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OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #06-6

School Board Meeting

February 10, 2020 – 7:00 PM – GHS Conference Room

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order with members present. Approve agenda as proposed or amended.

POTENTIAL CONFLICTS DISCLOSURE PURSUANT SDCL 23-3

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Approval of minutes of January 13, 2020 school board meetings as drafted.
2. Approval of January District bills for payment
3. Approval of January 2020 Financial Report, Agency Accounts, and Investments.
4. Approval of January 2020 Transportation Report.
5. Approval of January 2020 School Lunch Report.

OLD/CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. Open Forum for Public Participation in accordance with Board Policy & Guidelines.
2. Program Overview Presentations
 - a. K-12 Music...A. Fordham, C. Swanson, D. Yeigh
 - b. Art...J. Harry
 - c. Health/PE, Athletics...B. Schuring, L. Grieve, B. Dolan
3. Second read and adoption of recommended policy changes: ACAB Prohibition Against Aiding or Abetting Sexual Abuse (New); BDC Executive Sessions (Amend); BDDDB Agenda Format (Amend); BDDC Agenda Preparation and Dissemination (Amend); BDDEA Parliamentarian (Delete); BDDG Minutes (Amend); BDDH Public Participation at Board Meetings (Amend); BFC Policy Adoption (Amend); DB Annual Budget (Amend); BDC Budget Deadlines and Schedules (Delete); DBD Budget Planning (Delete); DBH Budget Adoption Procedures (Delete); DBKA Promissory Notes (Delete); DBK Budget Transfer Authority (Delete); DGD Credit Card Use Policy (Amend); DIC Financial Reports and Statements (Amend); DJB Petty Cash Accounts (Amend); DJC Bidding Requirements (Amend); DJD Local Purchasing (Amend); DJF Purchasing (Amend); DJ Purchasing (Amend); EH Service Animals at School (New); GBCBA Freedom of Expression (Amend); GBC Staff Ethics (Amend); GBEC Use of Alcohol and Drugs by Employees (Amend); GCBDF Nursing Mothers (New); GCB Qualifications of Teachers (Amend); GCD Professional Staff Hiring (Amend); JB Equal Educational Opportunities (Amend); JECA Admission of Resident Students (Amend); JFCD Cyberbullying (Delete); JFCE Student Bullying (Amend); KO Patriotic and National Organizations (New)
4. Administrative Reports: (a) Superintendent's Report; (b) Principal's Reports; (c) Business Manager Report

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Present Certificates of Appreciation on honor of South Dakota School Board Recognition Week.
2. Approve bid specs for lawn tractor/mower and set bid opening for 2:00 PM on Monday, March 9, 2020.
3. Approve South Dakota Clean Diesel Grant/VW Program Rebate Agreement.
4. Approve bid specs for school bus and set bid opening for 2:15 PM on Monday, March 9, 2020.
5. Review of 2020-2021 school year calendar draft and staff comments.
6. Set fee for summer 2020 driver's education.
7. Executive session pursuant SDCL 1-25-2(1) for personnel issues including Superintendent evaluation.
8. Issue administrative contracts for 2020-2021 school year with return date of February 21, 2020 with terms to be negotiated at a later date.

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

**TUESDAY
FEBRUARY 11, 2020**

8:45 a.m. – 9:00 a.m. – Discuss Spillman Update
9:00 a.m. – 9:05 a.m. – Employee Holiday Policy & Overtime Policy
9:05 a.m. – 9:10 a.m. – Personnel

- Approve General Meeting Minutes of February 4, 2020 and amend January 28, 2020
- Claims
- HR Report
- Auto Budget Supplement – Highway
- Lease
- Sheriff Vehicle Purchase

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

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Glimpses by Brock Greenfield

We have now wrapped up the first four weeks of Session. With the end of the sixteenth day, we now know that 479 bills are in-play. The Senate was responsible for introducing 186 of those bills, while the House dropped 293. There are also three Joint Resolutions on either side. Joint Resolutions generally seek to compel the voters to change the SD Constitution, but in a couple cases, they speak to attempting to add South Dakota to a list of states trying to amend the US Constitution and/or to remove SD from a list of states who have previously done so. Going forward, other bills can be introduced only by virtue of "suspending" our rules with a 2/3 affirmative vote of the chamber seeking to introduce the bill.

As things are slowly beginning to ramp up but not a lot of key bills have worked their way through the Senate, I would like to highlight some of the Senate Bills I have signed onto as the prime sponsor. SB 90 is a bill that seeks to direct resources for roads, culverts and small structures to our townships. With the profound damage from the multiple weather events and flooding in 2019, our townships got saddled with enormous burdens that under the current law they cannot begin to be expected to overcome. They are subject to caps on their ability to increase assessments, and the costs associated with repairs are astronomical when given the relative size of the population base. If SB 90 were to pass, it would take a portion of existing revenues and ensure that townships have some resources at their disposal for purposes of maintenance and repair that we all expect and have come to enjoy as we traverse roads under their purview.

SB 94 calls for revisions to the K-12 capital outlay restrictions. What I would like to say about this bill is that it's a work-in-progress, but it seeks to address some very real constraints that our schools are under because of the funding formula re-write of 2016. Many of our schools are feeling handcuffed by the limits imposed upon them by the 2016 legislation, and I am working with the education lobby to try to figure out how to responsibly change the law, while balancing school funding concerns with those of local taxpayers. I will report back to you as this bill is negotiated and re-negotiated, assuming it remains in-play as we go forward.

SB 108 seeks to revise the time frame under which an employer can try to compel an employee to agree to not compete against the employer if that employee moves on from that position. Last year, I brought a similar bill that was narrowly defeated on the Senate side. We learned that South Dakota allows employers to "try" to lock their employees out of competitive situations for two years. No other state in the country allows a two-year non-compete period. Also, it should be noted that employers cannot compel their employees to sign non-compete covenants, but many are VERY persuasive in doing so. I am attempting to shed some light on this issue, and I am hopeful that at some point we either remove the shackles from our South Dakota workforce or cut the length of allowable time in half for covenants no to compete.

SB 123 would appropriate money for a literacy intervention program within our schools. Four years ago, the legislature allocated \$1 million for this type of program. Ultimately, the state contracted with a company called "Imagine Learning" which made available a number of accounts for participating schools. Under normal company-to-school contracts, each account costs \$150. However, with our state acting as an intermediary between the company and the schools, they were able to negotiate a rate that amounted to less than \$50/account. Our students who interacted with the program saw substantial gains in their literacy achievement. I have heard glowing feedback from a number of administrators and teachers who were responsible for bringing the program to their facilities. Unfortunately, the contract ran out last year, and we were not able to find the dollars to fund the program. Although money appears to remain fairly tight, I am hoping to recapture as much bang-for-our-buck by passing this legislation and getting the state back into the negotiations process for our schools. Even if we were to work with a different vendor, the

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purchasing power would undoubtedly be enhanced with bulk purchasing power through state involvement.

Finally, I brought SB's 142, 143, and 144. These bills all seek to address issues identified by our Legislative Research Council staff as they did program evaluations. Specifically, they identified seven areas we might consider with respect to the dual credit programs offered to high school students through college or vocational technical level instructors. Some of these matters stemmed from a look at what other states offer relative to the dual credit programs under their jurisdictions. Specifically, SB 142 would allow state subsidization ONLY for classes that fulfill general education requirements. SB 143 would stipulate that if a student fails or withdraws from a course, that student is responsible for paying the entire cost associated with that course. SB 144 would establish that failure or withdrawal from a course would result in the student no longer being able to enroll in dual credit courses with the state subsidizing the cost of the credit. These are all matters that seemed to get the attention of the appropriators when they were mentioned, so I decided to bring them forth for further consideration. The dual credit program has been in place for a few years, now, and it is time to reassess whether we want to reshape any of the methods and manners under which we are operating. To the extent that we might be able to provide thoughtful reforms to the dual credit program, while still wholly endorsing them, we will either be able to bolster our offerings on some level, or we will be able to free up dollars for K-12 state aid or for our other budget priorities.

With that, I thank you, once again, for reading! Moreover, I thank you for the opportunity to work for you! It is a huge blessing, and I appreciate it!

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Lana's Annals- by Lana Greenfield

Greetings to all of you. First, thank you for the encouraging letters of support about HB1085, the Daylight Savings legislation. It was defeated on the floor after a 33-33 tie. I told the speaker of my intent to re-consider (which had to be done by the next day). We did so, and the vote was 34-33. I needed two more for passage so was defeated. It was a good discussion so maybe next year...

HB1134 appeared in the education committee. It asked for permission to have a special cultural song (no specific one) and the allowing of wearing beaded caps at high school graduation. Currently the law is that students of a specific culture would have the right to wear an eagle feather or plume during that special time. An amendment was offered to drop the special song. That portion passed. After much discussion and three different votes, our committee sent it to the floor without recommendation. I look forward to what the entire body may think. Personally, after considering all sides, I do not favor beaded caps. What if inappropriate words are beaded on the top? Does that then mean our administrators have to deal with this on graduation day? If the culture holds this tradition as an honor, does this then become disrespectful and racially charged if everyone does it? When a bill is looked at, it is important to go beyond face value.

HB1143 also appeared before the education committee, which I chair. This bill was far more complicated and vague. It calls for all public schools, unless on or nearby a reservation, to get rid of uniforms, school logos in gyms, yearbooks, etc. within a five year period if the aforementioned depict a native culture and are not native schools. I also opposed this bill as it discriminates against a public school (no mention of private), and causes undue expense for those who have names like "Chief" or "Warrior." I also question the concept of those located "near" a reservation being exempt. In South Dakota, what is considered "near" or "far?" One more thing: it is beyond my comprehension to understand why any school would adopt a logo in order to make fun of themselves or others. I would say that most teams choose logos to honor rather than to berate. We did send this bill to the 41st day with proponent promise that it would be brought back again next year and the ACLU would probably become involved.

On the House floor, discussion continued on the surrogacy bill whereas the sponsor's wish is to regulate companies that charge people to find surrogates. What is trying to be accomplished is to set parameters so these businesses cannot charge large fees to hopeful couples who want some right person to carry a child for them. (Private surrogacy would still be permitted). An amendment was added to conduct a summer study on the subject, and the body agreed. That way we can look at all sides of the issue hopefully create fair legislation.

HB1056 caused me great heartburn. It permits electronic devices in assisted living or nursing home rooms of loved ones. First, the device is family funded, so that means only people who can afford it can have this. Second, it means that people can monitor loved ones and, perhaps, may never make the trip to see them. Third, it could be a "big brother" system to create lawsuits against workers within the facility. Fourth, it could invade the privacy of a roommate, although the bill states that if anyone shares a room, he/she would have the right to refuse to have this system installed. My question would be if the other person is cognizant enough to refuse. Fifth, I do not like that type of constant monitoring. I think it could only lead to bad things. If a person has to go to those lengths to ensure the safety and care of those they love, perhaps they could invite grandma or grandpa to live with THEM! I know that is what I intend to do! Lol

Thank you to Sage Arnold of Hamlin for paging in the House and for doing a wonderful job! You represented your school very well.

I hope that you have a wonderful upcoming week. May God bless you with health and happiness.
Rep. Lana Greenfield

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Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jordan Wright

The chapter of the 2019 NFL season is officially over, so it's time to turn our attention towards the off-season. There are tons of important questions that will need to be answered over the next few months, but for now, we will take a quick look back to see how the Minnesota Vikings fared. This week we'll look at the offense, with the defense coming next week.

The Vikings had a top-10 offense by nearly every metric. As a whole, they ranked eighth in points per game (25.4), tenth in yards per play (5.8), and ninth in third-down conversion rate (43%). The team was fifth in the turnover battle as well, finishing the season +11.

In his second full season with the Vikings, Kirk Cousins proved he is a very good quarterback. Out of all QBs who threw at least 100 passes, Cousins was fourth in completion percentage (69.1), seventh in yards per attempt (8.1), eighth in touchdowns (26), and fourth in QB rating (107.4). Despite the top-10 rankings in most categories, there were 23 QBs who threw more passes this season, indicating Cousins wasn't asked to put the team on his back very often, but was able to make it count when he got the chance. The front office has an important question to answer this offseason: Is Cousins good enough to help this team win it all?

The biggest reason Cousins wasn't asked to do much was because running back Dalvin Cook was playing at an incredibly high level in 2019. He had 1,135 yards (81.1 yards per game) and 13 touchdowns on the ground, while adding 53 receptions and 519 yards through the air. Alexander Mattison also did a great job as the primary backup, accumulating 544 total yards on 110 touches.

Stefon Diggs led the team with 63 catches for 1,130 yards and six touchdowns. Adam Thielen dealt with a myriad of injuries this past season and only played in 10 games, leading to his worst year since he became a full-time starter in 2016 (30 receptions for 418 yards and six touchdowns). Rookie Bisi Johnson turned heads in training camp, earning him the team's third WR spot, and he finished with 31 catches for 294 yards and three touchdowns. Tight end Kyle Rudolph finished second on the team in catches with 39, totaling 367 yards and six touchdowns, while rookie TE Irv Smith Jr. was right behind him with 36 catches for 311 yards and two touchdowns.

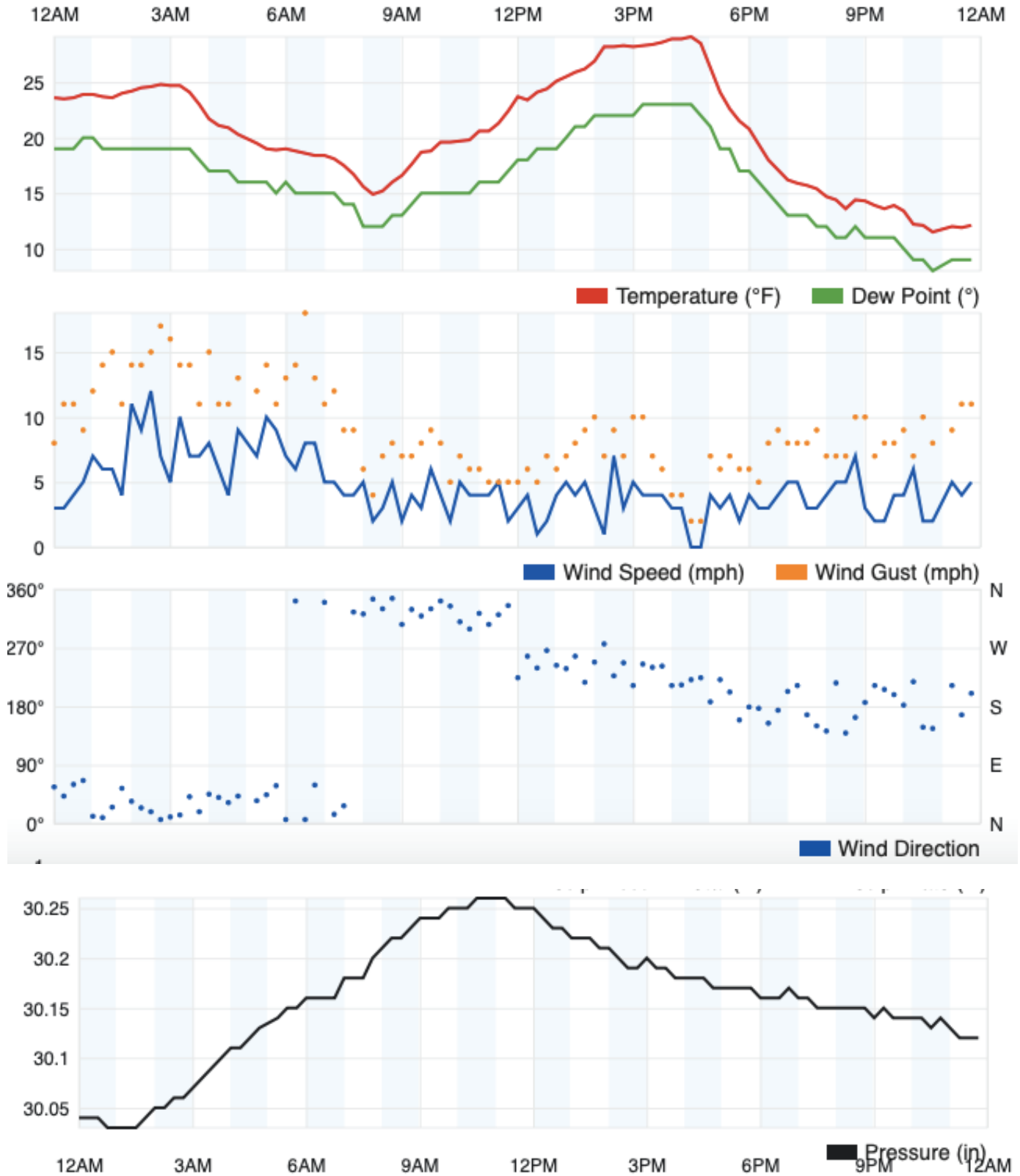
The biggest detriment to the Vikings' offense this past season was the offensive line. Although the numbers might tell a different story, the line struggled all year and were clearly overwhelmed in the playoffs. The Vikings were fifth in the league in both sacks (28) and QB hits (68), but the biggest reason for those low numbers was the offensive scheme, which focused on quick throws and play action passing. The left side of the offensive line was particularly porous, and the Vikings will need to figure out if keeping left tackle Riley Reiff and left guard Pat Elflein will be worth it. The best player along the line was right tackle Brian O'Neill, who only allowed one sack the entire season (according to Pro Football Focus).

Next week, we dig into the defensive side of the ball. If you have any questions or comments, reach out to me on Twitter (@JordanWrightNFL). Skol!

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Upcoming Events

Monday, February 10, 2020

5:15 p.m.: Junior High Boys Basketball hosts Webster Area. 7th grade at 5:15 p.m., 8th grade at 6:15 p.m.
7 p.m.: School Board Meeting

Tuesday, February 11, 2020

Junior High Boys Basketball at Ipswich. 7th grade at 4 p.m., 8th grade at 5 p.m.
Girls Basketball travels to Aberdeen Roncalli. Junior Varsity at 6:30 p.m followed by varsity game.

Wednesday, February 12, 2020

Small Group Music Contest at Northern State University

Thursday, February 13, 2020

1:30pm- 8:30pm Parent/Teacher Conferences at GHS Gymnasium, Groton Area Elementary School

Friday, February 14, 2020

Rushmore Challenge Debate at Harrisburg High School

NO SCHOOL - Faculty Inservice

Basketball Double Header at Warner. Girls JV at 4 p.m., Boys JV at 5:15 p.m., Girls Varsity at 6:30 p.m followed by the Boys Varsity Game.

Saturday, February 15, 2020

Rushmore Challenge Debate at Harrisburg High School

10:00 a.m.: Junior High State Wrestling Tournament at Pierre High School

Basketball Doubleheader with Mobridge-Pollock coming to Groton Area. Girls JV at 2 p.m., Boys JV at 3 p.m., Girls Varsity at 4:30 p.m. followed by the Boys Varsity Game.

Sunday, February 16, 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

Monday, February 17, 2020

President's Day - NO SCHOOL

Boys Basketball hosts Aberdeen Roncalli. C game at 5 p.m. followed by JV then Varsity.

Tuesday, February 18, 2020

Girls Varsity at Webster Area. JV game at 6:30 p.m. followed by Varsity Game.

7 pm.: City Council Meeting at Groton Community Center

Thursday, February 20, 2020

Girls Basketball hosts Milbank. JV game at 6 p.m. followed by Varsity Game.

Friday, February 21, 2020

Boys Basketball at Milbank. C game at 5 p.m., followed by JV then Varsity.

6:30pm: Elementary PAC Science Night at Groton Area Elementary School

Saturday, February 22, 2020

Basketball: Boys 7th/8th Jamboree at Britton-Hecla High School

10:00am: Wrestling: Varsity Regions at Sisseton

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Today



Mostly Sunny

High: 31 °F

Tonight



Partly Cloudy

Low: 10 °F

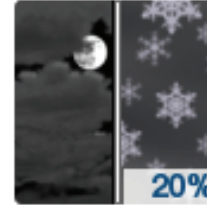
Tuesday



Mostly Sunny

High: 29 °F

Tuesday
Night



Mostly Cloudy
then Slight
Chance Snow


Low: 12 °F

Wednesday





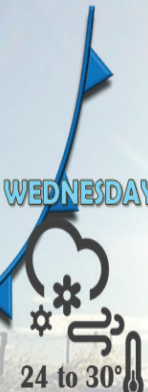


Blustery.
Slight Chance
Snow then
Mostly Cloudy


High: 26 °F




Work-Week Outlook

Arctic Blast Wednesday

| TODAY | TUESDAY | WEDNESDAY | THURSDAY | FRIDAY |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  |  |  |  |  |
| 28 to 36° 10 to 20° | 26 to 38° 10 to 24° | 24 to 30° -20 to -5° | -5 to 15° -15 to 10° | 20 to 40° 10 to 20° |

 *Travel Wednesday morning through the early evening will be affected by blowing snow mainly along and east of the James Valley.*

 *Wind chills will dip between -20 and -40 F Wednesday night into Thursday morning.*

NWS Aberdeen, SD
Updated: 2/10/2020 5:50 AM Central

After seasonable temperatures with breezy conditions at times today and Tuesday, an arctic front will pass through the area Wednesday morning. The result will be strong north winds and between a trace and 1" of snow east of the Missouri River. Blowing snow is a concern Wednesday morning into the early evening, mainly east of the James Valley. Dangerously cold air follows in behind Wednesday night into Thursday.

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Today in Weather History

February 10, 1993: Snow fell across all of South Dakota from the 10th to the 12th with over 8 inches occurring in south-central, west-central, and the southwest. Some reports included 13 inches at Harrington, 12 inches at Midland, 10.5 inches at Winner, 10 inches near Stephan, Ardmore, and Wagner, 8.5 inches near Lead and Milesville, and 8 inches at Mitchell and Usta.

February 10, 1996: Across central and northeast South Dakota as well as west central Minnesota, an intense area of low pressure and an Arctic high-pressure area created strong winds from 35 to 50 mph with gusts to around 65 mph through the afternoon and into the late evening. These high winds combined with the falling snow and the snow already on the ground to create blizzard conditions and slick roads across northeast South Dakota and west central Minnesota. Highway 12 from Webster to Summit was closed the evening of the 10th along with Interstate-29 from Summit to Sisseton. Hundreds of travelers were stranded at Summit for several hours until conditions improved. Some wind gusts included 61 mph at Mobridge and 66 mph at Pierre and Aberdeen.

February 10, 2013: An extreme low-pressure area moving across the region brought widespread heavy snow of 6 to as much as 19 inches. Along with the heavy snow came very strong winds of 30 to 50 mph causing extensive blowing and drifting snow. Roads, highways, along with Interstates 29 and 90 were closed for a time. Schools started late or were closed on Monday the 11th.

1921: The town of Gardner, Georgia was devastated by a massive, estimated F4 tornado that caused an entire section of the small town to disappear. This tornado killed 31 people and injured 100.

1959: St. Louis, Missouri was hit by a massive F4 tornado that killed 21 and injured 345. Over 2000 buildings were damaged or destroyed, including the St. Louis Arena.

1981: A morning tornado at Bay Minette, AL struck the local middle school. The school's gymnasium was severely damaged, and 62 people were hurt, 44 of which were students.

2010: Cyclone Pat slams The Cook Islands with 125 mph winds, which destroyed about 80 percent of the island of Aitutaki.

1899 - The temperature at Monterey plunged to 29 degrees below zero, establishing record for the state of Virginia. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1973 - A major snowstorm struck the southeastern U.S. It produced as much as 18 inches in Georgia, and up to two feet of snow in South Carolina. (David Ludlum)

1978 - As much as eight inches of rain drenched southern California resulting in widespread flooding and mudslides. The heavy rainfall produced a wall of water which ripped through the mountain resort community of Hidden Springs drowning at least thirteen persons. The storm was one of the most destructive of record causing fifty million dollars damage. (David Ludlum)

1982 - Bismarck, ND, experienced its 45th consecutive day of subzero temperature readings which tied the previous record long string of subzero daily lows ending on the same date in 1937. (David Ludlum)

1987 - A storm in the northeastern U.S. produced heavy snow in southeastern Maine. Grand Falls and Woodland received 15 inches, mainly during the early morning hours, while most of the rest of the state did not even see a flake of snow. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Bitter cold arctic air gripped the north central U.S. International Falls MN was the cold spot in the nation with a low of 35 degrees below zero. Record warm readings were reported in southern California, with highs of 78 at San Francisco and 88 at Los Angeles. San Juan Capistrano CA was the hot spot in the nation with a high of 92 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - For the first time all month winter relaxed its grip on the nation. The temperature at Brownsville TX warmed above 60 degrees for the first time in six days, ending their second longest such cold spell of record. (The National Weather Summary)

1990 - Thunderstorms developing ahead of a cold front continued to produce severe weather across the southeastern U.S. through the morning hours and into the late afternoon. There were a total of twenty-nine tornadoes in twenty-nine hours, and 245 reports of large hail or damaging winds. Pre-dawn thunderstorms produced high winds which injured at least seventy persons in Alabama and Georgia, and caused more than twelve million dollars property damage. A tornado at Austell GA prior to daybreak injured two persons and caused two million dollars damage. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

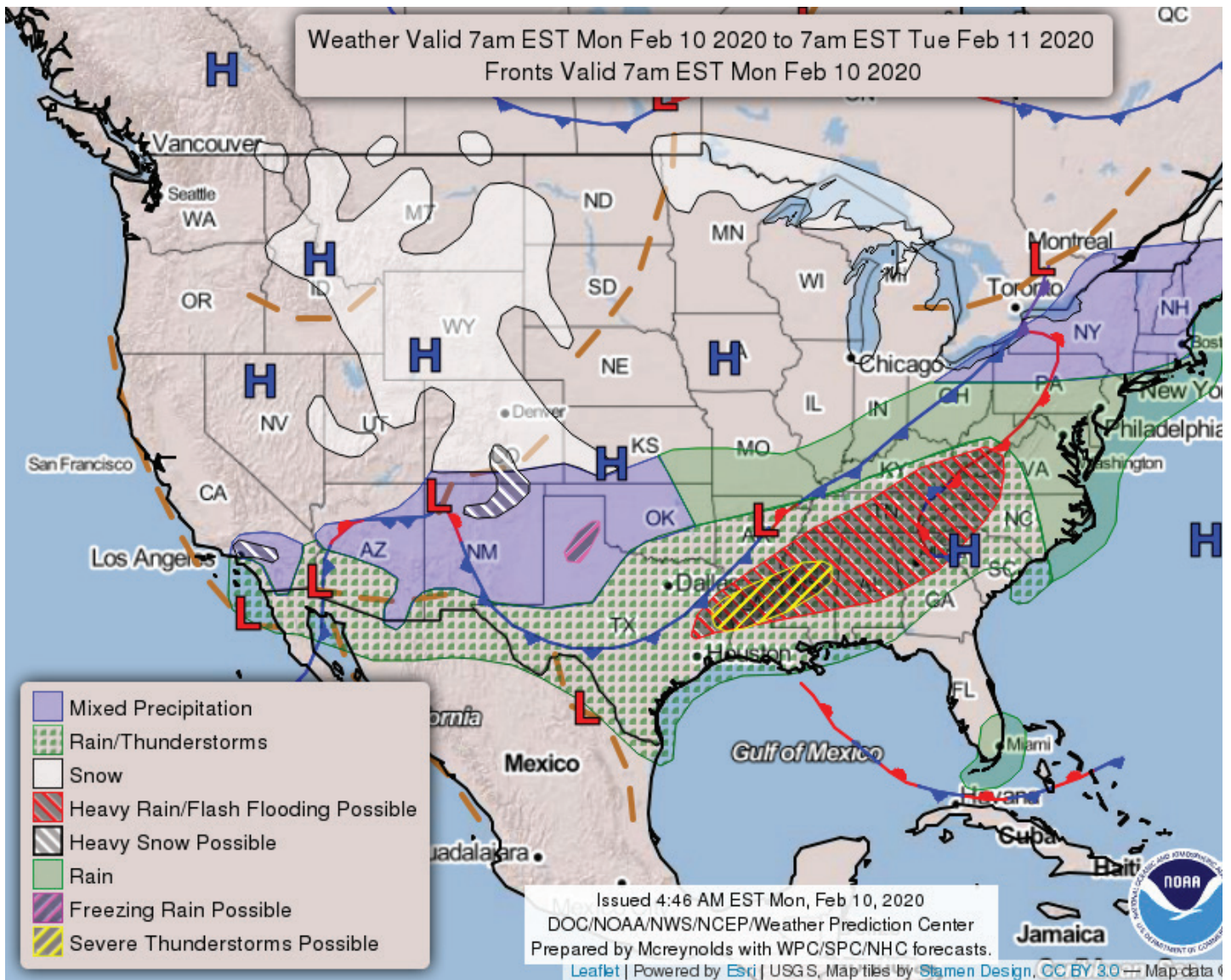
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 29 °F at 4:31 PM
Low Temp: 11 °F at 10:54 PM
Wind: 18 mph at 3:46 AM
Snow

Record High: 53° in 1977, 1934
Record Low: -28° in 1988, 1981
Average High: 26°F
Average Low: 5°F
Average Precip in Feb.: 0.14
Precip to date in Feb.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 0.61
Precip Year to Date: 0.35
Sunset Tonight: 5:53 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:42 a.m.



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IS GOD ASLEEP?

A small child was having a difficult time being quiet in church. Whispering in his ear, his father said in desperation, "Hush, this is where God lives. Be quiet when you are in His house!"

"Why?" asked the child. "Is God asleep?"

Certainly not. Our God, the God Who created heaven and earth - and all that is in it and on it and above it - has promised us in His Word that He is always watching over us, day and night. We must never forget that He is "awake," watching carefully and waiting patiently to guide and guard us. This One, this all-powerful God, who loved us and gave His Son to redeem us, is always available to meet our every need - every moment of every day!

We often forget that God is constantly watching over us and caring deeply for us. More than anyone we know, He is for us. We often "trade Him in" for lesser "gods" who cannot be trusted - the gods of money and power, prestige and worldly success. Even though we turn to them often and trust in them deeply, only the God who created us will always be faithful to us, strengthen and sustain us and never abandon us. In Him we are safe and secure - day and night.

Prayer: Lord, help us to recognize that Your watchful eye is carefully overseeing our lives with compassion. May we realize that You are meeting each need. THANKS! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Psalm 121 I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth.

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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
- 06/19/2020 SDSU Golf at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/04/2020 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
Groton Hosting State B American Legion Baseball Tournament
- 07/12/2020 Summer Fest/Car Show
- 07/31-08/04/2020 State American Legion Baseball Tournament in Groton
- 09/12/2020 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. (1st Sat. after Labor Day)
- 10/10/2020 Pumpkin Fest
- 10/31/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
- 11/14/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Annual Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)

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News from the  Associated Press

TRANQUILL: Change is necessary to continue to thrive

Matthew Tranquill Journal Publisher

The Rapid City Journal is in good shape.

That doesn't mean we don't have challenges like all media companies do. To say anything different would be an outright lie. My job as the publisher of your local newspaper is to make sure it is the best paper possible for this great area. For the last few months I have talked to hundreds of people about the future look of the Rapid City Journal. I have had focus groups lead by a research leader in our industry.

Let's talk about the great things happening at the Journal according to our readers. We have enjoyed our local advertisers rallying around us more in the last year than ever before. Because of this, we were able to recruit some of the best journalists in the business. We have also been able to keep some of South Dakota's best reporters while recruiting a few more outstanding ones. True, we have also lost a few great ones, but as with anything in life, we must move on even with adversity.

One of the largest concerns from our readers is how to improve delivery and keep our cost at a controllable rate while giving them the best local, state and national news and sports possible. The second concern is our price of the paper going up every year, sometimes twice a year.

As the story on the front page states, we are going to go down to 5 days a week for our printed product. Subscribers will continue to receive a printed newspaper Tuesday through Friday and a dramatically enhanced and expanded Saturday weekend edition that will be our largest paper of the week. The Rapid City Journal will be delivered using dependable carriers in our city market and through the U.S. Postal Service in outlying areas. People who only receive Sunday's paper will just start receiving it a day earlier.

All Rapid City Journal subscribers will continue to have access to the local news and information they rely on every single day of the week on our website, rapidcityjournal.com, and through our digital replica version of the newspaper also available at our website. There will be a seven day a week newspaper on our replica version, or what we call an e-edition. If you have not signed up for our digital replica (e-edition), I encourage you to do so. If you need help with activating your online replica version, please call 605-394-8300 Option 0, or email custservice@rapidcityjournal.com.

Why do this? Times have changed.

To make sure the Rapid City Journal is here for the next 100 years, this is a decision that had to be made. Younger people are reading more in digital media. It is less expensive to deliver news through digital avenues. However, there is something to be said about holding the printed version in your hands. My hope is that this move will keep the actual paper version around for decades to come.

We are ahead of the curve. We are not however the first newspaper that has reduced delivery days. The Detroit Press is a 3 day delivered newspaper, The Examiner, in San Francisco, is two days, the Washington Examiner is weekly, and The Flint Journal is 2 days just to name a few.

We need your continued support more than ever. It is my job to earn that.

Rapid City is my home. We need to continue the great tradition of the Rapid City Journal. This is not the beginning of the end, but the start of a new chapter of the Rapid City Journal. And by the way, did I mention, there is no plans for a rate increase in the near future?

Man fatally injured at Black Hills ski resort

LEAD, S.D. (AP) — Officials at a ski resort in the Black Hills say a man has died after he was injured on one of the slopes over the weekend.

The death occurred at Terry Peak Ski Area near Lead on Saturday afternoon, according to resort spokeswoman Linda Derosier.

"The Terry Peak management and staff send their sincere condolences to the family and friends of this

young man," Derosier said.

The fatal injury occurred on the eve of Terry Peak joining with the National Ski Areas Association's #RideAnotherDay campaign, which encourages skiers and snowboarders to slow down and be ready to avoid collisions.

Derek's journey: From being a kid to beating cancer

By ABIGAIL DOLLINS Argus Leader

DELL RAPIDS, S.D. (AP) — The floor creaked under 10-year-old Derek Gerlach's feet as he sat up in his bed.

"I don't like this part," Derek said to his mom, Donelle Gerlach.

The Dell Rapids fifth-grader was not dreading going to school but instead the waves of dizziness and nausea that came over him each morning. Donelle was concerned, but thought he might of sat up too quickly.

Her worry only grew after she came home from work one day in November 2018 and found Derek tucked away in the corner of the couch. Her energetic son would normally be playing with his yellow lab or eating a snack. His face looked pale, almost as if he was coming down with the flu. She sat down on the couch and asked him how he was feeling.

Derek could not pinpoint what was wrong, but knew he hadn't felt right for a while.

Donelle and her husband, Shane Gerlach, scheduled an appointment with his pediatrician.

"I honestly thought we were going to go into the doctor, and she was going to tell us he had a sinus infection," Donelle said.

Diagnosis: Stage four brain cancer

After Derek confessed the full extent of his symptoms to the doctor, his parents saw more of a cause for concern, the Sioux Falls Argus Leader reported.

Derek admitted to throwing up everyday for the past three weeks.

The doctor immediately ordered an EKG for that Friday afternoon, and CAT scan for the following Tuesday. After the CAT scan, Donelle and Derek — not too worried — were driving around Sioux Falls looking at "fancy" houses on the same side of town as the doctor. As they started to drive toward the interstate to go home, they got the call that the whole family needed to immediately return to the doctor's office. Shane left work to meet them there.

Donelle knew instantly what the black mass on the scans over Derek's brain meant.

"Immediately there's that pit in your stomach that you know this is not going to be good," said Donelle, who herself was diagnosed with breast cancer the year before.

Derek was diagnosed with stage four medullablastoma, a type of brain cancer, on Tuesday, Nov. 6, 2018.

"It's going to be okay, Dad," Derek said as he reached for Shane's hand.

The next day, Derek was rushed to emergency surgery for the removal of the tumor on his brain. Unpacking their bags in the hospital room, the Gerlachs got their first taste of the sterile environment they would come to know so well in Derek's treatment journey.

'Every single moment': Fighting since day one

Derek has always been a fighter.

Born 30 days premature, he spent the first part of his life lying in a NICU bed, surrounded by tubes and warning signs.

But Derek is no quitter. Named after baseball legend Derek Jeter, he, too, was ready to make his mark on the world.

Derek surpassed doctors' expectations and went home at just 10 days old.

"From that point on, you cherish every single moment, and you don't take any of them for granted." Shane said. "When you fight for so long to have a child and then to almost lose that child, every single moment I get with him from the day he was born has been a moment I thought I would never have."

From hospital to hospital: Countless hours on the road

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The rhythmic sound of cars passing on the interstate made each trip to the doctor feel like eternity. 500 miles round trip from Dell Rapids to Rochester, Minnesota, for proton radiation. 60 miles round trip from Dell Rapids to Sioux Falls for chemo treatment. Countless hours spent in that same sterile doctor's office environment. Countless hours spent away from home.

This was the Gerlachs new routine.

Donelle and Shane would rotate weeks staying at the Ronald McDonald House while Derek underwent proton radiation.

They are not alone. Between 250 and 500 children are diagnosed with medullablastoma each year in the United States, according to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

A break from the things he loves

Each day came with its own struggles: keeping on weight, the anxiety that comes with continual scans and tests, and neuropathy in his hands and feet that make it hard to do some of the things he loves, like riding his bike and playing piano.

Before the cancer diagnosis, Derek would hop on his blue mountain bike, decorated with scuff marks from use, and ride it for miles. The wind would blow through his bright red hair.

It took him eight years to learn how to ride a bike, and he hopes he remembers how to ride once he's able to again.

Sense of normalcy at school

Despite the medical challenges, school offers Derek a sense of normalcy.

Derek doesn't want to be treated differently, and his bestfriend, Ryan Baker, helps to maintain that. The two are often inseparable. When their history teacher asked the class to find a partner, Ryan and Derek immediately locked eyes and pointed their pencils at each other.

"He's been supportive throughout this year," Derek said. "He's just been there to take my mind off all this."

The support shown to Derek extends beyond his close-knit friend group.

Sixth-grade English and math teacher Kari Hettinger has seen how Derek's peers have supported him throughout his journey.

"His classmates have done a good job at recognizing that it still affects him without making it a big deal, and I think that's really important to Derek," Hettinger said. "They do a good job at not treating him like a child with cancer, but they also do a good job at letting him know that they haven't forgotten."

School isn't the only place Derek has received support. People have donated more than \$30,000 to the Gerlachs through a GoFundMe page.

The end of his fight and the road ahead

"Scanxiety" — the anxiety that comes with each scan — falls over the Gerlachs as they wait for MRI results.

Every scan has come back clean since the start of Derek's journey.

Since Derek responded well to radiation and chemotherapy, the family is hopeful for the future.

Derek ended his cancer treatment journey surrounded by family and friends on Dec. 27, 2019, at the Sanford Children's Hospital.

Grasping onto the metal chain, Derek put all his strength into ringing the bell and filling the lobby with its sound. Derek isn't sure of what's next, but he is sure that he can handle it.

Derek, now 12 years old, is looking forward to every reason for celebration. The self-proclaimed Star Wars fan is excited to visit Disney World's Galaxy's Edge during a trip he's taking with his family in early February.

It's also the small victories — getting out of bed isn't so painful anymore.

"It'll just add toward my strength and courage for the next big thing," Derek said. "Hopefully we don't have a next big thing, but if we do I'll be ready."

Sturgis students run own classroom coffee shop, learn skills

By DEB HOLLAND Black Hills Pioneer

STURGIS, S.D. (AP) — Students in Steve Hilton's life skills classroom at Sturgis Brown High School are learning job and life skills one cup of coffee at a time.

On a recent Thursday, the students held a grand opening and ribbon cutting for their Scooper Sam's Awesome Coffee Hut which is nestled in the corner of Room 162.

Food service regulations prohibit the students from selling their coffee, tea and hot chocolate to fellow students, but they have found a brisk business selling to staff.

The coffee is freshly ground. They offer a variety of mix-in flavors, both regular and sugar-free, along with eight flavors of tea.

Students rotate job duties which include taking orders, making drinks and delivering drinks.

The 14 students fill out timecards and are paid with classroom currency via check once weekly.

The students must deposit the check into their bank account. Then, if they want to buy a drink, they have to write a check out of their classroom currency account to pay for it.

The hands-on project has given student Beau Remington a dream of someday working in a coffee shop outside of school.

"I would love to do that. I love coffee," said Beau, who has now earned the nickname of "Beu-rista" for his stellar coffee-making skills.

Beau told the Black Hills Pioneer it is important to have the coffee shop business because he learns new things every day.

"Making coffee makes me happy. It helps me concentrate and do what I need to do to focus," he said.

Hilton gives credit for the operation to the students.

"This is the students' business," he said. "Everything that we have come up with has come from them."

Hilton said he planted the seed and the students took it from there.

The idea first surfaced when Hilton and Ronda Feterl, day program coordinator for Black Hills Special Services Cooperative, attended a summer conference and heard about the coffee shop concept being used at Harrisburg High School.

They then visited an in-school coffee shop at Rapid City Stevens High School this fall.

From there, the planning for Scooper Sam's Awesome Coffee Hut began.

"We put together what we wanted to do and how we wanted to do it," Hilton said.

Then, they figured out how much it was going to cost.

Hilton's co-worker Kelsey Smith helped price out equipment and presented a proposal to Pioneer Bank & Trust who agreed to fund the project with \$2,000.

Hilton has a motto on the wall in his classroom. It reads: "Make today so awesome that yesterday gets jealous."

As the students brainstormed names for their coffee shop, they knew they wanted to use their class motto as their business motto.

So, Scooper Sam's Awesome Coffee Hut's motto is "Making today's cup so awesome yesterday's cup gets jealous."

When their concept started to take shape, the students worked with students in Tere Froelich's journalism class to put together a survey that went out to staff about what they would like to see in a coffee shop.

"We didn't want to make too much, but wanted to make it something that would be used," Hilton said. "We took what we got back from that survey and developed what we now have to offer."

Hilton said it has been fun to see the excitement build among the student business managers as the coffee shop concept came together.

When the equipment started to arrive in their classroom the dream of a coffee shop became very real, Hilton said.

"The lights really began shining brightly," he said.

Feterl said she sees school as a culture, and the entrepreneurs in the life skills classroom are part of

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that culture.

"It has really opened the doors to these entrepreneurs in a way that none of us could have imagined. I have seen confidence grow in a matter of three weeks and it has been overwhelming," she said.

The students feel more a part of the community at Sturgis Brown High School and take pride in their business, she said.

"This is even more than Steve and I could have imagined this opportunity could actually bring back to the students here. We're very thankful to everyone for giving the opportunity to shine like everyone else. Their whole attitude has changed. They feel good about themselves," Feterl said.

Brice Rock, vice president and branch manager of Pioneer Bank & Trust of Sturgis, along with Dylan Clarkson, president and chief executive officer of Pioneer Bank & Trust, were on hand for the grand opening.

"We're grateful to be asked. This is part of our obligation to western South Dakota and the communities that we serve," Clarkson said. "All of you did the hard work. We just thank you for letting us be a part of it."

Hilton is an employee of Black Hills Special Services Cooperative which provides educational services, including support for the developmentally disabled, for school districts in the Black Hills from Oelrichs, Edgemont, Hot Springs, Custer, Belle Fourche, Spearfish, Lead-Deadwood, Sturgis, Rapid City, Douglas and as far east as Haakon County.

They rent the life skills classroom at the high school from the Meade School District.

Burst of snow makes roads slippery in southern Minnesota

A winter storm dumped more than a foot of snow on parts of the Upper Midwest on Sunday, making roads slippery in southern Minnesota.

The National Weather Service reports 16 inches (41 centimeters) of snow fell on Estelline, in eastern South Dakota, as of Sunday morning while Lake Crystal, in southern Minnesota, reported 15.5 inches (39 centimeters). More than 12 inches (30 centimeters) of snow fell on De Smet, South Dakota, and on St. James, Minnesota.

The Minneapolis-St. Paul International Airport recorded 4.8 inches (12 centimeters) of snow as of noon Sunday.

Both Minneapolis and St. Paul declared snow emergencies. The storm had moved on to western Wisconsin by noon Sunday.

In eastern Wisconsin, Outagamie County sheriff's authorities said winter and road conditions apparently were a factor in a two-vehicle crash Sunday morning that killed a 32-year-old woman from the New London area and injured a 38-year-old woman from the Appleton area.

No. 22 South Dakota cruises to 11th straight win, 93-46

GRAND FORKS, N.D. (AP) — Ciara Duffy scored 17 points as one of six South Dakota players to reach double figures and the No. 22 Coyotes rolled to their 11th consecutive win, beating North Dakota 93-46 on Sunday.

Taylor Frederick added 15 points, Chloe Lamb 14, Hannah Sjerven 12 and Madison McKeever and Jeniah Ugofsky 10 each for South Dakota (22-2, 11-0). The Coyotes won by 12 points more than their average victory margin of 35 versus Summit League opponents. They have beaten the Fighting Hawks (14-10, 5-6) in eight straight meetings.

Duffy had 11 points and Lamb 10 by halftime which had South Dakota ahead 43-18. It was 74-34 after three quarters.

The Coyotes shot 52.5%, outrebounded the Hawks by 18 and outscored them 52-18 in the paint.

Megan Zander led North Dakota with eight points. The Hawks shot just 22.4% and made only 4 of 28 from the arc for 14%.

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

AP_Top25

China virus cases rise again, 65 more on ship in Japan

By JOE McDONALD Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — China reported a rise in new virus cases Monday, denting optimism that disease control measures including isolating major cities might be working, while the operator of a cruise ship in Japan reported dozens of new cases.

Britain declared the virus an “imminent threat” and said it would forcibly detain infected people if necessary. France tested 45 children and their parents after five British tourists contracted the virus at a ski resort.

More Chinese workers and shoppers went back to offices and markets following the Lunar New Year, which was extended to discourage travel and reduce the risk the virus might spread.

Hong Kong canceled an arts festival including two concerts by the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

China reported consumer inflation spiked to an eight-year high in January, possibly boosted by panic buying and hoarding as word of the outbreak and anti-disease measures spread.

The latest developments:

CHINA'S DEATH TOLL RISES, GLOBAL STOCK MARKETS SLIDE

The mainland death toll rose by 97 to 908 in the 24 hours through midnight Sunday and 3,062 new cases were reported.

That was up 15% from Saturday and broke a string of daily declines. A government spokesman had said Sunday those declines showed containment measures were successful.

The fatality toll has passed the 774 people believed to have died in the 2002-03 epidemic of severe acute respiratory syndrome, another viral outbreak that originated in China. The total of 40,171 cases on the mainland vastly exceeds the 8,098 sickened by SARS.

More than 440 cases have been confirmed outside mainland China, including two deaths in Hong Kong and the Philippines.

China has built two hospitals and sent thousands of extra doctors, nurses and other health care workers to Wuhan, the city of 11 million people in central China that is the epicenter of the outbreak. Most access to Wuhan was suspended Jan. 23. Restrictions have spread to cities with a total of 60 million people.

Global stock markets slid following warnings that investor optimism that the disease and its economic impact were being brought under control might be premature.

CRUISE SHIP: 65 NEW CASES IN JAPAN

Japan's health ministry said an additional 65 cases were found aboard a cruise ship quarantined in Yokohama, south of Tokyo, raising the total to 135.

The operator of the ship earlier reported 66 new cases, but the ministry said one person may have been counted twice.

Health Minister Katsunobu Kato said the Japanese government was considering testing all 3,711 passengers and crew on the Diamond Princess, which would require them to remain aboard until results are available. Health authorities are scrambling to deliver medicine requested by more than 600 passengers.

“We are doing the utmost to keep everyone in good health,” Kato said.

BRITAIN DECLARES “IMMINENT THREAT,” FRANCE TESTS CHILDREN

The British government declared the virus a “serious and imminent threat to public health,” which it said gives authorities powers to forcibly detain infected people if necessary.

The change comes after a British man who caught the virus in Singapore in January appeared to be linked to at least seven other confirmed cases in Europe.

Five Britons, including a 9-year-old boy, contracted the virus in the French Alpine ski town of Contamines-Montjoie after staying in the same chalet as the British man.

French medical authorities tested 45 children and their families Sunday from the area and temporarily closed three schools where the boy spent time.

CHINESE OFFICES, MARKETS START TO REOPEN

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More Chinese went back to work following the Lunar New Year holiday, which was extended to discourage travel in an attempt to contain the virus.

Zhang Peng, who works for a livestreaming company in Beijing, went to the office for the first time since the holiday. The company checked employees for fever and handed out masks.

"I thought the situation is fairly good now," Zhang said. "I went to work by subway today and underwent various checks in the station. And my company did a good job of prevention and control."

Iris Ke, who works for an advertising company, said she plans to wait until next week to go back to the office.

"We just need to have a little more sense of self-protection," said Ke. "Life goes on anyway. How come we stop going outside or stop working simply because of fear of disease? We can't do that."

At the Sanyuanli market in Beijing, the Chinese capital, shoppers in face masks mixed with delivery drivers who were collecting orders of meat, fruit and vegetables. Stalls were stocked with pork, mutton, seafood and vegetables.

"The number of customers here is down a lot, maybe by more than half," said Liu Ying, who sells walnuts, cashews and other specialties. "But you can see a lot of people calling in orders, so we're slowly getting busy again."

Meanwhile, the Beijing city government told residential compounds in the capital to close their gates, check visitors for fever and record their identities, newspapers reported. Many apartment complexes already have taken such steps on their own.

A city official was cited as saying entertainment venues should close. A government statement told the public to "strictly abide by" regulations requiring wearing of masks in public and to avoid group activities.

CHINESE INFLATION RISES, BEIJING PROMISES BUSINESS AID

Consumer inflation spiked to an eight-year high of 5.4% over a year earlier in January, driven by a 4.4% rise in food costs, the government reported. Food prices rose 1.4% from the previous month.

"It appears that supply disruptions and hoarding due to the coronavirus outbreak helped to keep food prices elevated during the week after Chinese New Year, when they would normally drop back," Julian Evans-Pritchard of Capital Economics said in a report.

China's central bank announced a 300 billion yuan (\$43 billion) fund to make low-interest loans to producers of medicine and medical supplies or other companies involved in fighting the virus.

Over the weekend, the government promised tax cuts and subsidies to farmers, supermarkets, producers of medical supplies and companies that contribute to anti-disease work.

China's leaders are trying to keep food flowing to crowded cities despite the anti-disease controls and to quell fears of possible shortages and price spikes following panic buying after most access to Wuhan and nearby cities was cut off.

HONG KONG ARTS FESTIVAL CANCELED

Organizers of the Hong Kong Arts Festival canceled all of its more than 120 planned music, dance and drama performances, including two concerts by the Boston Symphony Orchestra. The festival was due to start this week and run through mid-March.

AP video journalist Liu Zheng and Associated Press Writers Mari Yamaguchi in Tokyo, Eileen Ng in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, and Danica Kirka in London contributed to this report.

South Koreans explode with joy over 'Parasite' Oscar wins

By **HYUNG-JIN KIM and JUWON PARK** Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Koreans reacted with rare collective joy Monday after director Bong Joon Ho's "Parasite" won the Oscar for best picture and three other awards, good news that came as their country struggles to guard against a new virus and counter North Korea's nuclear threat.

The movie's wins made history in both the Hollywood and South Korean film industries. The class satire is the first non-English-language film to win best picture in the 92-year history of the Academy Awards,

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and is the first South Korean movie to ever win an Oscar.

"Can you believe that 'Parasite' won the Academy best picture?" South Korea's biggest newspaper, Chosun Ilbo, said in a headline. "It rewrote the Academy's 92-year-old history."

South Korean social media were overwhelmed with congratulatory messages. Bong, "Parasite" and other Oscar-related news also dominated search terms throughout Monday at major internet portal sites, which had been preoccupied with the outbreak of a virus in China that has killed more than 900 people and sickened tens of thousands of others, mainly in China.

Worries about the virus have been growing in South Korea, where 27 cases have been reported, though no deaths have occurred. Sales at tour agencies, restaurants, movie theaters and department stores have sharply declined, raising worries about the impact on South Korea's already-lagging economy. Opposition parties are accusing the government of ineffectiveness in coping with the outbreak.

But the concerns about the virus and political warfare eased Monday to celebrate Bong's wins.

"It's happy news, like welcome rain, to the Republic of Korea, which is depressed, stagnant and thrown into despair due to Wuhan pneumonia," the main opposition Liberty Korea Party said in a statement. Wuhan is the Chinese city at the center of the outbreak.

President Moon Jae-in and his advisers began a regularly scheduled meeting by clapping their hands to celebrate Bong's wins. Moon later tweeted that he is proud of Bong and his staff and "particularly grateful to them for giving courage and pride to our people who are overcoming difficulties."

"I think this was a great opportunity to let the world know the true value of Korean movies," said office worker Cho Sung-ho, 54. "I think it is very meaningful that the Academy Award this time has acknowledged the superior quality of Korean films."

U.S. Ambassador Harry Harris, who said he watched the Academy Awards ceremony with embassy staff, tweeted, "Wow! Congrats Director Bong, Team #Parasite & ROK cinema!"

Hyeonjun Jeong, a 10-year-old "Parasite" actor who remained in Seoul, shouted with joy as he watched a TV broadcast of the awards.

"I thought it would be awesome to get them, and we actually won them," Jeong told The Associated Press. "So I am wondering if I am in heaven."

At Bong's alma mater, Seoul's Yonsei University, students belonging to a school movie club watched the Academy Award ceremony together.

"It's deeply meaningful for Korean movies and this will open the path for further development. It's such a great honor. I'm speechless," said Kim Nam-hoon, 21.

Jeong Ho-cheol, a 26-year-old student, praised Bong for pleasing both movie critics and crowds. "His way of dealing with the underside of Korean society and problems such as rich-poor gaps and the way he expresses those issues are very expressive," he said.

Park Chan-wook, a prominent South Korean movie director who is regarded as Bong's main rival at home, joined the congratulations.

It is a "huge blessing to work in the same industry as a person as talented as Bong and being able to call him a friend," said Park, who won the Grand Prix at the 2004 Cannes Film Festival for "Oldboy," in an interview with the Munhwa Ilbo newspaper.

Associated Press writer Kim Tong-hyung contributed to this report.

Drugs fail to slow decline in inherited Alzheimer's disease

By **MARILYNN MARCHIONE AP** Chief Medical Writer

Two experimental drugs failed to prevent or slow mental decline in a study of people who are virtually destined to develop Alzheimer's disease at a relatively young age because of rare gene flaws.

The results announced Monday are another disappointment for the approach that scientists have focused on for years -- trying to remove a harmful protein that builds up in the brains of people with Alzheimer's, the leading cause of dementia.

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"We actually don't even know yet what the drugs did" in term of removing that protein because those results are still being analyzed, said study leader Dr. Randall Bateman at Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri.

But after five years on average, the main goal of the study was not met — people on either of the drugs scored about the same on thinking and memory tests as others given placebo treatments.

More than 5 million people in the United States and millions more worldwide have Alzheimer's. Current drugs only temporarily ease symptoms and do not alter the course of the disease.

The study tested solanezumab by Eli Lilly & Co., and gantenerumab by Swiss drugmaker Roche and its U.S. subsidiary, Genentech. Both drugs gave disappointing results in some earlier studies, but the doses in this one ranged up to four to five times higher and researchers had hoped that would prove more effective.

The study was funded by the U.S. National Institute on Aging, the Alzheimer's Association and some foundations.

It involved about 200 people in the United States, Europe and elsewhere with flaws in one of three genes.

"If you get one of these genetic mutations you're almost guaranteed to get Alzheimer's," typically in your 30s, 40s or 50s, said Dr. Eric McDade, another study leader at Washington University.

People like this account for only about 1% of Alzheimer's cases, but their brain changes and symptoms are similar to those who develop the disease at a later age. That gives a unique chance to test potential treatments.

"We know everyone will get sick and we know about what time that is" in their lives, Bateman said.

Most study participants already had signs of the harmful protein in their brain even if they were showing no symptoms when the study started.

The were given either a gantenerumab shot, an IV of solanezumab or fake versions of these treatments every four weeks. The drugs made no difference in a combination score of four memory and thinking tests compared to placebo treatments.

Side effects were not disclosed, but "there's no evidence of any drug-related deaths in the trial," McDade said.

Details will be given at a medical meeting in April.

Solanezumab is being tested in another study to see if it can slow memory loss in people with Alzheimer's.

Gantenerumab also is being tested in two other large experiments that are expected to give results in two to three years.

It's unclear whether the results will affect views on aducanumab, another experimental drug whose makers say it can remove the harmful protein and slow mental decline. Results on it have been mixed, and the companies have said they will seek federal approval for it soon. Cambridge, Massachusetts-based Biogen is developing it with a Japanese company, Eisai Co. Ltd.

Marilynn Marchione can be followed on Twitter: @MMarchioneAP

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Elizabeth Warren's challenge: Breaking out of murky middle

By WILL WEISSERT and JULIE PACE Associated Press

MANCHESTER, N.H. (AP) — Elizabeth Warren isn't struggling like Joe Biden. But she isn't soaring, like Pete Buttigieg and Bernie Sanders.

Instead, the Massachusetts senator enters a critical stretch of the campaign relegated to the murky middle. She has to convince voters she has a viable path to the nomination, even if that path is unclear. Her campaign has spent millions of dollars flexing organizational muscle throughout the country, but she's lagging in her own backyard ahead of Tuesday's New Hampshire primary.

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"I think it's going to be tough if she doesn't do well," said Neil Levesque, executive director of the New Hampshire Institute of Politics at Saint Anselm College.

Warren's standing has frustrated her supporters and advisers, who have watched last summer's surge stagnate and struggled to kick the campaign into a new political gear. They are also aware of the realities of her situation, including the fact that her fundraising has fallen off since she pulled in an impressive \$24.6 million last summer.

Warren placed a respectable third in Iowa, behind Buttigieg and Sanders. But a similar finish in New Hampshire could put her candidacy in peril.

Expectations for her here had been high. Though Sanders won New Hampshire by more than 20 points during the Democratic primary campaign in 2016, Warren is also a familiar figure for the state's voters. Her team has been touting the endorsements of nearly 700 New Hampshire elected officials, party elders, political activists and community leaders.

And if Warren doesn't win in New Hampshire, it's unclear where she might. Nevada goes next, then South Carolina and a slate of Southern states with high concentrations of African American Democrats, a demographic that polls suggest the senator has struggled to connect with.

Christina Reynolds, vice president of communications for Emily's List, said much of the political world is willing to make concessions for Warren's male counterparts that she herself doesn't get.

"We're willing to give Biden the benefit of the doubt, we're willing to argue it's OK for him not to win," Reynolds said of Biden's lackluster fourth place finish in Iowa. "What is frustrating to me is there's special case here, there's a special case there. How come the special case never applies to the women?"

The footnotes of presidential primary history are filled with candidates who rose, then fizzled, whose potential never translated into votes and victories. Some come back again in later elections and found more success, like John McCain after his 2000 primary defeat and Hillary Clinton who lost the nomination in 2008. Others shelve their White House ambitions and move on to other endeavors.

Warren is hoping to avoid that fate.

She rose in the polls last summer by pitching herself as a relatable policy wonk, a candidate with a plan for everything. But she hit a roadblock when she rolled out a Medicare for All plan that pushed off implementation for three years, angering some liberals.

Warren's campaign has tweaked its message in recent weeks, with the senator stressing her ability to unite the Democratic Party. She has also leaned into gender, noting that women have done better in elections since President Donald Trump won the White House in 2016.

Warren struggled, though, to push those messages before a national audience during Friday's debate, her highest profile opportunity to reach New Hampshire voters before the primary.

Instead, she went long stretches without speaking and sidestepped multiple opportunities to draw sharp contrasts with rivals. She appeared poised to take on Buttigieg, one of the front-runners out of Iowa, when asked by moderators if he had been held sufficiently accountable for the rise in arrests of blacks residents on marijuana possession charges while he was mayor of South Bend, Indiana.

"No. You have to own up to the facts," she said, then quickly shifted to a recitation of her own criminal justice proposals.

By night's end, Warren wound up getting four minutes less of talk time than Sanders, her chief progressive rival.

Campaigning Saturday in Manchester, Warren said she wished she'd had more time: "I had my hand up a lot."

Warren is trying to make up for that lost time in the final days before New Hampshire votes, even traveling Sunday to the state's remote northern region where Sanders' support is thought to be the strongest. She had three stops planned for Monday, the final full day of campaigning.

And her campaign's organizational strength has indeed been on display. Decked out in the campaign's signature "liberty green," hundreds of supporters packed a stadium in Manchester Saturday night for a Democratic Party dinner.

Warren jogged onto the stage and proclaimed that she was ready to exceed expectations.

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"There a lot of people who talk about what races aren't winnable or what kind of people can't win," Warren said. "The way I see it, they're going to keep saying that right up until we get in the fight, we persist and we win."

Theresa Davis, a 38-year-old who works in software services, drove two hours from Woodsville, New Hampshire, to see Warren on Sunday at a high school gymnasium in the state capital of Concord. Davis voted for Sanders in 2016, and may vote for him again. But she's still considering Warren.

"I hope she says in the race awhile. Regardless of whether or not she wins, she is shaping some of the conversations that we need to have and that is important," Davis said of Warren.

But she added: "I see Bernie having a clearer path forward, for sure."

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

This story has been corrected to show Sanders won New Hampshire, not Iowa, by more than 20 points in 2016.

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press undefined

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

1. WHICH FILM MADE OSCARS HISTORY South Korean class satire "Parasite" became the first non-English language film to win best picture in the 92-year history of the Academy Awards.
2. CHINA REPORTS RISE IN NEW VIRUS CASES The mainland death toll rose by 97 to 908 as 3,062 new cases were reported on the mainland, denting optimism that disease control measures are working; and dozens more cases were reported on a Japanese cruise ship.
3. WHICH DEMOCRATIC PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE IS ON DEFENSE On the eve of the New Hampshire primary, Pete Buttigieg is being attacked by his rivals on everything from his struggle to connect with black voters to accepting campaign contributions from large donors.
4. THAILAND CITY MOURNS AFTER COUNTRY'S WORST MASS SHOOTING Authorities in northern Thailand began releasing bodies to relatives after security forces cornered and killed a soldier who carried out the attack.
5. WHO ISRAEL IS ACCUSED OF TORTURING Israel faces allegations of severely tormenting three alleged Palestinian militants rounded up after a rare bombing in the occupied West Bank.
6. IRANIAN FACTORY'S FLAGS DESTINED TO GO UP IN FLAMES The factory serves as a major producer for the American and Israeli flags constantly burned at pro-government rallies in the Islamic Republic.
7. ELIZABETH WARREN IS IN THE MURKY MIDDLE OF THE ROAD The Democratic presidential candidate isn't struggling like Joe Biden. But she isn't soaring, like Pete Buttigieg and Bernie Sanders.
8. NASA'S UNPRECEDENTED MISSION Europe and NASA's Solar Orbiter rocketed into space Sunday night to capture the first pictures of the sun's elusive poles.
9. WHERE A DELUGE HAS DRENCHED FIRES AND EASED A DROUGHT Australian authorities had a reason to celebrate, with many wildfires being extinguished or significantly dampened down by the rain while quenching parched soil in some inland areas.
10. AWARD-WINNING STYLE The Oscars closed the awards season in style, with statement necklaces and classic gowns, traditional tuxedos and some young rule-breakers.

German leader Merkel's party in crisis as successor quits

By FRANK JORDANS Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — German Chancellor Angela Merkel's designated successor unexpectedly threw in the towel Monday, plunging her conservative party into deeper crisis as it struggles to agree on its future political direction after losing votes to the far right.

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Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer told leading members of the Christian Democratic Union that she won't be seeking the chancellorship in next year's election, upending Merkel's plans to hand her the reins after more than 15 years in power.

Merkel's spokesman Steffen Seibert told reporters in Berlin that Germany's long-time leader stood by her decision not to run for a fifth term in 2021, despite the latest development.

Kramp-Karrenbauer's announcement reflects the growing split with the Christian Democrats exposed last week in its handling of the election of a governor in the state of Thuringia. There regional party lawmakers voted with the far-right Alternative for Germany party to oust the left-wing incumbent, ignoring advice from Berlin leadership.

The move broke what is widely regarded as a taboo in post-war German politics around cooperating with extremist parties.

Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer is still Germany's defense minister.

It was unclear how the latest developments would affect Merkel's earlier plans for her succession. A shift to the right in Merkel's center-right party could trigger a break with Merkel's junior coalition partners in Germany's federal government, the center-left Social Democrats, and increase the chances the country will hold the next general election early.

Among the names currently being bandied around as future party leaders were Health Minister Jens Spahn and Friedrich Merz, who were beaten to the leadership by Kramp-Karrenbauer in December 2018. Armin Laschet, the governor of North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany's most populous state, is also being mentioned as a possible contender.

While Spahn and Laschet are considered centrists in the Merkel tradition, Merz has tried to appeal to the conservative wing of the party that has flirted with the far-right Alternative for Germany. A lawyer and former party veteran, Merz was sidelined by Merkel before she became chancellor in 2005.

The far-right Alternative for Germany party welcomed Kramp-Karrenbauer's resignation, as did Germany's former domestic intelligence chief, Hans-Georg Maassen, a vocal figure on the right of Merkel's party since his ouster in 2018.

Peter Altmaier, Germany's economy minister and a close Merkel ally, said the Christian Democrats were in "an unusually serious situation."

Current polls have Merkel's conservative block holding steady at about 28% support nationally, followed by the left-leaning Greens at about 22%.

Yet the Social Democrats are struggling with only about 14 % support, about the same as the far-right Alternative for Germany.

Making Oscar history, 'Parasite' wins best picture

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — In a milestone win that instantly expanded the Oscars' horizons, Bong Joon Ho's masterfully devious class satire "Parasite" became the first non-English language film to win best picture in the 92-year history of the Academy Awards.

"Parasite" took Hollywood's top prize on Sunday night, along with awards for best director, best international film and best screenplay. In a year dominated by period epics — "1917," "Once Upon a Time ... In Hollywood," "The Irishman" — the film academy instead went overseas, to South Korea, to reward a contemporary and unsettling portrait of social inequality in "Parasite."

True to its name, "Parasite" simply got under the skin of Oscar voters, attaching itself to the American awards season and, ultimately, to history. The win was a watershed moment for the Academy Awards, which has long been content to relegate international films to their own category. But in recent years, to diversify its membership, the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences has invited many more overseas voters.

Multiple standing ovations greeted Bong's several wins. "I am ready to drink tonight," Bong said, prompting roars from the crowd. Unexpectedly called up again for best director, Bong saluted his fellow nominees,

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particularly Martin Scorsese, and concluded: "Now I'm ready to drink until tomorrow."

After the Dolby Theatre had emptied out, the "Parasite" team still remained on the stage, soaking in their win. Backstage, Bong was still gobsmacked. "It's really f---ing crazy," he told reporters, clutching his awards.

The victory for "Parasite" — which had echoes of the surprise win by "Moonlight" over "La La Land" three years ago — came in a year when many criticized the lack of diversity in the nominees and the absence of female filmmakers. But the triumph for "Parasite," the Palme d'Or-winner at last year's Cannes Film Festival, enabled Hollywood to flip the script and signal progress, nevertheless. No Korean film had ever won an Oscar before.

In doing so, the film academy turned away another history-making event, again denying Netflix its first best-picture win despite two contenders in "The Irishman" and "Marriage Story," and a big-spending awards campaign blitz.

Sam Mendes' audaciously conceived World War I film "1917," made to seem one continuous shot, had been the clear favorite heading into Oscars, having won nearly all the precursor awards, including top honors from the Producers Guild, the Directors Guild, the Golden Globes and the BAFTAs. In the end, "1917" went home with three awards for its technical virtuosity: Roger Deakins' cinematography, visual effects and sound mixing.

All of the acting winners — Brad Pitt, Renée Zellweger, Joaquin Phoenix and Laura Dern — went as expected. While Pitt, notching his first acting Oscar, had regaled audiences with one-liners in the run-up to Sunday, he began his comments on a political note.

"They told me I have 45 seconds to speak, which is 45 seconds more than the Senate gave John Bolton this week," Pitt said, alluding to the impeachment hearings before mentioning director Quentin Tarantino. "I'm thinking maybe Quentin does a movie about it."

Pitt said the honor had given him reason to reflect on his fairy-tale journey in the film industry, going back to when he moved to Los Angeles from Missouri. "Once upon a time in Hollywood," said Pitt. "Ain't that the truth."

Zellweger completed a comeback, winning her second Academy Award for her fragile but indomitable Judy Garland in "Judy." Dern won for her performance as a divorce attorney in Noah Baumbach's "Marriage Story." Accepting her first Oscar, Dern thanked her in-attendance parents, "my legends, Diane Ladd and Bruce Dern."

Phoenix, long one of Hollywood's most respected actors, took best actor for his limber but morose Joker. In his acceptance speech, Phoenix spoke deliberately about a host of issues, including sexism and racism in the film industry, ecological disaster and vegetarianism.

"I've been a scoundrel in my life. I've been selfish, I've been cruel at times and hard to work with. But so many of you in this room have given me a second chance," Phoenix said. When people guide each other toward redemption, he added, "that is the best of humanity."

He concluded quoting a lyric of his deceased brother, River Phoenix: "Run to the rescue with love and peace will follow."

For the 87th time, no women were nominated for best director this year, a subject that was woven into the entire ceremony — and even into some attendees' clothing. Natalie Portman wore a cape lined with the names of female filmmakers who weren't nominated for their direction, including Lulu Wang ("The Farewell"), Greta Gerwig ("Little Women") and Mati Diop ("Atlantics").

Coming on a rare rainy day in Los Angeles, the ceremony was soggy and song-heavy. Some performances, like Eminem's performance of "Lose Yourself," were unexpected (and drew a wan response from Scorsese). All of the song nominees performed, including Elton John who won with his longtime songwriting partner Bernie Taupin for their "Rocketman" tune.

The hostless ceremony opened on a note of inclusion, with Janelle Monae performing "A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood" and her own song, "Come Alive," with an assist from Billy Porter. "I'm so proud to be standing here as a black queer artist telling stories," Monae said. "Happy Black History Month."

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Two former Oscar hosts, Chris Rock and Steve Martin, provided the opening monologue. "An incredible demotion," Martin called it. Martin also reminded that something was missing from this year's directing nominees. "Vaginas!" Rock replied.

There were milestones beyond "Parasite." In winning best adapted screenplay for his Nazi satire "Jojo Rabbit," the New Zealand filmmaker Taika Waititi became the first indigenous director ever to win an Oscar. He dedicated the award to "all the indigenous kids in the world who want to do art, dance and write stories."

"We are the original storytellers," Waititi said.

"Joker" composer Hildur Guðnadóttir became only the third woman to ever win best original score. "To the girls, to the women, to the mothers, to the daughters who hear the music opening within, please speak up," said Guðnadóttir. "We need to hear your voices."

Awards were spread around to all of the best picture nominees, with the lone exception being Scorsese's 10-time nominee "The Irishman." When Bong mentioned his admiration of Scorsese, an impromptu tribute broke out, with the Dolby Theatre giving Scorsese a standing ovation. The car racing throwback "Ford v Ferrari" won both editing and sound editing. Gerwig's Louisa May Alcott adaptation "Little Women" won for Jacqueline Durran's costume design. "Once Upon a Time ... in Hollywood" won for Barbara Ling's production design.

Netflix didn't go home empty handed. Aside from Dern's win for "Marriage Story," the streamer's "American Factory" won best documentary. The film is the first release from Barack and Michelle Obama's Higher Ground Productions.

Pixar extended its domination of the best animated film category, winning for "Toy Story 4." It's the 10th Pixar film to win the award and second "Toy Story" film to do so, following the previous 2010 installment.

It was an early award for the Walt Disney Co., which despite amassing a record \$13 billion in worldwide box office last year and owning the network the Oscars are broadcast on, played a minor role in the ceremony. The bulk of its awards came from 20th Century Fox ("Ford v Ferrari") and Fox Searchlight ("Jojo Rabbit"), both of which the company took control of after its \$71.3 billion acquisition of 21st Century Fox last year.

Disney's ABC hoped a widely watched field of nominees — including the \$1 billion-grossing "Joker" — will help viewership. Last year's show garnered 29.6 million viewers, a 12% uptick.

AP Film Writer Lindsey Bahr contributed to this report.

Follow AP Film Writer Jake Coyle at: <http://twitter.com/jakecoyleAP>

Retailers try on clothing rentals but can they wear it well?

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO AP Retail Writer

Renting clothes could be the future of fashion — or it could just be a fad.

But traditional retailers can no longer afford to wait on the sidelines to find out. That's why a growing number of them are now offering customers the option to rent clothes for a monthly fee instead of buying them. Bloomingdale's, Banana Republic and Urban Outfitters are the latest to offer the services. Even footwear chain Designer Brands says it's considering launching a rental service for shoes.

Now a booming \$1 billion business, the clothing rental sector is expected to reach \$2.5 billion by 2023, according to research firm GlobalData. When combined with resale, it will account for 13% of the total \$360 billion U.S. clothing market within the decade, up from 7.3% today.

Clothing rentals are one more piece of the sharing economy, where customers — particularly those in their 20s and 30s — are less interested in owning or making big investments but still want access to different brands and services, says Steve Barr, consumer markets leader at PwC.

"You no longer have to buy into the myth of continuous consumption and that there's pride in wearing something as opposed to pride in owning something," said Jennifer Hyman, CEO and co-founder of Rent

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the Runway, which pioneered the business model in 2009 that many retailers are now trying to replicate.

For clothing retailers, rentals offer a glimmer of hope at a time when they are dealing with mounds of unsold goods that often need to be deeply discounted. Several have already gotten into the second-hand business — another popular trend in the sharing economy led by companies like The Real Real and ThredUp.

J.C. Penney and Macy's, for instance, have partnered with ThredUp to sell gently-worn clothes in a couple dozen locations. Nordstrom is testing resale at its women's flagship store in Manhattan and online.

Many in the industry consider these necessary steps as clothing retailers watch their fortunes erode. They, along with department stores, are expected to see their fourth-quarter earnings sink 11.3% compared with a 5.7% drop for the overall retail sector, according to research firm Retail Metrics LLC. Last year, clothing retailers accounted for an outsized share of retail bankruptcies, according to a recent report by consulting firm AlixPartners.

"Clothing retailers are dealing with pressures on multiple fronts," said Ken Perkins, president of Retail Metrics. "Heavy promotions, chronic traffic declines, e-commerce investment. And now they've got rental and resale services as well. The rental market is small, but it's going to grow, and they have to invest in it."

Christine Hunsicker, CEO and founder of CaaStle, a startup that manages inventory and shipping for retailers, says rental services have anywhere from a 20% to 25% operating profit compared with only 5% for traditional retailers. Last year, Hunsicker's retail clients saw total spending for both renting and buying increase two-fold on average for each customer.

But unlike Rent the Runway, a dedicated rental service for high-end designer clothing, the economics for traditional retailers — from marketing to dry cleaning and shipping, on top of running their normal day-to-day operations — pose significant challenges.

About a dozen retailers, including Banana Republic and Bloomingdale's, have left it to CaaStle to handle the logistics. But Urban Outfitters, which lets shoppers rent their brands as well as outside labels like Reebok and Levi's, is doing it all on its own — a formidable task.

"(Retailers) are very used to marketing products, not services, so it's challenging knowing which customers to message, and how often," Hunsicker said.

Some experts wonder whether it even makes sense for lower-priced clothing chains to get into the rental business since customers could just buy the clothes used, or get it at a deep discount. Also, the clothes may not hold up well after multiple wears, says Rod Sides of Deloitte LLP.

Elizabeth Kashin, 53, of Indianapolis, says she tried Urban Outfitter's Nuuly rental service last month. She never received her package of six items but was charged anyway. After contacting customer service via social media, she got another package but said the clothes didn't look clean.

"I can go to a second-hand store to get a better experience," she said.

Urban Outfitters said that it is constantly listening to feedback so that it can "make the experience even better for Nuuly's subscribers." It says it's on pace to have 50,000 subscribers in the first 12 months of operation.

Retailers also face the same challenges that still dog Rent the Runway. Consumers complain about spotty customer service and a slew of added fees. For example, Rent the Runway charges \$50 for every day that a customer is late in returning an item, up to double the retail value of that item.

There is also the issue of too few locations to return rented items. Retail expert Melissa Gonzalez says retailers should have kiosks in their stores in key cities but right now, most don't have any and shoppers must drop off their garment bags at a UPS or the post office. Rent the Runway has five stores and nearly 50 drop-off locations.

Rent the Runway itself has had to adapt to an increasingly demanding customer. It started out with special occasion dresses but its customers now rent on average more than 120 days per year. The New York-based company launched children's wear last year and later unveiled pillows and other home decor items through a partnership with home furnishings retailer West Elm.

Vara Pikor, a 26-year-old insurance broker from Manhattan who's been using Rent the Runway for many of her clothing needs, says she is hooked.

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"This could be my forever habit," she said. "I have less stuff in my home."

Rent the Runway's long-term prospects are still unknown. The company plans to go public but there is no clear timetable. In 2016, it announced that it was profitable but a spokeswoman declined to comment on whether that remains true today.

Nonetheless, retailers continue to follow its lead and hope to end up in a better place.

Follow Anne D'Innocenzio: <http://twitter.com/ADInnocenzio>

2020 Watch: On eve of New Hampshire, is Mayor Pete for real?

By STEVE PEOPLES AP National Political Writer

MANCHESTER, N.H. (AP) — Presidential politics move fast. What we're watching heading into a new week on the 2020 campaign:

Days to New Hampshire primary: 1

Days to general election: 267

THE NARRATIVE

Chaos in Iowa has sparked a deep sense of anxiety among Democrats, who hoped the kickoff contest would provide clarity and evidence of excitement at the official starting line of the 2020 primary season. Results were unclear, and turnout disappointed. Instead, New Hampshire voters on Tuesday are under the weight of deepening concerns about Democratic enthusiasm and glaring flaws in their leading presidential candidates. The stakes are greatest for longtime front-runner Joe Biden and progressive powerhouse Elizabeth Warren, who cannot afford to fall out of the top two in a second consecutive contest as Bernie Sanders and Pete Buttigieg aim to tighten their grip on front-runner status. At the same time, Amy Klobuchar threatens to break into the top tier at another candidate's expense. Not in New Hampshire, but very much part of the race, Mike Bloomberg waits for Super Tuesday. And President Donald Trump is loving it.

THE BIG QUESTIONS

Is Mayor Pete for real?

A former two-term vice president, a three-term Minnesota senator and a 38-year-old former small-city mayor walk into New Hampshire. Don't tell us you predicted that the former municipal official would be a top candidate on the eve of the state's primary. But that's exactly what's happening as Buttigieg appears to be cruising in the so-called moderate lane of voters seeking a more "electable" center-left candidate. The energy around Buttigieg's candidacy is real. So, too, is the lack of it around Biden, who entered the race as the establishment favorite. At the same time, a strong debate performance on Friday has prompted a second look at Sen. Amy Klobuchar. This could end up being a dream scenario for Buttigieg and a nightmare for Biden.

Is the neighbors' primary already over?

For much of the last year, Democrats in New Hampshire were expecting two tracks in their presidential primary: a competition between the two neighboring senators, Sanders and Warren, and a competition among everybody else. Now, polling suggests that Sanders is dominating the neighbors' primary as Warren struggles. She insists she's in it for the long haul, but it's difficult to imagine her generating the kind of financial support she needs to stay in the race much longer without a stronger-than-expected finish on Tuesday.

Will turnout rebound?

Perhaps as much as the muddled mess connected to Iowa's reporting failures, Democrats are nervous about the turnout in last week's kickoff caucuses, which is an important marker of enthusiasm for the party. Iowa officials predicted turnout would rival 2008, when a record 238,000 people showed up for the Democratic contest. The final 2020 tally: 176,000. That hurts. In New Hampshire, longtime Secretary

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of State Bill Gardner has projected Democratic turnout will hit 292,000, which would be slightly higher than the 289,000 Democrats who voted in the 2008 primary. Should Democrats fail to meet projections in a second consecutive contest that will call into question the conventional wisdom about Democratic enthusiasm in the Trump era.

Can Trump stay out of his own way?

Trump enters the week at a new high point in his turbulent presidency. He took a vitriolic victory lap after his Senate acquittal, celebrated another strong employment report and cheered on Democrats' disarray. Gallup reported his approval rating at 49%, which for any other president would be decent, but it actually marks the polling firm's highest number for Trump's entire presidency. But Trump has a talent for getting in his own way when times are good. Democrats are hoping for another unforced error, even as the reality begins to set in that the Republican president is well-positioned to win reelection.

Will the case for Bloomberg grow?

Democrats may be in disarray, but we know of at least one who's feeling pretty good right now: Bloomberg. People scoffed at the New York billionaire's plan to skip the first four primary contests, but all of a sudden we're starting to hear from some actual voters — not political pundits or donors — who see Bloomberg as a viable long-term option. The former New York City mayor, of course, has faced virtually zero scrutiny as a presidential candidate, having been excluded from presidential debates and avoiding tough questions from voters at his highly produced events. But for those Democrats concerned about a 2020 field led by Sanders and Buttigieg, Bloomberg's stock is ticking up.

THE FINAL THOUGHT

Warren has suddenly become an afterthought in the 2020 primary, even after finishing a strong third in Iowa. The stakes are enormous for the Massachusetts senator on Tuesday. With a home-field advantage, she was supposed to compete for the top spot in New Hampshire. Yet if polls are to be believed, she's slipping dangerously. If she can't win in New Hampshire, where can she?

2020 Watch runs every Monday and provides a look at the week ahead in the 2020 election.

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

Irish election produces an earthquake as Sinn Fein tops poll

By JILL LAWLESS and NICOLAE DUMITRACHE Associated Press

DUBLIN (AP) — Ireland's political parties were scrambling to adjust to a new reality Monday, after an earth-shaking election that saw the left-wing nationalist party Sinn Fein win the biggest share of votes.

Sinn Fein, the party historically linked to the Irish Republican Army and its violent struggle for a united Ireland, received 24.5% of the first-preference votes in Saturday's election. That bested Fianna Fail and Fine Gael, the two centrist parties that have governed Ireland since it won independence from Britain a century ago.

Fianna Fail received 22.2% of the votes and Fine Gael, the party of incumbent Prime Minister Leo Varadkar, got 20.9%.

Sinn Fein's left-wing proposals for tackling Ireland's housing crisis and creaking healthcare system proved a powerful draw for young voters in a country that is still dealing with aftershocks of the 2008 global financial crisis, which hammered its debt-driven "Celtic Tiger" economy.

Vote counting was resuming Monday to fill all the seats in the 160-Dail, the lower house of Ireland's parliament. Ireland uses a proportional-representation system in which voters rank candidates from first to last, with the lower preferences of elected or defeated candidates redistributed among their rivals.

It's highly unlikely that any party will get the 80 seats needed for a majority in parliament. That makes

some form of coalition inevitable, but forming a stable alliance looks tough.

Both Fianna Fail and Fine Gael said before the election that they would not go into a coalition with Sinn Fein because of its links to past violence.

Varadkar said Fine Gael's stance was unchanged.

But as the scale of Sinn Fein's surge became clear, Fianna Fail leader Micheal Martin said: "I'm a democrat." "I listen to the people. I respect the decision of the people," he told Irish broadcaster RTE.

The IRA was responsible for murders, bombings and other violence for decades during the "Troubles" in the U.K. region of Northern Ireland. More than 3,500 people were killed during decades of conflict between forces that sought to reunify Northern Ireland with the Republic of Ireland and those who wanted Northern Ireland to remain part of the U.K.

Supporters of Sinn Fein point out that it has been more than 20 years since Northern Ireland's 1998 peace agreement and 15 years since the IRA announced the end of its violent campaign. Sinn Fein already sits in government in Northern Ireland as part of a power-sharing arrangement created by the peace process.

"This vote for Sinn Fein is for Sinn Fein to be in government, for Sinn Fein to make a difference, for Sinn Fein to be tested, for Sinn Fein to deliver," party leader Mary Lou McDonald said.

"We want to talk to anyone who is interested in delivering a programme for government. That is about getting to grips with the housing crisis and solving it, getting to grips with the crisis in health and giving families and workers a break and giving a new lease of life to government."

Thai city copes with sorrowful fallout from mass shooting

By EMILY SCHMALL and PREEYAPA T. KHUNSONG Associated Press

NAKHON RATCHASIMA, Thailand (AP) — Authorities in northern Thailand began releasing bodies to relatives Monday after security forces cornered and killed a soldier who carried out the country's worst mass shooting in an hourslong siege at a shopping mall.

The soldier killed 29 people starting with his commanding officer in a stunning tragedy that began Saturday and ended Sunday morning when security forces shot dead the heavily armed attacker in Terminal 21 Korat, an airport-themed mall in Nakhon Ratchasima.

The gunman, Sgt. Maj. Jakrapanth Thomma, 31, was infuriated at a land deal brokered by his commander's mother-in-law, as far as authorities have been able to determine. She was another of his victims.

The death toll surpassed Thailand's last major attack on civilians, a 2015 bombing at a shrine in Bangkok killing 20 people that was allegedly carried out by human traffickers in retaliation for a crackdown on their network.

Messages of sympathy for the latest tragedy were sent by several countries.

The U.S. Embassy said it "stands with the people of Thailand, saddened by tragic events in Nakhon Ratchasima."

More than 1,000 people mourned the victims Sunday night in a vigil led by Buddhist monks at the city's town square. They lit candles and chanted.

"We are here today to pray in order to send the souls of those who die to heaven, and we ask the spirits to accept those souls. So those souls can be holy, be in heaven with goodness and beauty," said artist Suwanee Natewong.

Many of the 58 wounded are still in bad condition. The Public Health Ministry sent a mental health crisis team to help relatives of the deceased cope with their losses.

Survivors and victims' families at the city's hospitals recounted their ordeals.

Cpl. Korakot Ampanngun said he had been ordered to block a road so no one could go toward the gunman.

"So I was signaling to oncoming traffic, when I turned around and saw him. If I had not, I would not have survived," he recalled. "I tried to run and find somewhere to hide. But I could only take two steps and then I heard the sound — 'bang.' My leg just went and I couldn't walk. A good Samaritan helped carry me away."

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High school student Nachote Chotiklang said he was in his mother's car as she passed the gunman's vehicle.

The assailant "got out of the car and fired into the window. At that, I ducked down and didn't do anything until I felt that car hit something. It hit a tree."

When the teenager was asked what happened to his mother, Nachote shook his head. Another man explained that she had died.

Rachanon Kanchanamethi was riding a motorbike home when the gunman fired at him. The 13-year-old middle school student was his family's only child.

His father spoke at the first day of his son's Buddhist funeral.

"I don't want to lose him like this," Nuttawut Kanchanamethi said. "This is too sudden. We had plans for him, growing up. That's all. We didn't impose any expectations on him."

Nuttawut paused for a long moment.

"I want to continue taking care of him, but I no longer have that opportunity," he said, breaking into sobs.

The bodies of security personnel began to be flown Monday morning to the capital, Bangkok, for funerals.

Nakhon Ratchasima was not prepared for killing on such a scale. The public hospital's lone forensic doctor is performing autopsies before the bodies are released to families for cremation, but families were told he can only do six per day, so some won't be able to retrieve their loved ones until Tuesday.

Associated Press journalists Tassanee Vejpongsa, Busaba Sivasomboon and Grant Peck in Bangkok contributed to this story.

Backstage at the Oscars: Dazed winners and sweet reunions

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A whole other show happens just a few feet to the right of the main Oscars stage in the wings where presenters gather, ecstatic winners get a moment to process what just happened and the production staff stays busy making sure everything is going to plan.

Here are a few moments that the cameras didn't catch at the 92nd Academy Awards.

"WHOSE IS THIS?"

Best actor winner Joaquin Phoenix walked offstage in a bit of a daze, with tears still in his eyes from his emotional acceptance speech. Jane Fonda, waiting to present the best picture award, was among the few familiar faces in the wings for the "Joker" star who stopped to give her a hug and a kiss on the cheek.

Phoenix looked down at the golden statuette in his hand and said, "Whose is this?"

The woman escorting him to his next stop said gently, "It's yours."

STEVE MARTIN GETS READY

Steve Martin made sure to get to the wings extra early for his and Chris Rock's show opener Sunday but his promptness also meant he had a little time to kill. Martin paced back and forth in the wings and stopped a few times to check his lapel and bow tie in the mirror.

He offered some words of support to Janelle Monae's background performers.

"You'll do a good job," Martin said with a thumbs up. "But you're supposed to say break a leg."

And he even took a moment to allow himself to enjoy the performance, watching on the monitors with a big smile. But he quickly turned back to thinking about his imminent moment on stage.

"As long as I have my opening line, I'm fine," he said, continuing to pace.

CORDEN'S BIG, FURRY REVEAL

When James Corden ran into Maya Rudolph and Kristen Wiig early in the show, the two women were eager to know just what Corden had in store. He wouldn't reveal exactly what was to come but told Rudolph that he's "putting on a costume" and to "lower your expectations." Rudolph promised she'd be screaming for him nonetheless.

Later Corden ran into Rudolph and Wiig again, this time in his full "Cats" regalia alongside Rebel Wilson.

"This is ridiculous," he said. "This is it. This is...showbiz."

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The show's producers asked to get a photo with the two "cats." Corden obliged but warned them that they're going to "need a lint roller" if they get too close.

MAKING PLANS

You never know who you're going to run into backstage at the Oscars, or who you're going to see making plans, like Chris Rock and Timothée Chalamet or Rami Malek and Oscar Isaac.

"My man, my man," Rock said to Chalamet, greeting him with a bro hug. "Where you going after? Let's get dinner."

SOME DAUGHTERLY ADVICE

"Pace yourself," Charlize Theron advised her mother as they waited in line for the bathroom. "It's a long night."

The two waited patiently for the two stalls to become unoccupied. When one opened up Theron insisted that her mother take it first.

RENÉE CAN'T STOP SHAKING

Best actress winner Renée Zellweger looked as poised as could be as she glided offstage and into the wings, Oscar in hand, but it may have been just an act. Amid a slew of "thank yous" to all the well-wishers, the "Judy" star admitted that she was having trouble keeping it together.

"If only I could stand up straight," Zellweger said. "I am shaking so much."

KEANU AND DIANE TOGETHER AGAIN

It's been 17 years since Keanu Reeves and Diane Keaton starred in Nancy Meyers' "Something's Gotta Give," but it didn't seem like a day had passed backstage at the Oscars. The two reunited to present the best original screenplay award Sunday night. In the wings they shared a sweet moment: Reeves offered Keaton his arm and the two walked into position linked.

Buttigieg on defense as rivals aim to blunt his momentum

By **THOMAS BEAUMONT** Associated Press

DOVER, N.H. (AP) — Pete Buttigieg has been on defense all weekend as his Democratic presidential rivals attacked him on everything from his struggle to connect with black voters to accepting campaign contributions from large donors in an effort to blunt any momentum heading into Tuesday's New Hampshire primary.

Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, who essentially tied with Buttigieg in last week's Iowa caucuses, blasted the former mayor of South Bend, Indiana, for taking contributions from the very wealthy, suggesting Buttigieg won't stand up to "Wall Street tycoons" or "the corporate elite." Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren voiced similar criticism, telling ABC's "This Week" that "the coalition of billionaires is not exactly what's going to carry us over the top." Former Vice President Joe Biden told the same program that Buttigieg hasn't been able to "unify the black community."

The volley of criticism Sunday was fresh evidence that Buttigieg, who was virtually unknown in national politics a year ago, has become an early front-runner in the battle for the Democratic presidential nomination. The developments usher in a new phase of the campaign that will test how Buttigieg responds to the pressure, especially as the contest moves to more racially diverse states where he has struggled to gain traction.

Buttigieg hit back at Biden, who on Saturday lamented comparisons between the former mayor and former President Barack Obama.

"Oh, come on, man," Biden told reporters. "This guy's not a Barack Obama."

"Well, he's right, I'm not," Buttigieg responded on CNN's "State of the Union." "And neither is he. Neither is any of us running for president."

He later offered an oblique critique of Sanders' combative call for revolution.

"Let's remember we're facing the most divisive president of our time, which is why we can't risk dividing Americans further," Buttigieg told more than 1,800 people at an event in Nashua, New Hampshire.

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Later in Dover, he declared himself the candidate on the rise. "We are the campaign with the strongest momentum in the state of New Hampshire, thanks to you," he told a crowd of several hundred.

While responding to some of the attacks, Buttigieg didn't escalate any feuds on Sunday. That could help him maintain the energy of his optimistic Iowa campaign in which he portrayed himself as above the Washington fray.

"Part of the reason why he's doing well is he's got a pretty sunny and upbeat presentation," said David Axelrod, a former senior adviser to Obama. "Tactically, I think it's smart to handle it the way he's handling it. We still don't know what the impact any of this will have."

But in a sign of potential hurdles ahead for Buttigieg, even voters in an overwhelmingly white state like New Hampshire said they wanted to see evidence that he could build relationships with people of color. Kim Holman of Brookline, New Hampshire, said she was undecided but leaning toward Buttigieg's "energy and passion." Yet his struggle so far especially with black voters weighs on her decision.

"It's definitely a concern. New Hampshire is a super-white state," the 52-year-old personal trainer said. "I'm hoping he resonates more with people of color."

Buttigieg's standing has posed a challenge to Sanders. The two contenders represent opposite ideological wings of the party, yet Sanders is under pressure to show that he can unify Democrats if he is the nominee. With that in mind, the progressive Vermont senator has sought to qualify his criticisms of Buttigieg.

When a Sanders supporter in Plymouth laughed at the mention of Buttigieg, Sanders interjected, "We're not here to denigrate Pete."

But Sanders nonetheless proceeded to blast Buttigieg's ties to large donors. And one of his most prominent surrogates, former Ohio state Sen. Nina Turner, ripped into both Buttigieg and billionaire former Mayor Michael Bloomberg at a separate event later Sunday.

She slammed Buttigieg for fundraising with billionaires in a wine cave featuring a Swarovsky crystal chandelier. And she laid into Bloomberg for skipping the early voting states and running a campaign funded by hundreds of millions of dollars of his personal fortune.

"Whose side are you on?" she repeatedly asked the crowd to cheers.

There were other awkward moments Sunday during the final stretch of the New Hampshire campaign. During a rally in the state capital of Concord, Warren declared, "It's up to you, Massachusetts."

During an event in Hampton, a woman asked Biden to explain his underperformance in Iowa. He said it was a good question, then asked her if she'd been to a caucus. When she said she had, Biden responded, "No, you haven't" and proceeded to call her "a lying, dog-faced pony soldier." The audience laughed during the exchange.

The chaos from the Iowa caucuses lingered over the New Hampshire contest. Problems with an app led to delays in results and prompted questions about the accuracy of the vote count. Nearly a week after the caucuses, The Associated Press hasn't declared a result.

In an interview on CNN's "State of the Union" on Sunday, Democratic National Committee Chairman Tom Perez said he was "mad as hell" about the situation.

Associated Press writer Kathleen Ronayne in Plymouth, N.H., contributed to this report.

A breakdown of the gowns, bling and beauty from the Oscars

By LEANNE ITALIE AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The Oscars closed the awards season in style, with statement necklaces and classic gowns, traditional tuxedos and some young rule-breakers.

A look at fashion highlights from Hollywood's big night Sunday:

THE GOWNS

Scarlett Johansson, Renée Zellweger, Charlize Theron, Cynthia Erivo and Regina King served up standout looks.

King's pale pink Versace with just the right amount of silver embellishment was a flawless fit. Johans-

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son's Champagne-hued Oscar de la Renta was a strapless wonder with strand details at the top. Theron's black Dior Haute Couture offered one shoulder up and one down, along with a high side slit. Erivo shut it down in a white custom Atelier Versace one-shoulder bustier gown. Zellweger didn't disappoint in a white symmetrical body hugger from Armani with one long sleeve.

"Regina King and Cynthia Erivo really did the ballgown right," said Justine Carreon, senior market editor for Elle.com. "Cynthia Erivo had those kind of modern paniers on the hips. Regina had a pink princess moment, but it still had a very modern neckline."

Nobody took any big risks, she said, though there were some statements made.

Natalie Portman used her Maria Grazia Chiuri's embroidered cape to showcase the names of female directors snubbed by the Academy stitched into the fabric. Kaitlyn Dever wore a sustainable Louis Vuitton look in crimson. Waad al-Kateab, co-director of the documentary "For Sama," used her gown for some political messaging in Arabic.

Refinery29.com's director of fashion and culture, Gabrielle Korn, called Portman's moment "such a strong statement and such an important reminder that fashion can speak volumes."

Andrea Lavinthal, style and beauty director of People, was a fan of Zellweger's Armani Prive gown.

"She looked so elegant. People are always commenting that she sticks to a column silhouette but when you see something like that on her and how stunning it looks, I think you understand why it's her signature."

Young Hollywood didn't disappoint.

Janelle Monae stunned in silver Ralph Lauren with a hood, long sleeves and about 170,000 Swarovski crystals. Florence Pugh wore a tiered gown in welcome green from Louis Vuitton. Billie Eilish donned fuzzy, oversize Chanel jackets and pants to go with her bright green and black hair. Timothée Chalamet detoured from a slew of classic black tuxedos in a custom Prada navy gabardine jacket with satin racing stripes and matching trousers.

"She always brings such drama to the carpet in such an elegant way," E! style correspondent Zanna Roberts Rassi said of Monae's look. Monae, along with Eilish and Billy Porter (in a golden feather top and orange ball skirt), show trends aren't everything. The trend was to be yourself."

"It's less about trends. It's more about showing who they really are," she said.

Carreon, senior market editor for Elle.com, agreed.

"Billie Eilish and Billy Porter tend to just stick to their guns. When it comes to fashion, they don't let themselves be confined to any box," she said. "It's true that Eilish loves a logo, but that's true of her generation, from Gucci to Louis Vuitton."

Of Monet, Vanity Fair.com's associate editor Erin Vanderhoof said: "For the last decade, the musician and actor has proven that she's never afraid to wear something completely original, and it's been inspiring to see her hang on to that experimentation as she has blossomed from an R&B singer into full-blown movie star."

Lavinthal adored Johansson's bombshell look.

"She looked so outrageous in that dress. She's glowing. She has looked outrageous all awards season. I think it's love. I think love is her accessory. She really looks radiant and sexy."

Johansson is engaged to Colin Jost from "Saturday Night Live."

As for Erivo, who was nominated twice with no wins Sunday, fashion has helped propel her this awards season.

"If you didn't know her name before awards season, you know it now thanks in part to the incredible fashion choices she and her stylist, Jason Bolden, have been making. She looked so happy. You can see she feels comfortable and good, and that really comes through in these dramatic dresses she's been wearing, and the enormous jewels. She doesn't let these gowns wear her, which is incredible considering she's so petite," Lavinthal said of the 5-foot-1 Erivo.

Vintage represented, but just a tad.

Margot Robbie hit the carpet in Chanel from the brand's spring 1994 haute couture collection. It was a black fitted bustier gown with detached sleeves that practically touched the ground. A pearl pendant was front and center.

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THE BLING

There was an abundance of statement necklaces on women (Mindy Kaling, Julia Louis-Dreyfus, Zazie Beetz), but there was also a show of "gent's jewelry," said Claibourne Poindexter, associate jewelry specialist for Christie's auction house.

From Porter in multiple bracelets and rings from Swarovski to men bringing back the lapel brooch (Chalamet's vintage Cartier), "there is no doubt that men are embracing jewels for the first time in a long time," he said.

Among other favorites: Anthony Ramos in a long necklace and lapel brooch worn with a white suit.

As for the women, Greta Gerwig wore diamonds and emerald from Bulgari, as did Beetz. Theron wore a diamond drop necklace by Tiffany & Co. weighing in at more than 20 carats. Louis-Dreyfus wore more than 60 carats set in platinum from Harry Winston. Vintage represented in a small way, thanks to Rebel Wilson's gold and diamond double row necklace by Pomellato to Chalamet's 1950s ruby and diamond clip, Poindexter said.

"Over the last several years we've seen a consistent increase in gentlemen who wear jewels as a great way to diversify their style on what is arguably a more difficult wardrobe to show individuality in," he said.

Gerwig's emerald beads and diamonds has her "following in the footsteps of many powerful women in film," Poindexter said. "From Elizabeth Taylor in her own Bulgari emerald and diamond jewels purchased on a visit to the Bulgari boutique with Richard Burton to Monica Vitti posing for Karen Radkai in a full suite of oval shaped emerald and diamond jewelry in 1963, Bulgari has had a long reputation of being a favorite among the film and jet set," Poindexter said.

THE BEAUTY

The Oscars are often a parade of nudes, sheers or pale pinks, especially in nail polish, said Cat Quinn, beauty director for Refinery29.com.

"So I was excited to see so many actresses go for a bolder look this year. Black nail polish in particular reigned supreme, with a variety of cool iterations," she said.

Beetz wore a modern take on the French manicure with slivers of shiny black polish on the tips, Quinn said. Eilish wore long, square-tipped black nails with tiny crystal studs, and Lucy Boynton experimented with black, negative-space half-moon nails, according to Quinn.

"If you're not ready for nail art, Gal Gadot proved that a short, black manicure can still look classic and cool, too," she said.

Oscar hair comes and goes, but new looks on the red carpet are always exciting.

"Saoirse Ronan showed up with brand-new baby bangs inspired by Audrey Hepburn," Quinn said. "Olivia Coleman went for a dramatic change with a platinum blonde makeover that's a huge departure from her signature brunette shade."

Hair accessories are fun, too.

"Lucy Boynton accentuated her deep side part with a row of pearls, Salma Hayek topped off her updo with a sculptural crystal headpiece, Rebel Wilson pinned her side-swept Hollywood waves back with a gold hair clip," Quinn said. "Even Billie Eilish decorated her signature neon-green hair with Chanel ribbons and an embroidered barrette."

But Quinn's top hair accessory was the pregnant America Ferrera's woven gold headpiece.

"It was a custom design by Jennifer Behr that honored the actress' Honduran heritage," Quinn said. "I love that she used her beauty look to connect to her culture and spread an important message of representation."

Fire sale: An Iran plant makes the US flags protesters burn

By **NASSER KARIMI** and **MOHAMMAD NASIRI** Associated Press

KHOMEIN, Iran (AP) — Near the hometown of the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, workers at a small Iranian factory diligently add all 50 stars and 13 red-and-white bars to what are supposed to be U.S. flags, and carefully imprint the blue Star of David on Israeli ones.

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That's even as all their work is destined to go up in flames.

The company Diba Parcham Khomein serves as a major producer for the American and Israeli flags constantly burned at pro-government rallies in the Islamic Republic. Such flag-burnings are a sign of support for Iran's embattled clerical rulers and a throwback to the iconic images of the 1979 Islamic Revolution that branded the U.S. Iran's greatest foe and the "Great Satan."

Another batch of flags is being prepared for the 41st anniversary of the Iranian revolution on Tuesday. The celebrations will take on special symbolic importance amid renewed tensions with Washington after a U.S. drone strike in Baghdad killed Iran's top general, Qassem Soleimani, last month.

Yet the factory's owner, like many middle-class Iranians, holds out hopes for better relations between Tehran and the U.S.

"I hope there is a day that the flags we produce are presented as a gift," factory owner Abolfazl Khanjani told The Associated Press.

That day, however, has yet to come to Khomein, a city best known as the birthplace of the Islamic Republic's founder.

The factory itself is in the nearby suburban village of Heshmatieh, where staffers first dye the blue canton containing the 50 white stars of the American flag on linen before dyeing its seven red stripes.

The flags then hang to dry in the factory. As Iran does not recognize Israel as a country, the factory adds "Death to Israel," written in Farsi on those flags, workers said. Iran itself continues to support anti-Israeli militant groups like Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon.

Diba Parcham Khomein produces 1.5 million flags a year, many bearing Islamic phrases for religious and official occasions across the country. The factory also makes Iranian flags and a small number of Iraqi national flags for export.

But on a recent visit by the AP, the American and Israeli flags stood out, each 1.5 meters by 1 meter (59 inches by 39 inches). The factory makes as many as 6,000 American, British and Israeli flags in a year, all destined to be passed onto retailers. Iranian political hard-liners then purchase them for around \$2 apiece to be stomped on, torn and ultimately set ablaze.

"In recent years, the production of the U.S. flags has been tripled," Khanjani said. "What eventually happens to my products is on its end user."

Khanjani, 36, identifies himself as supporting Iranian reformist groups that want to slowly change, and open up, the Islamic Republic. But he acknowledged the anger hard-liners feel toward the U.S. Tensions have particularly been high since President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew America from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers in May 2018.

In the time since, regional tensions across the Mideast have steadily worsened, leading to the Jan. 3 U.S. drone strike in Iraq that killed Soleimani as he was leaving Baghdad's international airport.

Smiling images of Soleimani and Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ai Khamenei appeared on small Iranian flags in the factory, hanging behind women working at sewing machines on American flags.

Khanjani said burning the American flag offered Iranians a direct way to express their anger at U.S. policies, including the economic sanctions now choking the country.

"Does the production of U.S. flags for burning pose any danger to anyone? Does it hurt anyone? My answer is no. It is an insult at worst," he said. "But what about the production of weapons, bombs and drones for terror that have been used against our people and our country's general? Has it not harmed my country?"

That was a sentiment shared by Khanjani's sister Azam, who also works at the factory.

"The martyrdom of our general was a big torment for us and this year as I sewed every flag, I was excited that they were going to be burned," she said. "My feeling is just hatred when I sew them. It does not give me a good feeling."

Parisa Mahmoudi, another worker, said she focused her anger on Trump while working.

"I have no problem with the American people but I dislike their president," she said. "We have no problem with anyone but do not know why he is hostile with us."

The factory has 40 workers, including 25 women from nearby villages who earn monthly salaries of up

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to \$400. Khanjani declined to offer earnings information for the factory, but said it turns a single-digit profit yearly.

Despite expressing anger at U.S. policies, Khanjani said his factory's decision to supply the flags for burning is a business move, fulfilling a demand from consumers. He showed AP journalists a picture painted by his 8-year-old son, Aria, showing the flags of Iran and the U.S. next to each country's president.

The caption for the painting reads: "The president of the U.S. has shaken the hand of Iranian president and they have become friends."

Maryland to unveil statues of Tubman, Douglass in Capitol

By BRIAN WITTE Associated Press

ANNAPOLIS, Md. (AP) — At a time when states are debating the removal of Confederate monuments, Maryland is adding bronze statues of two of the state's famous black historical figures to the Maryland State House.

The statues of abolitionists Harriet Tubman and Frederick Douglass will be unveiled Monday night in the Old House Chamber, the room where slavery was abolished in Maryland in 1864.

"It's a really incredible, incredible, moment," Senate President Bill Ferguson said, as he told senators about the upcoming event last month.

While the commissioning of the statues was put in motion several years ago, their arrival coincides with new leadership in the state legislature, including Maryland's first black and first female speaker of the House and the first new Senate president in more than three decades.

Tubman escaped from slavery to become a leading abolitionist who helped slaves escape through the Underground Railroad. Douglass also escaped slavery on Maryland's Eastern Shore. He went on to become an author, speaker, abolitionist and supporter of women's rights. His autobiography, published in 1845, was a best-seller that helped fuel the abolitionist movement.

The statues aren't the only recent examples of the state taking steps to reflect its rich black history.

Last month, a portrait of a black female lawmaker replaced one of a white governor who had been on the wall for 115 years. The painting of Verda Welcome, who was elected to the state Senate in 1962, is the first portrait of a black person to adorn the Maryland's Senate walls.

During the unveiling ceremony, Ferguson, who became Senate president last month, recalled a letter he received from an 8th grader in Baltimore several years ago. The student wrote she was saddened she did not see anyone who looked like her in the paintings that decorate the State House.

"We've heard a lot about change in these chambers over the last few days, and portraits are, I admit, less impactful than our elected leaders, but the public display of portraits is meaningful," State Archivist Tim Baker said during the ceremony. "Images have an importance that transcends the painted canvas."

Mary Sue Welcome, the late senator's daughter, said during the unveiling of her mother's portrait that she was struck by how much more diverse the legislative body has become since her mother served in office.

"When I was a little girl I used to come to these chambers — and to the one across the hall — and I would look around and the color was a lot different than it is now," Welcome said. "The coloration is so absolutely beautiful now."

Maryland also has removed painful reminders of its past in recent years.

In 2017, the state removed a statue of Roger B. Taney, the U.S. Supreme Court justice who wrote the 1857 Dred Scott decision that upheld slavery and denied citizenship to African Americans.

State officials voted to remove the Taney statue days after a woman was killed in Charlottesville, Virginia. Heather Heyer, 32, was killed when a man rammed his car through a crowd of people who were there to condemn hundreds of white nationalists who were protesting the planned removal of a statue of Confederate Gen. Robert E. Lee.

The state of Virginia continues to have some of the country's most prominent displays of Confederate monuments in its capital city of Richmond. But in December a large bronze sculpture of a young black man in a hoodie astride a horse was permanently installed on the lawn of the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.

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The "Rumors of War" sculpture was previously on display in Times Square and is artist Kehinde Wiley's response to Confederate monuments in the U.S. and the South in particular.

Solar Orbiter blasts off to capture 1st look at sun's poles

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Europe and NASA's Solar Orbiter rocketed into space Sunday night on an unprecedented mission to capture the first pictures of the sun's elusive poles.

"We're on the way to the sun. Go Solar Orbiter!" said Cesar Garcia Marirrodriga, project manager for the European Space Agency. "It's a fantastic moment ... it's like, well, we're unstoppable."

The \$1.5 billion spacecraft will join NASA's Parker Solar Probe, launched 1 1/2 years ago, in coming perilously close to the sun to unveil its secrets.

While Solar Orbiter won't venture close enough to penetrate the sun's corona, or crown-like outer atmosphere, like Parker, it will maneuver into a unique out-of-plane orbit that will take it over both poles, never photographed before. Together with powerful ground observatories, the sun-staring space duo will be like an orchestra, according to Gunther Hasinger, the European Space Agency's science director.

"Every instrument plays a different tune, but together they play the symphony of the sun," Hasinger said.

Solar Orbiter was made in Europe, along with nine science instruments. NASA provided the 10th instrument and arranged the late-night launch from Cape Canaveral.

Nearly 1,000 scientists and engineers from across Europe gathered with their U.S. colleagues under a full moon as United Launch Alliance's Atlas V rocket blasted off, illuminating the sky for miles around. Crowds also jammed nearby roads and beaches.

The rocket was visible for four full minutes after liftoff, a brilliant star piercing the night sky. Europe's project scientist Daniel Mueller was thrilled, calling it "picture perfect." His NASA counterpart, scientist Holly Gilbert, exclaimed, "One word: Wow."

NASA declared success 1 1/2 hours later, once the Solar Orbiter's solar wings were unfurled.

Solar Orbiter — a boxy 4,000-pound (1,800-kilogram) spacecraft with spindly instrument booms and antennas — will swing past Venus in December and again next year, and then past Earth, using the planets' gravity to alter its path. Full science operations will begin in late 2021, with the first close solar encounter in 2022 and more every six months.

At its closest approach, Solar Orbiter will come within 26 million miles (42 million kilometers) of the sun, well within the orbit of Mercury.

Parker Solar Probe, by contrast, has already passed within 11.6 million miles (18.6 million kilometers) of the sun, an all-time record, and is shooting for a slim gap of 4 million miles (6 million kilometers) by 2025. But it's flying nowhere near the poles. That's where Solar Orbiter will shine.

The sun's poles are pockmarked with dark, constantly shifting coronal holes. They're hubs for the sun's magnetic field, flipping polarity every 11 years.

Solar Orbiter's head-on views should finally yield a full 3-D view of the sun, 93 million miles (150 million kilometers) from our home planet.

"With Solar Observatory looking right down at the poles, we'll be able to see these huge coronal hole structures," said Nicola Fox, director of NASA's heliophysics division. "That's where all the fast solar wind comes from ... It really is a completely different view."

To protect the sensitive instruments from the sun's blistering heat, engineers devised a heat shield with an outer black coating made of burned bone charcoal similar to what was used in prehistoric cave paintings. The 10-foot-by-8-foot (3-meter-by-2.4-meter) heat shield is just 15 inches (38 centimeters) thick, and made of titanium foil with gaps in between to shed heat. It can withstand temperatures up to nearly 1,000 degrees Fahrenheit (530 degrees Celsius).

Embedded in the heat shield are five peepholes of varying sizes that will stay open just long enough for the science instruments to take measurements in X-ray, ultraviolet, visible and other wavelengths.

The observations will shed light on other stars, providing clues as to the potential habitability of worlds

in other solar systems.

Closer to home, the findings will help scientists better predict space weather, which can disrupt communications.

"We need to know how the sun affects the local environment here on Earth, and also Mars and the moon when we move there," said Ian Walters, project manager for Airbus Defence and Space, which designed and built the spacecraft. "We've been lucky so far the last 150 years," since a colossal solar storm last hit. "We need to predict that. We just can't wait for it to happen."

The U.S.-European Ulysses spacecraft, launched in 1990, flew over the sun's poles, but from farther afield and with no cameras on board. It's been silent for more than a decade.

Europe and NASA's Soho spacecraft, launched in 1995, is still sending back valuable solar data.

Altogether, more than a dozen spacecraft have focused on the sun over the past 30 years. It took until now, however, for technology to allow elaborate spacecraft like Parker and Solar Orbiter to get close without being fried.

Fox considers it "a golden age" for solar physics.

"So much science still yet to do," she said, "and definitely a great time to be a heliophysicist."

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Israel accused of torturing Palestinians after fatal bombing

By **MOHAMMED DARAGHMEH** and **JOSEPH KRAUSS** Associated Press

RAMALLAH, West Bank (AP) — One of the men was hospitalized with kidney failure and 11 broken ribs. Another was nearly unrecognizable to his wife when he was wheeled into a courtroom. A third was stitched up after being attacked by a security dog.

Then the three Palestinians were returned to their Israeli interrogators. They had been swept up in a sprawling manhunt launched after a roadside bomb killed a 17-year-old Israeli girl and wounded her father and brother as they hiked down to a spring last August in the occupied West Bank.

The attack raised fears of a sophisticated militant cell that might strike again, and Israeli interrogators appear to have treated it as a ticking time-bomb scenario. Israeli and Palestinian rights groups say there is strong evidence that they tortured several detainees in violation of Israeli and international law.

The allegations against Israel are the most serious to come to light in years, and the rights groups say they point to a loosening of constraints two decades after the Israeli Supreme Court outlawed most forms of torture.

Lawyers and family members of the three main suspects say they were tortured to the point of being hospitalized. Several other Palestinians swept up by Israel's Shin Bet internal security agency say they were threatened, beaten, forced into painful stress positions and denied sleep.

A landmark 1999 Israeli Supreme Court ruling forbids such torture. But the law allows interrogators to defend the use of force when there is fear of an imminent attack.

Rights groups say interrogators routinely make use of the loophole, knowing they will face few consequences, if any.

The Public Committee Against Torture in Israel says more than 1,200 complaints against the Shin Bet have been filed since 2001, without a single case going to trial. Only one criminal investigation has been launched, over a 2017 case involving alleged rape, and it is still open.

The allegations come at a sensitive time following the release of President Donald Trump's Mideast initiative, which heavily favors Israel and would allow it to annex large parts of the West Bank. The Palestinians have rejected the plan, and sporadic clashes have erupted across the West Bank in recent days.

The Western-backed Palestinian Authority, which has also been accused of torturing prisoners, has responded to the plan by threatening to end its longtime security coordination with Israel, which many Palestinians view as an extension of the occupation. The latest torture allegations could add to the mount-

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ing pressure on President Mahmoud Abbas to follow through on those threats.

A FRENZIED MANHUNT

The Shin Bet launched a massive manhunt after the Aug. 23 bombing killed 17-year-old Rina Shnerb and seriously wounded her father and older brother. Such bombings, a hallmark of the 2000-2005 Palestinian uprising, have been rare in recent years.

Authorities blamed the attack on the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, or PFLP, a leftist political party that has an armed wing. In the following weeks, security forces arrested dozens of its members — suspected militants as well as politicians and student leaders.

The 2.5 million Palestinians in the West Bank live under Israeli military rule, and detainees can be held for months or years without charge under a practice known as administrative detention. Israel says such measures are needed to prevent attacks without disclosing sensitive intelligence.

The Shin Bet identified 44-year-old Samer Arbeed as the mastermind of the attack and the bombmaker. It said Qassem Barghouti, 22, took part in the bombing and other attacks, and that Walid Hanatsheh, 51, was a senior commander in the group's armed wing.

The Shin Bet, also known as the Israeli Security Agency, said the interrogations helped foil attacks planned for the "near future" and led authorities to several weapons caches.

The agency declined to address specific allegations of torture, saying only that "interrogations are conducted in accordance with the law and are aimed at protecting the State of Israel and its citizens from terror attacks."

'SEVERE TORTURE'

In September, days after his arrest, Arbeed was taken to a hospital in critical condition.

Sahar Francis, the head of the Palestinian Addameer rights group and a lawyer for the suspects, said Arbeed's interrogators beat him for 36 hours, leaving him with kidney failure and 11 broken ribs. He was hospitalized and required a respirator after developing pneumonia. He was released from the hospital after three weeks and returned to Shin Bet custody.

The Shin Bet said at the time that Arbeed "did not feel well" during interrogation and was taken to a hospital, without elaborating. Israeli media said the Justice Ministry was investigating. The ministry did not respond to requests for comment.

While Arbeed's hospitalization was widely reported at the time, Francis said his alleged co-conspirators, Barghouti and Hanatsheh, were also severely beaten.

Hanatsheh's wife, Bayan, said she hardly recognized him when she saw him 60 days after his arrest.

"He was brought into court in a wheelchair," she said. "He looked very old, his beard was plucked from several places and his eyes were deep inside his head. He was not himself," she said.

Francis shared photos of Hanatsheh she said were taken 10 days after his interrogation. They appeared to show large red bruises on his legs, feet and shoulders.

Barghouti, the third alleged attacker, was bitten in his genitals by a security dog when authorities raided his home near the West Bank city of Ramallah, Francis said.

"When he was brought back from the hospital for interrogation, the interrogators hit him on his wounds," she said. At one point during his interrogation, he urinated in his pants because he was not permitted to use the bathroom, she added.

Addameer declined to share medical records detailing the injuries, citing privacy laws.

Rachel Stroumsa, the executive director of the Public Committee Against Torture in Israel, said the allegations are "very credible" and line up with the testimony her group has gathered from other detainees over the years.

"Somebody who is in good health is arrested and ends up two days later in hospital, incubated, on dialysis, with broken ribs," she said. "It's extraordinarily difficult for me to see how you could give it any other explanation than a severe suspicion of torture."

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THE EXPERIENCE 'NEVER LEAVES YOU'

Addameer says several other suspects were subjected to less severe forms of abuse that the human rights community widely views as torture. It said a total of around 50 Palestinians were subjected to some form of torture in the wake of the bombing.

George Abu Ghazaleh, a 29-year-old who works at a music production company and teaches traditional dance, was arrested at his home on Nov. 11 and taken away in his pajamas and slippers. He said that for weeks he was isolated in a filthy cell, beaten and screamed at.

"I was asked about acquaintances and about people that I don't even know," he said. "I struggled to convince them that I have no ties whatsoever to any of these people."

He said he was held for several hours at a time with his arms and legs cuffed to a chair in the so-called Shabach position — a practice specifically outlawed by the Supreme Court.

He was released after 40 days without being charged but says he's still traumatized.

"This kind of experience never leaves you," he said. He describes feeling distracted much of the time and says he wakes up at night to the slightest sound outside his window.

Addameer said the Shin Bet also arrested family members of the alleged militants — mostly women — to put pressure on them.

It says Hanatsheh's 21-year-old daughter was held for two days and paraded before her father in detention. Authorities also detained Barghouti's mother, who teaches media studies at Birzeit University, holding her for two weeks.

The Shin Bet also rounded up university students with alleged ties to the PFLP. Mays Abu Ghush, 22, was also subjected to Shabach over the course of 30 days of interrogations, according to Francis, who is also representing her.

SANCTIONED AT THE 'HIGHEST LEVELS'

Stroumsa said the "necessity defense" allowed by the Supreme Court was never intended to sanction any form of torture but to allow interrogators to defend themselves if they strayed into gray areas.

"Torture is forbidden absolutely," she said. "There are things we do not do. We don't rape. We don't enslave people. We don't torture. That's a moral code. It's also a legal code which Israel is bound to."

She said the necessity defense is now agreed upon before interrogations, and is often sanctioned "at the highest levels," by the head of the Shin Bet or the attorney general.

Her group has recorded a "sharp increase" in reports of torture over the last three months.

The Shin Bet declined to comment on when or how the necessity defense is employed.

The Palestinian Authority, which has limited autonomy in parts of the West Bank, and the Islamic militant group Hamas, which rules Gaza, have also been accused of torturing political prisoners. Rights groups say torture is endemic in other countries in the region, such as Syria and Egypt.

Unlike those countries, Israel routinely portrays itself as the region's sole democracy and extolls the morality of its security forces.

In December, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu commended the Shin Bet, the army and police for apprehending the "reprehensible terrorists who murdered Rina Shnerb."

"The long arm of Israel reaches all those who seek our lives, and it will continue to do so," he said.

Follow Mohammed Daraghme on Twitter at www.twitter.com/MohammedDaragh1, and Joseph Krauss at www.twitter.com/josephkrauss.

Sanders to seek partial canvass of Iowa caucus results

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sen. Bernie Sanders' campaign plans to ask for a "partial canvass" of the results of last week's Iowa caucuses.

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A campaign aide confirmed the plans Sunday night, ahead of a Monday deadline for candidates to ask the Iowa Democratic Party to recanvass the results. A recanvass is not a recount, but a check of the vote count against paper records to ensure the counts were reported accurately.

The state party released updated results on Sunday showing Pete Buttigieg leading Sanders by two state delegate equivalents out of 2,152 counted.

The Associated Press remains unable to declare a winner because it believes the results may not be fully accurate and are still subject to potential revision.

Both Buttigieg and Sanders have claimed victory in the caucuses — Buttigieg, because he holds a razor-thin lead in the delegate count; Sanders, because he has received the most total support overall. But the chaos and inconsistencies in the reporting of the results have raised widespread doubts and prompted sharp criticism of the process by candidates and party leaders, and the field has largely shifted its focus to the next primary state, New Hampshire.

But with the slim margin separating Buttigieg and Sanders, the slightest mathematical or reporting mistake could have a significant impact on the race. In its request for a recanvass, campaigns must provide “an explanation about how the national delegation could be altered as a result of the problem or its correction,” according to the Iowa Democratic Party’s delegate selection plan. A Sanders aide said the campaign will be asking the state party to review the results from 20 to 30 precincts.

The potential recanvass would further extend a process already clouded by uncertainty.

Technical issues roiled the caucuses. An app used by party volunteers to report results and jammed phone lines set up for the same purpose resulted in the Iowa Democratic Party failing to release any results to the public until nearly a day after the event. Party volunteers found inconsistencies in the complicated math used by caucus volunteers to calculate the outcome of each individual caucus.

To confirm the validity of the data they received, Iowa Democratic Party officials spent much of the week collecting paper records of the results and checking them against the numbers reported by volunteers. But issues continued to plague the party’s reporting, and the Iowa Democratic Party on Saturday said it was reviewing reported inconsistencies in 95 precincts. On Sunday, they released updated results, which still gave Buttigieg a narrow lead in the delegate count.

But the updated results largely left issues with the complicated math used to calculate results in the individual caucus sites, known as precincts, intact — because, party leadership says, fixing the math would break the law.

Precinct leaders are required to fill out a “caucus math worksheet” at every caucus site to record the number of attendees and the results on the first and second round of voting. Those worksheets are signed by the precinct leader, secretary and representatives of each campaign present to certify their accuracy, and they’re considered the official paper record of what went on in each individual caucus room.

The Iowa Democratic Party used those paper records to ensure they matched the numbers the party reported publicly. But errors in the worksheet abound. In some cases, there were issues in adding up votes for candidates, or the final count of individuals participating after the two rounds of voting was larger than the initial count.

In others, precinct leaders made errors when using the party’s formula that translates raw votes to “state delegate equivalents,” which are ultimately used to calculate how many national delegates each candidate receives.

But in an internal party email sent this weekend, Iowa Democratic Party Chair Troy Price said that, according to the advice of the party’s attorney, Shayla McCormally, those worksheets are considered legal documents and tampering with them would amount to a crime.

“It is the legal voting record of the caucus, like a ballot. The seriousness of the record is made clear by the language at the bottom stating that any misrepresentation of the information is a crime,” McCormally said in the internal party email. “Therefore, any changes or tampering with the sheet could result in a claim of election interference or misconduct.”

The issues with this year’s caucuses, however, are likely to have an impact long beyond the end of the

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Democratic primary.

Democratic National Committee Chairman Tom Perez said on CNN Sunday that he's "mad as hell" about how the caucuses unfolded, and suggested the issues in Iowa could spell the end of caucuses altogether, which are technically party-run events rather than government-run elections.

"I think what we're going to do at the end of this cycle ... is have a further conversation about whether or not state parties should be running elections," he said.

Perez also said the party will "absolutely" consider whether Iowa should lose its status as the first primary state in the nation.

AP Washington Bureau Chief Julie Pace contributed to this report.

Deluge in Australia drenches fires and eases 3-year drought

By NICK PERRY Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — Drought, wildfires and now flooding have given Australia's weather an almost Biblical feel this year. The good news is that a recent deluge in eastern parts of the country has drenched deadly fires and helped ease a crippling drought.

But experts say it will take some time yet to know to what extent the rainfall has replenished dried-up rivers and quenched parched soil in some inland areas most affected by the 3-year drought.

Quentin Grafton, an economics professor and water expert at Australian National University in Canberra, said the rain had broken the drought in some towns but had not fallen evenly across all the affected areas.

"At this stage, it's very good news, and certainly much more than people could have wished for or expected," he said of the rainfall. "There are some very happy people."

Grafton said drought had badly affected an area of more than 1.5 million square kilometers (580,000 square miles), which is larger than the country of Ethiopia. He said monitoring on major rivers over the coming days should provide a clearer picture of how much the rain has helped.

Fire authorities had a reason to celebrate, with many wildfires being extinguished or significantly dampened down by the rain. On Saturday, authorities declared the Currowan Fire south of Sydney was finally out after destroying more than 300 homes and razing 500,000 hectares (1.2 million acres) over two-and-a-half months.

"This is the most positive news we've had in some time," the New South Wales Rural Fire Service tweeted on Monday. "The recent rainfall has assisted firefighters to put over 30 fires out since Friday. Some of these blazes have been burning for weeks and even months."

In all, Australia's wildfires killed at least 33 people and destroyed more than 3,000 homes.

The fires began causing widespread destruction toward the end of 2019, which was both the hottest and driest year in Australia's recorded history, according to the Bureau of Meteorology.

During the deluge over recent days, coastal areas have experienced some of the heaviest rainfalls, which has caused flash flooding in some places. Sydney, the central coast and the Blue Mountains received up to 400 millimeters (16 inches) since Friday, representing some of the heaviest falls in decades.

Dams in the greater Sydney area were more than 64% full on Monday after being only 42% full a week earlier, according to officials. More rain is forecast over the coming days.

But not everybody was ready to begin celebrating. Darryl Cowie, the owner of the Burke & Wills Menindee Motel in the Outback town of Menindee, said they'd received only a small amount of rain overnight.

"The ground was damp, but it's drying out again now," he said. "It's not enough to do anything."

Cowie said he has been serving guests bottled water for about a year now, ever since the tap water became discolored and salty tasting due to the drought. He said the town has since switched to bore water, which has improved the quality.

"There are clouds that have come past, but by the time they reach us, they're empty," he said. "We're keeping our fingers crossed. Sydney is copping it, but it's a long way from here."

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Trump budget to face skepticism, overwhelming politics

By ANDREW TAYLOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Confronted with the threat of trillion-dollar-plus deficits for as far as the eye can see, President Donald Trump is offering a \$4.8 trillion budget plan for the upcoming fiscal year that rehashes previously rejected spending cuts while leaving Social Security and Medicare benefits untouched.

Trump's fiscal 2021 budget plan, to be released Monday, isn't likely to generate a serious Washington dialogue about what to do, if anything this election year, about entrenched fiscal problems that have deficits surging despite a healthy economy.

The new budget, according to senior administration aides and a copy of summary tables, sees a \$1.08 trillion budget deficit for the ongoing budget year and a \$966 billion deficit gap in the 2021 fiscal year starting Oct. 1.

The budget's most significant policy prescriptions — an immediate 5% cut to non-defense agency budgets passed by Congress and \$700 billion in cuts to Medicaid over a decade — are nonstarters on Capitol Hill. But the Trump budget is a blueprint written as if Trump could enact it without congressional approval. It relies on rosy economic projections and fanciful claims of future cuts to domestic programs to show that it is possible to bend the deficit curve in the right direction.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said that "once again the president is showing just how little he values the good health, financial security and well-being of hard-working American families."

"Year after year, President Trump's budgets have sought to inflict devastating cuts to critical lifelines that millions of Americans rely on," she said in a statement. "Americans' quality, affordable health care will never be safe with President Trump."

The budget would reduce the deficit to \$261 billion within a decade if enacted in its entirety and promises balance after 15 years. Trump's budget blueprint also assumes 2.8% economic growth this year and growth averaging 3% over the long term.

The reality is that no one — Trump, the Democratic-controlled House or the GOP-held Senate — has any interest in tackling a chronic budget gap that forces the government to borrow 22 cents of every dollar it spends.

Trump's reelection campaign, meanwhile, is focused on the economy and the historically low jobless rate while ignoring the government's budget.

On Capitol Hill, Democrats controlling the House have seen their number of deficit-conscious "Blue Dogs" shrink while the roster of lawmakers favoring costly "Medicare for All" and "Green New Deal" proposals has swelled. Tea party Republicans have abandoned the cause that defined, at least in part, their successful takeover of the House a decade ago.

Trump has succumbed to the Washington temptation to deliver spending increases and tax cuts first and then deal — or not — with their impact on the deficit. Trump and key administration figures such as Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin had promised that Trump's signature cuts to corporate and individual tax rates would pay for themselves; instead the deficit spiked by more than \$300 billion over 2017 to 2019, falling just short of \$1 trillion.

Trump has also signed two broader budget deals worked out by Democrats and Republicans to get rid of spending cuts left over from a failed 2011 budget accord. The result has been eye-popping spending levels for defense — to about \$750 billion this year — and comparable gains for domestic programs favored by Democrats.

Trump's budget violates last year's spending accord with an immediate \$37 billion cut to non-defense programs appropriated by Congress each year, including a \$2.4 billion, 27% cut to the Environmental Protection Agency and a 13% cut to the Department of Transportation. The Department of Veterans Affairs, would win a 13% budget boost.

The White House hasn't done much to draw attention to this year's budget release, though Trump has revealed initiatives of interest to key 2020 battleground states, such as an increase to \$250 million to restore Florida's Everglades and a move to finally abandon a multibillion-dollar, never used, nuclear waste

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dump that's political poison in Nevada. The White House also leaked word of a \$25 billion proposal for "Revitalizing Rural America" with grants for broadband Internet access and other traditional infrastructure projects such as roads and bridges.

The Trump budget also promises a \$3 billion increase — to \$25 billion — for NASA in hopes of returning astronauts to the moon and on to Mars. It contains a beefed-up, 10-year, \$1 trillion infrastructure proposal, a modest parental leave plan, and a 10-year, \$130 billion set-aside for tackling the high cost of prescription drugs this year.

Trump's U.S.-Mexico border wall would receive a \$2 billion appropriation, more than provided by Congress but less than the \$8 billion requested last year. Trump has enough wall money on hand to build 1,000 miles of wall, most of it obtained by exploiting his budget transfer powers.

Trump took to Twitter on Saturday to promise voters that his budget "will not be touching your Social Security or Medicare" in keeping with his longstanding 2016 campaign promise.

Trump had made a bit of a stir last month at a meeting of global economic elites in Davos, Switzerland, when he told a CNBC interviewer that "at some point" he would consider curbs to popular benefit programs like Medicare and Social Security.

"At the right time, we will take a look at that," Trump said. "You know, that's actually the easiest of all things." After Saturday's tweet, an administration official said, "Every current beneficiary will keep their benefits as the President has always promised."

Trump has proposed modest adjustments to eligibility for Social Security disability benefits and he's proposed cuts to Medicare providers such as hospitals, but the real cost driver of Medicare and Social Security is the ongoing retirement surge of the baby boom-generation and health care costs that continue to outpace inflation.

With Medicare and Social Security largely off the table, Trump has instead focused on Medicaid, which provides care to more than 70 million poor and disabled people. President Barack Obama successfully expanded Medicaid when passing the Affordable Care Act a decade ago, but Trump has endorsed GOP plans — they failed spectacularly in the Senate two years ago — to dramatically curb the program.

Trump's latest Medicaid proposal would allow states that want more flexibility in Medicaid to accept their federal share as a lump sum; for states staying in traditional Medicaid, a 3% cap on cost growth would apply. Trump would also revive a plan, rejected by lawmakers in the past, to cut food stamp costs by providing much of the benefit as food shipments instead of cash.

"This destructive and irrational President is giving us a destructive and irrational budget," said House Budget Committee Chairman John Yarmuth, D-Ky. "The budget reportedly includes destructive changes to Medicaid, SNAP, Social Security, and other assistance programs that help Americans make ends meet — all while extending his tax cuts for millionaires and wealthy corporations."

Scarlett Johansson among the bombshells on Oscars red carpet

By LEANNE ITALIE AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Scarlett Johansson showed up Sunday for her two-nomination night at the Oscars every bit the bombshell in a Champagne-colored Oscar de la Renta strapless gown embellished to the rafters, while fellow nominee Laura Dern brought her mom as she walked the red carpet in pale pink and black.

"Scarlett looked so outrageous in that dress. She was glowing," said Andrea Lavinthal, style and beauty director for People. "She has looked outrageous all awards season. I think it's love. I think love is her accessory."

Johannsson walked the red carpet with boyfriend Colin Jost of "Saturday Night Live" fame.

Spike Lee paid tribute to Kobe Bryant in a Lakers-purple jacket with the basketball star's 24 on its lapels, though a majority of men went for classic black tuxedos from a slew of top designers.

Dern told The Associated Press that her dress was Armani. The designer also dressed her for first Oscars back in the early '90s, when she also attended with her mom, Diane Ladd. "It feels really special," Dern said. "I'm very grateful to them."

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While pink has dominated this awards season, a range of colors were plentiful at the Oscars. Princess and other classic silhouettes were the norm as fewer stars took fashion risks. Janelle Monae was an exception, as usual, in a stunning Ralph Lauren silver dress with a hood, long sleeves and about 170,000 Swarovski crystals.

"This dress took 600 hours to make. It was so beautiful in the architecture of it. She always brings such drama in an elegant way," said Zanna Roberts Rassi, style correspondent for E! and co-founder of Milk Makeup. "It's so nice to see people embrace their own personality."

Another queen of the carpet: "Little Women" nominee Florence Pugh in a tiered gown in a standout shade from Louis Vuitton.

"It changes in different light," she said. "Sometimes it's green, sometimes it's blue. I feel like a Tinkerbell fairy. It's great."

Billie Eilish, her hair bright green and black, was all about Chanel in a fuzzy white button down and pants, not breaking with her tradition of wearing oversize looks.

"We gotta do Chanel," she said, pointing to the brand's baubles in her hair. "I don't know why. It was just the vibe."

Saoirse Ronan's Gucci look seemed confused. It had a lavender skirt with a black and ivory top with an abundance of waist ruffles. There was no such problem with Sandra Oh's ecru, embroidered gown by Elie Saab with floral swirls of tulle and touches of silver thread. It was belted with a bow and suited her to a T. Brie Larson was elegant in an embellished caped gown. Charlize Theron, a star of "Bombshell," also looked classic Hollywood in one-strap black, her hair swept back.

Natalie Portman went in another direction. Her Dior cape look was embroidered with the names of women who directed movies last year but were not nominated at the 92nd Academy Awards. Who are they? The names included Lorene Scafaria ("Hustlers"), Lulu Wang ("The Farewell"), Greta Gerwig ("Little Women"), Marielle Heller ("A Beautiful Day in the Neighborhood"), Melina Matsoukas ("Queen & Slim") Alma Har'el ("Honey Boy"), Céline Sciamma ("Portrait of a Lady on Fire") and Mati Diop ("Atlantics")

The "Joker" star and run-away award winner this season, Joaquin Phoenix, accessorized his black tux with something he seems quite fond of — dark sunglasses. He walked hand in hand with girlfriend Rooney Mara, who wore a gown with black lace details and cutouts.

Cynthia Erivo went for blonde bombshell in a white gown that hugged her up top and fell to a full skirt. Her short hair matched the one-strap look. Nominee for "Judy," Renee Zellweger, also went for white. Her body hugger was custom Armani Prive and had one shoulder with crystal embroidery and a long sleeve.

"I thought she looked so elegant," Lavinthal said.

Zazie Beetz wore two stunning diamond necklaces by Bvlgari with a custom Thom Browne look, and Billy Porter paid homage to the Cupola Room at Kensington Palace in a 24-karat bodice of gold feathers. Beetz, who co-stars in "Joker," sparkled in two pieces from Browne, her tight top fringed at the bottom. Her necklaces were in white gold, one with round diamonds and the other a choker with an oval emerald at the center.

The look was "very chic dominatrix," Beetz said, adding: "I'm really into corsetry. It's a very beautiful classic shape."

Claibourne Poindexter, associate specialist for jewelry at the Christie's auction house, was a fan of Beetz's neckwear and earrings, also by Bvlgari and "no doubt" the idea of Luca Sylvestri, Bvlgari's creative director.

"She has continued to bring a renewed sense of glamour and modernity to the famed Italian house," Poindexter said.

Also winning in the necklace department was "Little Women" director Greta Gerwig. Around her neck was a short necklace with seven emerald beads surrounded by diamonds by Bvlgari. Mindy Kaling paired her bright yellow gown with a Chopard necklace featuring more than 124 carats of diamonds set in 18-karat white gold, taking a top spot in the Oscars jewelry game.

Porter's latest red carpet statement was custom, from British couture designer Giles Deacon. His orange silk ball skirt was printed with touches paying homage to the Cupola Room at Kensington Palace. It was the first of several looks for the "Pose" star at the Dolby Theatre.

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"Billie Eilish and Billy Porter always stick to their guns," said Justine Carreon, senior market director for Elle.com. "I really appreciate that."

Norwegian singer Aurora showed up in loose pants with a tunic top and red accents. Atop her head was a crown-like head piece in a flower design with touches of green and pearl.

Kaitlyn Dever, from "Booksmart," wore an eco-conscious strapless Louis Vuitton gown in red.

"There's a lot of change to be made," she said of saving the planet.

The company said the custom silk satin look embroidered with Swarovski crystals and glass beads is "ethical" and "eco-responsible."

Regina King went full Hollywood in a one-strap pink gown that showed off a perfect fit, paired with Harry Winston jewels. Julia Butters, the 10-year-old who appeared in "Once Upon a Time... in Hollywood," wore a perky shade of pink from Christian Siriano — it was custom — with a matching bag.

Of King's Versace dress, Roberts Rassi said "it was literally snatched at the waist, just beautiful."

Waad al-Kateab, co-director of the nominated, Syria-set documentary "For Sama," used her gown for some political messaging in Arabic. Her war film tells the stories of loss, laughter and survival in Aleppo.

The carpet kicked off with a blast of hard rain and cold just as Porter, Tamron Hall and others had arrived. Crazy staff ran around trying to keep the water off the tent with squeegees.

Associated Press producers Marcela Isaza and Amanda Lee Myers in Los Angeles contributed to this story.

Klobuchar pushes to defy expectations in New Hampshire

By HOLLY RAMER Associated Press

MANCHESTER, N.H. (AP) — Amy Klobuchar's campaign staff initially set up 250 chairs ahead of a Sunday rally at Southern New Hampshire University. But in the moments before the Minnesota senator arrived on campus, the aides scrambled to remove most of them to accommodate a capacity crowd of more than 700 people.

Klobuchar is still lagging in most polls, but the crowd was a sign of the energy surrounding her campaign as voters swamped with choices try to make a decision before Tuesday's New Hampshire primary. She's hoping that a strong debate performance along with a well received speech at a Democratic Party dinner and a surge of cash over the weekend will encourage voters to give her a second look.

"We exceeded expectations in Iowa, we're going to the debate stage in Nevada. I think a lot of people have written me off a few times, and every single time we defied them. And in New Hampshire, there's absolutely no doubt we're seeing a surge," she told The Associated Press after a rally Manchester on Sunday. "It feels good."

She's asking voters for their consideration at a critical moment in the campaign. Pete Buttigieg, the former mayor of South Bend, Indiana, made a strong showing in Iowa and is aiming for a repeat in New Hampshire in hopes of becoming the leading moderate in the race. Former Vice President Joe Biden, meanwhile, began the race as a front-runner but is struggling after a disappointing finish in Iowa and another middling result expected in New Hampshire.

If Klobuchar converts voters, it could come at the expense of Biden — and potentially Buttigieg. Klobuchar has slammed the 38-year-old former mayor as too inexperienced to be president.

Klobuchar has been struggling for attention and fundraising dollars for much of the last year along with a half dozen lower-tier candidates. A fifth-place finish in Iowa, which neighbors her home state, might have been a death knell for another candidates, but she benefited from confusion over the results and extraordinarily low expectations to move on to New Hampshire.

In Durham on Saturday, Annie Merrill was wearing a green scarf matching Klobuchar's campaign signs but said she hadn't made up her mind.

"I love her manner. She's gentle, yet forceful, and I think that's what we need," said Merrill, a retired human resources manager in her 70s. But she's also considering Buttigieg, and said electability weighs heavily on her choice.

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"I hate to say this, but I need to defeat Donald Trump. I don't want to make an election just about one person, but it's pretty important," she said.

But Paul Burkett, 54, a lawyer from Bow, said he's done with being a "tactical voter" and instead was backing Klobuchar simply because she would be the best president.

"I don't think she'll come in first or second, but third is in reach. And I do think there are three tickets out of New Hampshire, given what happened in Iowa and the political science experiment Michael Bloomberg is running," he said.

For much of the race, Klobuchar has struggled at the back of the pack in fundraising and had just under \$5 million in reserve at the end of 2019. But after Friday's debate she took in more than \$2 million in less than two days, a lifeline that will allow her to forge on in contests ahead.

"We have what it takes to go to Nevada and beyond, but to do that, I'm gonna need you," Klobuchar told supporters in Manchester. "So please give me your vote, give me your help, let's go for broke, let's barnstorm this state over the next two days, and we will do well in New Hampshire!"

Her debate performance included a harsh takedown of Buttigieg, and she continued voicing concern about his lack of experience when a reporter asked her about him on Sunday.

"Shouldn't we step back and look at who has the experience to lead especially when we have a brand newcomer in the White House right now? Maybe we should look at who can actually work with Congress, work across the aisle, not just have a talking point, not just saying it well but actually getting it done," she said.

Klobuchar declined to say what she would consider "doing well" in New Hampshire, but supporter Cheryl Archambault is hoping for a third, or even second-place finish.

Archambault, 62, said she had initially favored Biden but later began leaning toward Klobuchar. The senator's debate performance cemented her decision, she said.

"She's real. She's not gonna sell you a bag of goods she's not gonna deliver. I really hear that loud and clear from her," she said.

Associated Press writers Brian Slodysko in Washington and Steve Peoples in Hanover, N.H., contributed to this report.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Monday, Feb. 10, the 41st day of 2020. There are 325 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 10, 1967, the 25th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, dealing with presidential disability and succession, was ratified as Minnesota and Nevada adopted it.

On this date:

In 1840, Britain's Queen Victoria married Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg (KOH'-borg) and Gotha (GAH'-thuh).

In 1936, Nazi Germany's Reichstag passed a law investing the Gestapo secret police with absolute authority, exempt from any legal review.

In 1949, Arthur Miller's play "Death of a Salesman" opened at Broadway's Morosco Theater with Lee J. Cobb as Willy Loman.

In 1959, a major tornado tore through the St. Louis area, killing 21 people and causing heavy damage.

In 1962, the Soviet Union exchanged captured American U-2 pilot Francis Gary Powers for Rudolf Abel, a Soviet spy held by the United States.

In 1968, U.S. figure skater Peggy Fleming, 19, won America's only gold medal of the Winter Olympic Games in Grenoble, France, in the ladies' singles event. (Gabriele Seyfert of East Germany earned the silver medal, Hana Maskova of Czechoslovakia, the bronze.)

In 1992, boxer Mike Tyson was convicted in Indianapolis of raping Desiree Washington, a Miss Black

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America contestant. (Tyson served three years in prison.) "Roots" author Alex Haley died in Seattle at age 70.

In 1997, a civil jury heaped 25 (M) million dollars in punitive damages on O.J. Simpson for the slayings of his ex-wife and her friend, on top of eight-point-five (M) million dollars in compensatory damages awarded earlier.

In 2001, the space shuttle Atlantis' astronauts installed the \$1.4 billion Destiny laboratory on the international space station. Former New York City Mayor Abraham D. Beame died at age 94.

In 2004, the White House, trying to end doubts about President George W. Bush's Vietnam-era military service, released documents it said proved he had met his requirements in the Texas Air National Guard. Democrat John Kerry won the Virginia and Tennessee primaries.

In 2005, Britain's Prince Charles announced he would marry his divorced lover, Camilla Parker Bowles, in April. North Korea boasted publicly for the first time that it possessed nuclear weapons.

In 2006, Dr. Norman Shumway, who performed the first successful U.S. heart transplant, died in Palo Alto, California, at age 83.

Ten years ago: Shuttle Endeavour arrived to a warm welcome at the International Space Station, delivering a new room and observation deck. Former Congressman Charlie Wilson, a Texas Democrat whose funding of Afghanistan's resistance to the Soviet Union was chronicled in the movie and book "Charlie Wilson's War," died in Dallas at age 76.

Five years ago: The parents of Kayla Jean Mueller and U.S. officials confirmed the death of the 26-year-old aid worker who had been held captive by the Islamic State group (IS said Mueller had been killed in a Jordanian airstrike). NBC announced it was suspending Brian Williams as "Nightly News" anchor and managing editor for six months without pay for misleading the public about his experiences covering the Iraq War. Jon Stewart announced he would step down as host of "The Daily Show" on Comedy Central later in the year.

One year ago: Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar joined the growing group of Democrats jostling for the party's presidential nomination. Female acts took home some of the top prizes including album of the year and best new artist at the Grammys, with Kacey Musgraves' country-pop release "Golden Hour" capturing the top album prize; Childish Gambino made history when "This Is America" became the first rap-based track to win record and song of the year.

Today's Birthdays: Opera singer Leontyne Price is 93. Actor Robert Wagner is 90. Rock musician Don Wilson (The Ventures) is 87. Singer Roberta Flack is 83. Singer Jimmy Merchant (Frankie Lymon and the Teenagers) is 80. Movie director Michael Apted is 79. Rock musician Bob Spalding (The Ventures) is 73. Olympic gold-medal swimmer Mark Spitz is 70. Walt Disney Co. chairman and chief executive Robert Iger is 69. Rock musician and composer Cory Lerios (Pablo Cruise) is 69. World Golf Hall of Famer Greg Norman is 65. Actress Kathleen Beller is 64. Country singer Lionel Cartwright is 60. Movie director Alexander Payne is 59. ABC News correspondent George Stephanopoulos is 59. Retired MLB All-Star Lenny Dykstra is 57. Political commentator Glenn Beck is 56. Actress Laura Dern is 53. Writer-producer-director Vince Gilligan (TV: "Breaking Bad") is 53. Country singer Dude Mowrey is 48. Actor Jason Olive is 48. Actress Elizabeth Banks is 46. Pop singer Rosanna Taveres (Eden's Crush) is 43. Actress Julia Pace Mitchell is 42. Reggaeton singer Don Omar is 42. Country musician Jeremy Baxter (Carolina Rain) is 40. Actress Uzo Aduba is 39. Actress Stephanie Beatriz is 39. Actor Max Brown is 39. Actor Barry Sloane is 39. Rock singer Eric Dill is 38. Rock musician Ben Romans (The Click Five) is 38. Actor Trevante Rhodes is 30. Actress Emma Roberts is 29. Actress Makenzie Vega is 26. Actress Chloe Grace Moretz is 23. Actress Yara Shahidi is 20.

Thought for Today: "Morality is moral only when it is voluntary." — Lincoln Steffens, American journalist (1866-1936).

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