

Groton Daily Independent

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The snow piles along the edge of the streets are starting to get deep. While only three inches of snow fell with this last storm, the wind blew plenty of snow around, creating more and higher drifts around town. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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Sunday Extras



THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

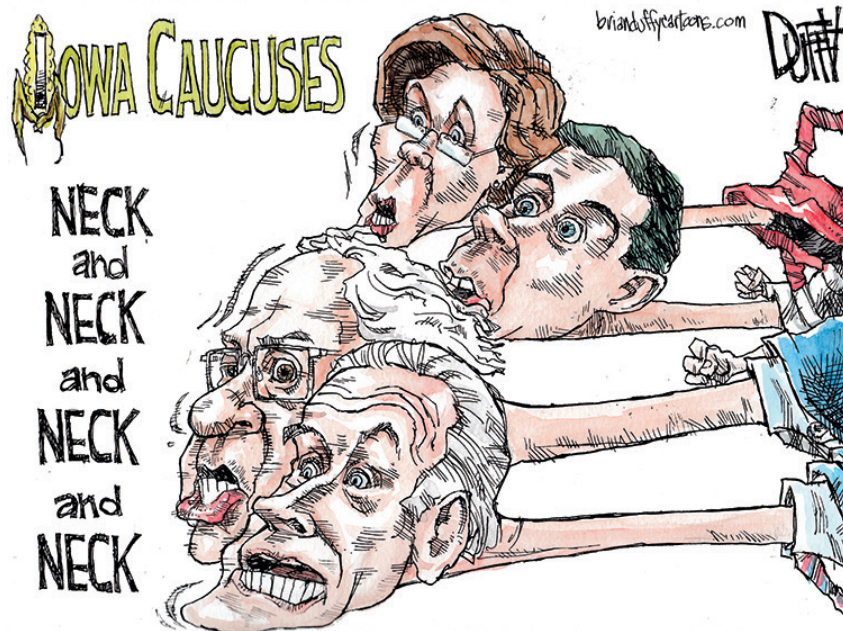
*I put on righteousness,
and it clothed me;
My justice was like a robe
and a turban.*

❧ JOB 29:14 ❧

Detail of "Man in Turban" by Thomas Eakins (1866-67)



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BIBLE TRIVIA

by Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of Judges in the Old or New Testament or neither?

2. Which member of David's army murdered two generals and was slain at a tabernacle altar as punishment?
Heliz, Elika, Joab, Zalmon

3. From Acts 28, who got a snake bite on the hand as he laid sticks on a fire?
Noah, Moses, David, Paul

4. What prophet did mouth-to-mouth on a dead boy, restoring him to life?
Jonathan, Silas, Elisha, Nahash

5. From Genesis 21, who put her child under a bush to die?
Hagar, Miriam, Ezra, Sarah

6. What grandmother got commended by Paul for her great faith?
Rachel, Lois, Dorcas, Delilah

ANSWERS: 1) Old; 2) Joab; 3) Paul; 4) Elisha; 5) Hagar; 6) Lois

"Test Your Bible Knowledge," containing 1,206 multiple-choice questions by columnist Wilson Casey, is available in bookstores and online.

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Comfort foods

Made fast and healthy 

by Healthy Exchanges

Chocolate Mayo Snack Cake

Just one bite, and you'll see why we call this cake a "little slice of heaven."

- 1½ cups cake flour
- Sugar substitute to equal ¾ cup sugar, suitable for baking
- ¼ cup unsweetened cocoa
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ¾ cup fat-free mayonnaise
- ½ cup unsweetened applesauce
- ½ cup water
- 1½ teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1 cup fat-free whipped topping
- 2 tablespoons mini chocolate chips

1. Heat oven to 350 F. Spray an 8-by-8-inch cake pan with butter-flavored cooking spray.

2. In a large bowl, combine flour, sugar substitute, cocoa, baking powder and baking soda. Add mayonnaise, applesauce, water and vanilla extract. Mix well to combine. Spread batter into prepared cake pan.

3. Bake for 20 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Place cake pan on a wire rack and allow to cool completely. Evenly spread whipped topping over cooled cake and sprinkle chocolate chips evenly over top. Freezes well. Serves 8.

• Each serving equals: 163 calories, 3g fat, 3g protein, 31g carb., 394mg sodium, 1g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 1 ½ Starch, ½ Fat.

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FLASH GORDON
Character Profile:
PRINCE THUN

SON OF KING JUGRID

ONE OF THE FIRST OF THE PLANET MONGO'S HOSTILE INHABITANTS TO BEFRIEND FLASH.

FLASH GORDON

1-12 BY JIM KEEFE

PILOT, STOP HERE.

WHAT IS IT, FLASH?
I MADE PLANS FOR A QUICK RENDEZVOUS BEFORE THE CONFERENCE. HOLD DOWN THE FORT WHILE I'M GONE.

PRINCE THUN, WHAT'S HAPPENED? WHY HAVE WE STOPPED?
PRINCESS TYREE...

HAVING RECEIVED APPROVAL BY THE ROYAL ASSEMBLY, A PEACE COUNCIL IS DISPATCHED TO KING KALA'S CITY BENEATH THE SEA.

THAT'S GORDON OUT THERE, ISN'T IT? THIS IS HIS DOING!
HE'LL ONLY BE A MOMENT.

I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS! THE ROYAL DELEGATION IS BEING HELD UP... JUST SO THAT EARTHMAN CAN HIT ON SOME UNDERWATER TROLLOP?!

WHY MY FATHER HAS ANY FAITH IN THE MAN IS BEYOND ME.

TO BE CONT'D..!

Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

TO WIN MORE BETS AND SILVERWARE THIS SEASON, GIVE UP SOME COURSE OR DRIVING-RANGE TIME FOR LONGER SPELLS ON AND AROUND THE PRACTICE PUTTING GREEN.

IT'S OBVIOUS THAT, THE BETTER YOU PUTT, THE BETTER YOU'LL SCORE.

WHAT MAY NOT BE SO OBVIOUS IS THAT THE BETTER YOU KNOW YOU CAN PUTT - AND PITCH AND CHIP, TOO - THE MORE PRESSURE YOU TAKE OFF YOUR TEE-TO-GREEN GAME.

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No Screening Tests for Bile Duct Cancer

DEAR DR. ROACH: A family friend has just been diagnosed with bile duct cancer. She is a breast cancer survivor and is 75 years old. The tumor is said to be the size of a quarter, and it was discovered after she complained of heartburn symptoms.

Are there screening tests that could have detected the condition before the heartburn symptoms? Are there things that she could have done to avoid the cancer? My family members are frightened and want to avoid her condition. — Anon.

ANSWER: Cholangiocarcinoma, cancer of the bile ducts, is a rare cancer that is, unfortunately, associated with a high mortality rate. There are no symptoms in most people until it is advanced. Since the cancer is in the bile ducts, the most common symptoms are caused by obstruction of the bile ducts: jaundice (yellow in skin/eyes), generalized itching, dark urine and light-colored stools. Abdominal pain, fever and weight loss are other symptoms.

Cholangiocarcinoma is not a disease that's amenable for screening; it is rare in North America (it is more common in East Asia, where there are screening programs). Further, the available screening tests, such as blood tests and imaging studies, are not very sensitive, meaning the tests will miss cases. And they are not very specific — a positive result on the screening test does not necessarily mean cancer. For these reasons, screening is not currently recommended for people at average risk, although it may be considered

in people at high risk, such as people with primary sclerosing cholangitis, a chronic liver disease that puts people at high risk for cholangiocarcinoma.

Other risk factors for cholangiocarcinoma are mostly beyond a person's control: other liver diseases, parasites and genetic conditions. There is some evidence that obesity and diabetes increase the risk of this cancer; however, it does no good for you or your friend to look backward. Never blame the victim.

She should concentrate on getting treated. I don't have enough information to comment on her prognosis, but the fact that it was diagnosed early — apparently before obstruction of the bile ducts — and with a tumor only the size of a quarter, are favorable. Treatment may include surgery and chemotherapy (before or after surgery).

DEAR DR. ROACH: I have a friend who is a longtime user of diet soda pop. A year ago, she was diagnosed with colon cancer and spots on her liver. She is taking chemo again now. She continues to consume diet soda, which concerns me because I have heard of possible adverse effects of artificial sweeteners. How would you advise her? I hesitate to say anything, since she might be getting more unsolicited advice than she wants already. — M.K.

ANSWER: I think that artificial sweeteners are unlikely to have had any role in causing her cancer in the first place, nor in her treatment or risk of recurrence. It's more important for her to stay hydrated during chemotherapy, and she should have what is easiest for her — and if that's diet soda, that's fine. Even if water is the best choice, I completely agree with your thoughtfulness: Now is not the time to give unsolicited health advice.

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

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1. What did fans throw at the Beatles during their first U.S. concert?
2. When the Doors were on "The Ed Sullivan Show" in 1967, they were asked to change the lyrics to which song?
3. How much more money does the operator want each time in "Sylvia's Mother"?
4. Who released "The One Who Really Loves You"?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: "She tunes in to Bandstand every day to watch the kids dancin' 'cross the USA."

Answers

1. Jelly beans. The boys had made the mistake of saying they loved them. Unfortunately they meant the U.K. version of soft jelly babies. The Beatles were on a round stage with no place to hide from the stinging barrage of hard jelly beans.
2. "Light My Fire." But they didn't, claiming they forgot. (The Rolling Stones also caused the show problems with their questionable lyrics.)
3. The operator keeps wanting "Forty cents more for the next three minutes."
4. Mary Wells, in 1962.
5. "Queen of the Hop," by Bobby Darin in 1958. Although written long ago, the song hasn't been forgotten. It was used on the soundtrack to the "Porky's Revenge" film in 1985 and Shakin' Stevens' 1987 "16 Rock 'n' Roll Greats."

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Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps



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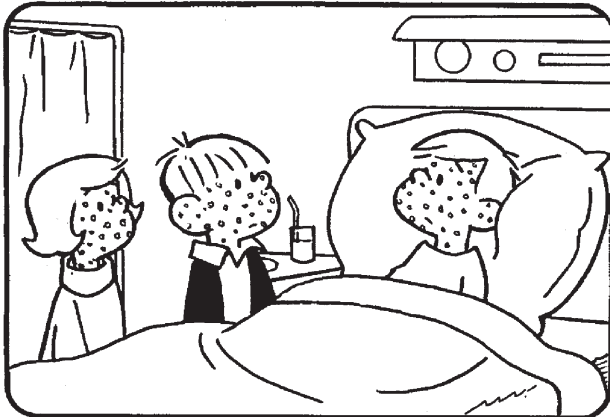
GRIN and BEAR IT ^{by} Wagner



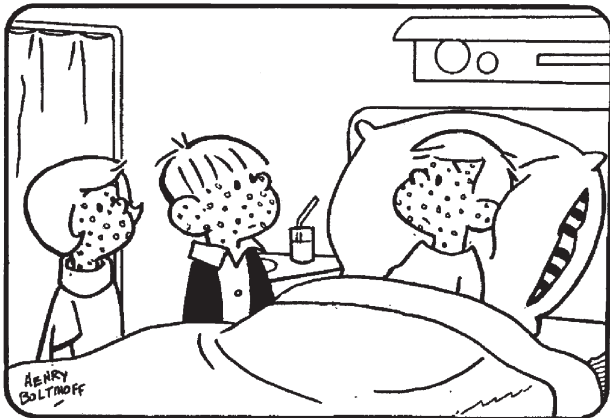
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HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Button is added. 2. Straw is shorter. 3. Pillow is different. 4. Hair is different. 5. Knob is moved. 6. Sleeve is shorter.



- Before removing a splinter, ice the area. There will be less fussing, and a wooden splinter might absorb some liquid, causing it to swell enough to pop out a bit more.

- “I used the mileage counter in my car to come up with several 2-mile routes for walking. Now I can vary my routine and be assured that I’ve walked 2 miles, which is my goal. I just drive from my house until I hit a mile on the trip odometer, and then I walk to that spot and back.” — *I.L. in Nevada*

- Use a tea infuser ball for aroma-

therapy. Apply several drops of essential oils to a cotton ball and place it inside the infuser basket. Then simply hang it to distribute the scent. You can hang it from a light bulb or even in front of the air handler for your air conditioning or heating intake.

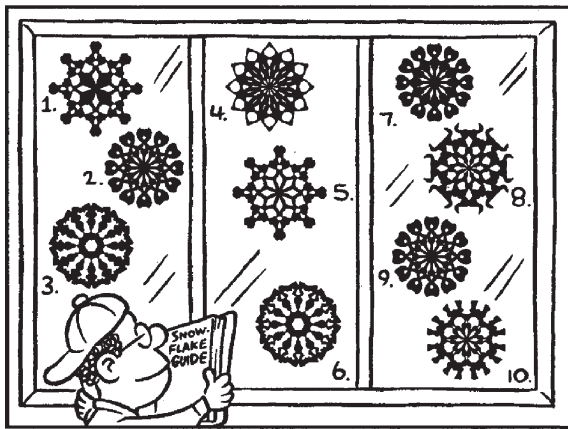
- “If you’re looking to give yourself a bit of traction on icy sidewalks, be careful what you use. While kitty litter is a much-recommended solution, when it melts, you’re left with a slippery pile of clay. Salt can de-ice a sidewalk, but it definitely will kill plants, so be precise, and don’t use too much of either. I carry a baggie of sand in my bag and keep a small bucket for the steps. It’s not perfect, but it works.” — *T. in Pennsylvania*

- “The knob came off my pot lid because it cracked. I grabbed a wine cork and threaded it on the screw. It stays in place and is never hot when I need to remove the top. Plus it looks cute.” — *E.T. in Alabama*

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

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A FLAKY PROBLEM! Unlike nature, two of the snowflakes hanging in this school window are exactly alike. Can you spot them in less than a minute? Don't melt under this time pressure.

Answer: 2 and 9.

Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend

1.	M					A
2.		M				A
3.			M			A
4.				M	A	
5.			A			M
6.		A				M
7.	A					M

Illustrated by David Coulson

FIND THE BIG WORDS!

Using the clues below, find the seven eight-letter words that fit into the framework pictured on the left.

The letters in the two anagram words must be unscrambled and used to form the word asked for.

Definitions: **Anagrams:**

- | | |
|------------------------|-------------|
| 1. Spanish scarf | malt + nail |
| 2. Of an empire | amir + pile |
| 3. Express resentment | lamp + coin |
| 4. Searched thoroughly | game + drum |
| 5. Railroad worker | mane + bark |
| 6. New York sandwich | mast + pair |
| 7. Waiting area | tome + roan |



1. Mantilla, 2. Imperial, 3. Complain, 4. Rummaged, 5. Brakeman, 6. Pastrami, 7. Anteroom.

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BRAIN TEASER! One night, two fathers and two sons played poker. When the game was over, there were three dollars in chips to be split up. Each player received exactly one dollar. How was this possible?

There were only three players: grandfather, father and son.



IT'S MAGIC! Use the numbers three through 18 to fill in this Magic Number Square. The numbers in each horizontal row and vertical column should total 42. We've filled in the numbers 15 through 18. The rest is up to you. Use trial and error -- and a good eraser!

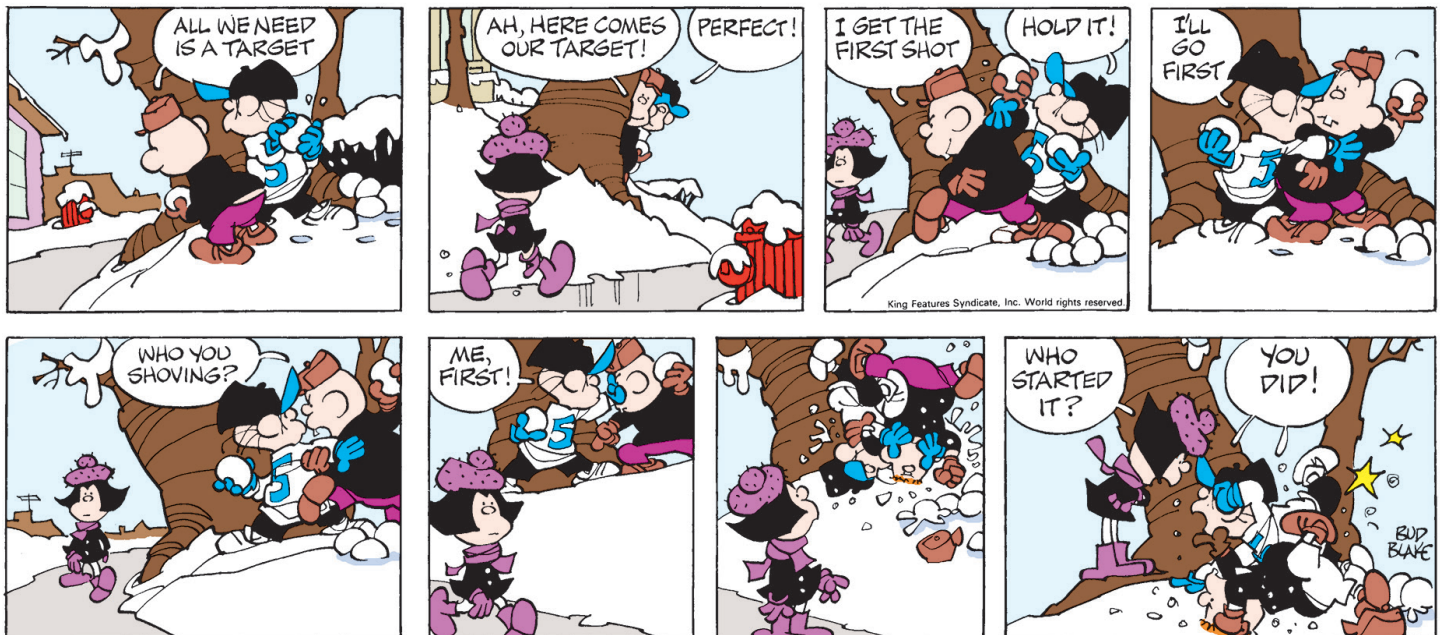
		16	
15			
	18		
			17

First row: 10, 13, 16, 3. Second row: 15, 4, 9, 14. Third row: 5, 18, 11, 8. Fourth row: 12, 7, 6, 17.



TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



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BUD BLAKE

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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Venomous viper
- 4 Incense
- 8 Pop
- 12 Ball-bearing item
- 13 Beelzebub's doings
- 14 From square one
- 15 Supreme Court Justice Thurgood —
- 17 Calm before the storm
- 18 Comedian Rivers
- 19 Refuge
- 20 Downright
- 22 Road's shoulder

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

- 24 Hard to find
- 25 Almond confection
- 29 " — Got a Secret"
- 30 Left-hand page
- 31 Ostrich's cousin
- 32 Union
- 34 Valhalla VIP
- 35 Loathe
- 36 Loses traction
- 37 Drive away
- 40 "Wozzeck" composer
- 41 Summertime treats
- 42 — Thatcher
- 46 Command-
- ment starter
- Birther's barterer
- Historic period
- Huge amount of 50-Across
- See 49-Across
- Tarzan's creator's monogram
- DOWN**
- 1 \$ dispenser
- 2 Vast expense
- 3 Storyteller in court
- 4 Detox center
- 5 Terrible guy?
- 6 " — Abner"
- 7 Right angle
- 8 Sandwich sausage
- 9 Burden
- 10 Place to buy 8-Down
- 11 Piercing tools
- 16 Slightly
- 19 Ricelike pasta
- 20 — and proper
- 21 Volcanic spillage
- 22 Cleopatra's boat
- 23 Gaelic
- 25 Vegan's no-no
- 26 Distinguished ancestry
- 27 In the thick of
- 28 Sisters
- 30 Test tube
- 33 Variety of macaque
- 34 Gumbo base
- 36 Music transition
- 37 Ceremony
- 38 Canyon phenomenon
- 39 Lowly worker
- 40 Author Stoker
- 42 Encountered
- 43 " — was saying ..."
- 44 Mess up
- 45 Bill

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— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 27 mins.

A	S	P		R	I	L	E		S	O	D	A
T	E	E		E	V	I	L		A	N	E	W
M	A	R	S	H	A	L	L		L	U	L	L
	J	O	A	N				O	A	S	I	S
P	L	U	M	B		B	E	R	M			
R	A	R	E		M	A	R	Z	I	P	A	N
I	V	E		V	E	R	S	O		E	M	U
M	A	R	R	I	A	G	E		O	D	I	N
			H	A	T	E		S	K	I	D	S
R	E	P	E	L			B	E	R	G		
I	C	E	S		M	A	R	G	A	R	E	T
T	H	O	U		E	S	A	U		E	R	A
E	O	N	S		T	I	M	E		E	R	B

LAFF - A - DAY



"I've been rubbing this thing for two hours!
Where have you been?"

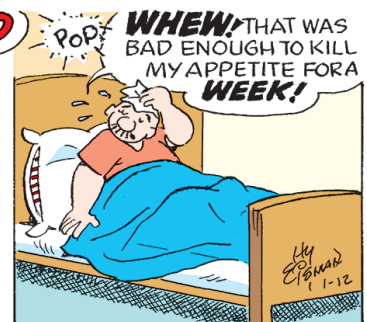
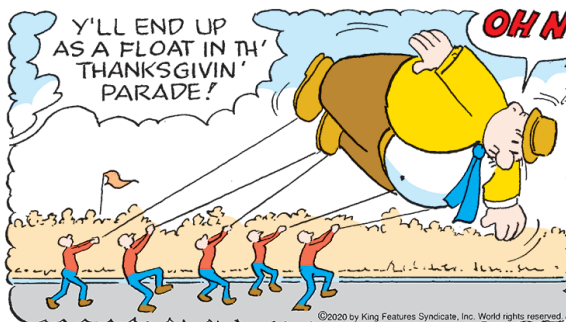
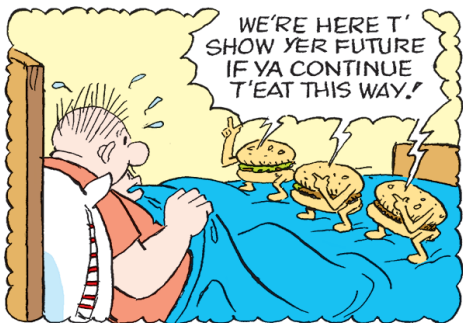
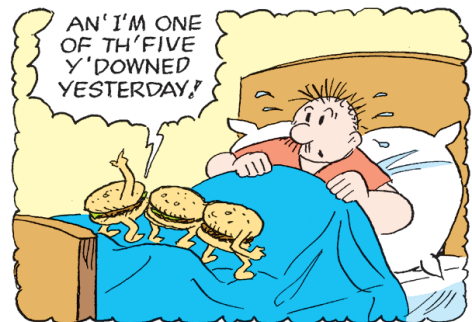
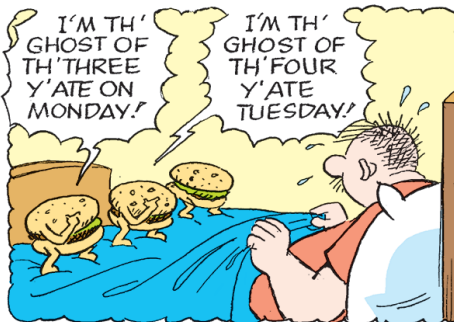
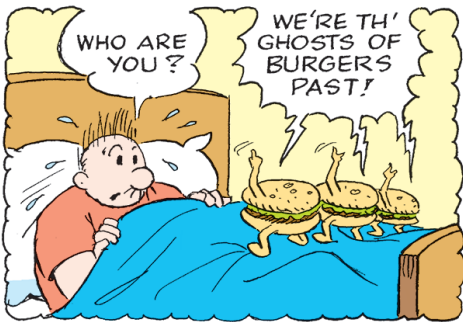
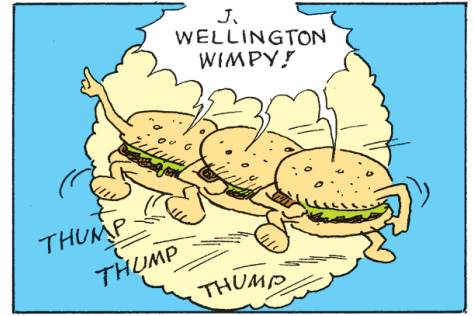
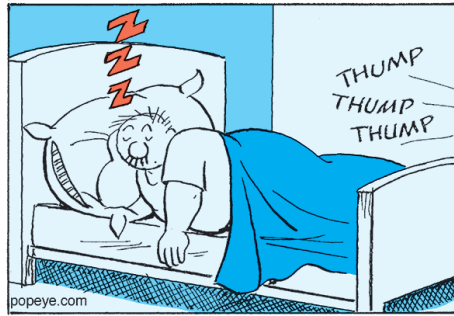
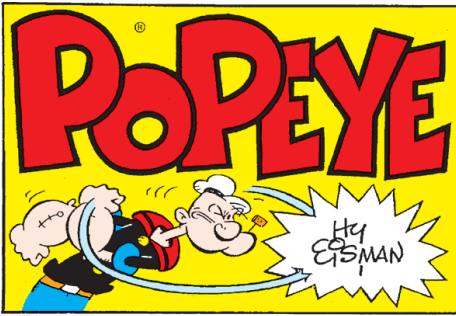
Out on a Limb

by Gary Kopervas



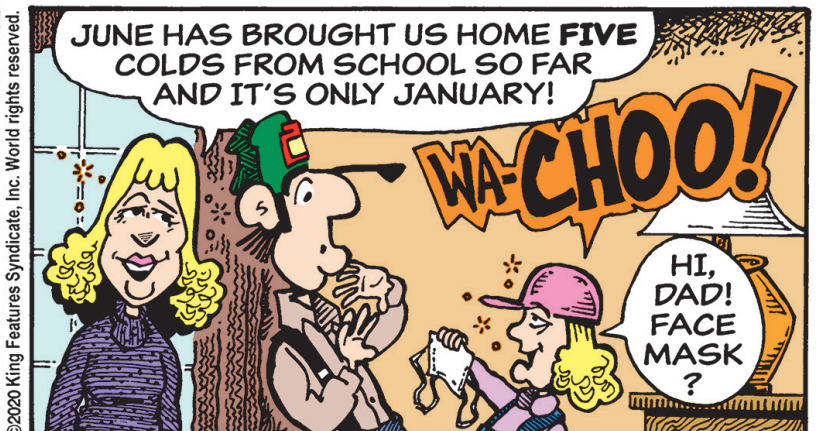
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R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



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Our Story:
 LONG AGO, THE ANCESTORS OF VALS CAPTORS WERE DRIVEN FROM EUROPE. THE PRINCE CAUTIONS THEM: "IF YOU HARM US OUR MANY BROTHERS WILL RISE UP AND..."

HAL FOSTER'S BY GIANNI AND SCHULTZ
Prince Valiant

"BAH!" THE BRUTES' LEADER EXPLODES, "YOU WILL DIE LONG BEFORE WE DO!"

THEN, UNEXPECTEDLY, THE THREE WHO CAPTURED VALS COMPANY STEP FORWARD. "WAIT! MAYBE THESE STRANGERS CAN HELP US LEAVE THIS AWFUL PLACE ..."

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BUT THE LEADER IS NOT INTERESTED IN DEBATE. "NO! GRU-ZOR CLAIMS THEM! IF YOU DON'T LIKE IT, I'LL HAVE YOU KILLED TOO!" THE THREE DISSENTERS QUICKLY FOLD BEFORE HIS FURIOUS DISPLAY OF DOMINANCE.

VAL SIGHS, AS HE SEES THEIR ONE SLIM HOPE TURN TAIL AND DASH INTO THE SWIRLING MISTS.

"I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU SPOKE OF," CHIDES GAWAIN, "BUT YOUR DIPLOMATIC SKILL HAS SEALED THE FATE OF THOSE THREE AS WELL."

3745 Gianni 8-11-16-08

NEXT:
 A stoning

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering

YEARS AGO I WORKED IN A SWEAT SHOP

...BUT THEY CLOSED IT DOWN.

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WHY... DID PEOPLE STOP BUYING SWEAT?

PICKERING

SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

You're Never Too Old to Try Something New

There's something to be said for continuing to learn as we get older. Not only does it keep our brains active, but sometimes learning new things is just plain interesting and fun.

I've made a goal of learning or investigating at least one new thing per month this year. Here are some ideas:

New Authors: Librarians have a "what to read next" reference book resource that offers suggestions about what authors someone might like based on previous books they've read. Tell a librarian what author you've enjoyed, and you'll get suggestions for others to try. If there isn't a library near you, you can do this online. Go to www.whatshouldireadnext.com and put in the name of one author you like. It will list several books by that

author. Click on one and suggestions will appear below.

Foreign Language: If you spoke a foreign language as a child or just took the required two years in high school, how much do you remember? Duolingo (www.duolingo.com) is a great, free online tool with exercises tailored to you. There are 35 languages to learn! You can study online or on a phone app. If you get serious, you can pay \$6.99 per month to remove ads, but you don't need to.

New Tech Skills: Our senior center has a weekly tech hour where a knowledgeable geek from the college comes in to solve any computer problems and answer how-to questions. I'll be going at least four times to ask about photo-editing software with the goal of learning to manipulate photos I've taken.

Try Some New Things: Shop at the new grocery store in the next town. Knit something that isn't a scarf. Sample an exotic selection of teas.

What about you? Do you have any goals for 2020?

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1. Who was the last Montreal Expos pitcher to lead the National League in saves for a season?

2. Pitcher Nolan Ryan had the most strikeouts in the decades of the 1970s (2,678) and 1980s (2,167). Name either pitcher who finished second to him in those decades.

3. In 2018, Notre Dame's Brian Kelly became the third person to win the AP College Football Coach of the Year Award twice since 1998. Name either of the other two to do it.

4. Which NBA team was the first to visit the White House after winning a championship?

5. Who holds the NHL record for most Game Seven career points in the NHL playoffs?

6. When was the last time before 2019 that Denny Hamlin captured a spot in the NASCAR Cup Series Championship 4?

7. How many times has Canada

reached the finals of tennis' Davis Cup?

Answers

1. Ugueth Urbina, with 41 saves in 1999. (The franchise moved to Washington after the 2004 season.)

2. Tom Seaver (2,304 strikeouts in the 1970s) and Fernando Valenzuela (1,644 strikeouts in the 1980s).

3. Nick Saban (2003, 2008) and Gary Patterson (2009, 2014).

4. The Boston Celtics, in 1963.

5. Justin Williams, with 15 points.

6. It was 2014.

7. Once, in 2019.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





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



Burning of the Beetle

Since 2014, every January marks the "Burning of the Beetle" in Custer, South Dakota. What's turned into a fun tradition and artistic celebration, stemmed from a bleak time in the Black Hills.

The Black Hills National Forest is one of South Dakota's treasures, but if you traveled there several years ago, you'd see a much different forest than you'll see today. For years, the Mountain Pine Beetle infected more than 430,000 acres of forest, leaving millions of trees dead in its path.

Pine beetles thrive in an overly crowded forest - they crave density. So, in order to tackle the problem, federal, state, local governments, and private citizens joined together to determine the best course of action.

From the beginning, state and local partners were proactive and engaged, but in recent years, federal policy has helped, as well. The U.S. Forest Service utilized categorical exclusions from the 2014 and 2018 Farm Bill to tackle the pine beetle with local partners. The federal government gets in the way far too often, but these categorical exclusions laid out in the Farm Bill allowed the Forest Service to more quickly utilize certain practices. Proper forest management practices, like tree thinning and controlled burning, played a key role in improving the resiliency of our forest.

When you go to the Black Hills today, it's clear which areas have undergone proper forest management and which areas have not - you'll notice which areas have healthy trees and which areas have too many dead trees.

Today, the Black Hills are recovering from the pine beetle outbreak, but this is not the time to take our foot off the gas. We must continue to push for and meet prescribed forest harvest targets to prevent further outbreaks of the pine beetle. The Black Hills doesn't need to face devastation again.

The "Burning of the Beetle" reminds South Dakota of an enemy we need to continue to keep at bay. As South Dakotans burn the beetle in effigy, we should remember that continuing to actively manage our forest will ensure its resilience for years to come.

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SOUTH DAKOTA GOVERNOR
KRISTI NOEM



South Dakota is OPEN for Business

While I was growing up, my dad often talked about building a better tomorrow. He dreamed of all four of his kids being able to stay on the family ranch if we wanted to. Whether that was developing the family farm and ranch into something all of us kids could one day work on or instilling godly values in us that we could one day pass those along to our kids, at the end of the day, he just wanted to give the next generation an opportunity to thrive.

My vision for South Dakota is the same.

We must ensure that every person can build a life in South Dakota and make a good living to provide for their families. This is why I have committed to four pillars of protection: keeping taxes low, limiting government regulation, fighting government intrusion, and keeping government open and honest.

After a year of serving as governor, I'm proud to say we stuck to these pillars in 2019, and we made a lot of progress, too.

One of our main priorities last year was recruiting new industries to South Dakota and helping businesses who are looking to grow or expand. And people have responded. It's not hard to understand why. There are so many reasons why South Dakota is the best place in the nation to do business.

Our state has the best people - our work ethic and values are second to none.

We don't have a corporate income tax. And there's also no business inventory tax. We are one of the few remaining states with no personal income tax, and I am committed to keeping it that way. We also don't burden our citizens with a personal property tax or an inheritance tax.

The taxes that we do have to fund state government are stable and predictable. In addition to my commitment to not raising taxes, our constitution requires a 2/3rd vote in both chambers of the legislature to raise taxes. In short, if you're worried about tax increases, you don't need to be.

Government in South Dakota lives within its means. We balance our budget without accounting gimmicks or tricks. And we believe in smart regulation. We roll out the red carpet, not the red tape.

Our part-time legislature is one of just a few that is a true citizen legislature. Our legislators come to Pierre, tackle the problems that need to be tackled that session, and then go home to their jobs, their families, and their communities.

I have traveled all across this country and around the world, and I can tell you, there is no better place to operate a business and raise a family than in South Dakota.

My goal is to make sure folks across the country and around the world know that South Dakota is THE PLACE to do business. Whether you've owned and operated a business for four generations, or you're looking to start, expand, or even relocate your current operation, my message is crystal clear: South Dakota is OPEN for business.

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What Recent Trade Wins Mean for South Dakota

As any South Dakota farmer or rancher will tell you, having a market to sell their products is vitally important to the success of their operations. In South Dakota, we produce some of the highest-quality crops and meat in the world. However, trade uncertainty—coupled with low commodity prices and poor weather conditions—has made life difficult for ag producers. After years of being at the tip of the spear in ongoing trade disputes, South Dakota's farmers, ranchers and manufacturers saw some major victories in recent weeks that will begin to reestablish and grow markets for them to sell their products.

I recently had the privilege of joining President Trump at the White House for the signing of "phase one" of the U.S.-China trade agreement. Under this agreement, China will purchase at least \$40 billion dollars of additional U.S. ag products. The phase one agreement comes at an especially good time for American pork producers. African swine fever has killed millions of pigs in China, driving up demand for pork products exported from the U.S. We still have more to do to make sure China lives up to its obligations under the deal—including stopping them from stealing our intellectual property and technologies—and phase one is the first step in that process.

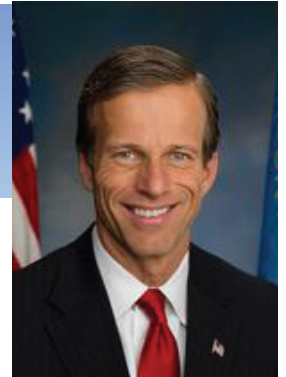
I recently cast my vote in favor of the U.S.-Mexico-Canada (USMCA) trade deal, which passed the Senate with broad bipartisan support after months of delays by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi. It will replace the 26-year-old North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). The USMCA will give South Dakota's farmers, ranchers and manufacturers greater opportunities to sell their products in Mexico and Canada, two of our nation's closest allies and our top trading partners. Trade with our North American neighbors supports 37,700 jobs in South Dakota, and in 2018, our state exported \$924 million of goods and ag products to Canada and Mexico. Under the USMCA, Canada will revise its grain grading policies to treat U.S. wheat in a way that is "no less favorable than that it accords to like wheat of national origin." This will level the playing field for South Dakota wheat farmers, by not allowing either country to have country of origin on wheat quality certificates. Finalizing the USMCA will also provide us with better leverage to negotiate fair deals with other countries around the world. It now awaits action in Canada's parliament before it can go into effect.

These trade wins come on the heels of the unilateral trade agreement we made with Japan, which took effect at the beginning of January. The U.S.-Japan agreement paved the way for more sales of American beef and other agricultural products. Additionally, the European Union trade negotiator recently called for a reset on trade talks with the U.S. so we can work to increase our markets in Europe. This progress is important for South Dakota farmers, ranchers and manufacturers, who have dealt with trade instability for far too long.

Senate Republicans and President Trump have remained focused on advancing policies that will help to grow the economy, and so far the economy in nearly all sectors aside from agriculture has improved. The stock market has reached record highs, we've cut taxes for American families—including costly Obamacare taxes—and rolled back thousands of burdensome, duplicative regulations that slowed business growth. I believe that finalizing trade agreements that give farmers and ranchers a fair deal for their products is one of the final pieces of the puzzle that will allow the economy to reach its full potential.

Free and fair trade is critical for our producers. We are making significant progress toward securing better, fairer trade deals for South Dakota's ag community than what they've had in the past.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



A Bipartisan Win for South Dakota Agriculture

The Republican-led Senate, the Democrat-led House of Representatives, and the president all agree: the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) will modernize the longstanding trade relationship with South Dakota's top trading partners and help take us further into the 21st century.

I'm relieved that after more than a year of unnecessary delay by House Democrats, the Senate recently voted 89 to 10 to send this bipartisan deal to the president. From my position as a senior member of the Finance Committee, I personally advocated for USMCA for more than a year now, and I will never stop advocating for South Dakota's hardworking farmers and ranchers, who, I hope, can breathe a little easier knowing it will soon be signed into law.

Mexico has already approved the deal, and Canada is standing ready. USMCA will soon bring greater certainty to the entire U.S. economy, particularly the agriculture economy, which has faced numerous challenges over the last few years.

The benefits of USMCA are clear. It's expected to create hundreds of thousands of new jobs, raise wages, contribute tens of millions of dollars to the economy, boost U.S. dairy exports by more than \$277 million, and expand market access for U.S. poultry, egg, and wheat producers. It's also expected to strengthen everything from manufacturing to digital services to the automotive industry. It's not a perfect agreement, but for South Dakota, USMCA is a big win.

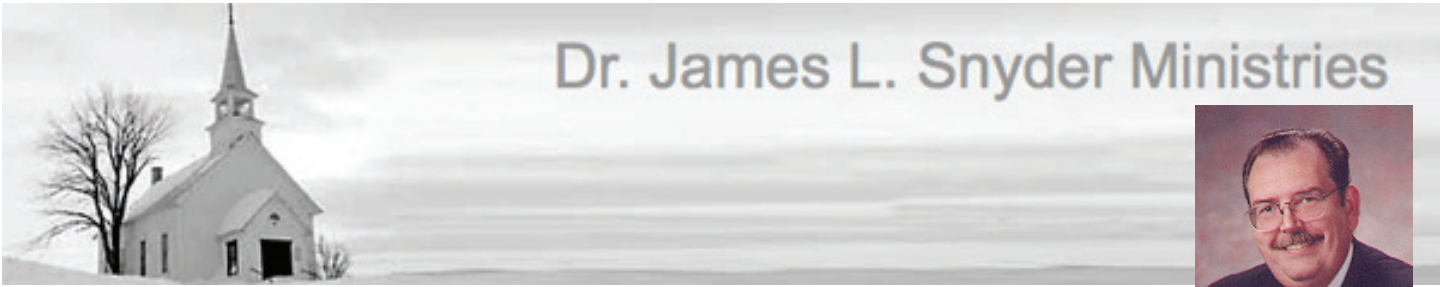
USMCA isn't the only trade win for South Dakota farmers and ranchers. The "phase one" trade deal with China is now in effect, and I was honored to be at the White House for the signing ceremony. While the United States needs to ensure China actually holds up its end of the deal, the phase one provisions will significantly increase demand for American agriculture products – soybeans in particular. Reopening this market for South Dakota's farmers is an important and timely win.

Neither one of these trade deals will be a cure-all that wipes away farm country's pain and suffering, even though that's what farmers and ranchers deserve after years of significant unease. They will take meaningful steps, though, to help turn the tide and make tomorrow a little brighter than today.

There's no doubt that USMCA is a win for South Dakota agriculture, and Congress and the administration should continue to pursue pro-growth, pro-agriculture policies. I remain committed to ensuring the agriculture community gets the support it needs to continue its mission of feeding the world, one row of South Dakota soybeans or corn at a time.

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Please Don't Mess with My Peanut Butter

Normally, I'm a rather calm, cool and collected person. Actually, my creditors trying to collect things from me, mostly money, are responsible for this and I have been officially collected. If I could only collect my thoughts, but the pieces are too small and too few.

Anybody who knows me knows I am not easily rattled by anything. I let the chips fall where they may because I know from whence they came. I am not susceptible to the various rumors making their way around on a regular basis.

All the debate about global warming, for example, has not in the least disturbed my personal serenity. Some say the earth is getting warmer while others insist it is getting cooler. Who in the world are you to believe? One scientist frantically reported that if we do not do something quickly in 1500 years, the earth is going to get 10° warmer than it is right now. One can only hope he was not a Rhodes Scholar.

Then there was the hullabaloo about how harmful chocolate was to a person only to be discovered later that it has marvelous health benefits. Pass me another bonbon.

Others took potshots at coffee. Again, it was found that a morning cup of Joe is just the thing to get a person on the go.

I took all of these things in the good-natured way that is typical of Yours Truly. I try not to let anything get my dander up. In fact, I am quite proud of the humble way in which I respond to all of these negativities, usually, with a cup of coffee in one hand and a bonbon in the other.

All was going well until one morning, the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage rattled my cage. She takes great pleasure in doing something like this.

"Have you seen the trouble they are having with peanut butter?"

This caught me by surprise because I had not heard any such thing. My wife went on to explain that, in some cases, they were recalling certain peanut products. Personally, I know a few nuts that need to be recalled.

I do not mind if they fool around with global warming, and recall every car on the planet. I care not what they say about chocolate and coffee, but I go by one simple rule; do not mess with my peanut butter.

My underlying philosophy is, man shall not live by bread alone, he needs a little bit of peanut butter to hold it all together.

I am not sure who invented peanut butter, it might have been God himself; all I know it is the food of the gods. According to Wikipedia, there has never been a time in history when there was not some form of peanut butter.

It is one of the few essential items in this world that nobody can get along without. I can hardly imagine a world without this marvelous concoction, either creamy or crunchy.

There are many things I can get along without, but I cannot get along without my daily ration of peanut butter.

Some people have chocolate as comfort food. Some people's comfort food of choice is a bag of salty potato chips. Others pamper their comfort with ice cream. And I say, to each one his own. My comfort food is simply peanut butter, preferably crunchy.

The thing about peanut butter that is so amazing is it can be used in a variety of ways. I would guess that the list is all but limitless. Hardly a month goes by that I do not discover a new way to enjoy peanut

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butter.

There, of course, is the traditional peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Every thoughtful and loving mother starts her young brood off on nutritious and delicious peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. If your mother was quite like my mother, she affectionately trimmed the edges, which made the peanut butter all the more delightful.

Need I mention Peanut Butter Cookies, Peanut Butter Fudge, Southern Peanut Butter Soup with Pepper Jelly, Peanut Butter Cheesecake, Peanut Butter Candy, and a Peanut Butter and Chocolate Sundae?

I'm not alone in this appreciation. "To me, peanut butter is the breakfast of champions!" opined Greg Louganis, Olympic Diver. And if anybody should know what a champion eats for breakfast, he should.

Peanut butter can be used for breakfast, lunch and supper. And for all those snacks in between.

Those who know the history of our country will remember that two Presidents of the United States were peanut farmers [Jefferson and Carter]. I am not sure of this, but I think it helped them deal with the nuts at Washington.

Of all the ways to enjoy peanut butter, there is one I prefer above all else. That is simply a nice tablespoon of peanut butter right out of the jar. If a tablespoon is not handy, several fingers will do the trick admirably.

Really, there is no wrong way to enjoy the marvelous taste of peanut butter.

Speaking of comfort food, the Bible has the perfect recipe. "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." (Psalms 23:4).

God has a marvelous way of taking our attention away from the trials of this world and focus our thoughts on Him.

Girls Hanson Classic - 2020

Monday, January 20, 2020

Corn Palace, Mitchell, SD

New Schedule

10:30 am - Langford Area vs. Bridgewater-Emery

12:00 pm - Corsica-Stickney vs. White River

1:30 pm - Parkston vs. Hamlin

3:00 pm - Faulkton vs. Ethan

4:30 pm - McCook Central-Montrose vs. St. Thomas More

6:00 pm - Winner vs. Lennox

7:30 pm - Sioux Falls Christian vs. Sioux Valley

This game has been moved to a different day and time.

Hanson vs. Waubay-Summit - moved to Sat. Feb 1st at 12:00 at the Corn Palace



Effort begins to reduce risk of death of S.D. mothers during childbirth

By: Nick Lowrey

New or expectant mothers in South Dakota — and across the United States — are dying during or after childbirth at higher rates than in nearly every other industrialized nation, and evidence suggests as many as 60% of maternal deaths are preventable.

Nine mothers in South Dakota died in 2018 within a year of giving birth, and 10 South Dakota mothers died due to pregnancy complications within six weeks of giving birth from 2010 to 2015, according to federal data.

Experts say that in South Dakota, high rates of obesity, diabetes and smoking, as well as a trend toward giving birth at older ages, may all contribute to the relatively high maternal complication and death rate. A lack of access to health care and inefficiencies or mistakes in the birthing process are also seen as factors. Native American women in South Dakota face a particularly high risk of death during pregnancy.

The state Department of Health has formed a new committee made up of medical professionals that will begin meeting later this year to address the risks during childbirth and seek solutions.

Giving birth is one of the most common reasons younger American women, including South Dakotans, are admitted to a hospital, with roughly 3.7 million births recorded nationally each year (about 12,000 in South Dakota annually.)

Between 2010 and 2015 in South Dakota, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates there were 10 “pregnancy-related” deaths, those that occurred during or within six weeks of a pregnancy ending and are directly due to a pregnancy complication. The number is an estimate based on birth and death records and is likely a conservative figure.

Maternal “pregnancy-associated” deaths — those that occur within a year of the end of a pregnancy but are not necessarily connected to the pregnancy — averaged 7.2 per year between 2010 and 2018, according to the state Department of Health. There were nine such deaths in 2018.

The CDC estimates that roughly 700 American women die due to pregnancy-related complications every year. In 2017, the U.S. maternal mortality rate was 19 deaths per 100,000 live births, according to the World Health Organization. Countries with similar economic conditions saw a much lower rate. The United Kingdom saw 7 deaths per 100,000 live births and Canada recorded 10 maternal deaths per 100,000 births that year.

About 50,000 women in the U.S. annually are estimated to experience life-threatening pregnancy complications such as heavy bleeding, organ failure or the dangerous blood-pressure condition called preeclampsia.

South Dakota does not keep data on the prevalence of severe pregnancy complications, but such problems are “not uncommon,” according to Dr. Kimberlee McKay, who oversees obstetrics and gynecological services at Avera Health. The CDC estimates that severe pregnancy complications are up to 50 times



more common than death.

Yet relatively little is known about how often complications arise. In South Dakota, there is no requirement for hospitals to publicly report how often they give new mothers blood transfusions or treat a pregnant woman for dangerously high blood pressure. Until this year, South Dakota didn't have a statewide review process to study the factors causing pregnant women to die in childbirth.

Many experts believe a lack of systematic review of maternal deaths in each state has been a significant factor in why America has become, statistically, one of the most dangerous industrialized nations in which to give birth.

Data that does exist largely are based on national surveys of hospital admissions and discharge paperwork as well as analyses of death certificates and birth certificates. The data show that both maternal deaths and the incidents of life-threatening complications are significant and have been growing in the U.S. since at least 1987.

The occurrence of life-threatening complications, for example, rose by nearly 200% between 1993 and 2014, according to the CDC National Inpatient Sample, a random sample of the nation's hospital admissions. The data do not show whether the number of South Dakotans who experience severe pregnancy complications has risen.

The national rate of pregnancy-related deaths more than doubled between 1987, when the rate was 7.2 deaths per 100,000 births, and 2014, when the rate was 18 deaths per 100,000 births, according to the CDC Pregnancy Mortality Surveillance System, which surveys death certificates as a way to monitor pregnancy-related deaths.

Existing data also show that roughly 60% of maternal deaths could be prevented. Researchers with the CDC have found that delivery hospitals could do a better job of creating standard procedures for monitoring and responding to emergencies such as high blood pressure and excessive bleeding in mothers before, during and after delivery.

South Dakota hospital systems are aware of the risks. At Avera Health, one of the state's largest hospital systems, McKay said she and her colleagues have been implementing new protocols for monitoring blood loss. At Sanford Health, another leading health provider in South Dakota, an innovative piece of technology is helping hospital staff better monitor blood pressure in new mothers.

Renewed national focus on maternal health and safety has pushed South Dakota officials to take initial steps toward understanding and addressing the problem. Later this year, the state's new Maternal Mortality Review Committee will hold its first official meeting to analyze maternal deaths and try to figure out how to prevent more such deaths in the future.

"It may change what we think about maternal mortality," said Colleen Winter, division director for family and community health at the South Dakota Department of Health.

Causes of high maternal mortality varied

No single cause has been pegged as the reason for America's rising rates of maternal death and severe pregnancy complications. But the trend has coincided with rising healthcare costs as well as rising rates of chronic conditions such as obesity and diabetes. The average age of women giving birth has risen, too. And, until this year, there really wasn't a standard for how hospitals were expected to identify, treat and train for responding to severe pregnancy complications.

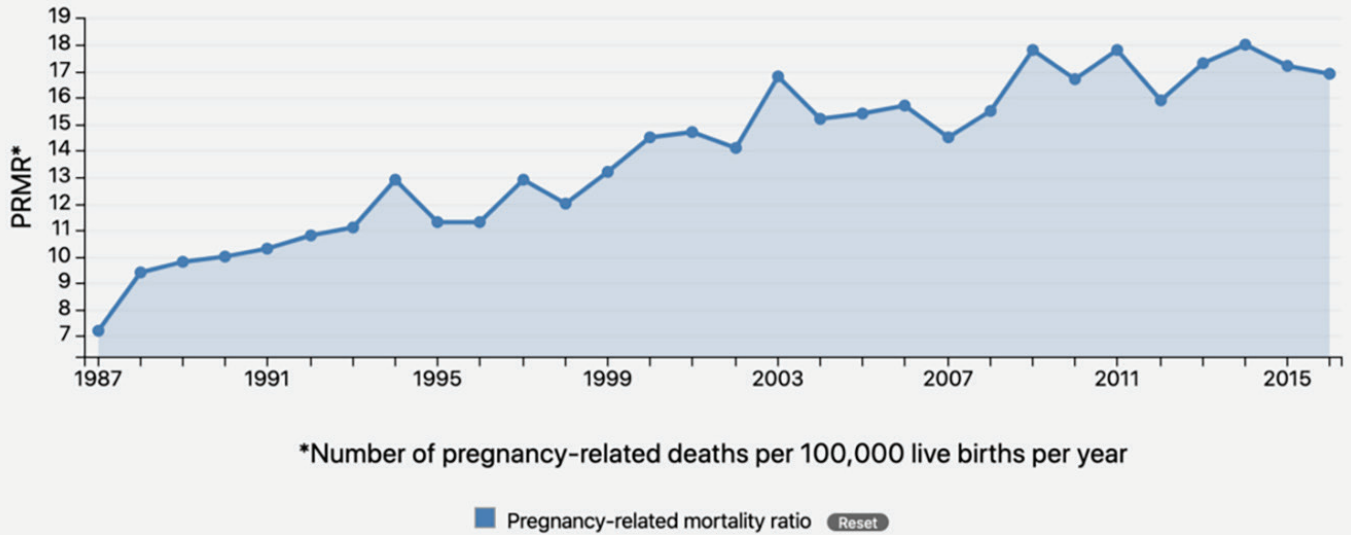
"What's interesting about women in South Dakota is that we tend to be overweight and gain too much weight (during pregnancy). We have higher rates of smoking. We are rural, which people don't think of rurality as being a social determinant of health but in fact it is. And then we have the complications of obesity like diabetes, like hypertension, we have all of those things," McKay said.

The state has a particular problem with gestational diabetes, a condition that affects how the body processes sugar, McKay said. Roughly one in 10 South Dakotans who got pregnant in 2017 were diagnosed



**Dr. Kimberlee
McKay, Avera
Health**

Trends in pregnancy-related mortality in the United States: 1987-2016



Data Table

	1987	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Pregnancy-related mortality ratio	7.2	9.4	9.8	10	10.3	10.8	11.1	12.9	11.3	11.3

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have been tracking maternal mortality since 1987 through its Pregnancy Mortality Surveillance System, which compares death certificates to birth certificates to determine whether a death was pregnancy related or associated. The rate of maternal death has been increasing since 1987 and public health officials are beginning to grapple with the situation. The U.S. is one of only a handful of nations around the world to have seen a rising rate of maternal mortality over the last three decades. Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

with the condition, according to the South Dakota Pregnancy Risk Assessment Survey. Gestational diabetes, if recognized early, can be treated but it can also cause a baby to grow larger in the womb, McKay said.

"If you have gestational diabetes, the downstream effects of that pregnancy are severe hypertension and big babies, and when you deliver a great big baby, a lot of times your uterus bleeds afterwards," McKay said.

One of South Dakota's biggest challenges when it comes to maternal health is proximity to health care. Most of the state is already considered a shortage area for primary healthcare. When it comes to maternal health, McKay described many of the state's rural areas as maternity deserts, meaning women must travel 30 minutes or more to see an OBGYN or to give birth in a hospital.

Access to quality care may be one of the biggest reasons that Native American women are almost twice as likely to die from pregnancy-related causes as white or Hispanic women, said Dr. Ashley Briggs, an OBGYN at Sanford Health. She has been working with the federal Indian Health Service and other critical access hospitals in the Dakotas to provide better prenatal and post-pregnancy care in rural areas. In 2018, Briggs helped create a multi-state group of healthcare providers and public health officials who seek to improve both maternal and infant health in both states.

"We are trying to do things that focus on the specific concerns of Native Americans," Briggs said.

Hospitals also share some of the blame for the country's rising maternal death rate. Experts say that

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not enough attention has been paid to using standardized research-based best practices to both watch for and treat complications, such as heavy bleeding or high blood pressure in pregnant women before the situation gets out of hand.

The Alliance for Innovation on Maternal Health within the Council on Patient Safety in Women's Healthcare has spent years trying to get hospitals to adopt sets of standardized procedures and practices, called bundles, that can be taught to anyone who works in a birthing hospital.

Many of the bundles are based on practices originally developed in California by the California Maternal Quality Care Collaborative. Implementation of the bundles helped reduce that state's maternal mortality rate by 55% between 2006 and 2013. California's maternal death rate during those years fell from 16.9 deaths per 100,000 births to 7.3 per 100,000. California now has one of the lowest maternal mortality rates in the U.S, according to the state's maternal mortality review committee.

The bundles include such practices as weighing blood absorbing pads in order to more accurately measure blood loss during delivery and making sure every delivery room has easily accessed kits for treating heavy bleeding. Hospitals also develop standard practices for monitoring blood pressure, including how and when to respond if a pregnant woman's blood pressure gets too high. The new standards also include annual training requirements for hospital staff.

Avera Health has been implementing procedures that conform to the AIM bundles for both high blood pressure and bleeding for a few years now, McKay said. One of the hospital system's most recently added practices is weighing blood absorbing pads to get a more accurate measure of a mother's blood loss during and after birth.

"I think our teams have done just a tremendous job of interrupting the bad things that can happen in deliveries because of the approach we've taken," McKay said.

Most hospitals that deliver babies in the U.S. will be forced to have such policies in place by July 1, 2020. The Joint Commission is a nonprofit group that evaluates performance for about 80% of U.S. hospitals, including most hospitals in South Dakota. The group recently updated its accreditation requirements for labor and delivery hospitals to create procedures and training regimes that conform to AIM supported maternal care bundles for monitoring and responding to high blood pressure and bleeding.

Sanford Health also has been developing its own set of practices in response to the Joint Commission's new requirements to improve patient safety, Briggs said. One innovation the hospital system plans to take advantage of is a way to automatically alert doctors and nurses when a patient's blood pressure is recorded as dangerously high in their electronic medical record. The technology will help prevent a high blood pressure reading from being missed and going untreated.

"We are all human and we all make mistakes. I think these standards are a way to head that off," Briggs said.

Having new protocols in place won't solve all of the problems, McKay said. Medical errors, whether they involve pregnant women or not, tend to be caused by a failure to recognize when a problem occurs or a failure to communicate about the problem, she said. While putting the protocols in place is a good first step, hospitals will need to adopt a more team-based culture to implement them.

"You can put a protocol in place all day long, but unless you address the culture and really adopt a culture of safety, you're not going to be successful at implementation," McKay said.

Despite ongoing efforts to prevent maternal deaths at the state's hospitals, physicians and public health officials say they need to get a better understanding of maternal mortality in South Dakota.

"We don't have complete data," said Winter, of the Department of Health.

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**Dr. Ashley Briggs,
Sanford Health**

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"We don't have complete data," said Winter, of the Department of Health.

Committee formed to improve safety

At the end of 2018, South Dakota was one of only nine states that had not established a Maternal Mortality Review Committee to analyze each death of a pregnant or recently pregnant woman. Establishing a state MMRC is regarded by the CDC and the Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs as a necessary first step toward lowering the rate of maternal deaths.

"They were very interested in improving outcomes for moms and getting a better handle on the data for our state," Winter said.

After months of laying the groundwork, Winter said South Dakota's MMRC will hold its first meeting later this year to evaluate all nine maternity-associated deaths reported in 2018. The evaluations will help public health officials and healthcare providers pinpoint which areas of maternal health need more focus. The state has had success with a similar review committee that helped reduce the state's rate of infant deaths.

"In the case of infant mortality we found that infants were dying as a result of not having safe sleep environments and so we implemented a statewide safe sleep program," Winter said. "I feel like we'll learn a lot from maternal mortality review."

Because the DOH created the new MMRC without any additional funding from taxpayers, its members will be volunteers from the South Dakota medical community, Winter said. The state's hospitals also will be asked to provide access to medical records for each maternal death recorded in the state.

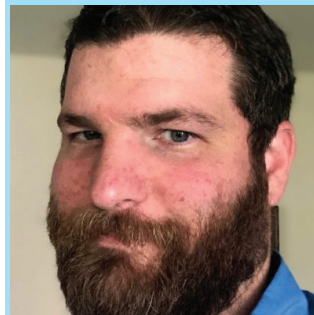
That access will be provided through a memorandum of understanding between the DOH and each hospital or hospital system. A DOH employee who has been assigned to work on maternal health will collect the pertinent information from each set of medical records and format a report on each death for the committee to review.

The committee may take years to devise policy recommendations. Maternal deaths are rare, of the roughly 11,890 women who gave birth in South Dakota in 2018, only nine died. Such a small number of deaths can make it difficult to draw conclusions, Winter said. But, she said, the MMRC will make a difference.

"Any maternal death is too many," Winter said. "Our numbers are smaller ... but we'd rather have none."

"They were very interested in improving outcomes for moms and getting a better handle on the data for our state ... any maternal death is too many. Our numbers are smaller, but we'd rather have none."

-- Colleen Winter, division director for family and community health at the South Dakota Department of Health



ABOUT

NICK LOWREY

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

Beware of Scams!

I received this email yesterday. It looks very real. But beware, banks will not send you a link to log in - you should always log in directly at the bank's web site. I further investigated the email of the return e-mail address. It looked like this: myra.wille@halo.com. Well, you can definitely tell that it's not coming from Wells Fargo.

Wells Fargo Online

Inbox - PaperPaul

SPAM [New message] Verify recent activities [[Email: paperpaul@grotonsd.n...](mailto:paperpaul@grotonsd.n...)]

To: Kosel Paul



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We require your immediate attention concerning some activities on your account.

To begin account verification process kindly login below and confirm account ownership.

[LOGIN HERE](#)

Failure to verify account activities within 72 hours will result in account permanent closure as signed with the Terms and Conditions agreement with Wells Fargo.

Thank you for banking with us.

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**AGENDA
REGULAR MEETING
BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION
COMMISSIONER'S CHAMBERS, COURTHOUSE ANNEX
25 MARKET STREET, ABERDEEN SD**

**TUESDAY
JANUARY 21, 2020**

8:45 a.m. – 8:47a.m. – First Reading Ord 154(Nerland Mini Ag Rezone) & Ord 155(Reder Mini Ag Rezone)

8:47 a.m. – 8:50 a.m. – Public Hearing on Granary Transfer

8:50 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. – Burt Elliot – Dumpster Enforcement

9:00 a.m. – 9:05 a.m. – Judy Dosch (Maintenance) – Discuss Storage Tanks

9:05 a.m. – 9:10 a.m. – Dave Lunzman (Chief Deputy Sheriff) – Home Detention

9:10 a.m. – 9:15 a.m. – Erica Coughlin (HR Director) – Follow up on Employee Handbook Changes

- Approve General Meeting Minutes of January 14, 2019
- Claims/Payroll
- HR Report
- Sheriff's Report for December 2019
- Quit Claim Deed
- Designation of Legal Newspaper
- Consolidated Board of Equalization
- Fair Revenue Contracts 2020 – Booths, Campers, Sponsorships
- Fair Contracts
- Contingency Transfer(2019)
- Homeland Security Regional Review Board Appointments

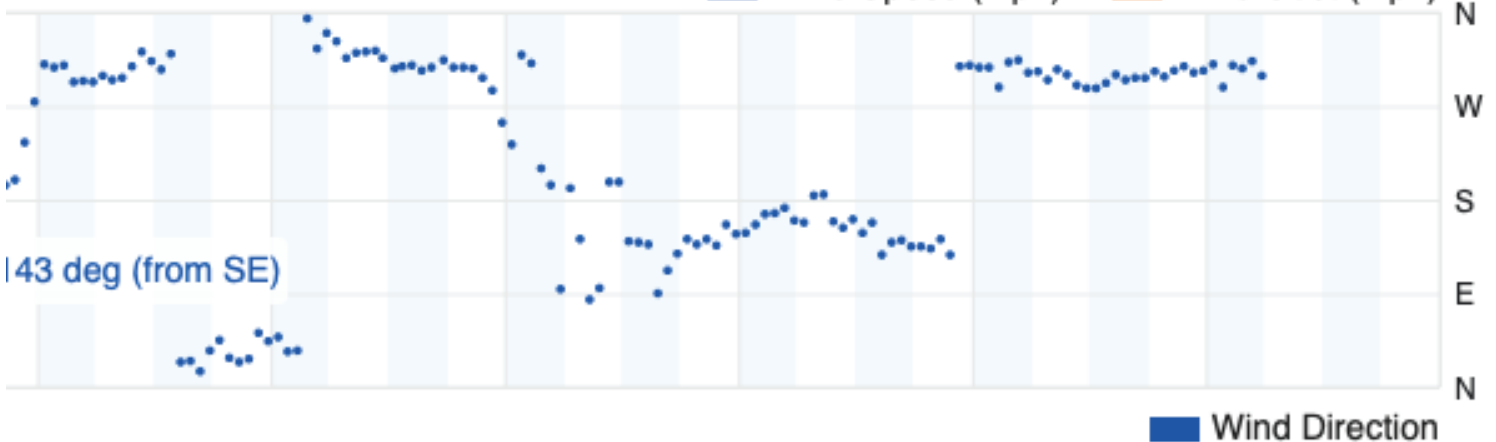
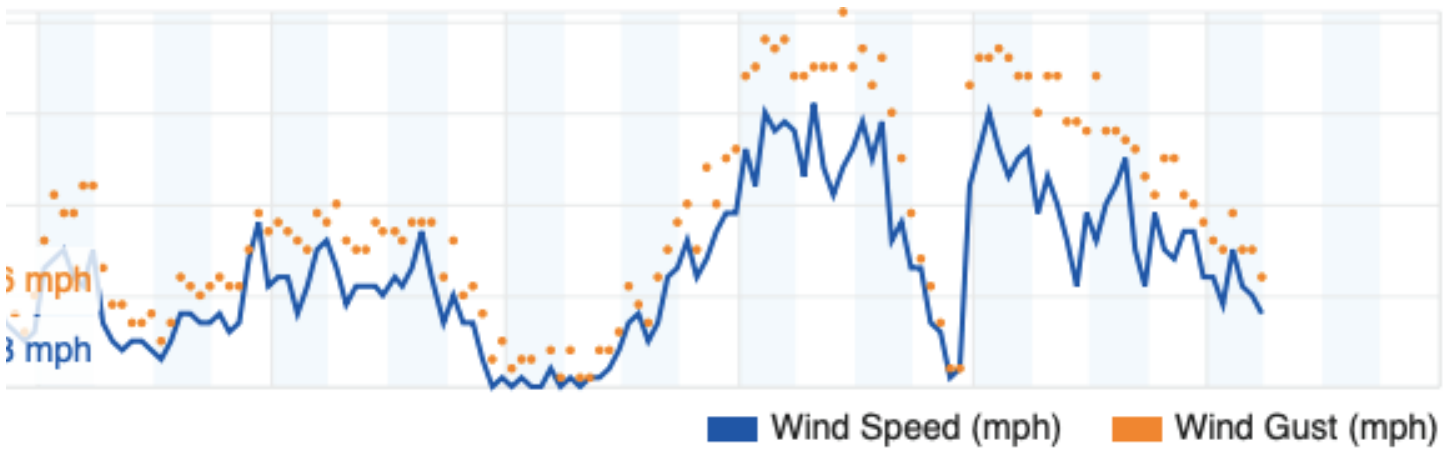
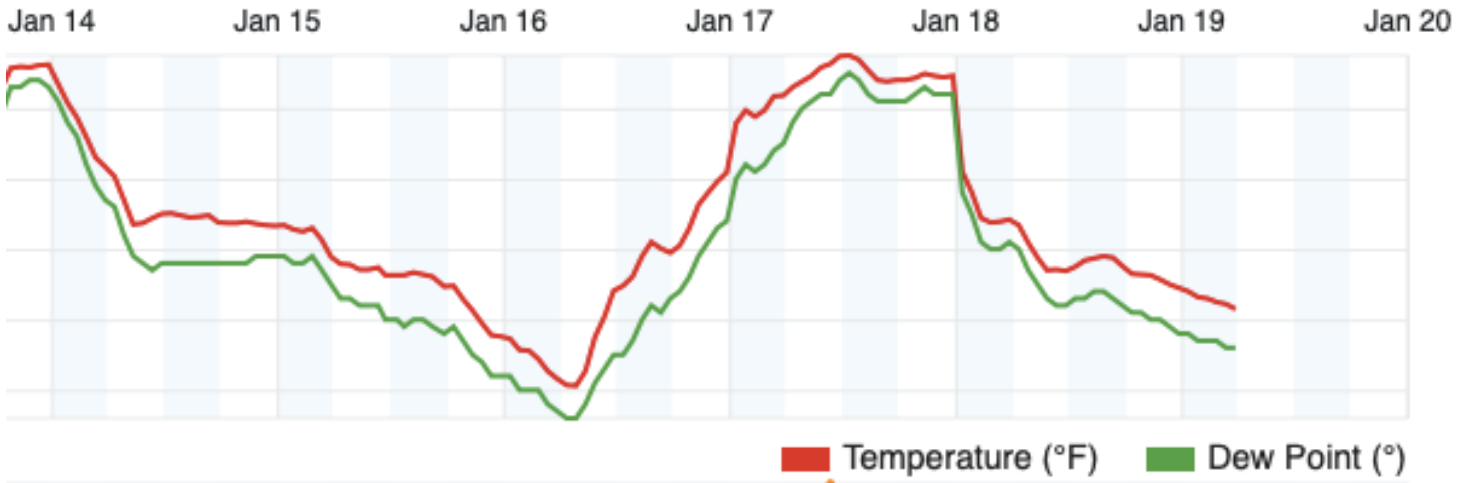
Public Comment and any other matters to come before the Commission for discussion

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Temperature drops 10 degrees in 15 minutes

When the cold front came through Saturday night, the temperature took a fast plunge. It was 25 degrees at 11:30 p.m. and 15 minutes later, it was 15 degrees. The wind went from calm at 11:30 p.m. with a 33 mph gust 15 minutes later.



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Upcoming Events

Sunday, January 19, 2020

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

2:00-4:00 PM Grades JK-8 (Students must be accompanied by an adult) 4:00-6:00 PM Grades 6-12

2 p.m. Carnival of Silver Skates dress rehearsal

Monday, January 20, 2020

Postponed to Feb. 4th, Double Header: Basketball: Girls Varsity Game vs. Langford @ Groton Area High School

Tuesday, January 21, 2020

Basketball Double Header with Ipswich in Groton. (Girls JV at 4 p.m., Boys JV at 5 p.m., Girls Varsity at 6 p.m., Boys Varsity to follow)

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

Thursday, January 23, 2020

3:00pm: Junior High Boys Basketball Game at Aberdeen Roncalli

5:00pm: Wrestling Quad at Clark.

6:30pm: Boys Basketball at Roncalli

Friday, January 24, 2020

Speech Fiesta Debate at Watertown High School

Saturday, January 25, 2020

Speech Fiesta Debate at Watertown High School

Robotics at GHS Gymnasium

10:00am: Boys Junior High Jamboree at GHS (rescheduled from 1-18-20)

10:00am: Wrestling Tournament at Arlington

Sunday, January 26, 2020

Carnival of Silver Skates at 2 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.

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

2:00-4:00 PM Grades JK-8 (Students must be accompanied by an adult) 4:00-6:00 PM Grades 6-12

Monday, January 27, 2020

Boys Basketball at Northwestern (combined junior high game at 4 p.m., Junior Varsity game at 6:30 p.m. followed by the varsity game)

6:00pm: Junior High Wrestling Tournament at Redfield

Tuesday, January 28, 2020

6:30pm: Girls' Basketball at Clark/Willow Lake (at Clark School)

Thursday, January 30, 2020

4:00pm: Northeast Conference Wrestling at Britton-Hecla School

Friday, January 31, 2020

Lewis and Clark Debate at Yankton High School

Boys Basketball hosts Clark/Willow Lake. (Combined Junior High Game at 5:15 p.m., followed by Junior Varsity game at 6:30 p.m. and then the varsity game.)



Johnson's 90th Birthday

Ella Johnson is celebrating her 90th birthday on Jan. 21st. Cards may be sent to her at 903 N 2nd St, Groton, SD 57445. Family requests no gifts.

82nd Annual

Carnival of Silver Skates

Sunday, January 26th—2:00 and 6:30

Groton Ice Rink—West Side of Groton

Dreams...both the kind you have when you're asleep AND when you're awake... This show will entertain through music, costumes and skating talent.

Join us for a *great show* performed by our *local youth* that will inspire you to *DREAM!*

Admission: 13 & older—\$3.00
6-12—\$2.00

Parking: Provided around the rink and on the ice or cozy up on the bleachers (ice parking begins at 10 am, then again at 4:30 pm)

**Check us out on Facebook at "Silver Skates"

WE HOPE TO
SEE YOU THERE!

Dreams
on Ice 2020

A stylized illustration of a pair of ice skates, one black and one white, positioned below the text.

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Sunday	Sunday Night	M.L.King Day	Monday Night	Tuesday
				
Cold	Slight Chance Flurries	Cold	Partly Cloudy	Patchy Blowing Snow and Breezy

High: -2 °F

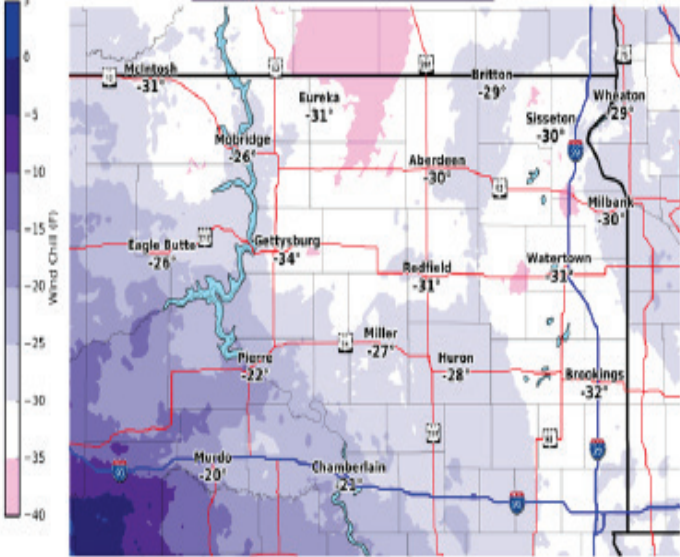
Low: -17 °F

High: 2 °F


Low: -3 °F

High: 31 °F

Today's Coldest Wind Chills





City	Wind Chill (°F)
McIntosh	-31
Eureka	-31
Britton	-29
Wheaton	-29
Sisseton	-30
Milbank	-30
Aberdeen	-30
Watertown	-31
Redfield	-31
Brookings	-32
Huron	-28
Miller	-27
Chamberlain	-25
Gettysburg	-24
Pierre	-22
Murdo	-20
Eagle Butte	-26
Madison	-26





National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Turning Milder
Mid-Week!



Today: 

 Partly Cloudy & Cold
Highs -5 to 15°F
(warmest west)

Monday: 

Continued Cold
Highs 0 to 25°F

1/19/2020 2:33 AM

Cold high pressure will continue to pump cold air into the region through Monday. Wind chills will remain bitterly cold too! The good news: milder conditions are expected for mid-week!

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Today in Weather History

January 19, 1970: Extremely cold airmass was over the area on this day in weather history in 1970. After a frigid night, daytime high temperatures struggled to reach the single digits below zero. Overnight low temperatures across the area were from 25 below to 34 below zero with daytime highs from 3 above at Sisseton to 12 degrees below zero at Pierre. Record low temperatures were set at Wheaton, Watertown, Pierre, and Kennebec. The temperature fell to 32 degrees below zero at Pierre, 33 degrees below zero at Watertown and Wheaton, and to 34 degrees zero at Kennebec. Aberdeen fell to 35 degrees below zero, Sisseton dropped to 26 degrees below zero, Mobridge fell to 25 degrees below zero, Sisseton fell to 26 degrees below zero, and Timber Lake fell to 27 degrees below zero.

1883: The steamers of Cimbria and Sultan collided in the North Sea due to heavy fog. This collision resulted in the death of 357 people.

1961: Eight inches of snow fell and caused crippling traffic jams around the Washington D.C. area on the eve of John Kennedy's inauguration. The president-elect had to cancel dinner plans and, in a struggle to keep other commitments, is reported to have had only 4 hours of sleep. Former President Herbert Hoover was unable to fly into Washington National Airport due to the weather, and he had to miss the swearing-in ceremony.

1993: An unusual series of Pacific storm systems tracked across Arizona from January 6th through the 19th, producing heavy and prolonged precipitation across the state. These heavy rains caused the most widespread and severe flooding in Arizona since the turn of the century. The highest flows of record were observed at some streamflow-gaging stations in every major river basin in the state. The protracted rainfall over the 2-week period caused multiple flood peaks on most streams and rivers. A large garbage landfill and portions of the new Mill Avenue Bridge that was under construction were washed away by the raging Salt River. The Gillespie Dam west of Phoenix was damaged, as high water spread throughout low-lying areas. One man drowned while trying to cross the Agua Fria River.

1996: January 1996 is known as one of the worst snowmelt floods on record for the Mid-Atlantic. The region saw blizzard conditions on January 6 and 7th, which produced 15 to 24 inches east of I-95, and 2 to 3 feet of snow west of I-95. With a tremendous amount of snow on the ground, on January 19, temperatures soared into the 50s and 60s ahead of an approaching cold front. At 7 am in Washington D.C. was reporting a temperature of 60 degrees with a dewpoint of 60 degrees, both unusually high for a January morning. The warm temperatures combined with rain to melt much of the snowpack, which was released into the waterways.

1810 - The famous "cold day" in New England. Gale force winds wrecked homes, and accompanied a sudden overnight drop in temperature of 50 degrees. Tragedy struck Sanbornton NH where three children froze to death. (David Ludlum)

1933 - Giant Forest CA received 60 inches of snow in just 24 hours, a state record, and the second highest 24 hour total of record for the U.S. (David Ludlum)

1977 - Snowflakes were observed at Homestead and Miami Beach in extreme southern Florida. (David Ludlum)

1987 - A storm tracking toward the northeastern U.S. produced up to 14 inches of snow in northern Indiana. Peru IN reported a foot of snow. Six cities in Florida reported new record high temperatures for the date. The afternoon high of 88 degrees at Miami equalled their record for the month of January. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A powerful storm hit the central U.S. producing blizzard conditions in the Central High Plains, and severe thunderstorms in the Lower Mississippi Valley. Snowfall totals ranged up to 36 inches at Wolf Creek Pass CO, with 31 inches at Elsmere NE. Tornadoes claimed five lives in Tennessee, and a tornado at Cullman AL injured 35 persons. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - The high temperature for the day at Fairbanks, AK, was a frigid 41 degrees below zero, and the morning low of 24 degrees below zero at Anchorage AK was their coldest reading in fourteen years. (National Weather Summary)

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GROWING UP

One Sunday morning, the pastor was visiting the first grade Sunday school class. With a bright smile, he said to a small child, "Who made you, Jimmy?"

"Well," he said thoughtfully, "God made part of me."

"What do you mean that God made part of you?" asked the pastor.

"First, God made me real little, and I grewed the rest all by myself."

How insightful! God begins a "good work in us" when we accept Christ as our Savior. We are, so to speak, "real little" like Jimmy. But, He does not expect us to remain "little." When God started the process of the new birth within us, He did so with the intention of bringing it to completion – for us to grow into the likeness of Christ. This is possible because the Holy Spirit lives with us and is willing and able, with our involvement, to let it happen through prayer, Bible study, and worship. Come, grow with Him. He has great things waiting for each of us.

Prayer: Lord, may we work with You to grow into Christlikeness. May we, with determination and surrender, commit our lives to become who You created us to be. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Philippians 1:6 And I am certain that God, who began the good work within you, will continue his work until it is finally finished on the day when Christ Jesus returns.

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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)



Shonna Harry had this photo on her Facebook Page and titled it, "God's Beauty."

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News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Dakota Cash

05-11-19-29-33

(five, eleven, nineteen, twenty-nine, thirty-three)

Estimated jackpot: \$23,000

Lotto America

05-07-31-41-43, Star Ball: 9, ASB: 2

(five, seven, thirty-one, forty-one, forty-three; Star Ball: nine; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$7.29 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$116 million

Powerball

20-24-38-56-68, Powerball: 18, Power Play: 2

(twenty, twenty-four, thirty-eight, fifty-six, sixty-eight; Powerball: eighteen; Power Play: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$321 million

Saturday's Scores

By The Associated Press

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

Edgemont 48, Newell 37

Hettinger/Scranton, N.D. 51, Bison 42

New Underwood 55, Hot Springs 38

Philip 61, Colome 43

Stanley County 67, Bennett County 47

Sundance, Wyo. 54, Hill City 30

GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL

Bison 49, Hettinger/Scranton, N.D. 27

Hill City 53, Sundance, Wyo. 31

Hot Springs 46, Upton, Wyo. 40

Newell 37, Edgemont 23

Thunder Basin, Wyo. 69, Pierre 27

Todd County 74, St. Francis Indian 47

POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS=

Centerville vs. Canistota, ppd. to Jan 18th.

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

Winter storm brings heavy snow, ice to Midwest, Northeast

CHICAGO (AP) — A winter storm that brought snow and sleet to the Midwest and Plains created travel headaches Saturday after airlines canceled flights and officials shut down major roads.

The storm system began moving through the Plains and Midwest on Friday, leading to trouble at airports in Chicago and Kansas City. It was expected to spread to the Northeast by Saturday evening.

Blizzard conditions with powerful winds were reported in some areas, and officials in North Dakota, South

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Dakota, Minnesota and Iowa were urging people to stay inside if possible on Saturday. They noted that blowing snow made it nearly impossible to see in some areas, making driving treacherous.

Officials in South Dakota shut down most of Interstate 29 and a 72-mile (115.87-kilometer) portion of Interstate 90 Friday night. Both highways were open Saturday afternoon, although no traffic was advised on those roads. Most of I-29 in North Dakota and a 200-mile (321.87-kilometer) stretch of I-94 remained closed. Farther west in Wyoming, officials closed down stretches of Interstate 80 due to the weather and as a precaution against travelers becoming stranded without services.

The danger on the roads was highlighted by dashcam video recorded from a delivery truck and made public by the Iowa State Patrol. The video shows a state trooper and a person who had been involved in a crash along Interstate 80 near Council Bluffs in western Iowa on Friday looking at the damage when another truck loses control on the slick interstate and barrels into the crash scene, barely missing the trooper and other man.

In Nebraska, the winter storm that pummeled the state Friday was blamed for at least one death on Interstate 80, the Nebraska State Patrol reported Saturday. The patrol said the driver was killed Friday when the pickup he was driving spun out of control, crossed the median and slammed into a semitrailer. Nebraska troopers responded to more than 200 weather-related incidents across the state. Most of those were to assist stranded motorists, but 55 were crashes, the patrol said.

In the Northeast, snow totals could reach a foot (30 centimeters) or more in parts of Vermont and New York state. But most areas in the region were expected to get just a few inches. On Saturday, snow fell from Buffalo to New York City as the storm tracked across the state.

On Friday, the Federal Aviation Administration halted all flights in and out of Chicago's O'Hare Airport for several hours, and a plane slid off an icy taxiway at Kansas City International Airport. The Chicago Department of Aviation reported about 200 cancellations at O'Hare on Saturday morning out of nearly 2,000 total flights, and the FAA said some flights were being delayed because of the weather.

After the storm, temperatures were expected to drop to the single digits and even below zero (-18 degrees Celsius) in parts of the Plains and the Midwest.



A blizzard packing winds of 50 mph or more reduced visibility to near zero at the intersections of Interstate 94 and Interstate 29 in Fargo, N.D., on Saturday, Jan. 18, 2020. Interstate 94 was shut down from Fargo to Bismarck, N.D., and Interstate 29 was closed from Grand Forks, N.D., to Sioux Falls, S.D. No travel was advised on secondary roads in states within the blizzard warning, which included parts of North Dakota, South Dakota, Minnesota and Iowa. (Jim Monk/KFGO Radio, Fargo via AP)

Upper Midwest residents wait out blizzard at end of storm

FARGO, N.D. (AP) — Most residents in the eastern Dakotas and western Minnesota were spending Saturday indoors while high winds at the back of a powerful winter storm created blowing snow that shut down highways, closed businesses and postponed events.

A blizzard warning was in effect until Saturday evening for the eastern Dakotas, western Minnesota and western Iowa. While snowfall totals in most areas were below 5 inches, according to the National Weather Service, wind gusts up to 45 to 55 mph were reducing visibility to near-zero and make travel impossible.

Officials in South Dakota shut down most of Interstate 29 and a 72-mile portion of Interstate 90 Friday night. Both highways were open Saturday afternoon, although no traffic was advised on those roads. Most of I-29 in North Dakota and a 200-mile stretch of I-94 remained closed.

A winter storm warning was in place from central and eastern Minnesota into west central Wisconsin. Minneapolis received between 4 and 7 inches of snow, which was less than expected.

In addition, falling temperatures into the single digits above and below zero was expected to create icy roads throughout the weekend in the Upper Midwest and lead to wind chills in the 30- to 40-below range.

Reservations brace for winter storms amid slow recovery

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

PINE RIDGE, S.D. (AP) — Snow blanketed the living room of Erna Shepard's home the morning after a storm on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

"I'm going to freeze," she said.

It's been 10 months since the "bomb cyclone" that dumped the snow and rain that Shepard, 48, says caused the roof of her mobile home to cave in. While she's managed to find a temporary home with her sister, like many people living in several Native American communities in South Dakota, she has struggled to recover from a storm and flooding that swelled rivers, swallowed roads and stranded thousands of people.

"The harsh thing about these climate-related events is that when they happen to these communities, we don't recover really," said Chase Iron Eyes, a spokesman for the Oglala Sioux Tribe's elected leadership.

It's a compounding problem: Year after year, storms batter roads and homes, but federal recovery funding is restricted to damage from a single disaster and a specific timeframe.

Unable to prove that the damage they've experienced was caused by just one event, residents and officials are left without the help they need to fix their homes and roads.

Then another storm comes.

"Once the winds start howling, my wife worries again," said Henry Red Cloud, who lives on Pine Ridge.

Before the March storm, Red Cloud, 60, ran workshops on his property on solar panel and wind turbine installation. But that halted after flooding damaged his workshop and he had to focus on repairing their trailer home.

Steve Wilson, the Oglala Sioux Tribe's emergency manager, said efforts to get roads ready for winter



In this Dec. 11, 2019 photo, Henry Red Cloud points to his property where flooding rose as high as 3-feet in March on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in South Dakota. He fears what winter storms will do after flooding damaged their home last spring. They ran workshops on solar panel and wind turbine installation, but had to halt the classes when flooding damaged their tools and property. (AP Photo/

Stephen Groves)

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have been slowed by a lack of documentation and the complexities of processing federal recovery money.

Wilson said the roads department is working with a small budget and an undersized staff while trying to repair gaps in roads that he said "would swallow homes up." People on Pine Ridge rely on thousands of miles of dirt roads to access medical care, school, and essentials like food and fuel, and tribal leaders say a major upgrade is needed.

Last year, the tribe used horses, snowmobiles and a helicopter to reach stranded residents. He's prepared to do the same this year.

As for Shepard, in the last nine months, her life has unraveled. She sent a teenage son to live with another relative. Her 22-year-old son had no place to live and killed himself in September, she said.

"It would have been all right if he had a place to stay," she said.

She tried to make her mobile home livable, covering the doors and windows with blankets to keep out the cold. Then thieves broke in and stole her wood-burning stove.

She applied for assistance from FEMA, but was denied.

FEMA spokesman Phil Wernisch said he can't talk about individual cases, but he noted that previous disasters have occurred on the reservation and this help was only for damage from March and April flooding.

Applicants must show that the damage to their homes came during the dates of the disaster and provide documents showing they live there.

The rate of approval for households on tribal land was much lower for this storm than in other parts of the state. In Oglala Lakota County, which lies on the Pine Ridge Reservation, 26% of people who applied were approved. In Minnehaha County, which contains South Dakota's largest city, Sioux Falls, the rate of approval was 76%

Recovery workers said many homes on Pine Ridge were damaged in hail storms in July 2018.

Delbert Brewer, who previously worked for FEMA and now consults on emergency responses for the Oglala Sioux Tribe, said FEMA inspectors are trained to look for "deferred maintenance," or damage that came from weather outside the disaster declaration dates. On the reservation, home insurance is rare and poverty is common, he said. Many left hail damage unrepaired.

Julian Bear Runner, president of the Oglala Sioux Tribe, attributed the low approval rates to a communication breakdown. Many older people on the reservation speak Lakota. Although FEMA hired translators, Bear Runner said it was still a challenge to communicate.

"It was very frustrating for the people because even though some of the damages were from the hail storm, the snow and flooding also caused damage as well," Bear Runner said.

Wernisch said FEMA works with tribes and hires local liaisons and translators. FEMA does not discourage people from registering for disaster assistance even if there are questions about when the damage occurred, said Wernisch. If FEMA is unable to help, it refers people to nonprofit organizations.

But Maretta Champagne, who operates one of those organizations, called Lakota Nation Disaster Resiliency, said her budget does not allow her to help everyone. She is still working through a list of over a thousand rejected applicants that FEMA gave her after a disaster declaration in 2015.

"It was really disheartening to see some of these people and the condition they're in," Champagne said. "When you're dealing with tribal lands, it's a whole different world here."

LGBT activists say new bills target transgender youth

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST and DAVID CRARY Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — At the urging of conservative advocacy groups, Republican legislators in more than a dozen states are promoting bills that focus on transgender young people. One batch of bills would bar doctors from providing them certain gender-related medical treatment; another batch would bar trans students from participating on school sports teams of the gender they identify with.

The proposed laws, if enacted, "would bring devastating harms to the transgender community," said Chase Strangio, a transgender-rights lawyer with the American Civil Liberties Union.

He warned that the medical bans -- now pending in Colorado, Florida, Missouri, Oklahoma, South Caro-

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lina and South Dakota and likely to surface elsewhere -- could trigger suicides among young people yearning to undergo gender transition.

The bills' goals have been endorsed by several national conservative groups, including Alliance Defending Freedom and Eagle Forum.

"We've got lots of legislators working on this," said Gayle Ruzicka, an activist with Eagle Forum's Utah chapter. "We don't let this happen to children."

The bill recently introduced in South Dakota would make it a felony for medical providers to perform operations or administer hormone therapy to help minors change their gender. The Missouri bill would subject doctors to revocation of their license if they administered gender-reassignment treatment, and parents who consented to such treatment would be reported to child-welfare officials for child abuse.

"I cannot imagine what happens to transgender people if these criminal bans pass," said the ACLU's Strangio, a transgender man. "I don't think we can possibly raise the alarm enough, because people are going to die."

The medical director of the Trevor Project, a youth suicide prevention service, also expressed dismay, saying the bills could deprive some young people of potentially life-saving treatment. "They would force doctors to make an untenable decision and could result in their imprisonment for providing best-practice medical care," said Dr. Alexis Chavez, a transgender psychiatrist.

A Utah legislator, Republican Rep. Brad Daw, said he has accepted Eagle Forum's request to begin drafting such a bill, though his current proposal now contains some changes from the language suggested by the advocacy group.

While his bill would ban surgeries and hormone therapy for minors, it would allow puberty blockers — medications that temporarily puts puberty on hold.

"We want to do what we think is reasonable practice, which is put off that kind of one-way ticket decision until the youth is an adult," he said.

Daw said he wants to be sensitive and respectful to transgender kids and their families but remains concerned about medical steps toward transitioning.

"What we want is really good policy off the bat," said Daw, who's still drafting the bill for the legislative session that begins Jan. 27.

For transgender kids and their families, though, the idea of putting those steps out of reach is terrifying. Robyn Rumsey of Roy, Utah said her child was withdrawn and angry before coming out as transgender at age 12.

"As parents we were completely thrown, to say the least," she said. In consultation with a counselor and doctors, Dex Rumsey gradually began wearing short hair and boy's clothes, then began using puberty blockers and eventually testosterone.



Dex Rumsey, 15, is photographed with his mother Robyn and father Clay Friday, Jan. 17, 2020, in Roy, Utah. Dex Rumsey, 15, came out as transgender at age 12. In consultation with a counselor and doctors, he gradually began wearing short hair and boy's clothes, then began using puberty blockers and eventually testosterone. His parents say he's gone from a shy, withdrawn child to a happy, thriving kid. He scared he could become depressed and suicidal again a ban on hormone therapy and sex-reassignment surgery for minors were to pass. (AP Photo/Rick Bowmer)

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"It wasn't a decision that was taken lightly," Robyn Rumsey said. It's made her son, now 15, into a happy, thriving person, she said. The family is considering surgery later this year.

"We have seen this child completely turn around," she said. Dex considered suicide before coming out, and if he didn't have access to hormones she worries those thoughts would return. Just learning about the idea of a ban sent him into a panic and a sleepless night, she said.

"I know that it would be a life or death situation for my son. We would be desperate to find help and medication for him," she said.

Dex Rumsey said the time since he's started hormone therapy has been the happiest of his life.

"I was never comfortable under my own skin. I always felt wrong, disgusting and I hated myself. These hormones have allowed me to feel comfortable with who I am. It's allowed me to be happier. I don't hate myself, I'm not depressed, I don't feel suicidal anymore," he said.

That kind of sentiment should be a particular concern to state leaders looking to bring down the state's suicide rate, said Troy Williams with the group Equality Utah.

If a law were to pass, Dex Rumsey said he'd want to leave the state. "I don't think they realize the damage these types of things are causing," he said.

The Alliance Defending Freedom is also leading a nationwide campaign to prevent transgender girls from competing with other girls in high school sports. It has filed a federal discrimination complaint on behalf of Connecticut girls who competed in track-and-field and say state's inclusive policy on transgender athletes has cost them top finishes and possibly college scholarships.

"Forcing female athletes to compete against biological males isn't fair and destroys their athletic opportunities," said attorney Matt Sharp, the ADF's state government relations director. "Likewise, every child deserves a childhood that allows them to experience puberty and other natural changes that shape who they will become."

So far this year, bills to restrict transgender students' sports participation are pending in Alabama, Georgia, Indiana, Missouri, New Hampshire, Tennessee and Washington state, according to the ACLU. Idaho State Rep. Barbara Ehardt told the Idaho Statesman she's preparing a similar bill. In several cases, the bills would override trans-inclusive policies adopted by state high school athletic associations.

The Alabama measure, titled the Gender Is Real Legislative Act, would bar any K-12 public school from participating in interscholastic sports events which allow trans athletes to compete according to their gender identity.

"The GIRL Bill seeks to support female student-athletes, so that they may compete against each other and not have to compete against male students with an unfair advantage," said the bill's author, Rep. Chris Pringle.

Several national women's rights and sports organizations are pushing back, saying that barring transgender people from sports teams aligning with their gender identity often means they are "excluded from participating altogether."

Hong Kong police fire tear gas as thousands rally

By ALICE FUNG Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Hong Kong police fired tear gas Sunday at a public park that was overflowing with thousands of protesters calling for electoral reforms and a boycott of the Chinese Communist Party.

Sporting their movement's trademark black clothing and face masks, rally participants packed into Chater Garden, not far from the Chinese territory's Legislative Council building. They held up signs that read "Free Hong Kong" and waved American and British flags.

"We want real universal suffrage," the protesters chanted. "Disband the police force, free Hong Kong!"

A former British colony, Hong Kong was returned to China in 1997. While the framework of "one country, two systems" promises the city greater democratic rights than are afforded to the mainland, protesters say their freedoms have been steadily eroding under Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Frictions between democracy-minded Hong Kongers and the Communist Party-ruled central government

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in Beijing came to a head last June, when proposed extradition legislation sparked months of mass demonstrations.

The bill — which would have allowed Hong Kong residents to be sent to mainland China to stand trial — has since been withdrawn, but protests have continued for more than seven months, centered around demands for voting rights and an independent inquiry into police conduct.

While the protests began peacefully, they increasingly descended into violence after demonstrators became frustrated with the government's response. They feel that Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam has ignored their demands and used the police to suppress them.

In response to Sunday's rally, Hong Kong's government released a statement outlining the "universal suffrage of 'one person, one vote' as an ultimate aim" enshrined in the city's de facto constitution, known as the Basic Law. This step must be implemented in line with "gradual and orderly progress," the statement said.

"The Government understands the aspiration of the community for universal suffrage," it added. "To achieve this aim, the community needs to have a clear understanding that apart from being accountable to (Hong Kong), the CE (Chief Executive) selected by universal suffrage is appointed by the Central People's Government and shall also be accountable to the CPG."

Underpinning the protests is a deep distrust for the central government and Xi, who is widely considered China's most authoritarian leader in decades. Some protesters have accused Lam of being "Beijing's puppet," a label she has rejected.

Demonstrators have routinely thrown bricks and gasoline bombs at riot police, who have responded with tear gas, rubber bullets and — on rare occasions — live rounds.

The months of unrest have sent the financial hub's economy reeling, as shops have shuttered during clashes and tourists have stayed away.

Hong Kong police gave approval for Sunday's rally, but not for a march that organizers were also planning. Protesters used bricks, umbrellas and traffic barriers to barricade a road. They ran for cover after riot police appeared around Chater Garden and raised yellow warning flags, telling demonstrators that they should disperse because they were participating in an illegal assembly.

Two officers were bleeding from the head after a group of "rioters" attacked them with wooden sticks, police said in a statement, adding that some also lobbed water bottles and other objects at law enforcement. Others threw paint bombs at buildings in the Central business district, according to police.

___ Associated Press writer Yanan Wang in Beijing and photographer Ng Han Guan in Hong Kong contributed to this report.



Riot police chase and corner a masked man who fell as another man tries to assist him ahead of a rally demanding electoral democracy and call for boycott of the Chinese Communist Party and all businesses seen to support it in Hong Kong, Sunday, Jan. 19, 2020. Hong Kong has been wracked by often violent anti-government protests since June, although they have diminished considerably in scale following a landslide win by opposition candidates in races for district councilors late last year. (AP Photo/Ng Han Guan)

Lebanon to release protesters detained after night of riots

By SARAH EL DEEB
Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Lebanon's public prosecutor ordered the release Sunday of 34 people detained the previous evening amid the worst day of violence since protests erupted three months ago, the National State News agency said.

The public prosecutor said those detained during the riots would be released except those with other pending cases. It was not clear how many would remain in detention if any.

The clashes took place amid the backdrop of a rapidly worsening financial crisis and an ongoing impasse over the formation of a new government. The Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Saad Hariri resigned in late October.

Protesters have called for more rallies on Sunday.

Riot police fired volleys of tear gas and rubber bullets on Saturday to disperse thousands of protesters rallied

outside the parliament and in downtown Beirut. The protesters, who came from the country's north, east and the capital itself, lobbed flares at security forces, metal bars, stones and tree branches.

The pitched street battles lasted for nearly nine hours and were among the worst scenes of rioting since protests broke out in mid-October.

At least 377 people were injured in the clashes, including according to the Red Cross and the Lebanese Civil Defense. More than 120 of those were treated in hospitals, including a protester who sustained an eye injury, as well as security force members. The clashes also took place in the courtyard and steps of a mosque downtown. The top Muslim Sunni Fatwa office called it "inappropriate" and said protesters had taken refuge inside the mosque and were taken care of.

Protesters smashed windows and the facade of the headquarters of the country's Banking Association with metal bars. Security forces set fire to a few tents set up by protesters nearby.

Interior Minister Raya El Hassan said Saturday that security forces were ordered to protect peaceful protests. "But for the protests to turn into a blatant attack on the security forces and public and private properties, this is condemned and totally unacceptable," she tweeted.

However, Human Rights Watch described the security force response as "brutal" and called for an urgent end to a "culture of impunity" for police abuse.

"There was no justification for the brutal use of force unleashed by Lebanon's riot police against largely peaceful demonstrators in downtown Beirut," said Michael Page, deputy Middle East director at HRW. "Riot police showed a blatant disregard for their human rights obligations, instead launching teargas canisters



Riot policemen watch flames rise from the tents of anti-government protesters, which were set on fire by civilian men believed to be the private unit of the parliament guards, during ongoing protests against the political elites who have ruled the country for decades, in Beirut, Lebanon, Saturday, Jan. 18, 2020. Riot police fired tear gas and sprayed water cannon near parliament in Lebanon's capital Saturday to disperse thousands of protesters after riots broke out during a march against the ruling elite amid a severe economic crisis. (AP Photo/Hussein Malla)

at protesters' heads, firing rubber bullets in their eyes and attacking people at hospitals and a mosque."

The protesters have rallied against the country's political elite who have ruled Lebanon since the end of the 1975-90 civil war. The protesters blame politicians for widespread corruption and mismanagement in a country that has accumulated one of the largest debt ratios in the world.

Panic and anger have gripped the public as their local currency, pegged to the dollar for more than two decades, plummeted. The Lebanese pound lost more than 60% of its value in recent weeks on the black market. The economy has seen no growth and foreign inflows dried up in the already heavily indebted country that relies on imports for most of its basic goods.

Meanwhile, banks have imposed informal capital controls, limiting withdrawal of dollars and foreign transfers.

Prime Minister-designate Hassan Diab had been expected to announce an 18-member Cabinet on Friday, but last minute disputes among political factions scuttled his latest attempt.

Germany hosts Libya summit in bid to curb military meddling

By GEIR MOULSON Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Germany is bringing together the key players in Libya's long-running civil war in a bid to curb foreign military meddling, solidify a cease-fire and help relaunch a political process to determine the North African nation's future.

Chancellor Angela Merkel invited leaders from 12 countries as well as the United Nations, the European Union, the African Union and the Arab League to Sunday's summit at the chancellery in Berlin. Germany's months-long diplomatic drive seeks to bolster efforts to stop the fighting in Libya by U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and his envoy for Libya, Ghassan Salame.

Among those expected are Russian President Vladimir Putin, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, French President Emmanuel Macron, Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. Other countries invited are the United Arab Emirates, Egypt, Algeria, China and the Republic of Congo.

Also invited are Libya's two main rival leaders: Prime Minister Fayeza Sarraj and Gen. Khalifa Hifter. Both will attend, according to German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas.

The chances of the summit producing any real progress are unclear, however. While getting the players to the table is an achievement, recent stepped-up outside support may have emboldened both sides not to compromise.

Since the 2011 ouster and killing of Libya's longtime dictator Moammar Gadhafi, the country has sunk further into chaos and turmoil. Libya is divided into rival administrations, each with the backing of dif-



German Chancellor Angela Merkel attends a news conference with Croatia's Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic after a meeting at the chancellery in Berlin, Germany, Thursday, Jan. 16, 2020. (AP Photo/Markus Schreiber)

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ferent nations: the U.N.-recognized government based in Tripoli, headed by Sarraj, and one based in the country's east, supported by Hifter's forces.

Hifter's forces have been on the offensive since April, laying siege to Tripoli in an effort to capture the capital and battling militias aligned with the government. Hifter's forces are backed by Egypt, Russia and the United Arab Emirates, while the Tripoli government has turned to Turkey for troops and weapons.

A truce brokered earlier this month by Russia and Turkey marked the first break in fighting in months.

Germany's priority is to try to get the outside players that have interests in the conflict on the same page, stem the flow of weapons to Libya and ensure that the cease-fire sticks -- creating space for U.N.-led efforts to re-establish a political process in Libya.

"At the Libya conference, we must see above all that the arms embargo is once again complied with — it has been agreed in principle at U.N. level but unfortunately not kept to," Merkel said.

Germany is also keen to prevent Libyan fighting from further destabilizing the region, potentially setting off new waves of migrants seeking safety in Europe across the Mediterranean Sea.

Maas traveled to Libya to meet Hifter on Thursday. He said the general pledged to respect the cease-fire, even though he had left Moscow days before without signing a draft document setting out details of the truce. Sarraj did sign the document.

On Friday, however, powerful tribal groups loyal to Hifter seized several large oil export terminals along Libya's eastern coast as well as southern oil fields in another challenge to the Tripoli government, which collects revenue from oil production. The National Oil Corporation said the move threatens to throttle much of the country's oil production.

U.N. envoy Salame earlier this month demanded an end to all foreign interference in Libya, saying that a military solution is impossible and governments and mercenaries helping rival forces are hindering a political solution.

Despite the arms embargo against Libya, he said, weapons are being sold and given to Libyans, and "probably thousands" of mercenaries have been sent into the country, creating a "bleak" situation for millions of civilians.

German officials have been careful to keep expectations of Sunday's summit in check.

"The conference is important, but it is a beginning, the start of a process," spokeswoman Ulrike Demmer said.

AP visits immigration courts across US, finds nonstop chaos

By KATE BRUMBACK, DEEPTI HAJELA and AMY TAXIN Associated Press

LUMPKIN, Ga. (AP) — In a locked, guarded courtroom in a compound surrounded by razor wire, Immigration Judge Jerome Rothschild waits -- and stalls.

A Spanish interpreter is running late because of a flat tire. Rothschild tells the five immigrants before him that he'll take a break before the proceedings even start. His hope: to delay just long enough so these immigrants won't have to sit by, uncomprehendingly, as their futures are decided.

"We are, untypically, without an interpreter," Rothschild tells a lawyer who enters the courtroom at the Stewart Detention Center after driving down from Atlanta, about 140 miles away.

In its disorder, this is, in fact, a typical day in the chaotic, crowded and confusing U.S. immigration court system of which Rothschild's courtroom is just one small outpost.

Shrouded in secrecy, the immigration courts run by the U.S. Department of Justice have been dysfunctional for years and have only gotten worse. A surge in the arrival of asylum seekers and the Trump administration's crackdown on the Southwest border and illegal immigration have pushed more people into deportation proceedings, swelling the court's docket to 1 million cases.

"It is just a cumbersome, huge system, and yet administration upon administration comes in here and tries to use the system for their own purposes," says Immigration Judge Amiena Khan in New York City, speaking in her role as vice president of the National Association of Immigration Judges.

"And in every instance, the system doesn't change on a dime, because you can't turn the Titanic around."

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The Associated Press visited immigration courts in 11 different cities more than two dozen times during a 10-day period in late fall. In courts from Boston to San Diego, reporters observed scores of hearings that illustrated how crushing caseloads and shifting policies have landed the courts in unprecedented turmoil:

--Chasing efficiency, immigration judges double- and triple-book hearings that can't possibly be completed, leading to numerous cancellations. Immigrants get new court dates, but not for years.

--Young children are everywhere and sit on the floor or stand or cry in cramped courtrooms. Many immigrants don't know how to fill out forms, get records translated or present a case.

-- Frequent changes in the law and rules for how judges manage their dockets make it impossible to know what the future holds when immigrants finally have their day in court.

Paper files are often misplaced, and interpreters are often missing.

In Georgia, the interpreter assigned to Rothschild's courtroom ends up making it to work, but the hearing sputters moments later when a lawyer for a Mexican man isn't available when Rothschild calls her to appear by phone. Rothschild is placed on hold, and a bouncy beat overlaid with synthesizers fills the room.

He moves on to other cases -- a Peruvian asylum seeker, a Cuban man seeking bond -- and punts the missing lawyer's case to the afternoon session.

This time, she's there when he calls, and apologizes for not being available earlier, explaining through a hacking cough she's been sick.

But by now the interpreter has moved on to another courtroom, putting Rothschild in what he describes as the "uneasy position" of holding court for someone who can't understand what's going on.

"I hate for a guy to leave a hearing having no idea what happened," he says, and asks the lawyer to relay the results of the proceedings to her client in Spanish.

After some discussion, the lawyer agrees to withdraw the man's bond petition and refile once she can show he's been here longer than the government believes, which could help his chances.

For now, the man returns to detention.

In a federal building in downtown Manhattan, the docket lists stretch to a second page outside the immigration courtrooms. Crowds of people wait in the hallways for their turn to see a judge, murmuring to each other and their lawyers, pressing up against the wall to let others through.

Security guards pass through and chastise them to stay to the side and keep walkways clear.

Immigration judges hear 30, or 50, or close to 90 cases a day. When they assign future court dates, immigrants are asked to come back in February or March -- of 2023.

The country's biggest immigration caseload is in New York City, spread over three different buildings.



The Stewart Detention Center is seen through the front gate, Friday, Nov. 15, 2019, in Lumpkin, Ga. The rural town is about 140 miles southwest of Atlanta and next to the Georgia-Alabama state line. The town's 1,172 residents are outnumbered by the roughly 1,650 male detainees that U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement said were being held in the detention center in late November. (AP

Photo/David Goldman)

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One in 10 immigration court cases are conducted there, according to Syracuse University's Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse.

On average, cases on the country's immigration docket have been churning through the courts for nearly two years. Many immigrants have been waiting much longer, especially those who aren't held in detention facilities.

With so many cases, immigrants are often double- and triple-booked for hearings. That can turn immigration court into a high-stakes game of musical chairs, where being the odd man out has far-reaching consequences.

Rubelio Sagastume-Cardona has waited two years for a New York judge to consider whether he should get a green card.

The Guatemalan had a hearing date in May but got bumped by another case. On this day, he finds himself competing for his space on Judge Khan's calendar with someone else's case -- a space Sagastume-Cardona only nabbed because his lawyer switched him with another client, who now must wait until 2023 for a hearing.

"It's been more difficult to get my client's case heard than to litigate" it, says his attorney, W. Paul Alvarez. "It's kind of crazy."

The protracted delays are agonizing for many immigrants and their relatives, who grapple anxiously with the uncertainty of what will happen to their loved ones -- and when.

And it isn't confined to New York. In myriad courtrooms, similar scenes play out as immigrants and their lawyers jockey for space on too-cramped calendars.

Courts in San Francisco and Los Angeles each have more than 60,000 cases. And cases have been pending an average of more than two years in courts from Arlington, Virginia to Omaha, Nebraska, according to TRAC.

In Boston, Audencio Lopez applied for asylum seven years ago. The 39-year-old left a Guatemalan farming town to cross the border illegally as a teenager in 1997 and soon found a job at a landscaping company where he still works, maintaining the grounds at area schools. But it was just this past November that he headed to the imposing Boston courthouse to learn his fate.

He brings his wife and three children into the courtroom, including a baby girl who munches on Cheerios while sitting on her mother's lap until his case is called.

Lopez tells the judge about his devout Christianity and Bible studies, his kids' education at a charter school and dreams of going to college, his fear of having to move his children to a dangerous place they've never been.

He's hoping to stay in the country under a provision for immigrants who have lived in the country more than a decade and have American children who would suffer if they were they gone.

After about an hour of questioning, Judge Lincoln Jalelian tells Lopez he'll take the case under advisement. The government attorney says she won't oppose granting Lopez a visa due to his "exemplary" record and community service, which means he'll likely be able to stay.

But even as he dreams of his family's future in America, Lopez admits the hope and joy are tempered by uncertainty because his wife's status is still unresolved. She applied separately for asylum five years ago and has yet to have her immigration court hearing.

"It's a good first step," Lopez says a week later. He praises God, "but we hope He can show us another miracle."

A toddler's gleeful screams fill the immigration courtroom in a Salt Lake City suburb as he plays with toy cars while his mother waits for her turn to go before the judge.

Ninety minutes later, the boy is restless, and the 32-year-old woman from Honduras is still waiting. She pulls out her phone, opens YouTube and plays children's songs in Spanish to calm his cries.

There are many children in the immigration courts, though the courts are hardly a place for kids.

In Chicago, a plastic box of well-worn books in English and Spanish sits in the corner of the court wait-

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ing room. But the chairs don't move and there are no changing tables in the bathrooms, leading a mom to change her newborn's diaper on a narrow counter between sinks.

Many children have immigration cases of their own. AP reporters saw appearances by children as young as 3. They sit on wooden benches with their parents, grandparents or foster families.

Teenagers scroll through smartphones; a toddler with a superheroes backpack swings his tiny, sneakered feet.

There are also American-born kids tagging along with immigrant parents the government seeks to deport.

The number of children in these courts has swelled since the Obama administration and continues to grow under Trump, with border arrests -- many of them children and families -- soaring in May to a 13-year high.

Now, nearly one in 10 cases in the immigration courts is a child who came to the country without parents, court data shows. Since September 2018, another 118,000 cases involving parents and children were placed in fast-tracked proceedings aimed at deciding cases in a year.

The administration aggressively tried to slow the arrival of young migrants by separating families -- a policy that was later reversed -- and tightening rules for relatives to get them out of detention. But thousands still arrive each month and end up in immigration courts -- sometimes, into adulthood.

Veronica Mejia left El Salvador as a young teen and has now lived a third of her life in the United States.

And it took her that long to get her day in a Los Angeles immigration court.

Now 20, Mejia raises her right hand and vows to tell the truth. She says she was barely a teen when a classmate who belonged to the MS-13 gang pressured her to be his girlfriend. After being assaulted and harassed by gang members, she moved to live with her adult sister in a new city and her family later decided to send her north.

Six years later, she has a job in a California warehouse, a boyfriend and an 8-month-old daughter with chubby cheeks and pierced ears waiting down the hall.

Immigration Judge Ashley Tabaddor asks why she didn't stay with her sister. The government lawyer questions Mejia's credibility.

The hearing ends, and Tabaddor takes a five-minute break. Mejia sits and waits in the courtroom, tears streaming down her face.

When Tabaddor returns, she says she believes Mejia. But she says she doesn't qualify for asylum under the law and issues an order for her to return to El Salvador.

Mejia walks down the hall with her lawyer. Her boyfriend hands her the baby.

"We're going to appeal," she says, sitting down to nurse the wide-eyed infant. "For her -- how am I going to leave her here?"

A piece of toast with jam sits on the desk in Tabaddor's office, half-eaten from the morning's breakfast though it is nearly lunchtime.

On her computer, there are eight color-coded dashboards showing how close she is to meeting goals set by the Department of Justice for the country's 440 immigration judges. Like many, she's nowhere near completing the annual case completion target, and her dashboard is a deep red.

"So far, everyone has told us they're failing the measure," says Tabaddor, speaking in her capacity as president of the immigration judges' union.

While they wear black robes and preside over hearings, immigration judges are employees of the Department of Justice and don't have the same power or autonomy as criminal court judges.

The Trump administration has made that clear, issuing new quotas and rules for the judges and placing them under tight scrutiny in a push to move cases more quickly through the clogged courts.

The measures have pitted the judges against the agency in a full-on fight. The judges' union has called for the courts to be made independent and free of government influence. In turn, the Department has asked federal labor authorities to put an end to the union.

"All of this is frankly psychological warfare," Tabaddor says. "I've had so many people say, 'I have a

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mortgage; I have a child who needs braces. I don't want to fight."

In the immigration courts, the friction has taken its toll. Judges are overbooking calendars to try to meet quotas, while the Trump administration has limited their ability to manage dockets as they see fit, adding to the mounting backlog.

Officials also issued rulings making it tougher for immigrants fleeing gangs or domestic violence to win asylum, leading to more denials and potentially more appeals.

In a glass building overlooking the Potomac River from Fall Church, Virginia, officials at the Department's Executive Office for Immigration Review try to find ways to stay ahead of the ever-growing backlog.

They're adding interpreters in Spanish and Mandarin, judges and clerks. They've started special centers to handle video hearings for immigrants on the U.S.-Mexico border, while smaller cities like Boise, Idaho, that were once served by traveling judges are now video-only.

They're moving to an electronic system to try to put an end to the heaps of paper files hoisted in and out of courtrooms.

The entire effort is a quest for efficiency, though director James McHenry acknowledges "we're still getting outpaced" by new cases.

The agency hopes tightening the system can make proceedings more efficient, while remaining fair to all. "We are trying to break down the false dichotomy between fair and efficient," he says.

The attorneys for Immigration and Customs Enforcement tasked with upholding the country's immigration laws also feel the crunch. Their numbers haven't changed even as the docket has swelled, says Tracy Short, the agency's principal legal adviser.

They're in court four days a week with caseloads that have doubled from a decade ago, leaving minimal time to prep for hearings.

"I feel like I'm already stretching them to the breaking point," says Wen-Ting Cheng, who oversees the agency's 100 trial attorneys in New York.

The disorder stretches well beyond the bustling courts of the country's cities. A lawyer takes a red eye from Los Angeles to Houston, then flies to Louisiana, rents a car and drives for an hour to reach a remote detention facility.

Michael Navas Gomez, a political activist from Nicaragua, is wearing a jail jumpsuit, and ready for his day in court after being detained five months. He and attorney Joshua Greer watch a video monitor for their hearing before an immigration judge who sits 1,000 miles away in Miami, Florida, along with the government's attorney.

But the stack of documents recounting how Navas Gomez was captured, beaten and burned by pro-government forces is missing. The judge searches for the files while Navas Gomez's lawyer scrambles to get them sent again so the judge can read them.

The system requires careful choreography among judges, lawyers and language interpreters. Immigration attorneys travel long distances to reach remote courts and follow clients shuffled to different detention facilities, while interpreters crisscross the country to provide translation to immigrants when and where they need it.

There's so much chaos it's hard to keep track. At times, an interpreter is missing, or stumbles over dialects or local slang. Video systems fail.

And there are papers everywhere -- except, sometimes, where they are supposed to be.

Adding to the problem is that many immigrants don't have lawyers, and there's no requirement for the government to provide any for them. So oftentimes, immigrants wind up arguing their cases on their own in an incredibly complex area of law.

At the facility in Lumpkin, Georgia, most attorneys' offices are hours away from the town, which has more detainees than residents. Immigrants have no access to email or fax machines and the phones don't always work. When they do, immigrants must pay for expensive calls to relatives to ask for help finding records to back up their cases.

And that's also the case in other detention facilities like the Louisiana one where Navas Gomez has his

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hearing.

The 30-year-old is lucky to have a lawyer who gets a detention officer to scan and email his files in time. The judge steps out to read them, and his hearing goes ahead.

Navas Gomez tells the judge how his captors scalded him with boiling water, leaving a scar, and released him days later in a remote sugarcane field. The judge agrees to consider his case, and nearly a month later, he is granted asylum and leaves the detention center a free man.

"It was truly beautiful, thank God," he says weeks later, living in Los Angeles.

Not all are so fortunate. At the Stewart facility in Georgia, a Honduran man who wants to apply for asylum isn't sure he'll be able to get the documents he will need to make his case. His mother fled to Costa Rica, and his daughter is here with him.

He asks the judge if there's way for him to let the court know if he decides before his next hearing that he'd rather just be deported.

Judge Jeffrey Nance tells him he can request deportation by putting a note in a box by the facility's cafeteria, and he'll call the man back to court.

The man nods and returns to take his seat in the gallery, his cheeks damp with tears.

The stakes are high for those vying to remain in the country. Some want to stay under a provision that opens the door for those without legal papers who have American relatives.

Others, who arrived recently, are seeking asylum to protect them from violence or persecution.

Those hearings are especially daunting, and most asylum seekers don't win.

The rest are mostly slated for deportation and often have little chance of being able to stay legally in the United States -- at least for now.

Their fate often depends on the luck of the draw in a system with extreme disparities from judge to judge. There are judges who reject 99 percent of asylum cases before them; others approve more than 90 percent, according to Syracuse University's Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse.

The Trump administration last year started forcing some asylum seekers to wait in Mexico until the day of their hearings, and families often stay in ramshackle border cities for weeks with their children, with virtually no shot at finding a lawyer. Many of them appear in tent courtrooms on the border that are closed to the public and difficult for lawyers to access.

In El Paso, Texas, immigrants waiting in Mexico show up on the border before dawn and are loaded U.S. government vans and driven to a downtown federal building for their hearings. They appear in courtrooms so crowded the government has barred observers from attending, and immigration detention guards patrol the hallways and escort immigrants on trips to the bathroom.

Immigration Judge Lee O'Connor, who hears these cases in San Diego, snaps at a Honduran mom whose infant bangs on audio devices in court and warns a Salvadoran woman she'll be at a disadvantage without a lawyer.

"I can't defend myself because I don't know anything about the law," she tells him, sobbing.

Miguel Borraro, a 40-year-old mechanic who sits before an immigration judge in a courtroom outside Salt Lake City, tried to find a lawyer to help him argue he should be allowed to stay in the country with his American children, despite lacking legal papers.

But he was told it would cost up to \$8,000, and he didn't have a strong case.

So he goes it alone.

Borraro tells the judge he never had any trouble with the law since slipping across the border from Mexico in 1997 until he turned his car into a McDonald's parking lot on a family outing for ice cream and came close to a man who was passing by.

The man was an immigration agent. Shortly after pulling into the drive-thru, Borraro was arrested.

But Immigration Judge Philip Truman spends little time on how Borraro ended up in his courtroom. He asks about the immigrant's two teenage children.

Borraro tells Truman they are both healthy and good students. His 16-year-old daughter dreams of

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someday becoming a veterinarian. His 13-year-old son wants to become a mechanic, like his dad.

His wife, the teens' mother, works part-time so she can care for them.

Ironically, this all dooms his case. Truman says it doesn't seem like his children would suffer tremendously if Borrayo returned to Mexico. Regrettably, he must deport him.

He's given a month to leave the country — one last Christmas in his family's home surrounded by snow-capped mountains.

He shrugs off the loss and leaves the courtroom. But days later, he wonders what went wrong.

"I just tried to tell the truth so that they would help me," he says.

The Associated Press' immigration team sent journalists based around the country to courts from Nov. 12, 2019 to Nov. 22, 2019. Those contributing reporting to the project include:

Philip Marcelo, Boston, @philmarcelo; Sophia Tareen, @sophiatareen, and Noreen Nasir, @noreensnasir, Chicago; Cedar Attanasio, El Paso, Texas, @viaCedar; Nomaan Merchant, Houston, @NomaanMerchant; Amy Taxin, Los Angeles, @ataxin; Kate Brumback, Lumpkin, Ga., @katebrumback; Adriana Gomez Licon, Miami, @agomezlicon; Deepti Hajela, New York, @dhajela; Astrid Galvan, Phoenix, @astridgalvan; Brady McCombs, West Valley City, Utah, @BradyMcCombs; Elliot Spagat, San Diego, @elliotspagat, and Colleen Long, Falls Church, Virginia, and @ctlong1.

Fires set stage for irreversible forest losses in Australia

By **MATTHEW BROWN** and **CHRISTINA LARSON** Associated Press

Australia's forests are burning at a rate unmatched in modern times and scientists say the landscape is being permanently altered as a warming climate brings profound changes to the island continent.

Heat waves and drought have fueled bigger and more frequent fires in parts of Australia, so far this season torching some 40,000 square miles (104,000 square kilometers), an area about as big as Ohio.

With blazes still raging in the country's southeast, government officials are drawing up plans to reseed burned areas to speed up forest recovery that could otherwise take decades or even centuries.

But some scientists and forestry experts doubt that reseeded and other intervention efforts can match the scope of the destruction. The fires since September have killed 28 people and burned more than 2,600 houses.

Before the recent wildfires, ecologists divided up Australia's native vegetation into two categories: fire-adapted landscapes that burn periodically, and those that don't burn. In the recent fires, that distinction lost meaning — even rainforests and peat swamps caught fire, likely changing them forever.

Flames have blazed through jungles dried out by drought, such as Eungella National Park, where shrouds of mist have been replaced by smoke.

"Anybody would have said these forests don't burn, that there's not enough material and they are wet. Well they did," said forest restoration expert Sebastian Pfautsch, a research fellow at Western Sydney University.

"Climate change is happening now, and we are seeing the effects of it," he said.

High temperatures, drought and more frequent wildfires — all linked to climate change — may make it impossible for even fire-adapted forests to be fully restored, scientists say.

"The normal processes of recovery are going to be less effective, going to take longer," said Roger Kitching, an ecologist at Griffith University in Queensland. "Instead of an ecosystem taking a decade, it may take a century or more to recover, all assuming we don't get another fire season of this magnitude soon."

Young stands of mountain ash trees — which are not expected to burn because they have minimal foliage — have burned in the Australian Alps, the highest mountain range on the continent. Fire this year wiped out stands re-seeded following fires in 2013.

Mountain ash, the world's tallest flowering trees, reach heights of almost 90 meters (300 feet) and live hundreds of years. They're an iconic presence in southeast Australia, comparable to the redwoods of Northern California, and are highly valued by the timber industry.

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"I'm expecting major areas of (tree) loss this year, mainly because we will not have sufficient seed to sow them," said Owen Bassett of Forest Solutions, a private company that works with government agencies to re-seed forests by helicopter following fires.

Bassett plans to send out teams to climb trees in parts of Victoria that did not burn to harvest seed pods. But he expects to get at most a ton of seeds this year, about one-tenth of what he said is needed.

Fire is a normal part of an ash forest life cycle, clearing out older stands to make way for new growth. But the extent and intensity of this year's fires left few surviving trees in many areas.

Already ash forests in parts of Victoria had been hit by wildfire every four to five years, allowing less marketable tree species to take over or meadows to form.

"If a young ash forest is burned and killed and we can't resow it, then it is lost," Bassett said.

The changing landscape has major implications for Australia's diverse wildlife. The fires in Eungella National Park, for example, threaten "frogs and reptiles that don't live anywhere else," said University of Queensland ecologist Diana Fisher.

Fires typically burn through the forest in a patchwork pattern, leaving unburned refuges from which plant and animal species can spread. However, the megafires raging in parts of Australia are consuming everything in their path and leaving little room for that kind of recovery, said Griffith University's Kitching.

In both Australia and western North America, climate experts say, fires will continue burning with increased frequency as warming temperatures and drier weather transform ecosystems around the globe.

The catastrophic scale of blazes in so many places offers the "clearest signal yet" that climate change is driving fire activity, said Leroy Westerling, a fire science professor at the University of Alberta.

"It's in Canada, California, Greece, Portugal, Australia," Westerling said. "This portends what we can expect — a new reality. I prefer not to use the term 'new normal'... This is more like a downward spiral."

Forests can shift locations over time. However, that typically unfolds over thousands of years, not the decades over which the climate has been warming.

Most of the nearly 25,000 square miles (64,000 square kilometers) that have burned in Victoria and New South Wales has been forest, according to scientists in New South Wales and the Victorian government.

By comparison, an average of about 1,600 square miles (4,100 square kilometers) of forest burned annually in Australia dating back to 2002, according to data compiled by NASA research scientist Niels Andela and University of Maryland research professor Louis Giglio.

Unlike grasslands, which see the vast majority of Australia's huge annual wildfire damage, forests are unable to regenerate in a couple of years. "For forests, we're talking about decades, particularly in more arid climates," Andela said.

Most forested areas can be expected to eventually regenerate, said Owen Price, a senior research fellow at the University of Wollongong specializing in bushfire risk management. But he said repeated fires will



This 2009 photo provided by Sebastian Pfautsch shows a eucalyptus forest that burned during a 2009 wildfire in Victoria, Australia. As of early 2020, fires have consumed some 40,000 square miles of Australia this fire season and scientists say the effects on the nation's forests could be long-lasting. (Sebastian Pfautsch via AP)

make it more likely that some will become grasslands or open woodlands.

Price and others have started thinking up creative ways to combat the changes, such as installing sprinkler systems in rainforests to help protect them against drought and fire, or shutting down forested areas to all visitors during times of high fire danger to prevent accidental ignitions.

Officials may also need to radically rethink accepted forest management practices, said Pfautsch, the researcher from Western Sydney.

That could involve planting trees in areas where they might not be suitable now but would be in 50 years as climate change progresses.

"We cannot expect species will move 200 kilometers (125 miles) to reach a cooler climate," said Pfautsch. "It's not looking like there's a reversal trend in any of this. It's only accelerating."

Brown reported from Billings, Mont. and Larson from Washington, D.C.

Follow Matthew Brown on Twitter: @MatthewBrownAP

Follow Christina Larson on Twitter: @larsonchristina

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Astros, Red Sox look ahead in wake of sign-stealing scandal

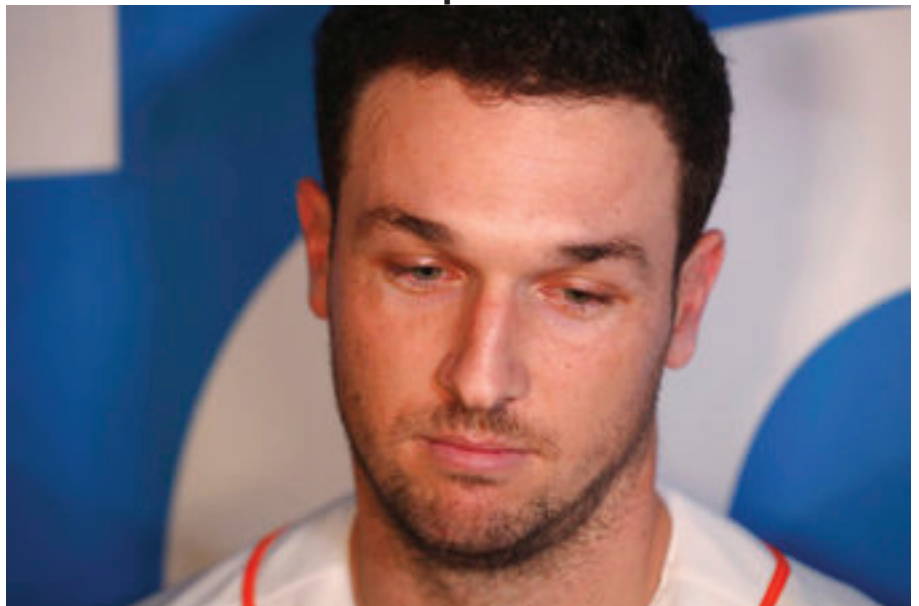
By KRISTIE RIEKEN and JIMMY GOLEN AP Sports Writers

Players from two teams at the center of baseball's sign-stealing scandal faced their fans on Saturday for the first time since the Houston Astros and Boston Red Sox ousted their managers amid the fallout from the investigation into Houston's elaborate scheme.

The Astros and Red Sox held their annual fan fests on Saturday, and instead of discussing preparations for the season, players from both teams were left to answer questions about the cheating that resulted in both teams' managers being fired.

"It's a tough situation and as a team we have to stay together and go through this as a team like we've been doing, always," Houston star second baseman José Altuve said. "We have to talk about it at spring training and try not to let things in the past distract us for for next year."

Houston manager AJ Hinch and general manager Jeff Luhnow were suspended for a year by MLB Commissioner Rob Manfred on Monday after he found illicit use of electronics to steal signs during the Astros' run to the 2017 World Series championship and again in the 2018 season. Team owner Jim Crane then fired both Hinch and Luhnow. Manager Alex Cora left the Red Sox on Tuesday after Manfred's report identified him as the ringleader of



Houston Astors third baseman Alex Bregman is interviewed by the media during the baseball team's FanFest at Minute Maid Park on Saturday, Jan. 18, 2020, in Houston.

(Steve Gonzales/Houston Chronicle via AP)

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the sign-stealing scheme when he was the bench coach for the Astros in 2017.

Many Red Sox players talked Saturday about how much they liked and valued Cora and hated to see him go.

"I'm heartbroken about it," Boston designated hitter J.D. Martinez said. "I understood his side of it. He definitely didn't want to be a distraction. He was one of my favorite, if not my favorite, managers I've had."

The Astros were fined \$5 million, which is the maximum allowed under the Major League Constitution, and must forfeit their next two first- and second-round amateur draft picks.

The investigation found that the Astros used the video feed from a center field camera to see and decode the opposing catcher's signs. Players banged on a trash can to signal to batters what was coming, believing it would improve the batter's chances of getting a hit.

MLB is also looking into whether Cora installed a similar system in Boston after arriving the following year, when the Red Sox won the World Series. No conclusions have been reached and there is no timetable; the Astros investigation took two months.

Martinez hopes MLB wraps up the investigation into the Red Sox soon so they can put this behind them.

"I'm excited for the investigation to get over with, so they can see there's nothing going on here," he said.

While the Astros were meeting with fans in Houston, Toronto Blue Jays outfielder Randal Grichuk called for MLB take away their World Series championship, now that it's been proven that they cheated.

"I mean, I would like to see that obviously. I bet the Dodgers would like to see that," Grichuk said. "I've got a few friends on the Dodgers that are very disappointed that possibly two years in a row they lost due to a team going against the rules."

Many Boston players are trying not to focus on the investigation or what could be coming for the team, but instead simply trying to prepare like it's any other season.

"MLB's going to do what they have to do to look into it," pitcher Nathan Eovaldi said. "I'm just trying to focus on baseball. I feel like it's going to pass, and everything's going to be fine."

While Altuve didn't have a problem answering numerous questions about the scandal, Houston third baseman Alex Bregman refused repeated attempts by reporters to get him to address what happened and kept repeating variations of the same phrase.

"The commissioner made his report, made his decision and the Astros made their decision and I have no further comment on it," Bregman said in some variation again and again.

After being pressed on if he plans to discuss the sign-stealing in the future, Bregman finally gave an answer that didn't seem as rehearsed.

"I think in the 2020 year our actions will speak louder than our words," he said.

Altuve and Bregman were the only two stars at Saturday's fan fest in Houston who were part of the 2017 championship team. Many of the other big names who helped the Astros win their first title, including World Series MVP George Springer, ace Justin Verlander and shortstop Carlos Correa, did not attend the daylong event where fans can interact with players.

Altuve was the AL MVP in 2017, and since the sign-stealing scandal broke, some have questioned whether he deserved the award. In recent days he's also been accused of wearing an electronic device under his jersey to tip pitches, which he vehemently denies. He was asked how it feels for people to call him a cheater.

"You don't want anybody to call you that," he said. "But ... I have two options. One is cry and one is go down and play the game and (perform) and help my team. And you know what one I am going to do."

MLB's investigation of Houston began after former Astros pitcher Mike Fiers, who played for Oakland last season, told The Athletic about the team's scheme to steal signs. Martinez said he has spoken to Fiers and gets why he came forward.

"I understand his side of it, being in that division, going against those guys. It's an uncomfortable position for him, but I understand why he did what he did," Martinez told reporters in Springfield, Massachusetts. "He obviously felt like he needed to and I understand it."

In Houston, as the Astros try to put the scandal behind them and focus on the future, Altuve, who has often been described as the heart and soul of the team, is confident it won't derail the Astros from another

successful season.

"Everything will be fine," he said. "We're going to be in the World Series again. People don't believe it. But we will."

More AP MLB: <https://apnews.com/MLB> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Trump team, House managers trade sharp views on impeachment

By ERIC TUCKER, ZEKE MILLER and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's legal team issued a fiery response Saturday ahead of opening arguments in his impeachment trial, while House Democrats laid out their case in forceful fashion, saying the president betrayed public trust with behavior that was the "worst nightmare" of the founding fathers.

The dueling filings previewed arguments both sides intend to make once Trump's impeachment trial begins in earnest Tuesday in the Senate. Their challenge will be to make a case that appeals to the 100 senators who will render the verdict and for an American public bracing for a presidential election in 10 months.

"President Donald J. Trump used his official powers to pressure a foreign government to interfere in a United States election for his personal political gain," the House prosecutors wrote, "and then attempted to cover up his scheme by obstructing Congress's investigation into his misconduct."

Trump's legal team, responding to the Senate's official summons for the trial, said the president "categorically and unequivocally" denies the charges of abuse and obstruction against him.

"This is a brazen and unlawful attempt to overturn the results of the 2016 election and interfere with the 2020 election, now just months away," the president's filing states.

Stripped of legalese and structured in plain English, the documents underscored the extent to which the impeachment proceedings are a political rather than conventional legal process.

They are the first of several filings expected in coming days as senators prepare to take their seats for the rare impeachment court.

Senators swore an oath to do "impartial justice" as the chamber convenes to consider the two articles of impeachment approved by the House last month as Trump's presidency and legacy hangs in balance.

One Republican whose votes are closely watched, Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska, acknowledged Saturday the political pressure bearing on them.

"I'm going to take my constitutional obligations very, very seriously," she told reporters from Anchorage on a call.

The House's 111-page brief outlined the prosecutors' narrative, starting from Trump's phone call with



President Donald Trump waves before getting into his vehicle after arriving at Palm Beach International Airport in West Palm Beach, Fla., Friday, Jan. 17, 2020. Trump and his family are spending the weekend at their Mar-a-Lago estate. (AP Photo/Susan Walsh)

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Ukraine and relying on the private and public testimony of a dozen witnesses -- ambassadors and national security officials at high levels of government -- who raised concerns about the president's actions.

The House managers wrote: "The only remaining question is whether the members of the Senate will accept and carry out the responsibility placed on them by the Framers of our Constitution and their constitutional Oaths."

The Trump team called the two articles of impeachment "a dangerous attack on the right of the American people to freely choose their president."

Trump's team encouraged lawmakers to reject "poisonous partisanship" and "vindicate the will of the American people" by rejecting both articles of impeachment approved by the House.

The Senate is still debating the ground rules of the trial, particularly the question of whether there will be new witnesses as fresh evidence emerges over Trump's Ukraine actions that led to impeachment.

New information from Lev Parnas, an indicted associate of Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani, is being incorporated in the House case. At the same time, Senate Democrats want to call John Bolton, the former national security adviser, among other potential eyewitnesses, after the White House blocked officials from appearing in the House.

With Republicans controlling the Senate 53-47, they can set the trial rules — or any four Republicans could join with Democrats to change course.

Murkowski told reporters she wants to hear both sides of the case before deciding whether to call for new witnesses and testimony.

"I don't know what more we need until I've been given the base case," Murkowski said.

The House's impeachment managers are working through the weekend and will be at the Capitol mid-day Sunday to prep the case.

Trump's answer to the summons was the first salvo in what will be several rounds of opening arguments. Trump will file a more detailed legal brief on Monday, and the House will be able to respond to the Trump filing on Tuesday.

Trump's team led by White House counsel Pat Cipollone and Trump personal lawyer Jay Sekulow, is challenging the impeachment on both procedural and constitutional grounds, claiming Trump has been mistreated by House Democrats and that he did nothing wrong.

The filings came a day after Trump finalized his legal team, adding Ken Starr, the former independent counsel whose investigation into President Bill Clinton led to his impeachment, and Alan Dershowitz, a Harvard law professor emeritus who intends to make constitutional arguments.

White House attorneys and Trump's outside legal team have been debating just how political Monday's legal brief laying out the contours of Trump's defense should be.

Some in the administration have echoed warnings from Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., that the pleadings must be sensitive to the Senate's more staid traditions and leave some of the sharper rhetoric exhibited during the House proceedings to Twitter and cable news.

One Democratic aide said Saturday that Trump's initial filing read more like a Trump campaign fundraising email than a legal document.

People close to the Trump legal team said Cipollone would deliver the president's opening argument before the Senate and that Sekulow would follow. Starr and Dershowitz would have "discrete functions" on the legal team, according to those close to the legal team, who were not authorized to discuss the strategy by name and spoke on condition of anonymity.

At issue in the impeachment case are allegations that Trump asked Ukraine to announce an investigation of Democratic political rival Joe Biden at the same time the White House withheld hundreds of nearly \$400 million in aid from the former Soviet republic as it faces a hostile Russia at its border.

The Government Accountability Office said last week the administration violated federal law by withholding the funds to Ukraine. The money was later released after Congress complained.

The House brief said, "President Trump's misconduct presents a danger to our democratic processes, our national security, and our commitment to the rule of law. He must be removed from office.

Trump's attorneys argue that the articles of impeachment are unconstitutional in and of themselves and

invalid because they don't allege a crime.

Under the Constitution impeachment is a political, not a criminal process, and the president can be removed from office if found guilty of whatever lawmakers consider "high crimes and misdemeanors."

Associated Press writers Mary Clare Jalonick in Washington and Becky Bohrer in Anchorage, Alaska, contributed to this report.

National Archives: 'We made a mistake' altering Trump photos

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press



President Donald Trump escorted by Col. Brian Daniels walks to board Air Force One at Andrews Air Force Base, Md., Friday, Jan. 17, 2020, en route to his Mar-a-Lago estate, in Palm Beach, Fla. (AP Photo/Jose Luis Magana)

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — The National Archives said Saturday it made a mistake when it blurred images of anti-Trump signs used in an exhibit on women's suffrage.

The independent agency is charged with preserving government and historical records and said it has always been committed to preserving its holdings "without alteration."

But the archives said in a statement Saturday "we made a mistake." The archives' statement came one day after The Washington Post published an online report about the altered images.

The archives said the photo in question is not one of its archival records, but rather was licensed for use as a promotional graphic in the exhibit.

"Nonetheless, we were wrong to alter the image," the agency said.

The current display has been re-

moved and will be replaced as soon as possible with one that uses the original, unaltered image, the archives said.

The exhibit about the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote, blurred some anti-Trump messages on protest signs in a photo of the 2017 Women's March in Washington.

Signs that referred to women's private parts, which also were widespread during the march, which was held shortly after Trump took office, also were altered.

The archives said it will immediately begin a "thorough review" of its policies and procedures for exhibits "so that this does not happen again."

The American Civil Liberties Union called on the archives to issue a more detailed, explanation.

"Apologizing is not enough," Louise Melling, the organization's deputy legal director, said in a statement. "The National Archives must explain to the public why it took the Orwellian step of trying to rewrite history and erasing women's bodies from it, as well as who ordered it."

Archives spokeswoman Miriam Kleiman told the Post for its report that the nonpartisan, nonpolitical federal agency blurred the anti-Trump references "so as not to engage in current political controversy."

References to female anatomy in the signs were obscured in deference to student groups and young people who visit the archives, Kleiman told the newspaper.

Kleiman did not respond to an emailed request for comment Saturday from The Associated Press. The

public affairs office at the archives emailed the statement.

The archives issued the apology as thousands again gathered in Washington and in cities across the country Saturday for Women's March rallies focused on issues such as climate change, pay equity and reproductive rights.

US seeks to deport Honduran mom, sick children to Guatemala

By NOMAAN MERCHANT Associated Press



FILE - In this May 2, 2019, file photo, U.S. Border Patrol agents walk down the hallway of a new U.S. Customs and Border Protection temporary facility near the Donna International Bridge in Donna, Texas. The U.S. government says it will deport a Honduran mother and her two sick children, both of whom are currently hospitalized, to Guatemala as soon as it can get them medically cleared to travel, according to court documents and the family's advocates. (AP Photo/Eric Gay, File)

HOUSTON (AP) — The U.S. government says it will deport a Honduran mother and her two sick children, both of whom are currently hospitalized, to Guatemala as soon as it can get them medically cleared to travel, according to court documents and the family's advocates.

The family's advocates accuse the U.S. of disregarding the health of the children, ages 1 and 6, to push forward a plan currently being challenged in court to send planeloads of families to different countries so that they can seek asylum elsewhere.

Both children have been hospitalized in recent days in South Texas' Rio Grande Valley. In court papers, the U.S. government has said it intends to deport the family to Guatemala on Tuesday, pending clearance "from a medical professional."

"The mother is desperate. She thought her baby was going to die," said Dr. Amy Cohen, a doctor who monitors the government's compli-

ance with a landmark court settlement governing how migrant children are treated known as the Flores agreement.

"Whenever the baby coughs, her whole body shakes," Cohen said. "The 6-year-old looked exhausted. Everyone looked malnourished."

According to Cohen, the family says both children were healthy when they crossed the U.S.-Mexico border without authorization in late December.

A lawsuit filed by the family says they were taken first to the U.S. Border Patrol's processing center in McAllen, Texas, a former warehouse where migrants are held in large fenced-in pens, then to a complex of tents built at the port city of Donna, where they were held for several days longer than the Border Patrol's own 72-hour limit to detain people.

The lawsuit blames the children's illnesses on inadequate medical care and the food served at the Donna tents, which they describe as burritos twice a day and a sandwich at night. The 1-year-old has diarrhea and a fever, while the 6-year-old was diagnosed with the flu, an illness that caused the death of a 16-year-old teen held in Border Patrol custody last year.

President Donald Trump's administration struck a deal last year with the Guatemalan government to take in asylum-seekers from Honduras and El Salvador, and has since said it will send Mexicans to Guatemala

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as well. The U.S. has also announced similar deals with Honduras and El Salvador. As of earlier this month, about 100 Hondurans and Salvadorans had been sent to Guatemala.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security says the deals, known as asylum cooperative agreements, "will allow migrants to seek protection within the region." The agreements are a key part of Trump's larger immigration crackdown, including programs forcing migrants to wait weeks or months to request asylum or to remain in Mexico to wait for immigration court dates. As a result, thousands of migrants are living in squalid tent cities just across the U.S.-Mexico border.

Tens of thousands of people annually flee El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras — collectively forming Central America's "Northern Triangle" — due to endemic violence, poverty, and political and religious persecution. Experts on the Northern Triangle say those countries can't be expected to take in asylum seekers when many of their own citizens are fleeing. The American Civil Liberties Union and other legal groups sued Wednesday to try to prevent the agreements from being enforced.

Lawyers for the mother and her two children have asked a federal judge in South Texas to order the government not to deport them.

Their lawsuit alleges that after the mother said she feared returning to Honduras — where she says gangs demanded monthly payments or they would kill her and her children — she "was instructed that she could either return to Honduras or be sent to Guatemala and had to decide immediately."

"She was not given an opportunity to explain why she feared being sent to Guatemala, where she has no family or contacts and would have difficulty providing for herself and her children," the lawsuit says.

In its response, the government said the infant would be monitored by the hospital for a few more days to ensure she can be deported. It also argued that the judge had no authority to prevent the family's deportation because higher courts have recognized that the Attorney General's office can decide on its own if and when to deport someone.

It was unclear when the judge would rule. U.S. Customs and Border Protection did not immediately respond to a request for comment Saturday.

Discovery of unused disaster supplies angers Puerto Rico

By DANICA COTO Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — People in a southern Puerto Rico city discovered a warehouse filled with water, cots and other unused emergency supplies, then set off a social media uproar Saturday when they broke in to retrieve goods as the area struggles to recover from a strong earthquake.

With anger spreading in the U.S. territory after video of the event in Ponce appeared on Facebook, Gov. Wanda Vázquez quickly fired the director of the island's emergency management agency.

The governor said she had ordered an investigation after learning the emergency supplies had been piled in the warehouse since Hurricane Maria battered Puerto Rico in September 2017.

Vázquez said inaction by the fired official, Carlos Acevedo, was unacceptable.

"There are thousands of people who have made sacrifices to help those in the south, and it is unforgivable that resources were kept in the warehouse," the governor said.

Puerto Rico's secretary of state, Elmer Román, told reporters that Acevedo had not told him about the contents of the warehouse.

News of the warehouse spread after online blogger Lorenzo Delgado relayed live video on Facebook of people breaking into the building. The scene became chaotic at times as people pushed their way in and began distributing water, baby food and other goods to those affected by the earthquake.

Delgado later told reporters that he had received a tip about the warehouse, but gave no specifics on when.

The mayor of Ponce, María Meléndez, said he had not known about the warehouse and its contents.

"This is outrageous," she said. "Everyone knows what us mayors went through after Hurricane Maria to try and get help to our cities and how we've worked these weeks to provide basic supplies to people affected by earthquakes. Those involved owe us an explanation."

Inés Rivera, spokeswoman for the city of Ponce, told The Associated Press that the warehouse is owned by Puerto Rico's Company of Commerce and Export. Officials with the company could not be reached for comment.

The information upset many in Puerto Rico already angry over the government's botched response to Hurricane Maria, with similar incidents of supplies going unused being uncovered months later.

Ponce is one of several cities in the island's southern region hit by the recent 6.4 magnitude earthquake that killed one person and caused more than an estimated \$200 million in damage. More than 7,000 people remain in shelters since the quake.

The governor said she has sent the Senate her nomination of José Reyes, who oversees the National Guard in Puerto Rico, to be the new commissioner for the State Bureau for Emergency Management and Disaster Management.



In this Friday, Jan. 10 photo, residents from the Indios neighborhood of Guayanilla, Puerto Rico, Milagros Figueroa and Ruben Fantausi, sit under a tarp between vehicles parked on a private hay farm where locals affected by earthquakes have set up shelter amid aftershocks in Guayanilla, Puerto Rico. A 6.4 magnitude quake that toppled or damaged hundreds of homes in southwestern Puerto Rico is raising concerns about where displaced families will live, while the island still struggles to rebuild from Hurricane Maria two years ago. (AP Photo/Carlos Giusti)

Thousands gather for Women's March rallies across the US

By LYNN BERRY

WASHINGTON (AP) — Thousands gathered in cities across the country Saturday as part of the nationwide Women's March rallies focused on issues such as climate change, pay equity, reproductive rights and immigration.

Hundreds showed up in New York City and thousands in Washington, D.C. for the rallies, which aim to harness the political power of women, although crowds were noticeably smaller than in previous years. Marches were scheduled Saturday in more than 180 cities.

The first marches in 2017 drew hundreds of thousands of people to rallies in cities across the country on the day after President Donald Trump was inaugurated. That year's D.C. march drew close to 1 million people.

In Manhattan on Saturday, hundreds of people gathered as part of a "Rise and Roar" rally at separate events in Foley Square and Columbus Circle.

"Today, we will be the change that is needed in this world! Today, we rise into our power!" activist Donna Hylton told a cheering crowd in Foley Square.

Snow began falling by the afternoon in Manhattan, apparently putting a damper on plans for the two groups to converge in large numbers near Times Square.

In downtown Los Angeles, thousands of men, women and children filled several blocks as they made

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their way from a plaza to a park adjacent to City Hall, where a rally featured speeches by Jennifer Siebel Newsom, the wife of California Gov. Gavin Newsom, Mayor Eric Garcetti, Rep. Maxine Waters and others.

Jennifer Siebel Newsom credited women for mobilizing against gun violence, creating the #MeToo movement against sexual harassment and discrimination, and taking back the Democratic majority in the House of Representatives.

"In 2020, I have no doubt that it will be women who will lead again, rise up and move this country forward on a path toward justice," she said.

In Denver, organizers opted to skip the rally after the march and instead invited participants to meet with local organizations to learn more about issues such as reproductive rights, climate change, gun safety and voting.

Several thousand came out for the protest in Washington, far fewer than last year when about 100,000 people held a rally east of the White House. But as in previous years, many of the protesters made the trip to the nation's capital from cities across the country to express their opposition to Trump and his policies. From their gathering spot on Freedom Plaza, they had a clear view down Pennsylvania Avenue to the U.S. Capitol, where the impeachment trial gets underway in the Senate next week.

In Washington, three key issues seemed to galvanize most of the protesters: climate change, immigration and reproductive rights.

"I teach a lot of immigrant students, and in political times like this I want to make sure I'm using my voice to speak up for them," said Rochelle McGurn, 30, an elementary school teacher from Burlington, Vermont who was in D.C. to march. "They need to feel like they belong, because they do."

Peta Madry of New London, Connecticut, was celebrating her 70th birthday in D.C. by attending her fourth Women's March with her sister, Cynthia Barnard, of San Rafael, California. Both women were wearing handknitted pink hats that date from the first march. With pained expressions, they spoke about Trump's determination to reverse the policies of his predecessor Barack Obama and his treatment of women.

"Look what he's doing to Greta Thunberg," Madry said, referring to the teenage climate activist. "He's the biggest bully in the world."

Melissa McCullough of Georgetown, Indiana, said when she recently turned 50 she promised herself that she would get more involved politically. "I'm here to protest Trump, as a woman," she said.

Her daughter, 19-year-old University of Cincinnati student Elizabeth McCullough, chimed in to say that most women's issues are human issues, and they talked about the need to protect immigrants.

"You have to push to protect everyone or no one's safe," Melissa McCullough said.

The protesters planned to march around the White House, but Trump wasn't there. He is spending the holiday weekend at his resort in Florida.

Organizers of the Washington march faced criticism from some local African American activists for failing to focus on local issues and damaging the ability of local activists to organize.



Participants of the Women's March hold banners near the White House, Saturday, Jan. 18, 2020, in Washington, three years after the first march in 2017, the day after President Donald Trump was sworn into office. (AP Photo/Manuel Balce Ceneta)

"Local D.C. is a domestic colony and the actions of national organizers have to recognize that," Black Lives Matter D.C. wrote in a letter this week to Women's March organizers. "Here in D.C., these unstrategic mass mobilizations distract from local organizing, often overlook the black people who actually live here and even result in tougher laws against demonstration being passed locally."

This story has been updated to correct the activist's name to Donna Hylton, not Hill. ____ Associated Press reporter Daisy Nguyen in San Francisco contributed to this report.

ICE ups ante in standoff with NYC: 'This is not a request'

By JIM MUSTIAN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Federal authorities are turning to a new tactic in the escalating conflict over New York City's so-called sanctuary policies, issuing four "immigration subpoenas" to the city for information about inmates wanted for deportation.

"This is not a request — it's a demand," Henry Lucero, a senior U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement official, told The Associated Press. "This is a last resort for us. Dangerous criminals are being released every single day in New York."

Mayor Bill de Blasio's administration said Saturday the city would review the subpoenas.

"New York City will not change the policies that have made us the safest big city in America," spokeswoman Freddi Goldstein said in an email.

The development comes days after ICE sent similar subpoenas to the city of Denver, a move that reflected the agency's mounting frustration with jurisdictions that do not honor deportation "detainers" or provide any details about defendants going in and out of local custody.

The subpoenas sent to New York seek information about three inmates — including a man wanted for homicide in El Salvador — who were recently released despite immigration officials requesting the city turn them over for deportation.

The fourth subpoena asks for information about a Guyanese man charged this month with sexually assaulting and killing Maria Fuertas, a 92-year-old Queens woman.

That case became a flashpoint in the conflict after ICE officials said the city had released the woman's alleged attacker, Reez Khan, 21, on earlier assault charges rather than turn him over for deportation. Khan was charged with murder Jan. 10 and remains in custody.

New York City police say they didn't receive a detainer request for Khan, though ICE insists it was sent. Either way, the city would not have turned him over under the terms of New York's local ordinance gov-



Matthew Albence, right, the acting director of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, speaks during a news conference, Friday, Jan. 17, 2020, in New York. The country's top immigration official blamed the "sanctuary policies" of New York City on Friday for the sexual assault and killing of a 92-year-old woman, while the mayor's office decried such rhetoric as "fear, hate and attempts to divide." (AP Photo/Jim Mustian)

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erning how police work with immigration officials.

Hours before the subpoenas were issued on Friday, the acting ICE director, Matthew Albence, told a news conference in Manhattan that city leaders had blood on their hands in Fuertas' death.

"It is this city's sanctuary policies that are the sole reason this criminal was allowed to roam the streets freely and end an innocent woman's life," Albence said.

Goldstein said in an email Saturday that "the Trump administration's attempt to exploit this tragedy are absolutely shameful."

De Blasio has accused ICE of employing "scare tactics" and spreading lies. He said on Twitter this week that the city has passed "common-sense laws about immigration enforcement that have driven crime to record lows."

City officials in Denver said they would not comply with the requests, saying the subpoenas could be "viewed as an effort to intimidate officers into help enforcing civil immigration law."

"The documents appear to be a request for information related to alleged violations of civil immigration law," Chad Sublet, Senior Counsel to the Department of Safety in Denver, wrote in a letter to ICE officials.

But Lucero, ICE's acting deputy executive associate director for enforcement and removal operations, said the agency may consult with federal prosecutors to obtain a court order compelling the city's compliance. "A judge can hold them in contempt," he told The AP.

Meanwhile, ICE is considering expanding its use of immigration subpoenas in other sanctuary jurisdictions.

"Like any law enforcement agency, we are used to modifying our tactics as criminals shift their strategies," Lucero said in a statement. "But it's disheartening that we must change our practices and jump through so many hoops with partners who are restricted by sanctuary laws passed by politicians with a dangerous agenda."

Newly released texts tie Nunes aide closer to Ukraine plot

By MICHAEL BIESECKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — New documents released by House Democrats suggest that Rep. Devin Nunes, the top Republican on the House Intelligence Committee, was more deeply involved than was previously known in efforts by allies of President Donald Trump to dig up dirt in Ukraine on former Vice President Joe Biden.

Democrats on the Intelligence Committee released a trove of text messages, photos and other documents Friday night as part of the impeachment inquiry. The materials were provided to the House by Lev Parnas, a Florida businessman who worked with Trump personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani to try to persuade the Ukrainian government to launch an investigation into Biden.

Nunes initially denied knowing Parnas but has since been forced to admit the two had spoken. The messages released Friday show about 100 text messages traded over months between Parnas and the California Republican's staffer, Derek Harvey, a retired U.S. Army colonel. Harvey previously served at the White House on Trump's National Security Council.

The months-long effort directed by Trump and Giuliani to prod Ukrainian officials to launch an investigation into Biden and his son Hunter's business dealings in Ukraine is at the core of the two impeachment articles against Trump passed last month in a largely party-line vote. The non-partisan Government Accountability Office ruled Thursday that the White House broke the law last summer when it withheld congressionally authorized security assistance to Ukraine, essential aid that Democrats allege was being held hostage pending the announcement of the investigations Trump sought.

Parnas and his business partner, Igor Fruman, both U.S. citizens who emigrated from the former Soviet Union, were indicted last year on charges of conspiracy, making false statements and falsification of records. Prosecutors allege they made outsize campaign donations to Republican causes after receiving millions of dollars originating from Russia. The men have pleaded not guilty.

Friday's document dump included dozens of texts exchanged between Parnas and Harvey last Spring over the encrypted messaging service WhatsApp. They show Parnas providing documents and helping set

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up meetings for Harvey with Ukrainians who have made unsubstantiated claims that as vice president Biden orchestrated the firing of a prosecutor who was investigating corruption allegations involving Burisma, a energy company where Hunter Biden served as a board member from 2014 to 2019.

Among the documents Parnas sent to Harvey is a scan of the Ukrainian passport of Burisma's founder. The texts also show Harvey scheduling phone calls with Parnas and a face-to-face meeting at the Trump International Hotel in Washington.

A spokesman for Nunes' congressional office did not respond to messages left by email and phone on Saturday.

Phone records released by House Democrats in December showed several calls between Parnas and Nunes, who helped lead the Republican's defense of Trump during the House impeachment hearings.

Nunes initially said he couldn't remember ever speaking with Parnas. But this week, after new documents were released showing additional contacts, Nunes said his memory had been jogged.

"I checked it with my records and it was very clear — I remember that call, which was very odd, random, talking about random things, and I said, 'great,' you know, 'talk to my staff,' and boom, boom, boom," Nunes told Fox News on Wednesday. "That's just normal operating procedure."

Last month, Nunes threatened to sue Democratic Rep. Ted Lieu if his fellow Californian didn't apologize for statements accusing him of conspiring with Parnas. After the new documents emerged, Lieu responded on Twitter: "Devin, I'm adding to my statement: 'Your pants are on fire.'"

The documents released late Friday included more text messages between Parnas and Robert F. Hyde, a Republican candidate for Congress from Connecticut, who claimed to be in contact with people in Kyiv who were conducting surveillance on former Ambassador to Ukraine Marie Yovanovitch before she was ousted by the Trump administration last spring.

The messages included screenshots of exchanges between Hyde and a Dutch man named Anthony De Caluwe. Hyde denied he was actually tailing the ambassador.

In a profanity-laced video posted online Friday, Hyde alleged the messages were probably "from some intel guy" who was "trying to set Trump up." "I'm sure if I disappeared or died or they gag-ordered me, they're going to use me as a smoking gun, some (expletive) like that I have Ukrainian ties."

FBI agents were observed visiting Hyde's home and business on Thursday, while police in Ukraine have opened an investigation into whether the U.S. ambassador was illegally surveilled.



FILE - In this Dec. 9, 2019 file photo, Rep. Devin Nunes, R-Calif, the ranking member of the House Intelligence Committee, confers with Rep. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio, and Rep. John Ratcliffe, R-Texas, during a break as the House Judiciary Committee considers the investigative findings in the impeachment inquiry against President Donald Trump, on Capitol Hill in Washington. New documents released on Friday, Jan. 17, 2020, by House Democrats suggest that Nunes was more deeply involved than was previously known in efforts by allies of President Donald Trump to dig up dirt in Ukraine on former Vice President Joe Biden. (AP

Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

In a statement issued to The New York Times on Saturday, De Caluwe denied having any contacts in Ukraine and dismissed his exchange with Hyde was just "ridiculous banter."

Follow Associated Press investigative reporter Michael Biesecker at <http://twitter.com/mbieseck>

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

Mexico blocks hundreds of migrants from crossing border span

By MARÍA VERZA Associated Press

CIUDAD HIDALGO, Mexico (AP) — Mexican authorities closed a border entry point in southern Mexico on Saturday after thousands of Central American migrants tried to push their way across a bridge spanning the Suchiate River between Mexico and Guatemala.

Honduran migrants waved their country's flag and sang the national anthem as they approached the bridge. At the height of the confrontation, Guatemalan authorities estimated 2,500 migrants were on the bridge, or attempting to get on it.

Mexican National Guardsmen slammed down a metal fence that reads "Welcome to Mexico" to block the path of the migrants.

Babies cried and tempers flared as the crowd swelled. Amid shoves, Mexican officials did allow a few migrants to enter the country in groups of 20, while a voice over a loudspeaker warned migrants against trying to slip into Mexico without passing through immigration filters.

Piecemeal, more than 150 migrants entered to apply for asylum or some other variation of permission to stay in Mexico as the day wore on. But many migrants prefer to pass through Mexico en route to the United States.

Mexico again finds itself in the role of immigration enforcer as Central Americans desperate for a better life try to make their way north, while Mexico's biggest trade partner — the United States — insists that Mexico prevent those migrants from reaching the U.S. border.

Mexico's National Migration Institute said via Twitter on Saturday that it had reinforced multiple points along the country's southern border to assure "safe, orderly and regular immigration." It also said it was using drones to monitor the region.

Hundreds of guardsmen lined the river to prevent migrants from crossing into Mexico clandestinely. The voice on the loudspeaker warned, over and over, that those aiming to transit through Mexico may not be granted asylum in the U.S., even if they make it there.

As temperatures rose Saturday, migrants trickled back across the bridge to Guatemala. By late afternoon,



Migrants charge on the Mexican National Guardsmen at the border crossing between Guatemala and Mexico in Tecun Uman, Guatemala, Saturday, Jan. 18, 2020. More than a thousand Central American migrants surged onto the bridge spanning the Suchiate River, that marks the border between both countries, as Mexican security forces attempted to impede their journey north. (AP Photo/Marco Ugarte)

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fewer than a hundred remained on the bridge.

Marvin Aguirre, 33, was one of the few who remained on the span. He stretched a sheet across metal poles on the bridge to protect his family from the afternoon sun as they mulled their options. The family would like to start a new life in Mexico, he said, but they fear Mexican authorities will deport them.

Aguirre set out from the Honduran city of San Pedro Sula on Tuesday with three children, his wife and a baby granddaughter. "This is hard, especially with the children," he said. "But there in Honduras, there's nothing to do. Everything is burned. There's no work."

Mexico's government has said migrants entering the country without registering will not be allowed to pass from its southern border area. But those seeking asylum or other protections will be allowed to apply and legalize their status in Mexico.

Guatemalan officials have counted roughly 3,000 migrants who registered at border crossings to enter that country in recent days, and estimated there were an additional 1,300 migrants who did not register. The Guatemalan government is offering to return migrants by bus to their countries of origin.

Guatemala's human rights defender's office said there were more than 1,000 migrants gathered at another point on the Mexican border far to the north in the Peten region. There were reports that Mexican forces were gathered on the other side of the border there.

Vicente Hernández, head of the Mexican armed forces in the border area, told migrants on the Guatemalan side of the Suchiate on Saturday that "there are opportunities for everyone" in Mexico.

"Here you just have to register," he added, saying that Mexican officials would then offer the migrants jobs.

Mexico's offer of legal status and potential employment for migrants carries a stipulation that would confine migrants to southern Mexico, where wages are lower and there are fewer jobs than elsewhere in the country.

El Salvador's consul general in Mexico, Antonio Azúcar, told The Associated Press that Mexican authorities had reported that the migrants crossing into Mexican territory would be housed in Ciudad Hidalgo, the city on the banks of the Suchiate where the bridge standoff happened.

But a Mexican official, who refused to be quoted by name, said those who request asylum in Mexico would be taken to one of two migratory stations in the state of Chiapas — one in Tapachula and the other in Tuxtla Gutiérrez.

Once in custody, in theory, migrants may request temporary work permits to remain in Mexico. For months, however, non-profit groups have complained that the migrants are instead often returned to their countries of origin.

And many of the migrants aim for a new life in the U.S. — not in Mexico.

"We are going to walk all the way up," said Jazmín González, a 23-year-old Salvadoran clutching a small girl.

González said she feared being deported as she turned herself over Saturday to Mexican authorities, alongside her daughter and three other family members.

Lourdes Geraldina Jiménez of Honduras also decided to trust in the assurances of Mexican officials as she entered Mexico with a son and another family member.

Jiménez said she left Honduras because gang members wanted to kill her 14-year-old son.

"I can't return to Honduras," she said, walking next to her son.

Many of the migrants leaving Central America say they fear for their lives back home, while others say they are looking for better economic prospects.

Associated Press writer Sonia Pérez D. in Tecún Uman, Guatemala, contributed to this report.

2020's first big test? Not Iowa, but a tiny Texas House race

By PAUL J. WEBER Associated Press

KATY, Texas (AP) — Beto O'Rourke is livestreaming again. Joe Biden and Julián Castro are making their presence felt. Mike Bloomberg has knocked on doors and outside groups are running TV attack ads. On the brink of 2020's first big contest, it all screams high stakes.

Not in Iowa. This is just for a single Texas House seat.

"This is one of the most important elections taking place in the country right now," said O'Rourke, who since ending his own presidential run in November has campaigned for the Democrat in the race, Eliz Markowitz, including again Saturday with Castro.

The outcome of the Jan. 28 special election runoff near Houston — a week before the Iowa caucuses — in an ethnically diverse district of 220,000 people won't change the balance of power in the GOP-controlled Texas Capitol. But like other special elections since President Donald Trump took office, this one is seen as brimming with broader significance: the year's first bellwether that could signal bigger trends to come in November.

That's a stretch, say Republicans, but it's also easy to see why an obscure race for Texas House District 28 is a tempting testing ground.

Is an impeached president repelling suburbanites who are crucial to his re-election? Trump won this turf by 10 points in 2016. Can Democrats really flip the nation's biggest red state? If they win this race, they'll move within eight seats of retaking the Texas House. Is the GOP in trouble with minority voters? The surrounding county, Fort Bend, is often called the most diverse in America.

The election is a release valve for Democrats itching for November to just get here already, but it also reflects the striking level of money and national muscle that are poised to swamp legislative races. Aside from the White House, the biggest prize for Republicans and Democrats this year may be winning control of statehouses — voting maps in the U.S. will be redrawn after the 2020 census, and the party in power can carve out electoral advantages for the next decade.

That may be lost on voters, and it's also unclear how much this race says about Trump and his impact. Republican candidate Gary Gates says that when he's knocked on doors in the last two months, fewer and fewer voters have wanted to talk about the president. "All that has kind of died down. It hasn't been as strong," he said.

Nevertheless, last summer, Texas House Speaker Dennis Bonnen, a Republican, was caught confiding to a conservative activist in a secretly recorded meeting that Trump was "killing us" in urban and suburban districts. Gates, a real estate developer, said that was not his impression from the 150 homes he hits a day.



In this January 11, 2020 photo former congressman, US Senate and Presidential candidate Beto O'Rourke speaks before a crowd of campaign volunteers for Eliz Markowitz in Katy, Texas. Markowitz is an educator running for district 148 of the Texas state house. O'Rourke and other national Democrats have endorsed Markowitz, her race is being viewed as a bellwether for national politics in 2020.

(AP Photo/ John L. Mone)

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Special elections have transformed into nationally watched battlegrounds in the Trump era, particularly among Democrats eager for signs that voters are fed-up with a combative presidency. In September, Republicans hung on in a special election for a House seat in North Carolina that included Trump personally appealing to voters, although the narrow victory still set off warning signs for the GOP about suburban revolt.

Trump hasn't chimed in on the Texas race. But on a recent Saturday, the living room of a two-story suburban mansion in Katy resembled an Iowa house party for a presidential candidate. O'Rourke climbed on the living room furniture to fire up dozens of volunteers, some of whom squeezed next to a breakfast spread that included muffins decorated with tiny "Beto for America" flags.

Biden made a splash by endorsing Markowitz, and Bloomberg paused his own presidential campaign swing through Texas to walk a neighborhood with her. A national Democratic group called Forward Majority, which is spending millions of dollars nationwide to flip GOP-controlled statehouses, says it has spent \$400,000 on the race, at least four times what the group spent on any other Texas district in 2018.

The spending included a TV ad that resurfaced allegations from 2000 that Gates, who has adopted 11 children, abused some of his kids. State child welfare investigators ultimately dropped that case, and Gates put up a counter-ad pushing back on the claims.

Fort Bend County is not unaccustomed to the political spotlight — it is home to Tom DeLay, the former Republican House majority leader. Pierce Bush, the 33-year-old grandson of the late President George H.W. Bush, is making a run here for Congress. The state House seat opened up when John Zerwas, who was among the most powerful moderate Republicans in the House, stepped down for a high-ranking university post.

In November, Markowitz finished first with 39% in an open special election race, falling well short of avoiding a runoff with the rest of the vote split among Gates and other Republicans.

"Special elections are unique creatures that don't necessarily predict anything," said James Dickey, chairman of the Texas Republican Party.

Associated Press journalist John L. Mone contributed to this report.

Follow Paul J. Weber on Twitter: www.twitter.com/pauljweber

Biden rips Sanders campaign for Social Security attacks

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

INDIANOLA, Iowa (AP) — Joe Biden has called for Bernie Sanders' presidential campaign to "disown" what he calls "doctored video" that some Sanders supporters say shows the former vice president endorsing Republican calls to cut Social Security and Medicare.

"There's a little doctored video going around ... put out by one of Bernie's people," Biden told supporters Saturday in Indianola, Iowa, referring to a 2018 speech in which Biden discussed then-House Speaker Paul Ryan saying rising deficit demanded action on the popular entitlement programs.

"I'm looking for his campaign to come forward and disown it," Biden continued, pointing to his 2020 campaign proposals designed to shore up Social Security. "But they haven't done it yet."

The video in question, circulated on Twitter by a top Sanders adviser, does not appear to be altered. But the short clip omits Biden's larger argument over how Ryan handled the 2017 tax cuts and subsequent budget debates. A separate Sanders' adviser included a transcript of Biden's remarks in the video clip in a separate campaign newsletter. He added other, more extended video, of Biden as a U.S. senator in 1995 and presidential candidate in 2007 explaining his support for a more austere federal budget, including putting Social Security and Medicare "on the table."

The 2020 campaign flap highlights long-standing philosophical fissures between the progressive Sanders, who has spent decades arguing for a massive expansion of the federal government, and the more centrist Biden. Those differences have come to the forefront as Biden and Sanders are bunched with Pete Buttigieg

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Democratic presidential candidate former Vice President Joe Biden speaks to members of the audience at a campaign stop at Simpson College, Saturday, Jan. 18, 2020, in Indianola, Iowa. (AP Photo/Andrew Harnik)

and Elizabeth Warren atop early state polls weeks before the Iowa caucuses and the New Hampshire primary.

Responding to Biden's remarks Saturday, Sanders campaign manager Faiz Shakir said, "Joe Biden should be honest with voters and stop trying to doctor his own public record of consistently and repeatedly trying to cut Social Security."

"The facts are very clear: Biden not only pushed to cut Social Security -- he is on tape proudly bragging about it on multiple occasions," Shakir said in a statement. "The vice president must stop dodging questions about his record, and start explaining why he has so aggressively pushed to slash one of the most significant and successful social programs in American history, which millions of Americans rely on for survival."

In a Jan. 1 tweet, Sanders adviser

Warren Gunnels wrote that it "is soul-wrenching" to have heard "Biden say 'Ryan was correct.'" He attached a 20-second video clip taken from an April 2018 speech Biden delivered at the Brookings Institution.

"Paul Ryan was correct when he did the tax code. What's the first thing he decided we had to go after?" Biden continued, leaning into the microphone. "Social Security and Medicare ... That's the only way you can find room to pay for it."

It was part of a broader speech in which Biden outlined his economic vision. He previewed his 2020 campaign emphasis on the middle-class, but declared that billionaires are not "the problem," an implicit contrast with progressives. The statement that Gunnels highlighted reflects a common Biden argument from the 2020 campaign: that Republicans pushed a tax cut whose benefits are tilted to corporations and the wealthiest Americans, knowing it would balloon the deficits, so the GOP could then justify cutting Social Security and Medicare.

"What I'd do is I make sure that we expand Social Security coverage," Biden insisted Friday when a voter in Iowa asked him about the program.

Biden, like most Democrats, proposes raising the cap on the level of income that is subject to the payroll taxes for Social Security and Medicare. That cap is set at \$137,700 for the current tax year, meaning any income beyond that threshold is still subject to personal income tax, but not payroll taxes. Biden — and many other Democrats — propose lifting that cap to increase the tax revenue flowing into the Medicare and Social Security trust funds.

Sanders' camp, meanwhile, maintains that Biden's history is more important than his current proposals. Another of their favorite video clips shows then-Sen. Biden, in the first years after Republicans' 1994 mid-term election romp, calling for a more austere approach. "When I argued that we should freeze federal spending, I meant Social Security, as well," Biden said at the time. "I meant Medicare and Medicaid. I meant veterans' benefits. ... And I not only tried it once. I tried it twice, I tried it a third time, and I tried it a fourth time."

Just as the Biden campaign argues that Republicans would lambaste the Vermont senator as a socialist if he wins the Democratic nomination, Sanders' backers retort that Trump would use the same video clips they cite to harm Biden with older voters who will prove critical in battleground states in November.

Boy arrested after shooting that killed 4 in small Utah town

By MATT VOLZ Associated Press

A boy armed with a gun killed three children and a woman inside a Utah home, then accompanied a fifth victim to a hospital, where he was arrested, police said Saturday.

Police were still trying to piece together who's who and what happened leading up to Friday night's shooting in Grantsville. Investigators believe the victims are all related to one another, and officials declined to release information about the shooter other than he is a juvenile male.

"We're trying to make certain that we verify people's relationships among the deceased and the survivor," Grantsville Police Cpl. Rhonda Fields told The Associated Press Saturday. "As for motive, we don't have any of that."

It appears to be the largest mass shooting in Utah since 2007, when a shotgun-wielding gunman killed five people and himself at Trolley Square mall in Salt Lake City. It's also the first homicide in nearly 20 years in Grantsville, a town of 11,000 about 35 miles (56 kilometers) west of Salt Lake City.

"It's been a very long time," Fields said.

The boy faces 10 charges, the most serious being aggravated homicide, she said. Police were not able to release his identity because he has been charged as a juvenile.

Officials said he is the only suspect. His relationship to the victims was not immediately clear.

The names of the victims have not been released, and their identities may not be publicly known until Monday, Fields said.

Authorities have not been called to the house in the past.

Police responded to a call of shots fired inside at home at approximately 7 p.m. Friday. When officers arrived, they found the bodies of two girls, a boy and a woman, Fields said.

The shooter and the surviving victim were gone, she said. Authorities later discovered that a person who arrived at the house after the shooting drove the suspect and the surviving victim to a nearby hospital, Fields said.

Officers arrested the boy at the hospital. He was being held at a youth detention facility.

The fifth victim had sustained a gunshot wound, was in stable condition and expected to survive, Fields said.

The person who drove them to the hospital was not involved in shooting, she said.

Grantsville Mayor Brent Marshall said the shooting happened in a very quiet neighborhood, the Deseret News reported.

"It's an unfortunate tragedy that has taken place here this evening," Marshall said. "Any time you have



Police investigate after four people were killed and fifth person was injured in a shooting at a Grantsville, Utah, home Friday, Jan. 17, 2020. The suspected shooter was taken into custody by Grantsville police, the Deseret News reported. Grantsville Mayor Brent Marshall said the victims and the shooter are all related, the newspaper reported.

(Steve Griffin/The Deseret News via AP)

children involved in something, it becomes very emotional, very fast.”

Tooele County School District officials said on Twitter they plan to offer counseling to students when they return to school on Tuesday.

Utah Gov. Gary Herbert released a statement through Twitter.

“Parents and grandparents, secure your firearms! Everyone, hug your loved ones tight. And remember love, not hate, will heal broken individuals and families,” he wrote.

Harry, Meghan to quit royal jobs, give up ‘highness’ titles

By GREGORY KATZ and JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Goodbye, your royal highnesses. Hello, life as — almost — ordinary civilians.

Prince Harry and wife Meghan will no longer use the titles “royal highness” or receive public funds for their work under a deal that lets the couple step aside as working royals, Buckingham Palace announced Saturday.

Releasing details of the dramatic split triggered by the couple’s unhappiness with life under media scrutiny, the palace said Harry and Meghan will cease to be working members of the royal family when the new arrangements take effect in the “spring of 2020.”

The radical break is more complete than the type of arrangement anticipated 10 days ago when the royal couple stunned Britain with an abrupt announcement that they wanted to step down. They said they planned to combine some royal duties with private work in a “progressive” plan, but that is no longer on the table.

Harry and Meghan will no longer use the titles His Royal Highness and Her Royal Highness but will retain them, leaving the possibility that the couple might change their minds and return sometime in the future.

Harry’s late mother, Diana, was stripped of the Her Royal Highness title when she and Prince Charles divorced.

They will be known as Harry, Duke of Sussex, and Meghan, Duchess of Sussex. Harry will remain a prince and sixth in line to the British throne.

The agreement also calls for Meghan and Harry to repay 2.4 million pounds (\$3.1 million) in taxpayers’ money spent renovating a house for them near Windsor Castle, Frogmore Cottage. The use of public funds to transform the house’s five separate apartments into a spacious single family home for them had raised ire in the British press. They will continue to use Frogmore Cottage as their base in England.

The deal came after days of talks among royals sparked by Meghan and Harry’s announcement last week that they wanted to step down as senior royals and live part-time in Canada.



FILE - In this Tuesday, July 10, 2018 file photo Britain’s Queen Elizabeth II, and Meghan the Duchess of Sussex and Prince Harry watch a flypast of Royal Air Force aircraft pass over Buckingham Palace in London. Prince Harry and Meghan Markle are to no longer use their HRH titles and will repay £2.4 million of taxpayer’s money spent on renovating their Berkshire home, Buckingham Palace announced Saturday, Jan. 18, 2020. (AP Photo/Matt Dunham, File)

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The couple's departure is a wrench for the royal family, and Queen Elizabeth II did say earlier this week that she wished the couple had wanted to remain full-time royals, but she had warm words for them in a statement Saturday.

The 93-year-old queen said she was pleased that "together we have found a constructive and supportive way forward for my grandson and his family. Harry, Meghan and Archie will always be much loved members of my family."

"I recognize the challenges they have experienced as a result of intense scrutiny over the last two years and support their wish for a more independent life," Elizabeth said.

"It is my whole family's hope that today's agreement allows them to start building a happy and peaceful new life," she added.

Despite the queen's kind words, the new arrangement will represent an almost complete break from life as working royals, especially for Harry. As a devoted Army veteran and servant to the crown, the prince carried out dozens of royal engagements each year,

Royal expert and author Penny Junor said the new setup will benefit both sides of the family.

"There are no blurred lines. They are starting afresh and they are going with the queen's blessing, I think it is the best of all worlds," she said.

It is not yet clear whether Harry and Meghan will continue to receive financial support from Harry's father, Prince Charles, who used revenue from the Duchy of Cornwall to help fund his activities and those of his wife and sons.

The duchy, chartered in 1337, produced more than 20 million pounds (\$26 million) in revenue last year. It is widely regarded as private money, not public funds, so Charles may opt to keep details of its disbursement private. Much of the royals' wealth comes from private holdings.

Though Harry and Meghan will no longer represent the queen, the palace said they would "continue to uphold the values of Her Majesty" while carrying out their private charitable work.

The withdrawal of Harry from royal engagements will increase the demands on his brother, Prince William, and William's wife, Kate, the Duchess of Cambridge.

Buckingham Palace did not disclose who will pay for the couple's security going forward. It currently is taxpayer-funded and carried out primarily by a special unit of the Metropolitan Police, also known as Scotland Yard.

"There are well established independent processes to determine the need for publicly funded security," it said.

Harry and Meghan have grown increasingly uncomfortable with constant media scrutiny since the birth in May of their son, Archie. They married in 2018 in a ceremony that drew a worldwide TV audience.

Meghan joined the royal family after a successful acting career and spoke enthusiastically about the chance to travel throughout Britain and learn about her new home, but disillusionment set in fairly quickly.

She launched legal action against a newspaper in October for publishing a letter she wrote to her father. Harry has complained bitterly of racist undertones in some media coverage of his wife, who is biracial.

There has also been a breach in the longtime close relationship between Harry and William, a future king, over issues that have not been made public.

The couple's desire to separate from the rest of the family had been the subject of media speculation for months. But they angered senior royals by revealing their plans on Instagram and a new website without advance clearance from the queen or palace officials.

Elizabeth summoned Harry, William and Charles, to an unusual crisis meeting at her rural retreat in eastern England in an effort to find common ground.

The result was Saturday's agreement, which is different from Harry and Meghan's initial proposal that they planned to combine a new, financially independent life with a reduced set of royal duties.

It is not known where in Canada the couple plan to locate. They are thought to be considering Vancouver Island, where they spent a long Christmas break, or Toronto, where Meghan filmed the TV series "Suits" for many years.

It is not clear what Harry and Meghan's immigration and tax status will be in Canada, or whether Meghan

will follow through on plans to obtain British nationality.

Gun-rights activists gear up for show of force in Virginia

BY ALAN SUDERMAN and DENISE LAVOIE Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Police are scouring the internet for clues about plans for mayhem, workers are putting up chain link holding pens around Virginia's picturesque Capitol Square, and one lawmaker even plans to hide in a safe house in advance of what's expected to be an unprecedented show of force by gun-rights activists.

What is provoking their anger in this once reliably conservative state is the new Democratic majority leadership and its plans to enact a slew of gun restrictions. This clash of old and new has made Virginia - determined to prevent a replay of the Charlottesville violence in 2017 - ground zero in the nation's raging debate over gun control.

The Virginia Citizens Defense League's yearly rally at the Capitol typically draws just a few hundred gun enthusiasts. This year, however, thousands of gun activists are expected to turn out. Second Amendment groups have identified the state as a rallying point for the fight against what they see as a national erosion of gun rights.

"We're not going to be quiet anymore. We're going to fight them in the courts and on the ground. The illegal laws they're proposing are just straight up unconstitutional," said Timothy Forster, of Chesterfield, Virginia, an NRA member who had one handgun strapped to his shoulder and another tucked into his waistband as he stood outside a legislative office building earlier this week.

VCDL president Philip Van Cleave said he's heard from groups around the country that plan to send members to Virginia, including the Nevada-based, far-right Oath Keepers, which has promised to organize and train armed posses and militia.

Extremist groups have blanketed social media and online forums with ominous messages and hinted at potential violence. The FBI said it arrested three men linked to a violent white supremacist group Thursday who were planning to attend the rally in Richmond, according to a law enforcement official who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity to discuss an active investigation.

Democrats have permanently banned guns inside the Capitol, and Gov. Ralph Northam declared a temporary state of emergency Wednesday that bans all weapons, including guns, from Capitol Square, during the rally to prevent "armed militia groups storming our Capitol." Gun-rights groups asked the Virginia Supreme Court to rule Northam's declaration unconstitutional, but the court on Friday upheld the ban.

Northam said there were credible threats of violence - like weaponized drones being deployed over Capitol Square. On Friday, the FAA issued a temporary flight restriction, including for drones, over Capitol airspace during the rally.



The Virginia state Capitol building is surrounded by fencing, Thursday, Jan. 16, 2020 in Richmond, Va., in preparation for Monday's rally by gun rights advocates. Gun-rights groups are asking a judge to block the Virginia governor's ban on firearms at a massive pro-gun rally scheduled for next week. Gov. Ralph Northam on Wednesday, Jan. 15, announced a state of emergency and banned all weapons from the rally at the Capitol. (Dean Hoffmeyer/Richmond Times-Dispatch via AP)

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The governor said some of the rhetoric used by groups planning to attend Monday's rally is reminiscent of that used ahead of the white nationalist rally in Charlottesville in August 2017. One woman was killed and more than 30 other people were hurt when a white supremacist drove his car into a crowd of counter protesters there.

The Virginia State Police, the Virginia Capitol Police and the Richmond Police are all coordinating the event and have plans for a huge police presence at Monday's rally that will include both uniformed and plainclothes officers. Police plan to limit access to Capitol Square to only one entrance and have warned rally-goers that they may have to wait hours to get past security screening.

Nonessential state staff were being told to stay away. Del. Lee Carter, a Democratic Socialist, said he's planning to spend Monday at an undisclosed location because of threats he has received.

"I ain't interested in martyrdom," Carter tweeted.

Northam lamented that such precautions were necessary for what's been a peaceful yearly event, but said pro-gun activists have "unleashed something larger, something they may not be able to control."

House Republican Leader Todd Gilbert said in a statement on Saturday that his caucus rejects any attempt to "infuse any kind of twisted or extreme worldview into this fundamentally democratic exercise."

"While we and our Democratic colleagues may have differences, we are all Virginians and we will stand united in opposition to any threats of violence or civil unrest from any quarter," Gilbert said.

The pushback against proposed new gun restrictions began immediately after Democrats won majorities in both the state Senate and House of Delegates in November. Much of the opposition has focused on a proposed assault weapons ban, which would affect thousands of owners of the popular AR-15-style rifles. One version of the bill, which Democrats later disavowed, would have required current owners of the rifles to turn them in or face felony charges.

That bill was the spark that created the massive pushback, according to Sen. Creigh Deeds, one of the few moderate Democrats left in Virginia who represents rural areas.

"That allowed people who like to inflame passions to say, 'Look, they're really coming after your guns, they're coming after you,'" Deeds said.

Thousands of gun owners from around the state packed municipal meetings to urge local officials to declare their communities "Second Amendment Sanctuaries" opposed to "unconstitutional" gun restrictions like universal background checks. More than 125 cities, towns and counties have approved sanctuary resolutions in Virginia.

Gun-control advocates, meanwhile, have also been flocking to Richmond to show their support for the proposed legislation. More than 200 volunteers with Moms Demand Action held a rally on Jan. 6. Gun control became a leading issue in the 2019 Virginia legislative elections after a city employee in Virginia Beach opened fire on his co-workers in May, killing 12 and injuring four others.

Janet Woody, a retired librarian from Richmond and a Moms volunteer, said she believes the proposed package of legislation can help reduce gun violence.

"I just feel so angry and helpless because of all these massacres," she said. "You can call your legislator or write, but there comes a point where you just have to get out in the street."

This story has been updated to correct the date of the Charlottesville rally.

Facing Senate trial crunch, Dems blitzing Iowa, early states

By JULIE PACE AP Washington Bureau Chief

NEWTON, Iowa (AP) — As a winter storm barreled down on Iowa, Elizabeth Warren's campaign team struggled with whether to scrap a town hall scheduled at the old Maytag headquarters.

There was more than weather at play as the Massachusetts senator's campaign monitored the forecast and called expected attendees to gauge their willingness to brave the snow and whipping wind. For the Democratic presidential candidate, the event was probably one of her last chances to make a face-to-face appeal to voters in Iowa before the Feb. 3 caucus. So it went on as planned.

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Warren, along with Sens. Bernie Sanders of Vermont and Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota, is soon to be marooned in the Senate as a juror in President Donald Trump's impeachment trial. With the trial schedule up in the air, this weekend is likely the final full weekend of campaigning for those candidates before the kick-off caucus.

That's left their campaigns scrambling to make the most of their time in Iowa and the other early-voting states, and thinking of ways to stay on voters' radars during the trial in Washington. It's also given their 2020 rivals outside the Senate an opportunity to take advantage.

Klobuchar trails the top tier of contenders in polling and fundraising and needs a strong showing in Iowa to catapult her campaign into the next round of primaries. She insisted that the demands of the Senate trial wouldn't hurt her candidacy.

"I'm a mom and I can balance things really well," Klobuchar said during an event Saturday in Coralville.

But privately, the collision of the trial and the caucus has created anxiety among campaign advisers who face the prospect of their bosses being trapped in the Senate as silent jurors just as voters in Iowa are taking a final look at the candidates.

The full schedule for the Senate trial is uncertain, and it's possible it wraps up before the caucuses. But campaigns are planning for the prospect of the candidates being in Senate session Tuesday through Saturday next week, as well as five or six days the following week. The fourth Democratic senator still in the race is Michael Bennet of Colorado.

Well-funded candidates such as Warren and Sanders are considering putting private planes on hold in Washington so they can quickly fly to Iowa for late-night events after the trial wraps up. Sanders has already scheduled an 8 p.m. rally in Cedar Rapids on Wednesday, taking advantage of the one-hour time difference between Washington and Iowa.

Campaign surrogates are planning to headline events during the week that the candidates can appear at via livestream video. Warren's team has Reps. Ayanna Pressley of Massachusetts and Katie Porter of California on standby, as well as Julian Castro, the former Obama housing secretary who dropped out of the presidential race this month. Sanders' wife, Jane Sanders, will headline an event in Las Vegas next weekend and will introduce her husband, who will participate by video.

Still, the Senate schedule has increased the pressure on the candidates to make the most of what may be their last free weekend. Warren had three events scheduled Saturday with influential interest groups. Klobuchar was headlining three town halls in eastern Iowa. Sanders was campaigning in New Hampshire, the next state on the primary calendar, before heading back to Iowa on Monday.

"I wish I could be back in New Hampshire and Iowa, but I will be in Washington doing my constitutional duty," Sanders told voters during an event Saturday in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

The Senate trial has added a layer of uncertainty to the political climate in Iowa, where the Democratic race remains exceedingly close. Recent polls show Warren, Sanders, former Vice President Joe Biden and Pete Buttigieg the former mayor of South Bend, Indiana, in a virtual tie, with Klobuchar trailing behind.



Volunteer Erick Zehr carries campaign signs outside a venue as snow falls before an event with Democratic presidential candidate Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., Friday, Jan. 17, 2020, in Newton, Iowa. (AP Photo/Patrick Semansky)

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Biden and Buttigieg will largely have the state to themselves once the impeachment trial begins. Biden and Buttigieg do not serve in the Senate, and neither currently has any other job.

Biden has events scheduled in Iowa four out of the next five days. Buttigieg plans to be in the state nearly every day until the caucuses, focusing in particular on smaller Iowa cities and towns less often seen by his top rivals.

Last week, Buttigieg traveled across northwest Iowa, where Republicans outnumber Democrats but where the minority party still has active county party organizations. In sub-zero weather, he drew 100 people in Algona, population about 5,400. It was his second visit to the town, one where no other candidate polling above 1 percent has campaigned.

On Thursday, he met about as many in Emmetsburg, where only Biden had visited before, and twice as many in Arnold's Park, a popular summertime lake-area vacation spot, where only Sanders had previously stopped.

While those areas are less populous than Iowa's larger cities, they still have delegates up for grabs that could make the difference on caucus night in a close race. The Associated Press will call the winner of the Iowa caucuses based on the number of state delegate equivalents the candidates receive on caucus night.

Associated Press writers Thomas Beaumont in Emmetsburg, Iowa, Bill Barrow in West Des Moines, Iowa, Alexandra Jaffe in Coralville, Iowa, and Hunter Woodall in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, contributed to this report.

Follow Julie Pace at <http://twitter.com/jpaceDC>

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

Impeachment lands Sen. Collins in familiar spot: crosshairs

By ALAN FRAM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Facing perhaps her toughest reelection fight, veteran Sen. Susan Collins has parachuted into familiar terrain — the heart of a hot-button issue, this time President Donald Trump's impeachment.

With Senate trial proceedings starting Tuesday, the moderate Maine Republican says she'll probably support a motion to call witnesses, aligning herself with Democrats. But she says she'll do that only after each side has argued its case and she says she's not decided whether she'll back seeking "any particular witness."

It's carefully parsed stances like that — and her track record of seeking bipartisan deals that sometimes fly and sometimes flounder on major issues such as immigration — that have won her respect and scorn.

Collins, 67, has embraced that approach for nearly 24 years in the Senate, even as compromise has grown increasingly scarce and politically perilous in the age of the retaliation-prone Trump. She did it again last week, saying she and three fellow Republicans had won a commitment from GOP leaders for a vote on whether to call witnesses.

"She's been open to conversation many times when very few on the Republican side of the aisle would be," said Illinois Sen. Richard Durbin, the No. 2 Senate Democrat. But he added, "There have been moments when she broke my political heart."

One of those times, he said, was Collins' pivotal vote putting Trump nominee Brett Kavanaugh on the Supreme Court in 2018, despite allegations of sexual assault. That vote won Collins appreciation from conservatives who had long bristled at her moderate stances but enmity from liberals who had been gratified by her views on issues such as abortion rights. Maine voters' reaction to her Kavanaugh vote will help determine whether Collins wins a fifth six-year term in the November elections.

Supporters call Collins a voice for moderation who is not afraid to oppose Trump, such as helping derail his 2017 effort to kill President Barack Obama's health care law. Just last week, she was among four Republicans to say they will back a Democratic bill curbing Trump's ability to attack Iran — just enough to

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make passage likely.

"The Senate needs Susan Collins and people like Susan Collins," said Sarah Chamberlain, president of the moderate Republican Main Street Coalition.

Foes call Collins an opportunist more interested in burnishing her centrist brand than producing results. They say she has bowed to Trump too often and that his divisive policies and rhetoric mean the time for half-measures has passed.

"She's not adapted, and she has to actually pick a side, and that side is right or wrong," said Ilyse Hogue, president of NARAL Pro-Choice America.

Trump seemed to endorse her on Twitter before Christmas, writing, "I agree 100%" with an earlier tweet by Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., urging her reelection. It is unclear how that will play in Maine, where voters recall that Collins said she would not vote for Trump in 2016.

Collins' newest ordeal is over impeachment. Democrats say testimony from four current and former White House officials plus documents, which Trump blocked House investigators from receiving, are needed for the Senate trial to be fair.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., has hammered away on that message, implicitly pressuring Republicans by saying senators must choose whether to be "in the search of truth, or in service of the president's desire to cover it up." The Senate Democrats' campaign arm has created a website called WhatChangedSusan.com, which contrasts her statements backing additional evidence during President Bill Clinton's 1999 impeachment trial with her nuanced comments this time.

With Republicans controlling the Senate 53-47, Democrats will need four GOP senators to join them to successfully call witnesses. That's heaped pressure on Collins and her three allies: Sens. Lamar Alexander of Tennessee, Lisa Murkowski of Alaska and Mitt Romney of Utah.

Collins is the only one of the four seeking reelection this year. She said of Schumer: "I don't think he's really very interested in doing anything but trying to defeat me by telling lies to the people of Maine."

She has said she wants to follow the Clinton impeachment process and will not decide whether to support calling witnesses until the Trump trial arguments are complete, perhaps in two weeks. That means if Schumer, as promised, forces votes Tuesday on calling witnesses, Collins will vote "no" and immediately draw Democratic criticism for squelching needed testimony.

Democrats facing an apparent uphill climb to grab the Senate majority are eager to defeat Collins, one of the more vulnerable GOP incumbents. They hope to erode her support in narrowly divided Maine by emphasizing her vote for Kavanaugh, for a \$1.5 trillion tax bill that disproportionately helped corporations and high-earning people and, if she opposes witnesses or votes to acquit Trump, on impeachment.

Some groups that have worked with Collins in the past have come out against her or stayed silent.

Margot Milliken, who leads the Maine Planned Parenthood's political arm, wrote an op-ed in Saturday's Portland Press Herald saying the group "can no longer" trust Collins on women's health issues. Planned Parenthood honored Collins in 2017 as a "champion" on the topic.



In this Jan. 15, 2020, photo, Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, talks to reporters on Capitol Hill in Washington. In the dawn of what may be her toughest reelection fight, veteran Collins has parachuted into familiar terrain _ the pressure-packed middle of an issue, this time the impeachment of President Donald Trump. (AP Photo/Susan Walsh)

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NARAL Pro-Choice America and the League of Conservation Voters have endorsed Sara Gideon, speaker of the Maine House and leading contender for the Democratic Senate nomination.

"When the stakes have never been higher and when we have never needed her more during the Trump era, we have been disappointed on far too many occasions," said the League of Conservation Voters' top lobbyist, Tiernan Sittenfeld. She cited Collins' support for the tax bill, which opened federal lands in Alaska to mineral drilling, and her vote for the conservative Kavanaugh.

On the other hand, David McIntosh, president of the conservative Club for Growth, which sometimes tries toppling moderate Republicans, said the group "will definitely not challenge her" this year. He cited her Kavanaugh vote and the need to protect the GOP's Senate majority.

"There are plenty of opportunities where we can commiserate about things," said Alaska's Murkowski, another moderate and one of Collins' closest Senate friends.

Collins' office did not make her available for this story.

A former congressional aide elected to the Senate in 1996, Collins has helped forge or joined bipartisan pacts reorganizing the intelligence agencies, ending the "don't ask, don't tell" ban on gays openly serving in the military and halting some government shutdowns.

A 2018 bipartisan compromise that she helped craft offering potential citizenship to many young immigrants died but it got more votes in the GOP-run Senate than any alternative, including Trump's. She got significant tax breaks included in a \$1.5 trillion tax bill in 2017 and backed it after party leaders committed to separate votes on bills reining health care premiums, but those other measures went nowhere.

Justices taking up bans on state money to religious schools

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A Supreme Court that seems more favorable to religion-based discrimination claims is set to hear a case that could make it easier to use public money to pay for religious schooling in many states.

The justices will hear arguments Wednesday in a dispute over a Montana scholarship program for private K-12 education that also makes donors eligible for up to \$150 in state tax credits. Advocates on both sides say the outcome could be momentous because it could lead to efforts in other states to funnel taxpayer money to religious schools.

Montana is among 37 states that have provisions in their state constitutions that bar religious schools from receiving state aid.

The Legislature created the tax credit in 2015 for contributions made to certain scholarship programs for private education. The state's highest court had struck down the tax credit as a violation of the constitutional ban. The scholarships can be used at both secular and religious schools, but almost all the recipients attend religious schools.

Kendra Espinoza of Kalispell, Montana, the lead plaintiff in the Supreme Court case, said the state court decision amounts to discrimination against her religious freedom. "They did away with the entire program so that no one could use this money to send their kids to a religious school," said Espinoza, whose two daughters attend the Stillwater Christian School in Kalispell, near Glacier National Park.

She said she could not afford to keep her daughters enrolled without financial aid from the school, where tuition this year is \$7,735 for elementary and middle school and \$8,620 for high school. But Espinoza said she has never received money from the scholarship program and only began the application process late last year.

For Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, the Montana program is part of a nationwide, conservative-backed campaign against public schools. "This is a ruse to siphon off money from public education," Weingarten said. Teacher unions generally oppose school choice programs.

Montana is one of 18 states that offer scholarship tax-credit programs, according to EdChoice, an organization that promotes school-choice programs. Most have more generous tax credits, one of several ways states have created programs to boost private schools or defray their tuition costs. Others include

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vouchers, individual tax credits or deductions and education savings accounts.

"These programs are about empowering parents, low-income parents, to make the same educational choices that their well-to-do peers make every day, which is to choose private schools for their kids, if public schools aren't working for them," said Richard Komer of the Virginia-based Institute for Justice, which backs school choice programs. Komer represents the Montana parents at the Supreme Court.

When the Montana Supreme Court considered the scholarship program, it found that allowing public money to flow to religious schools, even indirectly, ran afoul of the state constitution. But rather than leave the program in place for secular schools, the court struck it down altogether. The state court ruling has been put on hold pending a Supreme Court decision.

The state hoped the wholesale invalidation of the program would shield it from Supreme Court review. In urging the Supreme Court to reject the case, Montana said it can't be compelled to offer a scholarship program for private education. The state told the justices that the Montana court decision did not single out students at religious schools because the state court ruling struck down the entire program.

But at least four justices, the minimum needed to hear a case, were not persuaded by that reasoning. The Trump administration, which is taking steps to give religious organizations easier access to federal programs, has now joined the case on the parents' side. This past week, President Donald Trump also pledged to protect prayer in public schools as part of his bid to solidify his evangelical base for the 2020 election.

Recent rulings from the Supreme Court, which now includes Trump appointees Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh, in favor of religion-based discrimination claims suggest the state has an uphill fight. In 2014, the justices allowed family-held for-profit businesses with religious objections to get out from under a requirement to pay for contraceptives for women covered under their health insurance plans. In 2017, the court ruled for a Missouri church that had been excluded from state grants to put softer surfaces in playgrounds.

The Supreme Court also has upheld some school voucher programs and state courts have ratified others. But other state courts have relied on constitutional provisions banning the allocation of public school funds to religious institutions to strike down school choice programs.

The language in Montana's constitution is itself under attack in the case being argued Wednesday. Lawyers for the parents and legal groups supporting them argue that anti-Catholic bias motivated the adoption of the Montana provision and similar measures in other states in the late 1800s. They are similar to the proposed 1875 Blaine Amendment to the U.S. Constitution that would have prohibited the allocation of



This July 31, 2019 photo shows Stillwater Christian School parents Jeri Anderson and Kendra Espinoza at Woodland Park in Kalispell, Mont. The Supreme Court will hear arguments Wednesday, Jan. 22, 2020 in a dispute over a Montana scholarship program for private K-12 education that also makes donors eligible for up to \$150 in state tax credits. Advocates on both sides say the outcome could be momentous because it could lead to efforts in other states to funnel taxpayer money to religious schools. (Casey Kreider/The Daily Inter Lake via AP)

(Casey Kreider/The Daily Inter Lake via AP)

public school funds to religious institutions.

But Montana and its supporters dispute that bigotry was behind the adoption the state's "no-aid" clause in 1889. In any event, they contend, the provision is a part of the Montana Constitution that was adopted at a state constitutional convention in 1972, where one of the delegates who voted for it was a Catholic priest.

It's unfair to label the convention delegates and Montana voters who later ratified the constitution as "mere rubber-stampers of bigotry," the state wrote in its Supreme Court brief.

The Stillwater Christian School, like most Montana schools in the scholarship program, is not Catholic.

Espinoza said she chose it for her daughters, now 11 and 14, because "I really wanted values-based education for them, taught from the Bible, because that's what we do at home."

Where does Astros cheating rank in scandals? Ask Pete Rose

By TIM DAHLBERG AP Sports Writer

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Pete Rose was taking a break from signing autographs at the MGM Grand hotel when asked a question he's uniquely qualified to address.

What's worse, betting on baseball or cheating at baseball?

"I don't know," Rose tells The Associated Press. "All I know is I've been suspended for 30 years now. I don't know anybody that's been suspended for 30 years."

It's a fair point, especially when compared to the punishments handed out so far in the worst scandal to hit baseball since the steroid era. What Rose did was wrong — according to baseball rules — but there's still a lot of people who believe he should be adding a Hall of Fame designation when he signs memorabilia in his adopted hometown of Las Vegas.

Still, 30 years away from the game he was so great at seems like an awful long time, especially when Major League Baseball and other sports leagues have made their peace — and are doing business — with the bookies who post lines on their games.

And face it. If you believe Rose on the details of what he did — and that's a stretch for some — his betting didn't have nearly the impact on baseball than a cheating scheme that has brought into question the legitimacy of not just one, but two, World Series.

"Which one is worse, stealing signs electronically, taking steroids or betting on baseball?" the all-time major league hit leader asked. All three are bad. But at least what I did never had anything to do with the outcome of the game."

The Astros cheating scandal, of course, is still new, at least publicly. A week ago, no one was questioning whether the Astros were really the 2017 champions or the Red Sox a year after that.



FILE - In this Jan. 19, 2016 file photo, former Cincinnati Reds player and manager Pete Rose speaks during a press conference where it was announced that he will be inducted into the Reds Hall of Fame in Cincinnati. Rose says cheating on the field is bad for the game, and the one thing he never did with his bets is change the outcome of a game. (AP Photo/Gary Landers, File)

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Now it's all in play, and the discussion is beginning to turn to how the sign scandal ranks with other scandals in baseball history.

Pretty high up with each passing day, if only because there are few comparable scandals and two of them involve gambling. The Black Sox scandal of 1919 and Rose betting on baseball games from the dugout in Cincinnati are about the only ones that come close.

There's also the steroid era, where it was hard to figure out what was real and what wasn't. The players themselves weren't much help, sticking up for teammates and for the most part claiming ignorance of steroid use.

The unwritten baseball code of silence, though, seems to be unraveling quickly with the sign-stealing scandal. That began in November when former Houston pitcher Mike Fiers went on record to The Athletic about the scheme the Astros employed during his time there to steal signs.

Dodgers pitcher Alex Wood, who was careful to hide his signals in allowing one hit in 5 2/3 innings of Game 4 of the World Series, tweeted that he would rather pitch to a player on steroids than one who knew which pitch was coming. That sentiment was echoed by Reds pitcher Trevor Bauer, who added, "All day every day for the rest of time."

National League MVP Cody Bellinger went even further, saying there needs to be major consequences for any players involved.

"That Completely ruins the integrity of the game!!!" Bellinger tweeted.

Rose said he wished the scandal wasn't playing out a month before pitchers and catchers report for spring training. He predicted Commissioner Rob Manfred will have a hard time dealing with the fallout.

But he agreed with Bellinger that if players are guilty, they need to be punished, just as he was.

"If you're the batter and I give you the indicator, aren't you just as guilty being the batter?" he asked. "It's the batter who is benefiting from this, not the guy who was the indicator. You have to look at every player on the team."

Rose, who turns 79 in April, said there was sign-stealing during his time, though without technology. Mostly, it was a base coach figuring out sign sequences and a runner at second relaying them to the batter, and there were accepted ways to make it stop.

"Usually what would happen is the pitcher would throw it right at a guy's head," he said. "Ninety of 100 would stop because they don't want that chin music."

But while Rose was guilty of doing things not in the best interest of baseball, he said he wasn't much of a sign thief.

"I batted 15,000 times and I never wanted a guy on second to tell me what was coming," he said. "I didn't want to know because he might be wrong and I wasn't a guess hitter anyway so it wouldn't have helped me much."

It did help, Rose said, the home run hitters who liked to guess on what pitches were coming. And that, he added, holds true today.

"It's a bigger thing for home run hitters," he said. "I played with a lot of guys who were home run hitters and you tell them what's coming and they would hit it out of Yellowstone Park."

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Jan. 19, the 19th day of 2020. There are 347 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 19, 1937, millionaire Howard Hughes set a transcontinental air record by flying his monoplane from Los Angeles to Newark, New Jersey, in 7 hours, 28 minutes and 25 seconds.

On this date:

In 1807, Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee was born in Westmoreland County, Virginia.

In 1853, Giuseppe Verdi's opera "Il Trovatore" premiered in Rome.

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In 1861, Georgia became the fifth state to secede from the Union.

In 1915, Germany carried out its first air raid on Britain during World War I as a pair of Zeppelins dropped bombs onto Great Yarmouth and King's Lynn in England.

In 1942, during World War II, Japanese forces captured the British protectorate of North Borneo. A German submarine sank the Canadian liner RMS Lady Hawkins off Cape Hatteras, North Carolina, killing 251 people; 71 survived.

In 1944, the federal government relinquished control of the nation's railroads to their owners following settlement of a wage dispute.

In 1955, a presidential news conference was filmed for television and newsreels for the first time, with the permission of President Dwight D. Eisenhower.

In 1977, President Gerald R. Ford pardoned Iva Toguri D'Aquino, an American convicted of treason for making radio broadcasts aimed at demoralizing Allied troops in the Pacific Theater during World War II. (Although she was popularly referred to as "Tokyo Rose," D'Aquino never used that name.)

In 1980, retired Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas died in Washington, D.C., at age 81.

In 1981, the United States and Iran signed an accord paving the way for the release of 52 Americans held hostage for more than 14 months.

In 2006, Osama bin Laden, in an audiotape that was his first in more than a year, said al-Qaida was preparing for attacks in the United States; at the same time, he offered a "long-term truce" without specifying the conditions. Vice President Dick Cheney defended the administration's domestic surveillance program, calling it an essential tool in monitoring al-Qaida and other terrorist organizations.

In 2009, Russia and Ukraine signed a deal restoring natural gas shipments to Ukraine and paving the way for an end to the nearly two-week cutoff of most Russian gas to a freezing Europe.

Ten years ago: In a major upset, Republican Scott Brown captured the U.S. Senate seat held by liberal champion Edward Kennedy for nearly half a century as he defeated Democrat Martha Coakley in a special election. Eight people were shot to death in Appomattox, Virginia; Christopher Speight (spayt) later pleaded guilty to murder and was sentenced to five life terms. Hamas commander Mahmoud al-Mabhouh was slain at a posh airport hotel in Dubai (officials in Dubai accused Israel of carrying out the killing).

Five years ago: As he headed home from a week-long trip to Asia, Pope Francis upheld church teaching banning contraception, but said Catholics didn't have to breed "like rabbits" and should instead practice responsible parenting. The NFL confirmed to The Associated Press a report by WTHR-TV Indianapolis that it was investigating whether the New England Patriots deflated footballs that were used in their AFC championship game victory over the Colts. (After an investigation, Patriots quarterback Tom Brady was suspended for four games of the upcoming regular season for his alleged role in the controversy, but had that sanction overturned by a federal court.)

One year ago: A major winter storm dumped up to 10 inches of snow on parts of the Midwest before barreling toward New England. In a bid to end a partial government shutdown, President Donald Trump offered to extend temporary protections for young people brought to the U.S. illegally as children, but he didn't budge on his \$5.7 billion demand for a border wall.

Today's Birthdays: Former U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar is 100. Actress Tippi Hedren is 90. Former PBS newsman Robert MacNeil is 89. Movie director Richard Lester is 88. Actor-singer Michael Crawford is 78. Actress Shelley Fabares (fab-RAY') is 76. Country singer Dolly Parton is 74. Former ABC newswoman Ann Compton is 73. TV chef Paula Deen is 73. Rock singer Martha Davis is 69. Singer Dewey Bunnell (America) is 68. Actor Desi Arnaz Jr. is 67. Actress Katey Sagal is 66. Comedian Paul Rodriguez is 65. Conductor Sir Simon Rattle is 65. Reggae musician Mickey Virtue (formerly with UB40) is 63. Rock musician Jeff Pilson (Foreigner) is 62. Actor Paul McCrane is 59. Actor William Ragsdale is 59. Basketball coach and commentator Jeff Van Gundy is 58. International Tennis Hall of Famer Stefan Edberg is 54. Rock singer Whitfield Crane (Ugly Kid Joe) is 52. Singer Trey Lorenz is 51. Actor Shawn Wayans is 49. Rock singer-musician John Wozniak (Marcy Playground) is 49. Actress Drea (DRAY-uh') de Matteo is 48. Comedian-impressionist Frank Caliendo is 46. Actor Drew Powell is 44. Actress Marsha Thomason is 44. Actress Bitsie Tulloch is 39. Actress Jodie Sweetin is 38. Movie director Damien Chazelle is 35. Actress

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Shaunette Renee Wilson is 30. Actress Briana Henry is 28. Actor Logan Lerman is 28. Olympic gold medal gymnast Shawn Johnson is 28. Rapper Taylor Bennett is 24. Actress Lidya Jewett is 13.

Thought for Today: "Love without passion is dreary; passion without love is horrific." — Abraham Cowley, English poet (1618-1667).

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