond prices fell, sending yields higher. Gold rose and crude oil fell.

The S&P 500 rose 9.49 points, or 0.3%, to 3,230.78. The Dow gained 76.30 points, or 0.3%, to 28,538.44. The Nasdaq climbed 26.61 points, or 0.3%, to 8,972.60.

Smaller company stocks fared better than the rest of the market. The Russell 2000 index picked up 4.32 points, or 0.3%, to 1,668.47. The index ended the year with a gain of 23.7%.

Trading volume was lighter than usual ahead of the New Year's Day holiday. U.S. markets will be closed Wednesday and reopen on Thursday.

Bond prices fell. The yield on the 10-year Treasury note rose to 1.92% from 1.89% late Thursday.

In a year when most of the 11 sectors in the S&P 500 finished with gain of more than 20%, technology stocks led the way higher.

"Technology performed well," said J.J. Kinahan, chief strategist with TD Ameritrade. "There was a huge fear going into the year that technology was going to suffer considerably because of tariffs, yet at the end of the year Apple is the leading stock in the Dow."

Apple did in fact precipitate one of the biggest sell-offs of the year on Jan. 3 with a warning of slowing demand for iPhones. After that, however, it was mostly good news for Apple shareholders and the stock finished with an annual gain of 86%, its best year since 2009.

Financial sector stocks, especially big banks, also posted strong gains in 2019, despite a sharp pullback in interest rates.

The sector ended with a 29.2% gain for the year, while JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America and Citigroup climbed over 40%.

Benchmark U.S. crude oil lost 62 cents to settle at \$61.06 per barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, gave up 67 cents to close at \$66 per barrel.

In other commodities trading, wholesale gasoline fell 3 cents to \$1.70 per gallon. Heating oil slipped a penny to \$2.03 per gallon. Natural gas was little changed at \$2.19 per 1,000 cubic feet.

The price of gold rose \$5 to \$1,519.50 per ounce. Silver fell 8 cents to \$17.83 per ounce. Copper dropped 3 cents to \$2.79 per pound.

The dollar fell to 108.64 Japanese yen from 108.83 yen on Monday. The euro strengthened to \$1.1217 from \$1.1202.

European markets closed mostly lower. In Asia, Hong Kong's Hang Seng index lost 0.5%.

## A daring escape: Ex-Nissan chief flees Japan ahead of trial

By YURI KAGEYAMA and SARAH EL DEEB Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — In a daring escape that confounded authorities, Nissan's former Chairman Carlos Ghosn skipped bail while awaiting trial in Japan on allegations of financial misconduct and reappeared in Lebanon, where he said Tuesday that he had fled to avoid "political persecution."

Ghosn, who is of Lebanese origin and holds French, Lebanese and Brazilian passports, disclosed his location in a statement through his representatives but did not say how he managed to get out of Japan, where he had been under surveillance. He promised to talk to reporters next week.

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"I am now in Lebanon and will no longer be held hostage by a rigged Japanese justice system where guilt is presumed, discrimination is rampant, and basic human rights are denied, in flagrant disregard of Japan's legal obligations under international law and treaties it is bound to uphold," the statement said.

Speaking anonymously, prosecutors in Japan told Japanese media they did not know how Ghosn got out. His lawyer also denied all knowledge of the escape, saying he was stunned. Japan does not have an extradition treaty with Lebanon, which said Ghosn had entered the country legally and there was no reason to take any action against him.

"He is home," Ghosn's friend, television host Ricardo Karam said in a message. "It's a big adventure."

Karam said Ghosn arrived in Lebanon on Monday morning, but declined to elaborate. The Lebanon-based newspaper Al-Joumhouriya said Ghosn arrived in Beirut from Turkey aboard a private jet.

Ghosn was arrested in November 2018 and was expected to face trial in April 2020. He posted 1.5 billion yen (\$14 million) bail on two separate instances after he was arrested a second time on additional charges, and released again.

Prosecutors fought his release, but a court granted him bail on condition that he be monitored and not meet with his wife, Carole, who is also of Lebanese origin. Recently, the court allowed them to speak by video.

Ghosn, who was charged with under-reporting his future compensation and breach of trust, has repeatedly asserted his innocence, saying authorities trumped up charges to prevent a possible fuller merger between Nissan Motor Co. and alliance partner Renault SA.

"Maybe he thought he won't get a fair trial," said his lawyer, Junichiro Hironaka, stressing that he continues to believe Ghosn is innocent. "I can't blame him for thinking that way."

The charges Ghosn faces carry a maximum penalty of 15 years in prison.

How Ghosn managed to flee was, publicly at least, a mystery. Hironaka said the lawyers were holding Ghosn's three passports, yet Lebanon's minister for presidential affairs, Selim Jreissati, told the An-Nahar newspaper that Ghosn entered legally at the airport with a French passport and Lebanese ID.

France reacted with surprise and some confusion.

The French foreign ministry said in a statement that French authorities "have heard from the press about the arrival of Carlos Ghosn to Lebanon." They "have not been informed of his departure from Japan and have no knowledge of the circumstances of his departure," the statement said.

Agnes Pannier-Runacher, a junior finance minister, told broadcaster BFM-TV that "I was surprised as you when I learned about this escape."

Ghosn's lawyer, Hironaka, said he last spoke with his client on Christmas Day and was never consulted about leaving for Lebanon. However, he said the circumstances of Ghosn's arrest, the seizure of evidence and the strict bail conditions were unfair.

Jreissati told An-Nahar he had asked Japan to hand Ghosn over to be tried in Lebanon according to international anti-corruption laws. However, since there was no official word from Tokyo and it was not yet clear how Ghosn came to Lebanon, Beirut wouldn't take a formal position. Jreissati did not immediately respond to calls from The Associated Press.

People in Lebanon take special pride in the auto industry icon, who is credited with leading a spectacular turnaround at Nissan beginning in the late 1990s, and rescued the automaker from near-bankruptcy.

Ghosn speaks fluent Arabic and visited the country regularly. Born in Brazil, where his Lebanese grandfather had sought his fortune, Ghosn grew up in Beirut, where he spent part of his childhood at a Jesuit school.

Before his fall from grace, Ghosn was also a celebrity in Japan, where he was revered for his managerial acumen.

Nissan did not have immediate comment Tuesday. The Japanese automaker of the March subcompact, Leaf electric car and Infiniti luxury models has also been charged as a company in relation to Ghosn's alleged financial crimes.

Japanese securities regulators recently recommended Nissan be fined 2.4 billion yen (\$22 million) over disclosure documents from 2014 to 2017. Nissan has said it accepted the penalty and corrected its securi-



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ties documents in May.

The company's sales and profits have tumbled and its brand image is tarnished. It has acknowledged lapses in its governance and has promised to improve its transparency.

Another former Nissan executive, Greg Kelly, an American, was arrested at the same time as Ghosn and is awaiting trial. He has said he is innocent.

Hiroto Saikawa, who replaced Ghosn as head of Nissan, announced his resignation in September after financial misconduct allegations surfaced against him related to his income. He has not been charged with any crime.

The conviction rate in Japan exceeds 99% and winning an acquittal through a lengthy appeals process could take years. Rights activists in Japan and abroad say Japan's judicial system does not presume innocence enough and relies on long detentions that lead to false confessions.

In addition to under-reporting his future compensation, Ghosn is accused of diverting Nissan money and having it shoulder his personal investment losses. Other allegations against him involve payments to a Saudi dealership, as well as funds paid to an Oman business that were purportedly diverted to entities run by Ghosn.

Ghosn has said that the compensation was never decided, that Nissan never suffered losses from the investments and that all the payments were for legitimate business services.

El Deeb reported from Beirut. Associated Press writers Zeina Karam in Beirut, and Sylvie Corbet and John Leicester in Paris contributed.

Yuri Kageyama is on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/yurikageyama>

## Time's up for 'totes:' New batch of banned words is out

By ED WHITE Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Sorry, Latin teachers: Quid pro quo has got to go.

The centuries-old Latin phrase, which means an exchange of favors, leads a Michigan university's 45th annual "List of Words Banished from the Queen's English for Misuse, Overuse and General Uselessness."

Quid pro quo got new life during the impeachment of President Donald Trump. He repeatedly declared there was no "quid pro quo" with Ukraine over U.S. military aid to that country and an investigation of former Vice President Joe Biden's son.

"No quid pro quo was offered during the creation of this meticulously curated list of words," said Rodney Hanley, president of Lake Superior State University in Sault Ste. Marie.

The school each year invites the public to nominate words and phrases that seem tired or annoying through everyday speech, news coverage and more. The latest list has more than a dozen, including "artisanal," "influencer," "living my best life" and "chirp."

There's "jelly," short for jealous, and "totes," a nod to totally. And in a baby boomer revolt, it's apparently time to scratch "OK, boomer."

"Boomers may remember, however, that generational tension is always present," university wordsmiths said. "In fact, it was the boomers who gave us the declaration, 'Don't trust anyone over 30!'"

Finally, the list has "vibe/vibe check," "mouthfeel," "I mean," "literally" and "curated."

There now are more than 1,000 banned words or phrases in the Lake Superior archive. The late W.T. Rabe, who was public relations director, and faculty came up with the first list at a New Year's Eve party in 1975.

"Since then, the list has consisted entirely of nominations received from around the world throughout the year," the school said.

Follow Ed White at <http://twitter.com/edwhiteap>

## US seeks review of state DMV laws on immigration enforcement

By COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The acting secretary of Homeland Security is taking aim Tuesday at new laws in New York, New Jersey and other states that allow immigrants to get driver's licenses without proof they are in the U.S. legally, and restrict data sharing with federal authorities.

Chad Wolf sent a memo to all the components of Homeland Security, which include U.S. Customs and Border Protection, the Coast Guard and the Transportation Security Administration, requesting a department study on how the laws affect its enforcement efforts for both immigration and other investigations into human trafficking, drug smuggling and counterterrorism.

New York's law went into effect earlier this month, and migrants lined up to get documents. It was the 13th state to authorize licenses for drivers without legal immigration status, and most of the other states also restrict data sharing. New Jersey lawmakers passed a similar bill in December.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo and New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio, both Democrats, are frequent thorns in the side of the Trump administration's efforts to restrict immigration. New York City is home to an estimated 500,000 immigrants in the country illegally.

The laws prohibit state Department of Motor Vehicles officials from providing data to agencies that enforce immigration law unless a judge orders it. New York cut off database access to at least three federal agencies last week when the law went into effect.

Wolf said in his memo, obtained by The Associated Press, that the department must be "prepared to deal with and counter these impacts as we protect the homeland."

An estimated 265,000 immigrants without legal documents were expected to get driver's licenses within three years, more than half of them in New York City, according to the Fiscal Policy Institute.

Applicants must still get a permit and pass a road test to qualify for a "standard driver's license," which cannot be used for federal purposes like an enhanced driver's license or Real ID.

Wolf's directive asks that each agency survey what DMV information is already available, how it is used in day-to-day operations, and what the security consequences are without the data.

"The Trump administration takes the mission of protecting the Homeland very seriously," said DHS spokeswoman Heather Swift. She said the laws were short-sighted and unsafe and skirt immigration laws on the books for decades. "These types of laws make it easier for terrorists and criminals to obtain fraudulent documents," she said.

New York authorities and other state officials say the laws are meant to lower the number of uninsured people, improve traffic safety and allow for better opportunity for work.

## In a 24/7 food culture, periodic fasting gains followers

By CANDICE CHOI AP Food & Health Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — On low-carb diets, meat and cheese are OK.

On low-fat diets, fruit and oatmeal are fine.

With the latest diet trend, no foods at all are allowed for long stretches of time.

A diet that forbids eating for hours on end might seem doomed in a culture where food is constantly available, but apps and Facebook groups are popping up for people practicing "intermittent fasting."

Bri Wyatt, a 32-year-old Tennessee resident, tried it this summer.

"At first I was like, there's no way," she said.

But after reading more about it, she thought it might not be that hard. She started by skipping breakfast and night-time snacks, and later moved on to a 60-day challenge of fasting every other day.

Melissa Breaux Bankston, a Crossfit instructor in New Orleans, Louisiana, also tried intermittent fasting as a way to curb her snacking. "I wanted to limit the amount of time that I was eating," she said.

Studies on the potential health benefits of intermittent fasting are still limited, including for its effectiveness with weight loss. But heading into the new year, you may be wondering whether it could help you get in better shape.

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## WHEN, NOT WHAT

Like other diets, intermittent fasting helps you lose weight by setting boundaries around food. But instead of limiting what you eat, it restricts when you eat.

"It's really another way of fooling your body into eating less calories," said Krista Varady, who studies intermittent fasting at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

Proponents say intermittent fasting helps with weight loss in other ways. For instance, they say it forces your body to start burning its own fat for fuel after depleting the energy it normally gets from food. But any effects would depend on the specific approach you take, and Varady said there isn't strong evidence yet that intermittent fasting has any unique effects compared with other diets.

Regardless, people should consult their doctor before trying it. It's not advised for children, people on certain medications and people with a history of eating disorders.

## FASTING MENU

One of the more popular approaches to intermittent fasting is to limit eating to an 8-hour window and to fast during the day's other 16 hours. This is called time-restricted feeding and isn't as difficult as some other approaches, since the fasting period can include the time you're asleep.

Many people tailor the eating window to be shorter or longer. Some eat just one meal a day, while others fast entire days a couple times a week. On fasting days, people may allow themselves around 600 calories if needed. But Dr. Jason Fung, who has written books on intermittent fasting, says skipping food altogether might actually be easier, since eating small amounts could stimulate appetite.

Whatever the method, people aren't supposed to gorge when they stop fasting. Fung says it's a myth that fasting leaves you famished.

Sumaya Kazi, who posts about her intermittent fasting online and offers coaching services on the diet, says it seems more difficult than it is partly because overeating has become the norm. "Intermittent fasting is more of a mental challenge than a physical challenge," she says.

But people react differently to diets, and fasting may be a lot harder for some than for others, says Dr. Fatima Stanford, a Harvard Medical School obesity specialist.

"There's no one size fits all," she said.

## FASTING ON TRIAL

Obesity experts have become interested in intermittent fasting, but studies on the diet are still emerging. For now, limited research suggests it may not be any better for weight loss than conventional calorie-cutting over the long term.

"Unfortunately, intermittent fasting gets a little hyped," said Courtney Peterson, who studies the diet at the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Still, some fasting approaches may be more effective than others. And Peterson notes the difficulty of designing studies that definitively capture a diet's effects. That's in part because so many other variables could be at play.

For instance, researchers are looking at whether any benefits of intermittent fasting might be tied to when the eating period falls and fluctuations in how well our bodies process food throughout the day.

Some health experts say intermittent fasting might be too difficult for many people. They point to a study of 100 people where those placed in the alternate-day fasting group lost around the same amount of weight as those on conventional calorie-restriction diets over time. But the fasting group had a dropout rate of 38%, compared with 29% for the conventional diet group.

But intermittent fasting may be easier than other diets for people who already skip meals when they're too busy, said Varady of the University of Illinois at Chicago.

To make weight loss stick, she said people should pick diets that resemble how they already eat.

"Different diets do work for different people," she said.

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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.

## **Making misery pay: Libya militias take EU funds for migrants**

**By MAGGIE MICHAEL, LORI HINNANT and RENATA BRITO Associated Press**

TRIPOLI, Libya (AP) — When the European Union started funneling millions of euros into Libya to slow the tide of migrants crossing the Mediterranean, the money came with EU promises to improve detention centers notorious for abuse and fight human trafficking.

That hasn't happened. Instead, the misery of migrants in Libya has spawned a thriving and highly lucrative web of businesses funded in part by the EU and enabled by the United Nations, an Associated Press investigation has found.

The EU has sent more than 327.9 million euros to Libya, with an additional 41 million approved in early December, largely channeled through U.N. agencies. The AP found that in a country without a functioning government, huge sums of European money have been diverted to intertwined networks of militiamen, traffickers and coast guard members who exploit migrants. In some cases, U.N. officials knew militia networks were getting the money, according to internal emails.

The militias torture, extort and otherwise abuse migrants for ransoms in detention centers under the nose of the U.N., often in compounds that receive millions in European money, the AP investigation showed. Many migrants also simply disappear from detention centers, sold to traffickers or to other centers.

The same militias conspire with some members of Libyan coast guard units. The coast guard gets training and equipment from Europe to keep migrants away from its shores. But coast guard members return some migrants to the detention centers under deals with militias, the AP found, and receive bribes to let others pass en route to Europe.

The militias involved in abuse and trafficking also skim off European funds given through the U.N. to feed and otherwise help migrants, who go hungry. For example, millions of euros in U.N. food contracts were under negotiation with a company controlled by a militia leader, even as other U.N. teams raised alarms about starvation in his detention center, according to emails obtained by the AP and interviews with at least a half-dozen Libyan officials.

In many cases, the money goes to neighboring Tunisia to be laundered, and then flows back to the militias in Libya.

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

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The story of Prudence Aimée and her family shows how migrants are exploited at every stage of their journey through Libya.

Aimée left Cameroon in 2015, and when her family heard nothing from her for a year, they thought she was dead. But she was in detention and incommunicado. In nine months at the Abu Salim detention center, she told the AP, she saw "European Union milk" and diapers delivered by U.N. staff pilfered before they could reach migrant children, including her toddler son. Aimée herself would spend two days at a time without food or drink, she said.

In 2017, an Arab man came looking for her with a photo of her on his phone.

"They called my family and told them they had found me," she said. "That's when my family sent money." Weeping, Aimée said her family paid a ransom equivalent of \$670 to get her out of the center. She could not say who got the money.

She was moved to an informal warehouse and eventually sold to yet another detention center, where yet another ransom — \$750 this time — had to be raised from her family. Her captors finally released the young mother, who got on a boat that made it past the coast guard patrol, after her husband paid \$850 for the passage. A European humanitarian ship rescued Aimée, but her husband remains in Libya.

Aimée was one of more than 50 migrants interviewed by the AP at sea, in Europe, Tunisia and Rwanda, and in furtive messages from inside detention centers in Libya. Journalists also spoke with Libyan government officials, aid workers and businessmen in Tripoli, obtained internal U.N. emails and analyzed budget



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documents and contracts.

The issue of migration has convulsed Europe since the influx of more than a million people in 2015 and 2016, fleeing violence and poverty in the Mideast, Afghanistan and Africa. In 2015, the European Union set up a fund intended to curb migration from Africa, from which money is sent to Libya. The EU gives the money mainly through the U.N.'s International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the High Commissioner for Refugees. (UNHCR).

But Libya is plagued by corruption and caught in a civil war. The west, including the capital Tripoli, is ruled by a U.N.-brokered government, while the east is ruled by another government supported by army commander Khalifa Hifter. The chaos is ideal for profiteers making money off migrants.

The EU's own documents show it was aware of the dangers of effectively outsourcing its migration crisis to Libya. Budget documents from as early as 2017 for a 90 million euro outlay warned of a medium-to-high risk that Europe's support would lead to more human rights violations against migrants, and that the Libyan government would deny access to detention centers. A recent EU assessment found the world was likely to get the "wrong perception" that European money could be seen as supporting abuse.

Despite the roles they play in the detention system in Libya, both the EU and the U.N. say they want the centers closed. In a statement to the AP, the EU said that under international law, it is not responsible for what goes on inside the centers.

"Libyan authorities have to provide the detained refugees and migrants with adequate and quality food while ensuring that conditions in detention centers uphold international agreed standards," the statement said.

The EU also says more than half of the money in its fund for Africa is used to help and protect migrants, and that it relies on the U.N. to spend the money wisely.

The U.N. said the situation in Libya is highly complex, and it has to work with whoever runs the detention centers to preserve access to vulnerable migrants.

"UNHCR does not choose its counterparts," said Charlie Yaxley, a spokesman for the U.N. refugee agency. "Some presumably also have allegiances with local militias."

After two weeks of being questioned by the AP, UNHCR said it would change its policy on awarding of food and aid contracts for migrants through intermediaries.

"Due in part to the escalating conflict in Tripoli and the possible risk to the integrity of UNHCR's programme, UNHCR decided to contract directly for these services from 1 January 2020," Yaxley said.

Julien Raickman, who until recently was the Libya mission chief for the aid group Médecins Sans Frontières, also known as Doctors Without Borders, believes the problem starts with Europe's unwillingness to deal with the politics of migration.

"If you were to treat dogs in Europe the way these people are treated, it would be considered a societal problem," he said.

## EXTORTION INSIDE THE DETENTION CENTERS

About 5,000 migrants in Libya are crowded into between 16 and 23 detention centers at any given time, depending on who is counting and when. Most are concentrated in the west, where the militias are more powerful than the weak U.N.-backed government.

Aid intended for migrants helps support the al-Nasr Martyrs detention center, named for the militia that controls it, in the western coastal town of Zawiya. The U.N. migration agency, the IOM, keeps a temporary office there for medical checks of migrants, and its staff and that of the UNHCR visit the compound regularly.

Yet migrants at the center are tortured for ransoms to be freed and trafficked for more money, only to be intercepted at sea by the coast guard and brought back to the center, according to more than a dozen migrants, Libyan aid workers, Libyan officials and European human rights groups. A UNHCR report in late 2018 noted the allegations as well, and the head of the militia, Mohammed Kachlaf, is under U.N. sanctions for human trafficking. Kachlaf, other militia leaders named by the AP and the Libyan coast guard all did not respond to requests for comment.

Many migrants recalled being cut, shot and whipped with electrified hoses and wooden boards. They

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also heard the screams of others emerging from the cell blocks off-limits to U.N. aid workers.

Families back home are made to listen during the torture to get them to pay, or are sent videos afterward.

Eric Boakye, a Ghanaian, was locked in the al-Nasr Martyrs center twice, both times after he was intercepted at sea, most recently around three years ago. The first time, his jailers simply took the money on him and set him free. He tried again to cross and was again picked up by the coast guard and returned to his jailers.

"They cut me with a knife on my back and beat me with sticks," he said, lifting his shirt to show the scars lining his back. "Each and every day they beat us to call our family and send money." The new price for freedom: Around \$2,000.

That was more than his family could scrape together. Boakye finally managed to escape. He worked small jobs for some time to save money, then tried to cross again. On his fourth try, he was picked up by the Ocean Viking humanitarian ship to be taken to Italy. In all, Boakye had paid \$4,300 to get out of Libya.

Fathi al-Far, the head of the al-Nasr International Relief and Development agency, which operates at the center and has ties to the militia, denied that migrants are mistreated. He blamed "misinformation" on migrants who blew things out of proportion in an attempt to get asylum.

"I am not saying it's paradise -- we have people who have never worked before with the migrants, they are not trained," he said. But he called the al-Nasr Martyrs detention center "the most beautiful in the country."

At least five former detainees showed an AP journalist scars from their injuries at the center, which they said were inflicted by guards or ransom seekers making demands to their families. One man had bullet wounds to both feet, and another had cuts on his back from a sharp blade. All said they had to pay to get out.

Five to seven people are freed every day after they pay anywhere from \$1,800 to \$8,500 each, the former migrants said. At al-Nasr, they said, the militia gets around \$14,000 every day from ransoms; at Tarik al-Sikka, a detention center in Tripoli, it was closer to \$17,000 a day, they said. They based their estimates on what they and others detained with them had paid, by scraping together money from family and friends.

The militias also make money from selling groups of migrants, who then often simply disappear from a center. An analysis commissioned by the EU and released earlier this month by the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime noted that the detention centers profit by selling migrants among themselves and to traffickers, as well as into prostitution and forced labor.

Hundreds of migrants this year who were intercepted at sea and taken to detention centers had vanished by the time international aid groups visited, according to Médecins Sans Frontières. There's no way to tell where they went, but MSF suspects they were sold to another detention center or to traffickers.

A former guard at the Khoms center acknowledged to the AP that migrants often were seized in large numbers by men armed with anti-aircraft guns and RPGs. He said he couldn't keep his colleagues from abusing the migrants or traffickers from taking them out of the center.

"I don't want to remember what happened," he said. The IOM was present at Khoms, he noted, but the center closed last year.

A man who remains detained at the al-Nasr Martyrs center said Libyans frequently arrive in the middle of the night to take people. Twice this fall, he said, they tried to load a group of mostly women into a small convoy of vehicles but failed because the center's detainees revolted.

Fighting engulfed Zawiya last week, but migrants remained locked inside the al-Nasr Martyrs center, which is also being used for weapons storage.

## TRAFFICKING AND INTERCEPTION AT SEA

Even when migrants pay to be released from the detention centers, they are rarely free. Instead, the militias sell them to traffickers, who promise to take them across the Mediterranean to Europe for a further fee. These traffickers work hand in hand with some coast guard members, the AP found.

The Libyan coast guard is supported by both the U.N. and the EU. The IOM highlights its cooperation with the coast guard on its Libya home page. Europe has spent more than 90 million euros since 2017 for

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training and faster boats for the Libyan coast guard to stop migrants from ending up in Europe.

This fall, Italy renewed a memorandum of understanding with Libya to support the coast guard with training and vessels, and it delivered 10 new speedboats to Libya in November.

In internal documents obtained in September by the European watchdog group Statewatch, the European Council described the coast guard as "operating effectively, thus confirming the process achieved over the past three years." The Libyan coast guard says it intercepted nearly 9,000 people in 2019 en route to Europe and returned them to Libya this year, after quietly extending its coastal rescue zone 100 miles offshore with European encouragement.

What's unclear is how often militias paid the coast guard to intercept these people and bring them back to the detention centers -- the business more than a dozen migrants described at the al-Nasr Martyrs facility in Zawiya.

The coast guard unit at Zawiya is commanded by Abdel-Rahman Milad, who has sanctions against him for human trafficking by the U.N.'s Security Council. Yet when his men intercept boats carrying migrants, they contact U.N. staff at disembarkation points for cursory medical checks.

Despite the sanctions and an arrest warrant against him, Milad remains free because he has the support of the al-Nasr militia. In 2017, before the sanctions, Milad was even flown to Rome, along with a militia leader, Mohammed al-Khoja, as part of a Libyan delegation for a U.N.-sponsored migration meeting. In response to the sanctions, Milad denied any links to human smuggling and said traffickers wear uniforms similar to those of his men.

Migrants named at least two other operations along the coast, at Zuwara and Tripoli, that they said operated along the same lines as Milad's. Neither center responded to requests for comment.

The U.N.'s International Organization for Migration acknowledged to the AP that it has to work with partners who might have contacts with local militias.

"Without those contacts it would be impossible to operate in those areas and for IOM to provide support services to migrants and the local population," said IOM spokeswoman Safa Msehli. "Failure to provide that support would have compounded the misery of hundreds of men, women and children."

The story of Abdullah, a Sudanese man who made two attempts to flee Libya, shows just how lucrative the cycle of trafficking and interception really is.

All told, the group of 47 in his first crossing from Tripoli over a year ago had paid a uniformed Libyan and his cronies \$127,000 in a mix of dollars, euros and Libyan dinars for the chance to leave their detention center and cross in two boats. They were intercepted in a coast guard boat by the same uniformed Libyan, shaken down for their cell phones and more money, and tossed back into detention.

"We talked to him and asked him, why did you let us out and then arrest us?" said Abdullah, who asked that only his first name be used because he was afraid of retaliation. "He beat two of us who brought it up."

Abdullah later ended up in the al-Nasr Martyrs detention center, where he learned the new price list for release and an attempted crossing based on nationality: Ethiopians, \$5,000; Somalis \$6,800; Moroccans and Egyptians, \$8,100; and finally Bangladeshis, a minimum \$18,500. Across the board, women pay more.

Abdullah scraped together another ransom payment and another crossing fee. Last July, he and 18 others paid \$48,000 in total for a boat with a malfunctioning engine that sputtered to a stop within hours.

After a few days stuck at sea off the Libyan coast under a sweltering sun, they threw a dead man overboard and waited for their own lives to end. Instead, they were rescued on their ninth day at sea by Tunisian fishermen, who took them back to Tunisia.

"There are only three ways out of the prison: You escape, you pay ransom, or you die," Abdullah said, referring to the detention center.

In all, Abdullah spent a total of \$3,300 to leave Libya's detention centers and take to the sea. He ended up barely 100 miles away.

Sometimes members of the coast guard make money by doing exactly what the EU wants them to prevent: Letting migrants cross, according to Tarik Lamoum, the head of the Libyan human rights organization Beladi. Traffickers pay the coast guard a bribe of around \$10,000 per boat that is allowed to pass, with

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around five to six boats launching at a time when conditions are favorable, he said.

The head of Libya's Department for Combating Irregular Migration or DCIM, the agency responsible for the detention centers under the Ministry of Interior, acknowledged corruption and collusion among the militias and the coast guard and traffickers, and even within the government itself.

"They are in bed with them, as well as people from my own agency," said Al Mabrouk Abdel-Hafez.

## SKIMMING PROFITS

Beyond the direct abuse of migrants, the militia network also profits by siphoning off money from EU funds sent for their food and security -- even those earmarked for a U.N.-run migrant center, according to more than a dozen officials and aid workers in Libya and Tunisia, as well as internal U.N. emails and meeting minutes seen by The Associated Press.

An audit in May of the UNHCR, the U.N. refugee agency responsible for the center, found a lack of oversight and accountability at nearly all levels of spending in the Libya mission. The audit identified inexplicable payments in American dollars to Libyan firms and deliveries of goods that were never verified.

In December 2018, during the period reviewed in the audit, the U.N. launched its migrant center in Tripoli, known as the Gathering and Departure Facility or GDF, as an "alternative to detention." For the recipients of the services contracts, sent through the Libyan government agency LibAid, it was a windfall.

Millions of euros in contracts for food and migrant aid went to at least one company linked to al-Khoja, the militia leader flown to Rome for the U.N. migration meeting, according to internal U.N. emails seen by the AP, two senior Libyan officials and an international aid worker. Al-Khoja is also the deputy head of the DCIM, the government agency responsible for the detention centers.

One of the Libyan officials saw the multimillion-euro catering contract with a company named Ard al-Watan, or The Land of the Nation, which al-Khoja controls.

"We feel like this is al-Khoja's fiefdom. He controls everything. He shuts the doors and he opens the doors," said the official, a former employee at the U.N. center who like other Libyan officials spoke anonymously out of fear for his safety. He said al-Khoja used sections of the U.N. center to train his militia fighters and built a luxury apartment inside.

Even as the contracts for the U.N. center were negotiated, Libyan officials said, three Libyan government agencies were investigating al-Khoja in connection with the disappearance of \$570 million from government spending allocated to feed migrants in detention centers in the west.

At the time, al-Khoja already ran another center for migrants, Tarik al-Sikka, notorious for abuses including beating, hard labor and a massive ransom scheme. Tekila, an Eritrean refugee, said that for two years at Tarik al-Sikka, he and other migrants lived on macaroni, even after he was among 25 people who came down with tuberculosis, a disease exacerbated by malnutrition. Tekila asked that only his first name be used for his safety.

"When there is little food, there is no choice but to go to sleep," he said.

Despite internal U.N. emails warning of severe malnutrition inside Tarik al-Sikka, U.N. officials in February and March 2018 repeatedly visited the detention center to negotiate the future opening of the GDF. AP saw emails confirming that by July 2018, the UNHCR's chief of mission was notified that companies controlled by al-Khoja's militia would receive subcontracts for services.

Yaxley, the spokesman for UNHCR, emphasized that the officials the agency works with are "all under the authority of the Ministry of Interior." He said UNHCR monitors expenses to make sure its standard rules are followed, and may withhold payments otherwise.

A senior official at LibAid, the Libyan government agency that managed the center with the U.N., said the contracts are worth at least \$7 million for catering, cleaning and security, and 30 out of the 65 LibAid staff were essentially ghost employees who showed up on the payroll, sight unseen.

The U.N. center was "a treasure trove," the senior Libaid official lamented. "There was no way you could operate while being surrounded by Tripoli militias. It was a big gamble."

An internal U.N. communication from early 2019 shows it was aware of the problem. The note found a high risk that food for the U.N. center was being diverted to militias, given the amount budgeted compared



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to the amount migrants were eating.

In general, around 50 dinars a day, or \$35, is budgeted per detainee for food and other essentials for all centers, according to two Libyan officials, two owners of food catering companies and an international aid worker. Of that, only around 2 dinars is actually spent on meals, according to their rough calculations and migrants' descriptions.

Despite the investigations into al-Khoja, Tarik al-Sikka and another detention center shared a 996,000-euro grant from the EU and Italy in February.

At the Zawiya center, emergency goods delivered by U.N. agencies ended up redistributed "half for the prisoners, half for the workers," said Orobosa Bright, a Nigerian who endured three stints there for a total of 11 months. Many of the goods end up on Libya's black market as well, Libyan officials and international aid workers say.

IOM's spokeswoman said "aid diversion is a reality" in Libya and beyond, and that the agency does its best. Msehli said if it happens regularly, IOM will be forced to re-evaluate its supports to detention centers "despite our awareness that any reduction in this lifesaving assistance will add to the misery of migrants."

Despite the corruption, the detention system in Libya is still expanding in places, with money from Europe. At a detention center in Sabaa where migrants are already going hungry, they were forced to build yet another wing funded by the Italian government, said Lamloum, the Libyan aid worker. The Italian government did not respond to a request for comment.

Lamloum sent a photo of the new prison. It has no windows.

## TUNISIA LAUNDERING

The money earned off the suffering of migrants is whitewashed in money laundering operations in Tunisia, Libya's neighbor.

In the town of Ben Gardane, dozens of money-changing stalls transform Libyan dinars, dollars and euros into Tunisian currency before the money continues on its way to the capital, Tunis. Even Libyans without residency can open a bank account.

Tunisia also offers another opportunity for militia networks to make money off European funds earmarked for migrants. Because of Libya's dysfunctional banking system, where cash is scarce and militias control accounts, international organizations give contracts, usually in dollars, to Libyan organizations with bank accounts in Tunisia. The vendors compound the money on Libya's black-market exchange, which ranges between 4 and 9 times greater than the official rate.

Libya's government handed over more than 100 files to Tunisia earlier this year listing companies under investigation for fraud and money laundering.

The companies largely involve militia warlords and politicians, according to Nadia Saadi, a manager at the Tunisian anti-corruption authority. The laundering involves cash payments for real estate, falsified customs documents and faked bills for fictitious companies.

"All in all, Libya is run by militias," said a senior Libyan judicial official, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of risking his life. "Whatever governments say, and whatever uniform they wear, or stickers they put....this is the bottom line."

Husni Bey, a prominent businessman in Libya, said the idea of Europe sending aid money to Libya, a once-wealthy country suffering from corruption, was ill-conceived from the beginning.

"Europe wants to buy those who can stop smuggling with all of these programs," Bey said. "They would be much better off blacklisting the names of those involved in human trafficking, fuel and drug smuggling and charging them with crimes, instead of giving them money."

Michael reported from Tripoli, Libya. Hinnant reported from Zarzis, Tunisia. Brito reported from aboard the Ocean Viking. Contributors include Lorne Cook in Brussels; Rami Musa in Benghazi, Libya, and Jamey Keaten in Geneva.

## Warren blasts billionaires as Democrats end year campaigning

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren marked one year of running for president on Tuesday by slamming billionaires from both parties who she says put corporate interests above the needs of the rest of the country, as many top Democrats looking to unseat President Donald Trump spent the last day of 2019 rallying core supporters. Warren addressed a raucous hometown crowd at Boston's Old South Meeting House, a Congregational church famous for being the organizing point for the Boston Tea Party in 1773.

Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders is holding a "Big New Year's Bash" featuring "Prince's longtime backing band" in Des Moines, the capital of Iowa, which holds its lead-off caucuses on Feb. 3. Also campaigning in Iowa is New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker.

Businessman Andrew Yang invited supporters to mark midnight at a party in New Hampshire, which is set to hold the first primary, on Feb. 11. Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar is also in New Hampshire, while Colorado Sen. Michael Bennet plans to headline a house party in the state timed to begin one minute after midnight and billed as 2020's first such gathering.

The crush of events reflects how little time there is to spare before voting begins. Even though campaigning ground to a near halt for Christmas Eve and Christmas, candidates are betting voters will be more amenable to their messages on the final day of the year.

"You've got to use every minute," said Kelly Dietrich, founder and CEO of the National Democratic Training Committee, which trains candidates and staff all over the country.

Warren said the coming of a new year is "normally a moment for optimism. But let's face it: This year in America has been anything but normal."

In a nod to the president's impending impeachment trial, Warren said congressional Republicans "have turned into fawning, spineless defenders of his crimes." She spoke to hundreds who filled the historic wooden pews painted in a deep, creamy white on the church's polished wooden ground floor and stately balcony.

The senator also decried the "chaos and ugliness of the past three years" under Trump but didn't miss a chance to swipe at other Democratic presidential hopefuls who argue that her support for a "wealth tax," universal health care and proposals to overhaul the political and economic system are too radical for moderate and swing voters in a general election battle against Trump.

"One year into this campaign, you've never found me behind closed doors with corporate executives or spending hours on the phone sucking up to rich donors to fund my campaign," said Warren, who first announced forming a presidential exploratory committee on Dec. 31, 2018.

Warren didn't name any fellow Democrat on Tuesday, but has for months has slammed South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg and former Vice President Joe Biden for relying too heavily on fundraisers with big, powerful donors. She's also accused ex-New York City mayor and billionaire Michael Bloomberg of trying to buy the election.

Warren told the Boston crowd: "The billionaires know which candidates for president are on their side."

"Many corporate executives and career politicians and billionaires on both sides of the aisle want to keep their influence and their wealth. And they are already deep in the fight to do so," Warren said, arguing that Washington is too controlled by lobbyists and fossil fuel companies that have a "death grip on our planet."

She also evoked the story of Phillis Wheatley, who was born in West Africa but shipped to New England by slave traders in 1761. Wheatley was a poet who eventually inspired George Washington and once sat in the pews of the Old South Meeting House. Warren quoted from a Wheatley poem to help acknowledge the struggles of modern society's inherent biases that she said Africans Americans and women still face.

"Imagine an America where the lived experience of women is reflected in committee rooms and corner offices," Warren said, "And yes, even that really nice oval-shaped office at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue."

That prompted one of several standing ovations and chants of "Warren! Warren! Warren!"

Not everyone is getting into the New Year's Eve action. Biden campaigned Monday in New Hampshire but had scheduled no public events Tuesday. Buttigieg's New Year's Eve calendar is similarly clear of rallies.

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Most of the candidates also don't have New Year's Day events scheduled, though former Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick is planning to attend services at Mother Emanuel in Charleston, South Carolina, where nine African American churchgoers were shot to death in 2015.

Dietrich, who trains Democratic candidates, said that activities like door-knocking can be more effective for candidates during the holidays since many people are home from work. They can also use times of traditional parties, like New Year's Eve, to rally volunteers and others who have helped with campaigning over the long haul.

"You can't take time off when you're running for president," Dietrich said. "Your vacation happens the day after the general election."

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

## Hello, dogo: 2 new breeds get the American Kennel Club's nod

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A powerful Argentine big-game hunter and a sociable French water dog have made the American Kennel Club's list of recognized breeds.

The club announced Tuesday that the barbet and the dogo Argentino are now part of the 195-breed pack.

That means they can compete starting Wednesday in many traditional, breed-judging dog shows (many agility trials and other canine events are open to all dogs, purebred or not). The newcomers can't vie for best in show at the famous Westminster Kennel Club show until 2021, however.

The newcomers are "offering dog lovers very different choices," AKC spokeswoman Gina DiNardo said in a statement.

The curly-coated, bearded barbet (pronounced "bar-BAY") has a long history as a hunter's helper in France, where accounts of it go back centuries. Traditionally finders and retrievers of waterfowl, barbets — like some other breeds around the globe — dwindled during the world wars, but fanciers eventually built their numbers back up.

The medium-size dogs have a cheery, friendly reputation and often take to agility contests, enthusiasts say.

The dogo Argentino, developed by an Argentine doctor in the last century, is a large, strong and tenacious dog designed to hunt animals as large as mountain lions and wild boars. Aficionados prize the breed's loyalty and athleticism, but dogos also are among breeds that have been banned in some places. Even the AKC cautions that only experienced dog owners should get them.

"They are affectionate and loyal, but owners do need to have caution to make sure a dogo fits with their lifestyle" and any local regulations, said club spokeswoman Brandi Hunter. The AKC opposes any breed-specific laws.

While dogos can be protective of their people, owners also need to take care to protect them — from sunburn, which can strike under their short, white coats.

Fans of particular breeds often spend years building up to recognition by the AKC, the nation's oldest purebred dog registry. The designation requires having at least 300 dogs of the breed spread around at least 20 states.

Dog breeding is the subject of considerable debate. Critics say it leads to puppy mills and short-circuits pet adoptions. Defenders argue there's a place in dogdom for conscientious breeders and for canines bred for certain traits or purposes.

## Trump says he'll sign first-step China trade deal on Jan. 15

By **DARLENE SUPERVILLE** and **CHRISTOPHER RUGABER** Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — The first phase of a U.S.-China trade agreement will be inked at the White House in mid-January, President Donald Trump announced Tuesday, adding that he will visit Beijing at a later date to open another round of talks aimed at resolving other sticking points in the relationship.

The so-called "Phase One" agreement is smaller than the comprehensive deal Trump had hoped for and leaves many of the thorniest issues between the two countries for future talks. Few economists expect any resolution of "Phase Two" before the presidential election in 2020.

And the two sides have yet to release detailed documentation of the pact, making it difficult to evaluate.

Trump said high-level Chinese government officials will attend the signing on Jan. 15 of "our very large and comprehensive Phase One Trade Deal with China."

"At a later date I will be going to Beijing where talks will begin on Phase Two!" Trump said in his tweet. He did not announce a date for the visit.

China has agreed to boost its U.S. goods imports by \$200 billion over two years, the U.S. Trade Representative said Dec. 13 when the deal was announced. That includes increased purchases of soybeans and other farm goods that would reach \$40 billion a year.

China has also agreed to stop forcing U.S. companies to hand over technology and trade secrets as a condition for gaining access to China's vast market, demands that had frustrated many U.S. businesses.

In return, the Trump administration dropped plans to impose tariffs on \$160 billion of Chinese goods, including many consumer items such as smartphones, toys and clothes. The U.S. also cut tariffs on another \$112 billion of Chinese goods from 15% to 7.5%.

Many analysts argue that the results are fairly limited given the costs of the administration's 17-month trade war against China. U.S. farm exports to China fell in 2018 to about one-third of the peak reached six years earlier, though they have since started to recover.

Import taxes remain on about half of what the U.S. buys from China, or about \$250 billion of imports. Those tariffs have raised the cost of chemicals, electrical components and other inputs for U.S. companies. American firms have cut back on investment in machinery and other equipment, slowing the economy's growth this year.

A study last week by economists at the Federal Reserve found that all of the Trump administration's tariffs, including those on steel and aluminum as well as on Chinese imports, have cost manufacturers jobs and raised their costs. That's mostly because of retaliatory tariffs imposed by China and other trading partners.

Many experts in both the U.S. and China are skeptical that U.S. farm exports can reach \$40 billion. The most the U.S. has ever exported to China before has been \$26 billion. China has not confirmed the \$40 billion figure.

Still, the agreement has helped calm concerns in financial markets and among many U.S. businesses that the trade war with China would escalate and potentially lead to a recession. The approval by the Democratic-led House of the Trump administration's revamp of the NAFTA agreement has also reduced uncertainty around global trade.

Since the U.S.-China pact was first announced in October, the stock market has risen steadily and is on track to finish the year with its biggest gain since 2013. Most analysts now forecast that the economy will grow at a steady if modest pace in 2020, extending the current record-long expansion.

The Phase 1 deal has left some major issues unresolved, notably complaints that Beijing unfairly subsidizes its own companies to give them a competitive advantage in world markets.

The Trump administration argues -- and independent analysts agree -- that China uses the subsidies in an effort to gain an advantage in cutting-edge fields such as driver-less cars, robotics and artificial intelligence.

Another sticking point in future talks will likely involve rules around data flows, with China looking to require more foreign companies to keep data they use in China as opposed to stored overseas.

"It's a very toxic brew and I don't know that we're really going to see much progress on it," said Mary Lovely, a trade economist at the Peterson Institute for International Economics.



Rugaber reported from Washington.

## Sonny Mehta, visionary head of Alfred A. Knopf, dies at 77

By HILLEL ITALIE AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Sonny Mehta, the urbane and astute head of Alfred A. Knopf who guided one of the book world's most esteemed imprints to new heights through a blend of prize-winning literature by Toni Morrison and Cormac McCarthy among others and blockbusters such as "Fifty Shades of Grey" and "The Girl With the Dragon Tattoo," has died at age 77.

Mehta, the husband of author Gita Mehta, died Monday at a Manhattan hospital. According to Knopf, the cause was complications from pneumonia.

"Mehta's contributions to the world of letters and publishing are without precedent," a statement from the publisher read Tuesday. "His exacting standards — in editorial, production, design, marketing, and publicity — were a beacon to the book industry and beyond."

A successor will be named at some point in the new year.

The bearded, chain-smoking Mehta spoke carefully and chose wisely, helping Knopf thrive even as the industry faced the jarring changes of corporate consolidation, the demise of thousands of independent stores and the rise of e-books.

An accomplished publisher and editor since his mid-20s, he succeeded the revered Robert Gottlieb in 1987 as just the third Knopf editor-in-chief in its 72-year history and over the following decades fashioned his own record of critical and commercial success. He continued to publish celebrated authors signed on by Gottlieb, including Morrison and Robert Caro, while adding newer talent such as Tommy Orange, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Karen Russell.

Knopf also was home to some of the best-selling works in recent times. In 2008, Mehta acquired U.S. rights to a trilogy of crime fiction by a dead Swedish journalist, Stieg Larsson's "Millennium" series, which went on to sell tens of millions of copies. In 2012, the paperback imprint Vintage won a bidding war for an explicit erotic trilogy that at the time could only be read digitally, E L James' "Fifty Shades" novels. Other top sellers released during Mehta's reign included Sheryl Sandberg's "Lean In," Bill Clinton's "My Life" and Cheryl Strayed's "Wild." When the Center for Fiction honored Mehta in 2018 with a lifetime achievement award, tributes were written by Joan Didion, Haruki Murakami and Anne Tyler, who praised "his precision" and "deft assurance" and called him the "Fred Astaire of editing."

Knopf's catalog often reflected Mehta's own broad curiosity. In a single season, the publisher might release new fiction by Morrison and Gabriel Garcia Marquez, crime novels by P.D. James and James Ellroy, poetry by Anne Carson and Philip Levine, history by John Keegan and Joseph Ellis, humor by Nora Ephron and memoirs by Bill Clinton or Katharine Hepburn or Andre Agassi. Knopf also appreciated the rewards of patience, allowing Caro to spend years between each installment of his Lyndon Johnson biographies, a decades-long project that sold hundreds of thousands of copies and brought Caro numerous awards.

Mehta was born Ajai Singh Mehta, the bookish son of Indian diplomat Amrik Singh Mehta. He lived everywhere from Geneva to Nepal as a child and graduated from Cambridge University with degrees in history and English literature. Choosing book publishing over his parents' wishes he become a diplomat. Mehta needed little time to make an impact in London, helping to launch the literary career of his college friend Germaine Greer and introducing British readers to the profane Americana of Hunter S. Thompson. With Pan Books, he released works by rising authors such as Ian McEwan and Salman Rushdie, while signing up Jackie Collins, Douglas Adams and other best-sellers. He was Gottlieb's personal choice to take over at Knopf, but still faced initial wariness from the staff.

"People ... had the terrible fear that I was going to suddenly publish Jackie Collins over here and really sort of lower the tone of the place," Mehta told Publishers Weekly in 2015. "I think the difference was that I probably encouraged people to market a lot more than they were in the habit of doing. I encouraged them to look at a certain type of literary fiction and see it wasn't necessarily intended for some kind of

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ghetto, that there was a bigger market for it.”

Mehta survived numerous transformations at Knopf, notably the 1999 acquisition by the German conglomerate Bertelsmann AG and the 2012 merger with Penguin Group, and outlasted company rivals such as Random House President Ann Godoff and Bantam Dell publisher Irwyn Applebaum. He was widely credited for expanding the company’s international reach and acquiring Vintage and making it one of publishing’s most successful paperback imprints, becoming so involved he even redesigned the covers. He also helped keep Knopf, now the Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, a stable and desired place to work.

Authors from Caro to John Updike remained with the publisher for decades and so did top editors such as Judith Jones, who helped discover Julia Child and other cookbook writers; Ashbel Green, who edited nonfiction authors such as Ellis and former President George H.W. Bush; and Carol Brown Janeway, who acquired English-language editions for fiction by Nobel laureates Heinrich Boll and Imre Kertesz. Mehta himself edited Don Winslow’s acclaimed crime novel “The Cartel” and numerous other works.

“On a good day, I am still convinced I have the best job in the world,” Mehta told Vanity Fair in 2016, explaining that he had recently finished a novella by Graham Swift. “I opened it and didn’t know what to expect, and I read it in one sitting right here in the office, utterly mesmerized. Sometimes you find something new and you just say ‘Wow.’”

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Corrects that Mehta died in a Manhattan hospital.

## Judge orders Alex Jones to pay \$100,000 in Sandy Hook case

AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — A Texas judge ordered conspiracy theorist Alex Jones to pay \$100,000 in another court setback over the Infowars host using his show to promote falsehoods that the 2012 Sandy Hook school massacre was a hoax.

Jones is being sued for defamation in Austin, Texas, by the parents of a 6-year-old who was among the 26 people killed in the Newtown, Connecticut, attack.

State District Judge Scott Jenkins ruled on Dec. 20 that Jones and his defense team “intentionally disregarded” an earlier order to provide witnesses to attorneys representing a Sandy Hook father who brought the lawsuit, Neil Heslin. Jenkins also denied Jones’ request to dismiss the lawsuit.

An attorney for Jones did not immediately comment Tuesday. Jenkins’ orders were first reported by The Daily Beast.

Jones operates Infowars in Texas. He is fighting similar lawsuits in Connecticut brought by other families of Sandy Hook victims for promoting a theory that the shooting was a hoax. A 20-year-old gunman killed 20 first-graders, six educators and himself at the school, after having killed his mother at their Newtown home.

The families said they have been subjected to harassment and death threats from Jones’ followers because of the hoax conspiracy.

Jones has since acknowledged that the Sandy Hook killings occurred. His attorneys have defended his speech in court as “rhetorical hyperbole” and deny it was defamation.

In June, the father of 6-year-old Noah Pozner, one of the Sandy Hook victims, won a defamation lawsuit against the authors of a book that claimed the shooting never happened.

## Raging wildfires trap 4,000 at Australian town’s waterfront

By TRISTAN LAVALETTE Associated Press

PERTH, Australia (AP) — Wildfires burning across Australia’s two most populous states Tuesday trapped residents of a seaside town in apocalyptic conditions and killed at least two people while more property along the country’s east coast fell victim to a devastating fire season.

About 4,000 residents in the southeastern town of Mallacoota in Victoria state fled toward the water Tuesday morning as winds pushed an emergency-level wildfire toward their homes. The smoke-filled sky shrouded the town in darkness before turning an unnerving shade of bright red.

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Australia's annual wildfire season, which peaks during the Southern Hemisphere summer, started early after an unusually warm and dry winter. Record-breaking heat and windy conditions triggered devastating wildfires in New South Wales and Queensland states in September.

About 5 million hectares (12.35 million acres) of land have burned nationwide over the past few months, with 12 people confirmed dead and more than 1,000 homes destroyed. Nearly 100 fires were burning across the state of New South Wales, which is home to Sydney.

New South Wales state Rural Fire Services Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons said this wildfire season is the worst on record and painted a bleak long-term picture.

"We've seen extraordinary fire behavior," he said Tuesday. "What we really need is meaningful rain, and we haven't got anything in the forecast at the moment that says we're going to get drought-breaking or fire-quenching rainfall."

The wildfire crisis has reignited debate about whether Prime Minister Scott Morrison's conservative government has taken enough action on climate change. Australia is the world's largest exporter of coal and liquefied natural gas.

Morrison, whom critics have deemed a climate change skeptic, conceded earlier this month that "climate change along with many other factors" has contributed to the wildfires.

The prime minister took criticism for going on a family vacation to Hawaii in December during the crisis. He eventually cut his trip short and publicly apologized.

Late Tuesday, Mallacoota was saved by changes of wind direction, but authorities said "numerous" homes were lost. Residents returning home were urged to boil tap water before drinking it. Forest Fire Management Victoria said the wildfires had put heavy demands on tap water that is affecting the supply of water.

Stranded residents and vacationers were reported to be sleeping in cars on New Year's Eve, while gas stations and surf clubs transformed into evacuation areas.

Victoria state Premier Daniel Andrews had earlier announced plans to evacuate the trapped people by sea. There were grave fears for four missing people. "We can't confirm their whereabouts," Andrews told reporters Tuesday.

Andrews has requested assistance from 70 firefighters from the United States and Canada, while Australia's military sent air and sea reinforcements.

Victoria Emergency Services Commissioner Andrew Crisp confirmed "significant" property losses across the region. More than 115 communities across Victoria remained under emergency warnings Tuesday night.

Some communities canceled New Year's fireworks celebrations, but Sydney's popular display over its iconic harbor controversially went ahead in front of more than a million revelers. The city was granted an exemption to a total fireworks ban in place there and elsewhere to prevent new wildfires.

Fire conditions in Victoria and New South Wales worsened after oppressive heat Monday mixed with strong winds and lightning.

Police in New South Wales said Tuesday that two men — a 63-year-old father and 29-year-old son — died in a house in the wildfire-ravaged southeast town of Cobargo, and a 72-year-old man remained missing.

"They were obviously trying to do their best with the fire as it came through in the early hours of the morning," New South Wales Police Deputy Commissioner Gary Worboys said. "The other person that we are trying to get to, we think that person was trying to defend their property in the early hours of the morning."

On Monday, a firefighter was killed when extreme winds flipped his truck. Samuel McPaul, 28, was the third volunteer firefighter in New South Wales to have died in the past two weeks. He was an expectant father.

More than 130 fires remain burning across New South Wales, with five at an emergency level. Authorities warned that power would be out for 24 hours along the fire-ravaged south coast of the state.

## Deval Patrick hopes 'magic' can make up for late 2020 start

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Over a year ago, Woody Kaplan, a major Democratic donor and longtime Deval Patrick supporter, helped the former governor plan his potential presidential bid.

"The game plan was really simple: Put him in one living room in each of the 99 counties in Iowa, and those people would discover the magic," Kaplan said. "He would've won Iowa."

But the former Massachusetts governor balked — deciding to focus on his wife's battle with cancer. By the time he jumped into the race in mid-November, after his wife was pronounced cancer-free, he was months behind his Democratic rivals and in need a new game plan.

"They're going to have to catch that magic — not in person, but in other ways," Kaplan said.

Patrick is struggling to find those ways. In the six weeks since he jumped into an already packed primary, he hasn't registered in polling in the critical early nominating states. He hasn't qualified for the nationally televised debates. Unlike another latecomer to the race, Michael Bloomberg, Patrick doesn't have the campaign cash or personal fortune to blanket television screens with advertising.

And while his competitors are staging rallies and town halls, Patrick is still holding the kind of small, intimate events — a business tour here, a roundtable with local leaders and advocates there — that other candidates held months ago.

Ask those close to Patrick what he needs to do in the presidential race, and the word "magic" comes up, again and again. Patrick's reputation is built on his charm and oratorical skills in groups big and small, an appeal that powered his surprise victory over more seasoned politicians in the 2006 Massachusetts governor's race. But it's far from clear that such "magic" can make up for lost time in a presidential campaign.

"Governor Patrick's model for the campaign is a deep, long, person-to-person organizing effort," said John Walsh, who ran Patrick's 2006 campaign and worked with him on strategy for his 2020 presidential run over a year ago. "That's mostly a long-term play. So they're going to have to figure out how to accelerate that."

Patrick says the race is fluid and voters are still looking for alternatives to front-runners Joe Biden, Elizabeth Warren, Bernie Sanders and Pete Buttigieg.

"They've been doing it for months, in some cases years, and spent millions of dollars, and it's still wide open," he said in an interview. "So don't ask me why we're not doing what everyone else is doing. Ask them why they keep doing what they've been doing and haven't locked it down."

Patrick is largely conceding Iowa's Feb. 3 caucus, the first nominating contest in the Democratic primary, and focusing his efforts instead on New Hampshire and South Carolina, where he sees more natural advantages. But he has yet to register in surveys of the field in either state.

He's spent the last six weeks building a campaign that counts a staff of about 70. His aides argue the lean operation is an asset, allowing them to nimbly redeploy resources and keeping overhead low. But the impact of playing catch up has been clear. His campaign recently failed to collect enough signatures to get him on the primary ballot in Michigan.

Campaign aides say they're looking to January as an opportunity for Patrick to break through, especially if the senators in the race are stuck in Washington for impeachment proceedings. Patrick has planned a series of policy speeches during the month, where he'll outline his proposals and emphasize his experience as a chief executive in a field topped by senators, a former vice president and a mayor.

The campaign maintains fundraising is solid — it hasn't yet reported its numbers — and a super PAC has already been established to support him, though it's unclear when the group will spend money on his behalf.

Patrick is little known nationally. Yet polling indicates a majority of Democratic voters with a first-choice candidate could still change their minds before they vote in the primaries.

On the stump, Patrick make the case for compassionate capitalism — a message that stands out in a primary dominated by liberals' calls to break up big corporations and expand government aid programs. He brings up his time working for the private equity firm Bain Capital, noting he was advising companies on how to work towards social good. He highlights the public-private partnerships he helped foster as governor of Massachusetts — to argue for a role for private business in positive social change.



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While other candidates have sharpened their criticisms of each other, Patrick largely avoids even veiled jabs at his opponents.

At a roundtable of business people in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, in December, Patrick went over well with the roughly two dozen people in attendance. The group largely wanted to talk about policy, asking about his positions on health care, the opioid crisis and fisheries. Several of those who came to the event said they were still undecided.

"Honestly I came because I had never heard of him," said Vicki Mutschler, 29, an office manager from Somersworth, New Hampshire, who left thinking Patrick is "is a really good option."

"He seems like he's pretty right in the middle of being able to bring everybody together instead of being super, super separated like how it is," she said.

Maddie Cassidy, 24, a marketing specialist from Seabrook who knew Patrick from her time living in Massachusetts, said Patrick came off as more authentic than a typical politician.

"I feel so many candidates in every political race just seem inauthentic to me," she said. "I feel like he's really speaking from his heart and his experience."

Patrick has made 17 trips to New Hampshire and promised the group he would to continue to "make my presence felt."

"I am not in this to have a voice or to give interviews or to make speeches," Patrick said. "I am in this to win. I have been thought of as an underdog for almost my whole life in almost everything I've done and I've done it anyway. So stay tuned."

But on the last weekend of the year, just over six weeks from the New Hampshire primary, Patrick was in Chicago. Instead of a major rally or speech, he stopped at two small businesses and met local clergy on Saturday, and attended services at Trinity United Church of Christ, Obama's former church, on Sunday. While he said he's leaving the former president alone these days — "he's finishing his book!" — Patrick is in frequent contact with Valerie Jarrett, one of Obama's closest advisers and a longtime Patrick confidant as well.

Patrick also spent some of his weekend in the neighborhood where he grew up, visiting with one of his grade-school teachers and an old friend to film scenes for his first ad, which he expects will begin in New Hampshire in the coming weeks.

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Associated Press writer Michael Casey in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, contributed reporting.

## In 2019, the box office belonged to Disney

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Every movie year offers up a parade of hits and flops. But in 2019, no winner was in the same galaxy as the Walt Disney Co. And the biggest loser might have been anyone less thrilled about the box-office domination of franchise films.

When the year closes out Tuesday, the top 10 films in U.S. and Canada theaters will all be intellectual property-backed movies. That, in itself, isn't new. It's the third year in a row that the year's 10 biggest ticket-sellers have all been sequels, remakes and superhero films.

But in today's IP-driven movie world, one studio is in a league of its own. In 2019, Disney dominated American moviegoing more than any studio ever has before — roughly 38% of all domestic moviegoing.

The year's top five films were all Disney movies, and it played a hand in the sixth. Disney's Marvel Studios produced the Sony Pictures release "Spider-Man: Far From Home."

Disney banked about \$13 billion in worldwide box office in 2019, including a record number of \$1 billion releases. Once "Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker" (\$724.8 million through Sunday) inevitably reaches that milestone, it will mark the studio's seventh such \$1 billion movie in 2019. The others were: "Avengers: Endgame" (the highest grossing release ever, not accounting for inflation, with \$2.8 billion), "The Lion King," "Captain Marvel," "Aladdin," "Toy Story 4" and "Frozen II."

Disney's unprecedented market share includes films from 20th Century Fox, the 84-year-old studio that

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Disney gobbled up in March in a \$71.3 billion acquisition.

Despite Disney's considerable firepower, overall ticket sales in U.S. and Canada theaters were down 4.4% from the year before through Sunday, according to data firm Comscore. The upper echelons of the box office may be stratospheric, but the lower realms — where critics' scores are rotten and word of mouth is faster than opening weekend — are dismal. The movies are increasingly a zero-sum game. You're either "The Lion King" or you're "Cats."

"There's plenty of capacity to bring people to the movie screen," says Cathleen Taff, distribution chief for Disney. "What I think we're doing is competing for their time. If it's not great, they do have other options. But when it is great, people show up. And we've seen that this year with seven \$1 billion movies."

Disney's considerable role in today's moviegoing hasn't been without critics. They have lamented its mega-blockbusters as products, not cinema. Before Martin Scorsese's criticisms of Disney's Marvel movies sparked headlines, he lamented the monopolizing of the multiplex, disturbed by the sight of "Avengers: Endgame" playing on 11 of a theater's 12 screens.

If the big-screen experience is narrowing, the small screen is expanding. Streaming services proliferated in 2019 with the launch of Apple TV Plus (although it pushed back its first big movie release) and Disney Plus. Amazon also reshaped its release strategy, shortening the theatrical window for some of its movies to just two weeks. Netflix rolled out its most ambitious release slate, including a host of awards contenders, led by Scorsese's "The Irishman" and Noah Baumbach's "Marriage Story," that played in only limited theaters. The so-called streaming wars will only grow in 2020 when NBCUniversal launches its service, Peacock, and WarnerMedia debuts HBO Max.

While some may see a downturn in ticket sales as indicative of streaming's impact, John Fithian, the president and chief executive of the National Association of Theater Owners, believes streaming is disruptive to broadcast TV, cable and home markets like DVDs, but not to movie theaters.

"This may sound counter-intuitive, but with the launch of Disney-Plus, HBO Max and Peacock, we're more confident of the symbiotic relationship of streaming and theatrical than we were before," says Fithian. "The people who stream also go to the movies a lot."

Disney, Universal and Warner Bros. also remain devoted to the traditional theatrical window. Netflix will soon be competing with studios that can offer both a robust theatrical release and a streaming life — albeit not one with the same number of viewers at home that Netflix can promise.

Those services have certainly added pressure to the theatrical release, and quite a few in 2019 weren't up to the challenge. The year's most glaring bombs included bold bids at technological innovation ("Gemini Man"), mishandled franchise finales ("Dark Phoenix"), remakes that failed to connect ("Charlie's Angels"), prestige dramas doomed by controversy ("Richard Jewell"), toy movies that didn't click ("Playmobil: The Movie") and, you know, "Cats."

But some Hollywood executives point to successes suggesting a vibrant medium. Jordan Peele's "Us," for Universal, was the highest grossing original movie. Others like Lionsgate's "Knives Out," Fox's "Ford v Ferrari," STX's "Hustlers" and Sony's "Once Upon a Time ... in Hollywood" were also both critical and global hits. Bong Joon Ho's "Parasite" and Lulu Wang's "The Farewell" gave the art house a boost.

"I don't think that the four-to-five percent drop means the domestic audience wants to stay home on the couch. I think it's just like everything else in this industry since it began: We have cycles," says Jim Orr, distribution chief for Universal. "Generally, the box-office is still trending up and I think that will continue over time, especially because you can do films like 'Us' and films like (the R-rated comedy) 'Good Boys' and people will still come out in force."

Last year's box office, which followed a two-decade low in 2017, set a record with \$11.9 billion in ticket sales. Disney, the market leader for the last five years, again led the way with "Black Panther," "Avengers: Infinity War" and "Incredibles 2."

Revenues have largely been on the rise thanks to increasing ticket prices. 2019's estimated \$11.4 billion in ticket sales rank second all time, not accounting for inflation. But admissions have been gradually declining since 2005.

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Overseas business, however, is booming. International box office for the first time crossed \$30 billion in 2019. Either next year or in 2021, China will likely surpass North America as the world's top movie market.

Lately, homegrown movies have been China's top draws. This year, only two U.S. productions — "Avengers: Endgame" and "Fast and Furious: Hobbs and Shaw" — cracked the country's top 10 films. A pair of Chinese blockbusters led the way, each with about \$700 million in box office: the science fiction adventure "The Wandering Earth" and the animated fantasy "Ne Zha."

All of these factors — a rare alignment of Disney juggernauts, expanding home-entertainment options, a more inward-looking China — mean a potentially dimmer outlook for 2020. Many in the industry expect the year's ticket sales to drop of a few percentage points again. No one forecasts a similar year from Disney. The studio will still have a strong slate but one without an "Avengers" or "Star Wars" movie.

"2020 is going to be a more typical year, where the wealth will be spread quite a bit more," says Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for Comscore. "The sky is not falling but we're definitely going to have to change our expectations for 2020. It's not going to be just about one studio dominating but it's going to be about all the studios bringing some of their biggest brands."

James Bond, Wonder Woman and The Rock are coming in 2020. But greater volatility may be on the way, too.

Follow AP Film Writer Jake Coyle on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/jakecoyleAP>

## Man charged after Picasso painting damaged in London gallery

LONDON (AP) — A 20-year-old man is being held in custody pending his next court hearing after being charged with damaging a Picasso painting at the Tate Modern gallery in London.

London police said Tuesday that Shakeel Ryan Massey of northwest London has been charged with criminal damage. He appeared at Camberwell Green Magistrates' Court on Monday.

Police said the attack on the artwork happened Saturday. Police did not specify the painting but British media said it was "Bust Of A Woman."

The Tate Modern said the damaged artwork was being assessed by its conservation team and the museum remained open.

The 1944 painting depicts photographer Dora Maar in a semi-abstract style wearing a hat and green clothes.

## Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Jan. 1, the first day of leap year 2020. There are 365 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 1, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Emancipation Proclamation, declaring that slaves in rebel states shall be "forever free."

On this date:

In 1785, The Daily Universal Register — which later became the Times of London — published its first issue.

In 1892, the Ellis Island Immigrant Station in New York formally opened.

In 1953, country singer Hank Williams Sr., 29, was discovered dead in the back seat of his car during a stop in Oak Hill, West Virginia, while he was being driven to a concert date in Canton, Ohio.

In 1959, Fidel Castro and his revolutionaries overthrew Cuban leader Fulgencio Batista, who fled to the Dominican Republic.

In 1975, a jury in Washington found Nixon administration officials John N. Mitchell, H.R. Haldeman, John D. Ehrlichman and Robert C. Mardian guilty of charges related to the Watergate cover-up (Mardian's conviction for conspiracy was later overturned on appeal).

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In 1979, the United States and China held celebrations in Washington and Beijing to mark the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

In 1984, the breakup of AT&T took place as the telecommunications giant was divested of its 22 Bell System companies under terms of an antitrust agreement.

In 1993, Czechoslovakia peacefully split into two new countries, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

In 1995, the World Trade Organization (WTO) came into being, replacing the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Sweden, Finland and Austria joined the European Union.

In 2005, desperate, homeless villagers on the tsunami-ravaged island of Sumatra mobbed American helicopters carrying aid as the U.S. military launched its largest operation in the region since the Vietnam War. Shirley Chisholm, the first black woman elected to the U.S. Congress, died near Daytona Beach, Florida, at age 80.

In 2009, an Israeli warplane dropped a 2,000-pound bomb on the home of one of Hamas' top five decision-makers, instantly killing him and 18 others. The U.S. formally transferred control of the Green Zone to Iraqi authorities in a pair of ceremonies that also handed back Saddam Hussein's former palace.

In 2014, the nation's first legal recreational pot shops opened in Colorado at 8 a.m. Mountain time.

Ten years ago: A suicide bomber detonated a truckload of explosives on a volleyball field in northwest Pakistan, killing at least 97 people. Fifth-ranked Florida overwhelmed No. 4 Cincinnati 51-24 in the Sugar Bowl. In the Rose Bowl, No. 8 Ohio State defeated No. 7 Oregon 26-17.

Five years ago: Mario Cuomo, 82, a leading liberal voice who served three terms as governor of New York, died just hours after his son Andrew began his second term as the state's chief executive. Actress Donna Douglas, who played the buxom tomboy Elly May Clampett on the hit 1960s sitcom "The Beverly Hillbillies," died in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, at age 82.

One year ago: U.S. authorities fired tear gas across the border into Mexico during the early hours of the new year to repel about 150 migrants who tried to breach the border fence in Tijuana. Writing in the Washington Post, newly-elected Republican Sen. Mitt Romney of Utah said President Donald Trump's conduct was evidence that Trump "has not risen to the mantle of the office." Urban Meyer finished his coaching career at Ohio State with a 28-23 victory over Washington in the Rose Bowl. Jair Bolsonaro was sworn in as Brazil's president after rising to power on an anti-corruption and pro-gun agenda.

Today's Birthdays: Documentary maker Frederick Wiseman is 90. Actor Frank Langella is 82. Rock singer-musician Country Joe McDonald is 78. Writer-comedian Don Novello is 77. Actor Rick Hurst is 74. Sen. Robert Menendez, D-N.J., is 66. The former head of the International Monetary Fund, Christine Lagarde, is 64. Rapper Grandmaster Flash is 62. Actress Renn Woods is 62. Actress Dedee Pfeiffer is 56. Country singer Brian Flynn (Flynnville Train) is 54. Actor Morris Chestnut is 51. Rhythm and blues singer Tank is 44. Model Elin Nordegren is 40. Actor Jonas Armstrong is 39. Actress Eden Riegel is 39. Olympic gold medal ice dancer Meryl Davis is 33. Rock musician Noah Sierota (Echosmith) is 24.

Thought for Today: "If you asked me for my New Year Resolution, it would be to find out who I am." — Cyril Cusack, Irish actor (1910-1993).

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