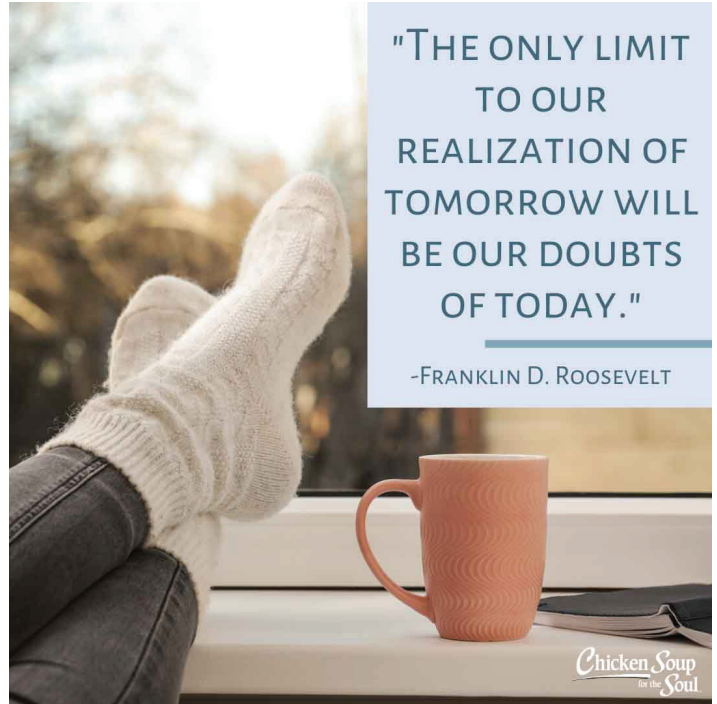


Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 1 of 63

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- GDI Living Heart Fitness - Free Consultation!](#)
- [3- February Students of the Month](#)
- [3- Fish Houses Must Be Removed by March 1](#)
- [4- South Dakota News Watch receives grant to report on Native American issues](#)
- [5- Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs](#)
- [6- Weather Pages](#)
- [9- Daily Devotional](#)
- [10- 2020 Groton Events](#)
- [11- News from the Associated Press](#)



Upcoming Events

Thursday, February 27, 2020

Double header basketball vs. Deuel at Clear Lake. Girls JV at 4 p.m., Boys JV at 4 p.m., Girls Varsity at 6:30 p.m. and Boys Varsity at 8 p.m.

Friday, February 28, 2020

National Qualifier at Brookings High School.

State Wrestling Tournament at Sioux Falls.

Boys' Basketball make-up game at Sisseton. C game at 5 p.m. followed by JV game then the varsity game.

Saturday, February 29, 2020

National Qualifier at Brookings High School.

State Wrestling Tournament at Sioux Falls.

Robotics at Mitchell Technical Institute

Show Choir competition at Vermillion

Sunday, March 1, 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

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

© 2019 Groton Daily Independent

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 2 of 63

13 Main St., Downtown Groton

Open 24/7

GDI Living  **Fitness**

**Free
consultation!**

With Annual Membership

Workout plan tailored to your goals

Learn proper form

Which exercises to perform

1 Free Personal Training Session

by Certified Personal Trainer Rachael Crank

Call/Text Paul at 605/397-7460 for details

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 3 of 63



February Students of the Month

From Back Left: Nathan Unzen (6th), Emma Kutter (8th), Sage Mortenson (11th), Megan Flihs (10th)
From front Left: Anna Fjeldheim (8th), Sierra Ehresmann (9th), Payton Colestock (12th)

Groton Area MS/HS School works to ensure that all levels of academic instruction also include the necessary life skills teaching, practicing, and modeling that encourages essential personal life habits that are universally understood to facilitate helping our students become good human beings and citizens.

It is learning with our heads, hearts and hands to be caring and civil, to make healthy decisions, to effectively problem solve, to be respectful and responsible, to be good citizens, and to be empathetic and ethical individuals.

Students are selected based on individual student growth in the areas of: positive behavior, citizenship, good attendance, a thirst for knowledge, and high academic standards.

Fish Houses Must Be Removed by March 1

PIERRE, S.D. - The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) reminds ice anglers that all fish houses, shelters and other structures must be removed from the ice by midnight on Saturday, Feb. 29. Fish houses, shelters and other structures may be used after this date, but must be removed from the ice on a daily basis.

Once shack have been removed, anglers are reminded to clean up the area. If a shack has been removed and trash remains, the owners of that fish house could be fined for littering.

South Dakota News Watch receives grant to report on Native American issues

South Dakota News Watch has been accepted into a national grant and educational program that will enable News Watch to expand its coverage of the Native American community in South Dakota throughout 2020.

In February, News Watch was one of 12 journalism organizations selected for participation in the Solutions Journalism Revenue Project, a first-time program run by the non-profit Solutions Journalism Network and funded by the Google News Initiative. More than 100 journalism organizations across the country applied for the grant.

The goals of the program are twofold: to fund reporting that focuses on communities or populations that face challenges related to income, health, education or overall well-being; and to educate news organizations on how to leverage public-service reporting to generate new revenue.

Solutions Journalism is focused on the concept that reporting on important issues should also explore and offer potential solutions that will help solve problems or improve communities and populations. The network was founded in 2014 and provides funding and education to news organizations and freelance reporters to enhance the impact of their journalistic work.

"By using rigorous reporting to tell the full story, solutions journalism can build a better relationship between a news organization and the community it serves. It helps with audience engagement, and inspires trust in journalism and within communities," the organization said in announcing the grants. "Now, the Solutions Journalism Revenue Project will see how diverse news organizations can use it to unlock the financial support news organizations need."

News Watch is a nonpartisan, non-profit news organization that publishes its material on its website www.SDNewsWatch.org, on social media and on dozens of traditional media platforms across the state. Launched in 2018, News Watch is completely funded by donations and grants.

The grant money received by News Watch will offset costs of time, travel and technology related to reporting on the Native American community in South Dakota, said David Bordewyk, News Watch executive director.

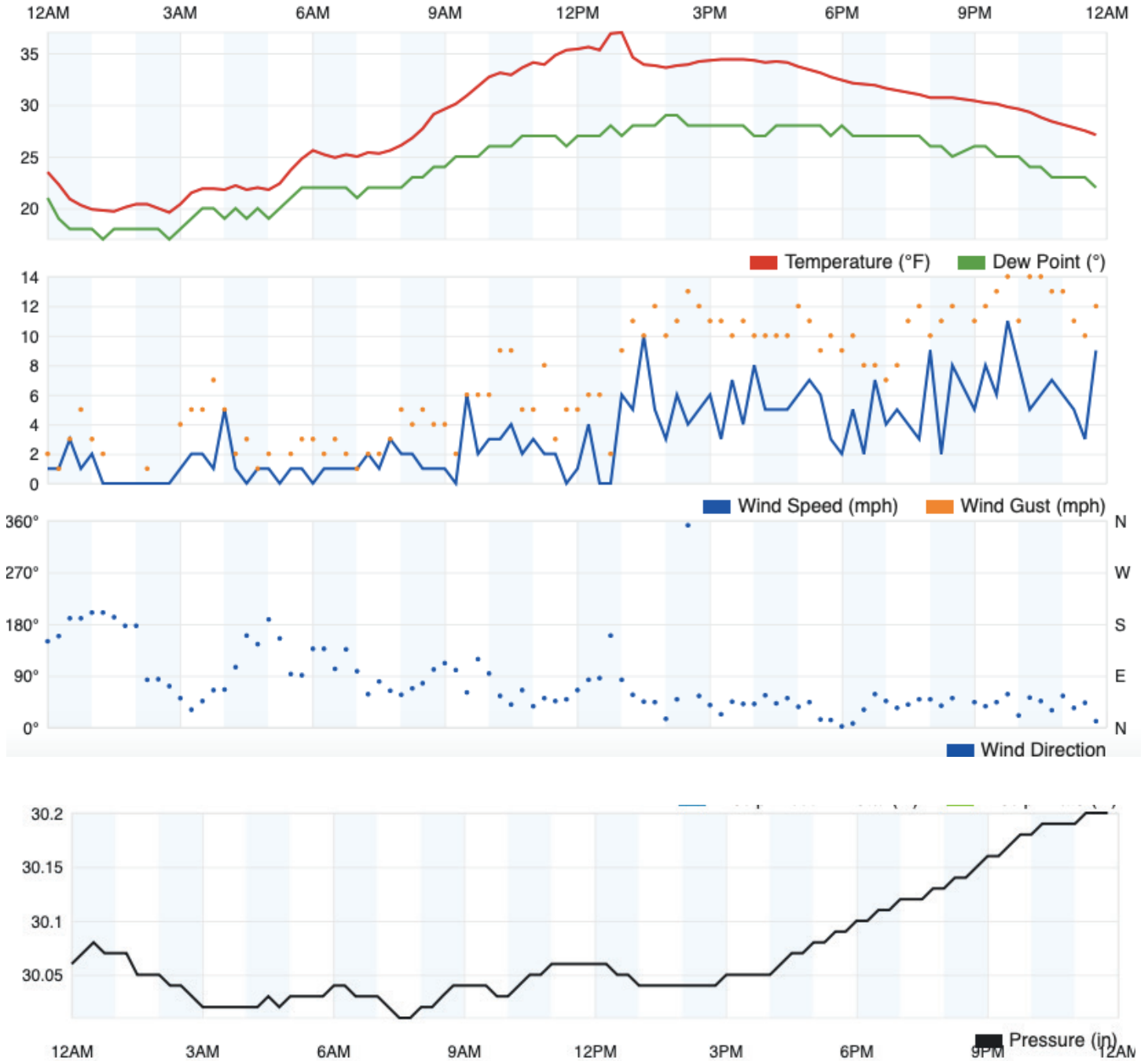
"We are honored to have been selected for this grant from among applicants nationwide," Bordewyk said. "These resources will help us report important Native American issues in our state and ultimately fulfill our mission to inform and enlighten citizens."

The grant project will be led by Bordewyk and News Watch Content Director Bart Pfankuch. News Watch anticipates using the grant funding to produce three multi-part journalism projects in 2020, all focused on highlighting issues and offering potential solutions that can improve the lives and health of Native Americans across South Dakota.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 5 of 63

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 6 of 63

Today



Cloudy

High: 28 °F

Tonight



Decreasing
Clouds

Low: 3 °F

Wednesday



Partly Sunny

High: 22 °F

Wednesday
Night



Mostly Cloudy

Low: 11 °F

Thursday



Mostly Cloudy

High: 25 °F

Light Snow Ending

Today



- Snow ending this morning, remaining mostly cloudy
- Highs 23-36°F

Tonight

- Partly cloudy
- Lows 2-17°F

Wednesday

- Mostly cloudy
- Highs 17-36°F

Aberdeen, SD
Weather Forecast Office

Light snow should end across the region this morning. But, it will remain mostly cloudy. Tonight and Wednesday should be dry. Highs for Wednesday will be warmer west, and cooler east.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 7 of 63

Today in Weather History

February 25, 1987: Six to thirty inches of snow fell on this date in 1987 across much of western and central South Dakota. Three to six inches of snow fell in the northeast part of South Dakota. Some of the most significant snowfall amounts reported were 30 inches at Phillip, 26 inches at Murdo, and Timber Lake, with 15 inches at Rapid City. Numerous accidents occurred in the western and central sections of the state. Many roads were closed, including interstate 90 for most of the 27th. Slippery roads were a major factor in the vehicle injuries of three women on Highway 12, six and one-half miles east of Ipswich in the late afternoon of the 27th. The storm began on the 24th and lasted until the 28th.

February 25, 2000: Unusual February severe thunderstorms produced nickel to quarter size hail in Lyman and Hand counties on this date in 2000.

1934: An outbreak of six tornadoes killed nineteen in Mississippi, Alabama, and Georgia. Hardest hit was Bowden, GA, and Shady Grove, AL. One home in Lauderdale County, Mississippi, was picked up, thrown 400 feet, and blown to bits. Six family members were killed in the house.

1991: Black rain fell over southeastern Turkey for 10-hours, causing panic among people. The black rain was the result of soot from burning oil fields in Kuwait.

2010: A powerful nor'easter spread significant snow and windy conditions across the Middle Atlantic region from Thursday, February 25th into Friday, February 26th. An area of low pressure developed off the Carolina coast late Wednesday night February 24th and then strengthened as it tracked northward to near Long Island, New York by Thursday evening. As low pressure aloft deepened over the Mid-Atlantic coast Thursday night into Friday, the surface low retrograded and moved westward into northern New Jersey and southern New York. By Saturday, February 27th, the low pushed into southern New England and gradually weakened over the weekend. Strong wind gusts were measured throughout the Middle Atlantic region as a result of this coastal storm. Some of the highest wind gusts recorded include 62 mph measured at Cape May, New Jersey; 52 mph at the Atlantic City Marina; 51 mph at the Mount Pocono Airport and Lewes, Delaware; and 50 mph at Dover Air Force Base. Wind gusts of 40 mph or higher were also recorded at Philadelphia, Wilmington, and Allentown. Considerable blowing and drifting snow resulted, especially from the Poconos eastward into northern New Jersey. Snow drifts as high as 3 to 5 feet were seen across portions of Warren and Sussex counties in New Jersey. Total accumulations of 20 inches or more were recorded from Morris and Sussex counties in New Jersey westward into Monroe County, Pennsylvania. A band of 12 to 18 inches of snow accumulation was measured from Warren and Morris counties in New Jersey westward to Lehigh County, Pennsylvania. In addition to snow that accumulated during the daytime on Thursday, many locations across the region experienced a heavier burst of snow with gusty winds Thursday night into early Friday thanks to additional moisture that wrapped around the low-pressure system. Some areas saw snowfall rates of 1 to 2 inches per hour, especially from northern New Jersey and into the Poconos. Central Park ended the month with a total of 36.9 inches of snow, making this the snowiest month since records began in 1869.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 8 of 63

Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 37 °F at 12:48 PM

Low Temp: 20 °F at 2:44 AM

Wind: 15 mph at 10:30 PM

Snow

Record High: 70° in 1958

Record Low: -29° in 1919

Average High: 31°F

Average Low: 12°F

Average Precip in Feb.: 0.45

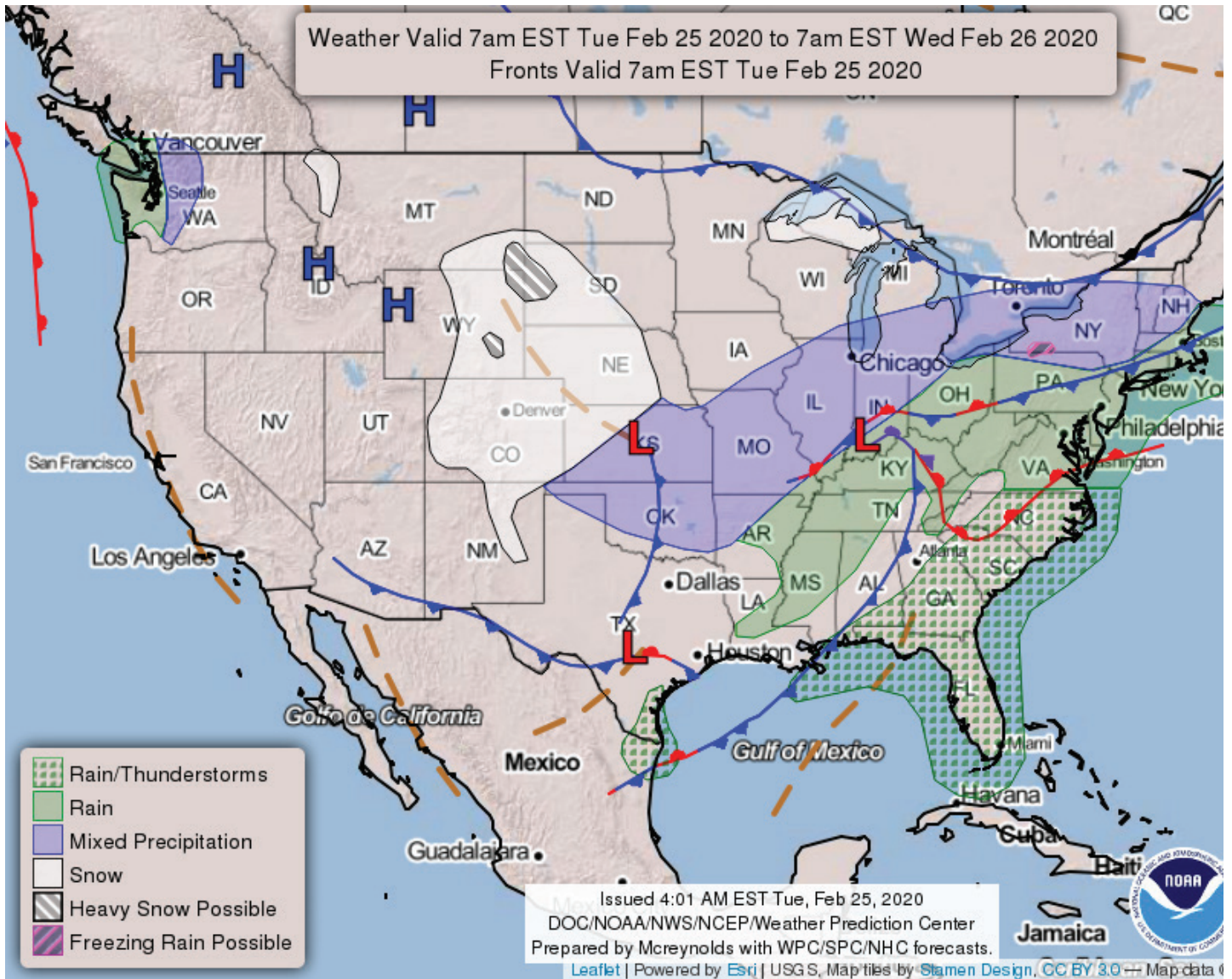
Precip to date in Feb.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 0.92

Precip Year to Date: 0.35

Sunset Tonight: 6:15 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:18 a.m.





The Value Of A "Deaf Ear"

Matt came home from school with a note from his teacher. He had misbehaved in class and the teacher wanted his mother to know what he had done.

After reading the note his mother said, "Son, why did you trip James as he was walking to his desk?"

"It wasn't my idea, Mom. It was Donald's," he responded quickly.

"Now, Matt, you know that Donald can't make you do anything," replied his mother.

"Well," he said after a moment's thought, "it must have been the devil that made me do it."

"Son, shame on you. You know that when the devil tempts you, it is important to turn a deaf ear," she admonished him.

He put one finger in his left ear and listened to the sound coming from the TV and shook his head. Then he put a finger in his right ear and listened to the sound once again. After a moment he looked up at his Mom and said smilingly, "Mom, I don't have a deaf ear."

Temptation comes at us from every direction all of the time. It could be something we see or hear or think we would enjoy eating. But James had the best way to end being tempted: "Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw close to God and God will draw close to you." Such a simple solution that it is amusing! But it is neither simple nor amusing. Getting close to God takes time and the devil cleverly sets our priorities.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, help us to take control of our time and our lives by "seeking first the Kingdom of God." May each day begin with Your Word and prayer. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: James 4:7-8 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 10 of 63

2020 Groton SD Community Events

- 03/14/2020 Youth Girls/Boys Basketball Tourney Grades 4th-6th (Baseball/Softball Foundation Fundraiser)
 - 04/04/2020 Groton Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt - City Park (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
 - 04/04/2020 Dueling Piano's Baseball Fundraiser at the American Legion
 - 04/25/2020 Fireman's Stag (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
 - 04/25-26/2020 Front Porch 605 Rural Route Road Trip
 - 04/26/2020 Father/Daughter dance.
 - 05/02/2020 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales, (1st Saturday in May)
 - 05/11/2020 Girls High School Golf Meet at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 05/25/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services
 - 06/05/2020 Athletic Fundraiser at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 06/8-10/2020 St. John's VBS
 - 06/19/2020 SDSU Golf at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 06/20/2020 Shriner's Golf Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 06/22/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Ladies Invitational
 - 06/26/2020 Groton Businesses Golf Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 07/04/2020 Firecracker Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 07/12/2020 Summer Fest/Car Show
 - 07/16/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Pro Am Golf Tourney
 - 07/31-08/04/2020 State American Legion Baseball Tournament in Groton
 - 08/07/2020 Wine on Nine Event at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 09/12/2020 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Sat. after Labor Day)
 - 09/13/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Couples Sunflower Classic
 - 10/09/2020 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
 - 10/10/2020 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
 - 10/31/2020 Downtown Trick or Treat
 - 10/31/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat
 - 11/14/2020 Groton Legion Annual Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
 - 11/26/2020 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center
 - 12/05/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Tour of Homes & Holiday Party
 - 12/05/2020 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services
 - 01/--/2021 83rd Annual Carnival of Silver Skates
-
- Bingo every Wednesday 6:30pm at the American Legion Post #39
 - Groton Lions Club Wheel of Meat, American Legion Post #39 7pm (Saturday nights November 30th thru April 11th)
 - Groton Lions Club Wheel of Pizza, Jungle Lanes 8pm (Saturday nights November 30th thru April 11th)
-
- All dates are subject to change, check for updates here

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 11 of 63

News from the Associated Press

Monday's Scores By The Associated Press

BOYS BASKETBALL=

Clark/Willow Lake 76, Florence/Henry 74, 2OT
Corsica/Stickney 62, Parkston 60
Flandreau 66, Deuel 30
Hamlin 56, Flandreau Indian 42
Irene-Wakonda 59, Bon Homme 56
Lower Brule 61, McLaughlin 53
Madison 71, Milbank 49
Mobridge-Pollock 62, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 42
Stanley County 56, Miller 50
Tri-Valley 73, Baltic 66
Vermillion 69, Canton 61
Webster 73, Britton-Hecla 72
Winner 91, Crow Creek 84

GIRLS BASKETBALL=

Clark/Willow Lake 57, Florence/Henry 51
Flandreau 67, Deuel 21
Vermillion 51, Canton 10
Class B Region 1=
First Round=
Great Plains Lutheran 56, Britton-Hecla 35
Wilmot 45, Leola/Frederick 26
Class B Region 2=
First Round=
North Central Co-Op 53, Sunshine Bible Academy 24
Class B Region 3=
First Round=
Arlington 49, Iroquois 31
James Valley Christian 52, Lake Preston 50
Wolsey-Wessington 53, Wessington Springs 34
Class B Region 4=
First Round=
Chester 41, Elkton-Lake Benton 36
Mitchell Christian 51, Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 36
Class B Region 5=
First Round=
Canistota 65, Alcester-Hudson 44
Centerville 56, Gayville-Volin 42
Scotland 61, Freeman Academy/Marion 25
Class B Region 6=
First Round=
Andes Central/Dakota Christian 50, Platte-Geddes 45
Bon Homme 47, Marty Indian 33
Gregory 58, Colome 38

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 12 of 63

Class B Region 7=
First Round=
Oelrichs 59, Crazy Horse 54
Philip 49, Jones County 37
Class B Region 8=
First Round=
Bison 53, McIntosh 32
Harding County 60, Tiospaye Topa 25
Timber Lake 64, Takini 43

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

Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorials

By The Associated Press undefined

Argus Leader, Sioux Falls, Feb. 21

Gov. Noem's crackdown on 'riot boosters' comes at a cost

When the South Dakota Legislature pushed through "riot boosting" measures spearheaded by Gov. Kristi Noem toward the end of last year's session in Pierre, there was legitimate cause for concern.

Noem and her staff were so eager to snuff out potential Keystone XL pipeline protests that they crafted flawed legislation that violated basic constitutional rights to free speech and thwarted the governor's efforts to improve relations with Native American tribal leaders.

Following a preliminary injunction and lawsuit settlement with the ACLU, Noem agreed not to enforce elements of the law that punished those who direct or encourage others to "riot" as well as provisions that allowed the state to sue offenders for three times the amount of damages.

This year's Keystone XL crackdown law picks up where that setback left off. The governor's office has brought forth House Bill 1117, also known as "Cleanup in Aisle 3."

Tribal members protest Gov. Kristi Noem's riot boosting bill until asked to leave the Capitol because they didn't have a permit on Tuesday. Sioux Falls Argus Leader

The bill, which passed through the House State Affairs Committee this week, repeals language deemed unconstitutional and narrows the definition of "incitement to riot" to one that meets the established Supreme Court standard set forth in the landmark 1969 case of Brandenburg v. Ohio.

When asked by Rep. Steven Haugaard during the committee hearing why last year's law didn't adhere to that federal precedent, Noem's deputy counsel Katie Hruska demurred and pointed out that the legislation was a "collaboration" with different groups. It's unclear whether this updated version will meet the same fate if passed and legally challenged.

As with many administrative missteps during Noem's tenure so far, this riot boosting kerfuffle reveals an overreaction to a perceived threat that demands more nuance than South Dakota's top executive allows.

There is nothing wrong with being prepared for demonstrations like those against the Dakota Access pipeline that cost neighboring North Dakota nearly \$40 million and led to hundreds of arrests beginning in late 2016.

But pushing through laws to punish perceived antagonists from parts unknown seems a far cry from a responsible dialogue about South Dakota's role in a pipeline drama that involves multiple states, the federal government, tribal interests, environmental groups and of course the oil industry.

The governor would be well-served to meet with tribal leaders to better understand their concerns about the 1,200-mile Keystone XL project, which starts in Canada, enters the U.S. in Montana and travels through South Dakota and Nebraska to join existing pipelines to flow to Gulf Coast refineries.

Though the \$8 billion project does not cut through reservation land, there are valid concerns about impact on water supply. Major leaks have already occurred on the Keystone line, including a spillage of 383,040 gallons of oil in North Dakota late last year, coming on the heels of a 2017 leak in South Dakota

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 13 of 63

of 210,000 gallons.

Environmentalists point out that the Keystone XL pipeline would cut across the Ogallala Aquifer, one of the largest underground deposits of fresh water in the world.

These concerns led the State Department under President Obama in 2015 to deny a permit to approve the XL project, but President Trump issued a presidential permit in 2017 that put the project back on track for construction later this year.

As governor, Noem is well within her purview to anticipate security measures and potential costs to state agencies as the likelihood of pipeline protests increase. But the art of governing lies in execution, not just foresight. The haste with which her riot boosting laws were passed last year, with little or no consultation with tribal representatives, made a difficult situation much worse, with Faith Spotted Eagle of the Yankton Sioux Tribe calling it an attempt to "legislate by ambush."

Protests rang through the rotunda this week, with several tribal members chanting "Gov. Noem, we are not a riot!" before HB 1117 passed the House by a vote of 45-25. As the bill heads to the Senate, it's worth considering whether these measures are worth the price of harming rather than healing Native American relations in a state with a nearly 9 percent Indian population and a lot of history to draw upon.

The prospects of the Keystone XL pipeline will be decided, with much hue and cry, outside the realm of South Dakota state government. But there are still choices to be made. Treating legitimate protest over the pipeline's environmental impact as a lawless rampage to be harshly punished is one avenue of action.

Another is to communicate with those who hold grievances and make them feel part of the process. There are no perfect solutions in this case, but treating dissenters as a valid voice rather than a looming threat is a decent place to start.

Madison Daily Leader, Feb. 18

A boost in tax relief could add buffer strips

While buffer strips aren't universally embraced, there is little doubt as to the benefits.

Buffer strips are grasses or other vegetation planted along lakes, rivers and streams. The purpose is to filter nitrogen, phosphorus and sediment from adjacent land before it gets into waterways. Excess quantities of those elements cause deterioration of water quality in lakes and rivers.

In our region, excess nitrogen and phosphorus contribute to algae blooms. Excess sediment fills up creeks and contributes to flooding in high water events.

South Dakota recently implemented a voluntary program for agriculture producers to plant buffer strips, with the state providing a 40% tax break for farmers who plant buffer strips. The program attracted just 27 farmers who placed 292 acres in 12 counties in the first year. We know, however, that many more farmers have buffer strips who simply have not entered the tax break program.

Minnesota's program, by contrast, requires mandatory participation. While there are plenty of farmers who oppose the mandatory nature, preliminary compliance is very high: 99 percent of land adjacent to lakes and streams have grassy strips, while 95% of all bodies of water do, according to Conservation Minnesota, an environmental group.

Minnesota has typically had more water protection rules in place, hoping to preserve the state's thousands of lakes. While South Dakotans are also concerned about lake water quality, there hasn't been much appetite for mandatory plantings.

So perhaps it's time to consider enhancing our voluntary program. A boost in the property tax relief percentage is the right place to start. We can't guess as to what levels of tax relief will improve compliance, but an increased amount would have to help.

The results would matter. In addition to the water quality benefits, we think the soil stabilization benefits are particularly timely. Officials in our area are trying to prepare for potential spring flooding, and cleaning sediments out of creeks is a top priority. Preventing the sediment in the first place would be helpful in the battle.

We won't see action in the 2020 legislative session concerning buffer strips, but we'd like to see it on

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 14 of 63

next year's agenda.

Aberdeen American News, Feb. 22 **What's really important?**

We're losing patience.

No, not the American News, exactly, or the editorial board, though we're included. But all of us. South Dakotans. Americans. Humans.

We're losing patience and maybe something much more important — the ability to be civil.

Listen to how we interact.

Read what we post on social media.

Take in a little public discourse, if that's even the right word.

Looking at Facebook and Twitter can be almost painful experiences.

Maybe we need a week of nothing but kid, pet, vacation and meal posts. Some folks overdo those, too, but they're easier to tune out. And they probably don't offend anybody.

Our instant update, immediate feedback society is not very healthy.

News is churned out in bits that might not include all the needed context. Immediate angry responses follow — sometimes raw emotion, sometimes misguided.

Sweeping generalities are made about all members of a political party or church or group, including our friends and neighbors. Same of politicians and the media, for that matter.

Debate seems dead.

And, to be clear, debate does not mean getting defensive immediately. It does not mean being unwilling to listen to or consider alternative viewpoints. It does not mean responding in unwarranted anger.

Keep your passion. Kill the hate.

Some of this might not seem that important, except it's affecting how we interact with each other.

Family members won't communicate. Friends drift apart. We make assumptions about our neighbors based on a sign in their yard. Even church communities are sometimes fractured.

The question isn't so much why. We all know why.

A better question is: Is it all worth it?

Most of us know our crazy brother is really a good person. We know our neighbors are willing to help out in a bind. We have made friends with the very people we're butting heads with because we like them, we enjoy their company. We go to church to feel included, to find fellowship.

It didn't used to be like this.

It doesn't have to now.

We're all in this together even if our beliefs about how to get out are vastly different.

The political divide is driving us apart.

Humanity has to bring us back together.

It's more important than a tweet.

It's more important than a yard sign.

It's more important than just about anything, honestly, because without it, we're all sunk.

If there's somebody unhealthy in your life — a manipulator, an addict, a liar, a cheater, an abuser — push him or her out.

But if you just disagree, there are plenty of workarounds.

People over politics. Compassion over contempt. Patience over hostility.

A cup of coffee and cookies over another nasty Facebook comment or a rash, inaccurate generalization.

Maybe it's easier said than done at this point in history and in this election year. But it feels like we've never needed it more.

S. Dakota kills bill from survivors of Catholic school abuse

By **STEPHEN GROVES** Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Louise Aamot Charbonneau couldn't make her annual trip to the South Dakota Legislature this year to confront lawmakers with her story of surviving childhood rape and abuse at the hands of priests and nuns at a boarding school for Native Americans during the 1950s and 1960s.

The 69-year-old died suddenly three weeks ago. But her sisters, bonded both through family and survival, showed up, along with their daughters and granddaughters.

They continued their push for lawmakers to open a two-year window for victims of childhood sexual abuse to file lawsuits against organizations in which the abuse occurred. The proposal has died every year, but they keep coming back to confront lawmakers with their testimony that priests and nuns at St. Paul's Indian Mission School systematically perpetrated rape, abuse and even forced abortions.

For nearly a decade, Charbonneau, along with her eight older sisters, has made their case to lawmakers. Geraldine Dubourt, one of the sisters, said in some ways she was glad her sister Louise died peacefully at her home so she didn't have to continue the fight.

"We fought so far, but I feel the creator took her home so she didn't have to come here again, so she didn't have to be raped all over again by your no vote," Dubourt told lawmakers.

She said she doesn't make the annual trip to Pierre for herself anymore, but to protect the next generation of Native American women. She is now also looking to them to carry their cause. The living sisters have all entered their 70s.

As victims of childhood sexual abuse have come forward across the country, 15 states have moved to extend or suspend the time frames for childhood sexual abuse lawsuits to allow claims that stretch back decades. South Dakota has done the opposite.

The Legislature in 2010 passed a law that does not allow childhood sexual abuse survivors over age 40 to sue organizations. Marci Hamilton, a Professor at the University of Pennsylvania who runs an organization advocating for removing the statute of limitations on childhood sexual abuse, told lawmakers that South Dakota is the only state since 2002 to put restrictions on the statute of limitations.

The bill to undo that was once again defeated by lawmakers who did not want to open churches and organizations up to lawsuits for past abuse.

Justin Bell, a lobbyist for St. Joseph's Indian School in Chamberlain, cast doubt on the memories of childhood sexual abuse survivors, arguing that the passage of time make it more difficult to disprove allegations. He pointed to the recent filings by the Boy Scouts of America as an example of the ruin that these types of lawsuits can bring to an organization.

"The Catholic Church put these perpetrators in place, so shouldn't they own these perpetrators?" Dubourt asked.

She argued that lawmakers inaction doesn't just affect their case, but could allow future abuse within organizations and churches.

The Catholic Diocese of Sioux Falls did not immediately return a call for comment on the case.

The current law stipulates that childhood sexual abuse survivors must sue organizations within three years of the abuse or when they discovered effects of abuse. But the average age that victims come forward is 52, according to Hamilton.

It was around that age when the Charbonneau sisters and some of their fellow students began opening up about their experiences at St. Paul's, which was turned over to the Yankton Sioux Tribe and became Marty Indian school in the 1970s.

"I didn't tell my children about what happened to me until the past five years," said Francis Hart, who also attended the school with the sisters.

Hart said it was important to tell her children about the sexual, physical and mental abuse she endured so that they could fight for other Native women.

Her daughter and granddaughter drove through the night from Minnesota to attend Monday's committee hearing, arriving at 4 a.m. Her daughter donned a dress with hundreds of tiny bells that made gentle

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 16 of 63

clinks as she moved through halls of the Capitol. The bells send prayers of healing, she said.

As the bill died, Hart's granddaughter, 25-year-old Mikayla Maxwell, turned to her mother and grandmother and told them, "I've got you guys. I'll keep this going for the rest of my life."

Girl's Basketball Polls

By The Associated Press \

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Sportswriters Association high school girl's poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, records, total points and last week's ranking.

Girls

Class AA

1. O'Gorman (20) 19-0 100 1
2. Stevens 17-1 80 2
3. Lincoln 14-5 44 4
4. Yankton 13-5 41 5
5. Harrisburg 15-3 35 3

Class A

1. Winner (20) 18-0 100 1
2. Lennox 18-1 78 2
3. St. Thomas More 17-1 62 3
4. Crow Creek 18-2 31 4
5. Flandreau 16-2 21 5

Receiving votes: Hamlin 7, Red Cloud 1.

Class B

1. Corsica-Stickney (20) 20-0 100 1
2. Ethan 19-1 80 2
3. De Smet 16-4 52 3
4. Faith 18-2 33 4
5. Howard 17-3 16 RV

Receiving votes: Castlewood 10, Faulkton Area 7, Langford Area 2.

Boy's Basketball Polls

By The Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Sportswriters Association high school boy's poll, with first-place votes in parentheses, records, total points and last week's ranking.

Boys

Class AA

1. Huron (14) 14-4 94 4
2. Yankton (6) 14-4 85 1
3. Roosevelt 12-6 45 5
4. O'Gorman 12-6 37 3
5. Stevens 12-6 23 RV

Receiving votes: Brandon Valley 16.

Class A

1. St. Thomas More (20) 17-0 100 1
2. Sioux Valley 19-1 79 2
3. Crow Creek 18-1 56 3
4. SF Christian 13-5 30 4
5. Lennox 16-3 17 5

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 17 of 63

Receiving votes: Dell Rapids 10, Dakota Valley 5, Madison 2, Tiospa Zina 1.

Class B

- | | | | |
|----------------------------|------|----|----|
| 1. Aberdeen Christian (17) | 18-2 | 97 | 1 |
| 2. De Smet (3) | 18-2 | 83 | 2 |
| 3. Viborg-Hurley | 16-3 | 52 | 3 |
| 4. White River | 16-3 | 32 | 4 |
| 5. Hanson | 16-3 | 22 | RV |

Receiving votes: Arlington 7, Platte-Geddes 3, Canistota 2, Howard 2.

New app can teach math to children in the Lakota language

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A new app is helping American Indian youth learn math that can be taught in their native Lakota language.

The bilingual English and Lakota math video game was created by the Thunder Valley Community Development Corp., a South Dakota nonprofit that promotes Native American issues.

The "Making Camp: Lakota" app is free and can be downloaded on mobile devices and computer desktops, KOTA-TV reported. It is meant mainly to help fourth- and fifth-grade students.

A historical video introduces each section of the game explaining cultural symbols like eagle feathers, buffalo and horses.

Mary Bowman, an Oceti Sakhalin teacher with the Rapid City Area School District, said it's a key part of the curriculum. Culturally responsive teaching increases children's achievement levels because the children are more engaged and learn more, she said.

"It's so important because, you know, Lakota people have lived here for centuries. And the influence that the culture has is here and great. It's good not just for Native students to learn but all kids to learn," Bowman said.

Lakota is part of the Dakota language group and is one of the most commonly spoken Native American dialects in the country. Most of its speakers live in the Dakotas.

Defendant pleads guilty to threatening to shoot prosecutor

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A man accused of threatening to shoot a prosecutor at the federal courthouse in Rapid City has pleaded guilty to charges.

Steven McCann entered the plea late last week to threatening to assault, kidnap or murder a federal official. Two charges of contempt of court are to be dropped as part of a plea deal with prosecutors.

McCann was in court in December 2018 when a judge revoked his supervised release for possessing a gun, officials said.

The Rapid City Journal reports McCann became agitated and was taken to a cell where he threatened to shoot U.S. Attorney Eric Kelderman in the head.

The threatening crime carries a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison, but prosecutors said they will recommend a punishment on the low end of sentencing guidelines.

Weinstein case could influence other sex crime prosecutions

By MARYCLAIRE DALE and JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — New York prosecutors are hailing Harvey Weinstein's conviction as a pivotal moment that could change the way the legal system views a type of sexual assault case historically considered difficult to prove.

Most of the women who testified against Weinstein stayed in contact with him — and sometimes had consensual sexual encounters with him — after alleged attacks. None promptly reported his crimes. There was little physical evidence to bolster their stories.

The jury convicted anyway, finding the producer guilty of raping one woman in 2013 and sexually as-

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 18 of 63

saulting another in 2006.

"This is a new day," Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr. said after the verdict was announced. "Rape is rape whether the survivor reports within an hour, within a year or perhaps never. It's rape despite the complicated dynamics of power and consent after an assault. It's rape even if there is no physical evidence."

But some women's advocates cautioned that it's too soon to know how much the legal landscape has shifted.

"This is not a signal that our systems and institutions are magically transformed," said Sonia Ossorio, the president of the National Organization for Women's New York chapter, who sat through most of the trial. "This is one case, one man. We've got to keep it in perspective."

If any case seemed to encapsulate the #MeToo reckoning with sexual misconduct, gender dynamics and power as a form of coercion, it was Weinstein's.

Dozens of women who crossed paths with Weinstein through the entertainment industry have said he bullied, pressured, coerced or overpowered them while demanding sexual favors. The alleged encounters took place over many decades, amid movie screenings in Los Angeles, film festivals in Cannes, and business meetings in New York or London.

The New York case involved only six accusers: three directly linked to the charges and three whose testimony was meant to bolster the prosecution case.

Weinstein's defense team argued that the encounters were consensual, if perhaps "transactional": He wanted sex, they wanted access to his power over the film world.

While the law recognizes that people can be assaulted by intimate partners in ongoing relationships, those cases have rarely been prosecuted in the past, because they're difficult to prove, several trial lawyers said. The tide is starting to change, however, as prosecutors take more risks and juries become more aware of the complexities of human behavior.

"This case challenges our notions of what is force in a sexual relationship, what is lack of consent in a sexual relationship," said Paul DerOhannessian, an Albany, New York, defense lawyer, former sex crimes prosecutor and author of a guide to sexual assault trials. He followed the trial coverage and found it telling that one of the first questions from the jury involved the legal definition of "consent" and "forcible compulsion."

Vance initially declined to prosecute Weinstein when a model claimed he'd groped her in 2015. Facing criticism of the 2015 decision after waves of additional women came forward two years later, Vance ultimately took some of their allegations to trial.

One of the first witnesses at trial was an expert on victim behavior, who testified that it isn't unusual for sexual assault victims to continue communicating with their attackers. A decade ago, that type of expert testimony was rarely allowed.

The jury ultimately acquitted Weinstein of two of the most serious counts: one of first-degree rape, and a second charge that he was a sexual predator, linked to the testimony of actress Annabella Sciorra, who said Weinstein barged into her apartment and raped her in the early 1990s.

But Weinstein, 67, still faces the possibility of up to 29 years in prison. He's also facing separate charges in Los Angeles involving two more alleged sexual assault victims.

The Associated Press does not typically identify people who say they are victims of sex crimes unless they grant permission, as Sciorra did.

Criminal defense attorney Richard Kaplan said the New York case could both empower women to come forward and embolden prosecutors to take on tough cases.

"Now there is a roadmap on how you can win this kind of case," he said, predicting more people would come forward.

"There's always the fear of coming forward, you know, going through a trial, getting beat up and humiliated and then not getting that verdict. Now that they see it can be done, I think more people will come forward and definitely empower the movement."

Lawyer Carrie Goldberg represents Weinstein accuser Lucia Evans, whose complaint against him was

initially part of the indictment, but Vance's office ultimately dropped her allegations from the case. While Goldberg faults Vance for not sticking with her client, she said the conviction is a "watershed moment" — and a long time coming.

"I hope that prosecutors, all over this country, and all over the world, look at this case and realize that rape trials can be won," Goldberg said, "and that these aren't just 'he said, she said' stories, but they're actually crimes that are winnable and need to be brought."

Dale reported from Philadelphia.

Trump returns to domestic squabbles on India trip

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — Returning to domestic squabbles, President Donald Trump lashed out at Supreme Court justices and his Democratic rivals on Tuesday during the second and last day of a whirlwind trip to India. Addressing reporters and business leaders, Trump warned of economic calamity if he loses his reelection race in November and repeated his call for two liberal-leaning Supreme Court justices to recuse themselves from cases involving him or his administration.

The Republican president also said he had not been briefed on intelligence suggesting Russia is meddling in the 2020 election, either to bolster him or Democratic candidate Bernie Sanders.

"Nobody ever told me that," he said at a news conference, later adding, "I want no help from any country and I haven't been given help from any country," despite Russia's well-documented meddling in the 2016 election to help him win.

Trump had joked at the beginning of the news conference that he would be "very, very conservative" in his answers to avoid distracting from his "fantastic two days" in India.

But then he quickly launched into attacks, including criticizing Supreme Court Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Sonia Sotomayor, the latter for a blistering dissent that was critical of the Trump administration's rush to claim emergencies when asking the Supreme Court to review cases.

"I just don't know how they can not recuse themselves for anything Trump or Trump-related," he said.

He added: "What Justice Sotomayor said yesterday was highly inappropriate. She's trying to shame people with perhaps a different view into voting her way." He said Ginsburg had gone "wild" against him during the 2016 campaign.

Trump spent much of Tuesday meeting with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and emerged saying he was optimistic about the prospects of inking a trade deal with India despite moves by both sides that created doubt about the ability to reach an agreement. Trump had made clear before the trip that hammering out a long-sought trade deal with India was unlikely during the two-day trip.

"Our teams have made tremendous progress on a comprehensive trade agreement and I'm optimistic we can reach a deal that will be of great importance to both countries," Trump told reporters on the second and final day of his whirlwind, 36-hour, first official visit to India. He said at the news conference that, if a deal happens, it will likely be "towards the end of the year."

The day began with an elaborate welcome ceremony in front of the grand Rashtrapati Bhavan Presidential Palace in New Delhi, continuing the pomp and pageantry the Indian government had lavished on Trump a day earlier.

Cannons fired as the president's armored car, nicknamed "The Beast," rolled through the palace gates accompanied by a parade of red-uniformed guards on horseback. The ceremony included hundreds of military officials, marching with instruments and swords, as well as an official greeting by India's president and Modi.

Elsewhere in Indian capital, new violence erupted a day after at least seven people, including a police officer, were killed and nearly 100 others reportedly injured in clashes between hundreds of supporters and opponents of a new Indian citizenship law that provides fast-track naturalization for some foreign-born

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 20 of 63

religious minorities but not Muslims, police said.

Protesters in several areas of northeast Delhi defied orders prohibiting the assembly of more than five people and threw stones and set some shops and vehicles on fire, a police officer said. Some homes were attacked with rocks.

Trump declined to comment on the law. "I don't want to discuss that. I want to leave that to India," he said. But he added that he privately had raised the issue of religious freedom with Modi and that Modi was "incredible" on the subject.

"He wants people to have religious freedom," said Trump, who proposed temporarily barring all Muslims from entering the U.S. during his 2016 campaign and successfully implemented a travel ban that targets travelers from certain majority-Muslim countries.

And he continued to shower praise on Modi for the opulent and colorful welcome spread across three cities.

"The last two days were amazing in every sense of the word," Trump said as he and Modi briefly addressed reporters after the first of their two meetings. Trump described the trip as "unforgettable," "extraordinary" and an expression of "love."

Modi said he was thankful Trump visited despite the presidential campaign underway in the United States. Trump has said the short India visit was partly due to presidential politics.

"I know that it's busy time for you in the United States," Modi told Trump. "But despite that, you accepted an invitation to visit India. I welcome you and your delegation."

Modi said talks to ease trade tensions between their countries would continue. Those tensions escalated after Trump imposed tariffs on Indian steel and aluminium exports. India responded with higher penalties on U.S. agricultural goods and restrictions on medical devices, prompting the U.S. to strip India of its decades-old trade preferences.

At a meeting with Indian business leaders, the Republican president abandoned the tradition of avoiding domestic political squabbles while traveling abroad and criticized the Democratic candidates who are competing for the right to challenge his reelection bid in November, warning of economic turmoil if one of them defeats him.

He said he believes the U.S. economy is being held back by the upcoming U.S. election and claimed that, "if the wrong person gets elected, everything will come to a halt" and unemployment will soar.

Trump also addressed the coronavirus outbreak, which has begun to spook the U.S. stock market. Trump said the administration has asked Congress for an additional \$2.5 billion to help get the U.S. ready "just in case something should happen" and to assist countries he says are ill-equipped to deal with the virus' spread on their own.

During Monday's protests, police fired tear gas and used canes as they charged at the protesters in several districts of New Delhi. The rival groups hurled rocks at each other and set some houses, shops, vehicles and a gasoline pump on fire. Police closed access to two metro stations in the area.

Trump, however, was far away from the violence. And everywhere he went, he encountered streets lined with cheering Indian citizens, troops of traditional dancers and roadways lined with posters and billboards celebrating his visit. Trump and first lady Melania Trump also went on a stunning sunset tour of the famed Taj Mahal.

On Tuesday, the couple participated in a wreath-laying ceremony at Raj Ghat, a memorial to Mohandas Gandhi in New Delhi at the site where the famed Indian independence leader was cremated after his assassination in January 1948.

Trump had visited Gandhi's home on Monday.

Associated Press writers Deb Riechmann and Darlene Superville in Washington contributed to this report.

Follow Lemire on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/@JonLemire> and Colvin at <http://twitter.com/@colvinj>

Mubarak, Egypt's autocrat ousted by protests, dies at 91

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Hosni Mubarak, the Egyptian leader who was the autocratic face of stability in the Middle East for nearly 30 years before being forced from power in an Arab Spring uprising, died on Tuesday, state-run TV announced. He was 91.

Mubarak was a stalwart U.S. ally, a bulwark against Islamic militancy and guardian of Egypt's peace with Israel. But to the hundreds of thousands of young Egyptians who rallied for 18 days of unprecedented street protests in Cairo's Tahrir Square and elsewhere in 2011, Mubarak was a latter-day pharaoh and a symbol of autocratic misrule.

His overthrow, however, plunged the country into years of chaos and uncertainty, and set up a power struggle between the military and the Muslim Brotherhood group that he had long outlawed. Barely two years after his ouster, Abdel Fattah el-Sissi led the military overthrow of Egypt's first freely elected president and rolled back freedoms gained in the 2011 uprising.

State TV said Mubarak died at a Cairo hospital where he had undergone an unspecified surgery. The report said he had health complications but offered no other details. One of his sons, Alaa, announced over the weekend that the former president was in an intensive care after undergoing surgery.

El-Sissi offered condolences and praised Mubarak's service during the 1973 war with Israel, when he commanded the air force, but made no mention of Mubarak's almost three-decade rule as president.

"The Presidency mourns with great sorrow the former President of the Republic, Mr. Mohammed Hosni Mubarak," he said in a statement. It referred to Mubarak as "one of the leaders and heroes of the glorious October war, as he assumed command of the Air Force during the war that restored dignity and pride to the Arab nation."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu expressed "deep sorrow" over Mubarak's death. "President Mubarak, a personal friend of mine, was a leader who guided his people to peace and security, to peace with Israel," Netanyahu said.

Born in May 1928, Mubarak was vice president on Oct. 14, 1981, when his mentor, President Anwar Sadat, was assassinated by Islamic extremists while reviewing a military parade. Seated next to Sadat, Mubarak escaped with a minor hand injury as gunmen sprayed the reviewing stand with bullets. Eight days later, the brawny former air force commander was sworn in as president, promising continuity and order.

Over the next three decades, as the region was convulsed by one crisis after another, Mubarak was seen as a steady hand and a reliable U.S. partner against Islamic extremism. He sent troops as part of the U.S.-led coalition in the 1990-1991 Gulf war and contributed to efforts to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Within Egypt he presided over slow but steady economic growth and largely kept the country out of armed conflicts after decades of war with Israel. Unlike his predecessors, both Sadat and Egypt's first modern president, Gamal Abdel Nasser, Mubarak pursued no grand ideology beyond stability and economic development.

Over the years, Mubarak tinkered with reform but shunned major change, presenting himself as Egypt's sole protection against Islamic militancy and sectarian division. The U.S., particularly under President George W. Bush, pressed for democratic reforms but was wary of alienating a key ally.

The failure to fulfill repeated promises of change steadily deepened public despair. Those seeking a democratic future were dismayed to see Mubarak making apparent moves to groom his businessman son, Gamal Mubarak, for a dynastic succession.

Inspired by the first Arab Spring revolt in Tunisia, protesters took to the streets in January 2011. They harnessed the power of social media to muster tumultuous throngs, unleashing popular anger over the graft and brutality that shadowed Mubarak's rule.

In the end, with millions massed in Tahrir Square and other city centers, and even marching to the doorstep of Mubarak's palace, the military announced his resignation on Feb. 11, 2011. The generals took power, hoping to preserve what they could of the system he had led.

Though Tunisia's president fell before him, the ouster of Mubarak was a watershed moment in the his-

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 22 of 63

tory of the region, and gave impetus to uprisings in Libya, Syria, Yemen and Bahrain.

Over the next two years Egypt held a referendum on an amended constitution, as well as parliamentary and presidential elections. Turnout was high as enthusiastic Egyptians got their first taste of democracy. But the Muslim Brotherhood emerged victorious again and again, raising fears among their opponents that the country would be transformed into an Islamic state.

The struggle came to a head in the summer of 2013, when the military removed President Mohammed Morsi, a senior Brotherhood figure, from power amid mass protests against his divisive rule. The military assumed power and launched a massive crackdown on dissent. El-Sissi was elected president the following year. Rights groups and activists say his rule has proved far more oppressive than Mubarak's.

Mubarak was jailed shortly after his overthrow and later relocated to a military hospital as he went on trial in an array of cases. The televised images of Mubarak on a stretcher in a defendant's cage were in sharp contrast to the portraits of the leader that had lined major public streets during his long rule.

For the man who was long untouchable — even a word of criticism against him in the media was forbidden for much of his rule — prison was a shock. When he was flown from the court to Torah Prison in Cairo in 2011, he cried in protest and refused to get out of the helicopter.

In June 2012, Mubarak and his security chief were sentenced to life in prison for failing to prevent the killing of some 900 protesters during the 18-day uprising. Both appealed the verdict and a higher court later cleared them in 2014.

The following year, Mubarak and his two sons — wealthy businessman Alaa and Mubarak's one-time heir apparent Gamal — were sentenced to three years in prison on corruption charges during a retrial. The sons were released in 2015 for time served, while Mubarak walked free in 2017. Following his release, he was taken to an apartment in Cairo's Heliopolis district, where he lived until his death.

Mubarak is survived by his wife, Suzanne, his two sons and four grandchildren.

Desperate to stop virus' spread, countries limit travel

By KIM TONG-HYUNG and MATT SEDENSKY Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Police manned checkpoints in quarantined towns, governments issued travel warnings and more flights were suspended Tuesday as officials desperately sought to stop the seemingly inevitable spread of a new virus.

Clusters of the illness continued to balloon outside mainland China, fueling apprehension across the globe that was reflected in sagging financial markets.

The crisis pushed into areas seen as among the worst-equipped to deal with an outbreak as well as some of the world's richest nations, including South Korea and Italy. As it proliferates, the virus is bringing a sense of urgency for local officials determined to contain it but often unsure how.

"It's a matter of speed and time: We must create a clear turning point within this week," said President Moon Jae-in of South Korea, where the caseload grew by 144, with a total of 977 people sickened.

Cases of people who could have infected many others spurred fears.

Korean Air said one of its crew members tested positive, but the airline didn't disclose the flights the employee had worked on. On a U.S. military base in Daegu, the center of infections in South Korea, officials said a servicemember's spouse had also been infected. And in the tiny Persian Gulf nation of Bahrain, one of those infected was a school bus driver who had transported students as recently as Sunday.

Also testing positive was the head of Iran's virus task force, who just a day earlier gave a news conference in Tehran in which he tried to minimize the danger posed by the outbreak.

In Italy's north, where more than 200 people were sickened, a dozen towns were sealed off and police wearing face masks patrolled.

Two neighbors of Italy — Croatia and Austria — reported their first cases of the virus.

Croatia, Hungary and Ireland advised against traveling to Italy's affected area, one of a number of governmental moves seeking to limit further exposure. Bahrain suspended flights to Dubai while the United States' Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued its highest travel alert on South Korea, advis-

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 23 of 63

ing citizens to avoid nonessential trips. Japan urged citizens to avoid unessential trips to South Korea's hardest-hit areas.

A culture of long days at the office in Japan came to terms with the outbreak, with the government urging employers to allow workers to telecommute and have more flexible hours, simple moves Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe expressed hope could help control the spread.

"We are at an extremely important time in ending the spread of infection at an early stage," Abe said at a meeting of a task force on the outbreak.

Even in places where no cases have sprouted up, leaders kept a wary eye, such as Denmark, where two former military barracks were being prepared as quarantine centers. Still, uncertainty remained about how to effectively limit the epidemic.

Italy had taken Europe's most stringent preventative measures against COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus, and yet became home to the biggest outbreak outside Asia. Experts in Japan, with one of the world's most sophisticated health systems, acknowledged the country's handling of the virus-stricken Diamond Princess cruise ship was flawed and could have allowed the problem to magnify.

In comments reflecting both defiance and dubiousness over what measures work, French health minister Olivier Veran said the country would not shut its border or call off mass gatherings.

"We don't close borders because we would not be able to, we don't do it because it would be meaningless," he said on French radio RTL. "Should we ban gatherings? Should we stop the Fashion Week? Should we suspend matches? Should we close universities? The answer is no."

China reported 508 new cases and another 71 deaths, 68 of them in the central city of Wuhan, where the epidemic was first detected in December. The updates bring mainland China's totals to 77,658 cases and 2,663 deaths.

But while China remained home to the vast majority of the world's cases, the world's attention increasingly moved to where the outbreak would spread next. Iran was eyed as a source for new transmissions in the Middle East, including in Iraq, Kuwait and Oman, which were grappling with the spread past their borders.

In South Korea's southeastern city of Daegu and surrounding areas, panic over the virus has brought towns to an eerie standstill. The country reported its 11th fatality from COVID-19 amid signs, big and small, of the problem that has magnified nearly 15-fold in a week.

Health officials said they were working to finish testing hundreds of members of a church that has the country's biggest cluster of infections. The church agreed to hand over a list of 200,000 members nationwide so screenings could widen.

"We are creating and refining our system as we go along," said Dr. Kim Jin-hwan of Keimyung University Dongsan Medical Center in Daegu.

South Korea's professional basketball league said it will ban spectators until the outbreak is under control, while Busan City said the world team table tennis championships it planned to host in March would be postponed until June.

South Korea's military confirmed 13 troops had contracted the virus, resulting in quarantines for many others and the halting of field training.

Sedensky reported from Bangkok. Associated Press writer Mari Yamaguchi in Tokyo contributed to this report.

Iran official running anti-coronavirus task force has virus

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The head of Iran's counter-coronavirus task force has tested positive for the virus himself, authorities announced Tuesday, showing the challenges facing the Islamic Republic amid concerns the outbreak may be far wider than officially acknowledged.

The announcement regarding Iraj Harirchi came after he gave a news conference with journalists in Tehran about the virus just one day prior, seeking to minimize the danger posed by the outbreak.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 24 of 63

The United Arab Emirates on Tuesday meanwhile banned all flights to and from Iran over the outbreak of the new coronavirus, just a day after its spread from the Islamic Republic was announced across multiple Mideast nations. Iran earlier raised the official death toll from the virus to 15 killed amid 95 confirmed infections.

Health Ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour confirmed Harirchi had the virus. Harirchi himself posted an online video saying he had the virus and that he had quarantined himself at his home. He promised that authorities would bring the virus under control.

However, having the top official in charge of stopping the virus become sick with it is just the latest woe to befall Iran as the UAE cut off Iranian flights from the country.

The UAE, home to long-haul carriers Emirates and Etihad, remains a key international transit route for Iran's 80 million people. The flight ban, which will last at least a week, shows the growing concern over the spread of the virus in Iran amid worries the outbreak may be larger than what authorities there now acknowledge.

The Emirates' General Civil Aviation Authority made the announcement via the country's state-run WAM news agency, just hours after Dubai International Airport, the world's busiest for international travel, said there would be restrictions on flights there.

"All passenger and cargo aircraft traveling to and from Iran will be suspended for a period of one week, and could be up for extension," the authority said. "The decision is a precautionary measure undertaken by the UAE to ensure strict monitoring and prevention of the spread of the new coronavirus."

Emirates, the government-owned carrier based in Dubai, flies daily to Tehran. Its low-cost sister airline, FlyDubai, flies to multiple Iranian cities, as does the Sharjah-based low-cost carrier Air Arabia.

The announcement came after Bahrain said it would suspend all flights from Dubai and Sharjah, a neighboring UAE emirate that is home to Air Arabia, for 48 hours.

Bahrain's Health Ministry on Tuesday raised the number of infected cases from the new virus to eight, saying that all had traveled from Iran via Dubai. Four of them have been identified as Saudi nationals. The cases were confirmed upon arrival to Bahrain during screenings at the airport, and prior to the suspension on flights to Dubai and Sharjah, according to Bahrain's official news agency.

Dubai has been screening passengers on incoming flights from China, where the outbreak began in December. Long-haul carriers Emirates and Etihad are among the few international airlines still flying to Beijing. However, the outbreak in Iran only became public in recent days.

The novel coronavirus has infected more than 80,000 people globally, causing around 2,700 deaths, mainly in China. The World Health Organization has named the illness COVID-19, referring to its origin late last year and the coronavirus that causes it.

Iran's government said Tuesday that 15 people had died nationwide from the new coronavirus, rejecting claims of a much higher death toll of 50 by a lawmaker from the city of Qom that has been at the epicenter of the virus in the country. The conflicting reports raised questions about the Iranian government's transparency concerning the scale of the outbreak.

The new death toll came from Health Ministry spokesman Kianoush Jahanpour during an interview with Iranian state television. He said there were 95 confirmed cases of the virus in Iran, with many linked to Qom, a major Shiite religious center where other cases have emerged.

Iranian President Hassan Rouhani sought to reassure the nation in a speech on Tuesday, calling the new coronavirus an "uninvited and inauspicious passenger."

"We will get through corona," Rouhani said. "We will get through the virus."

Afghanistan, Kuwait, Iraq and Oman also announced their first cases of the virus on Monday and connected them to travel with Iran.

The UAE, a federation of seven sheikhdoms on the Arabian Peninsula, has reported 13 cases of the new virus. Most of those were connected to Chinese travel.

Also Tuesday, Kuwait raised the number of its infected cases to eight, according to the state-run KUNA news agency, after earlier raising the number to five. It said the three latest cases involved Kuwaiti citizens just back from Iran, without giving more details. The five previously reported cases were passengers

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 25 of 63

returning on a flight from the Iranian city of Mashhad, where Iran's government has not yet announced a single case of the virus.

Kuwait had halted transport links with Iran over the weekend and said it was evacuating its citizens from Iran.

Meanwhile, Iraq's Health Ministry said four new cases of coronavirus were diagnosed in the northern province of Kirkuk. It said the afflicted were members of an Iraqi family who had returned from a recent trip to Iran. Iraq announced the discovery of the first coronavirus case in the country on Monday in the Shiite Muslim holy city of Najaf.

Iraq had earlier closed its border with Iran to Iranian nationals but apparently Iraqis can still cross the boundary.

Also Tuesday, a Turkish Airlines flight from Tehran to Istanbul landed in Ankara with 17 passengers suspected of having coronavirus, including some who had been to the Iranian city of Qom, Turkey's CNN-Turk broadcaster reported. The passengers were to be quarantined at an Ankara hospital that had previously quarantined Turks returning from China's Hubei province. Turkish Airlines has temporarily suspended most flights with Iran, apart from those with Tehran.

Turkey's Health Minister Fahrettin Koca said the Turks on board were being repatriated due to the outbreak in Iran. All 132 passengers and crew on board would be quarantined for 14 days at the same hospital where Turkish citizens returning from China had been quarantined. "We are engaged in the maximum effort possible to protect our country from this illness," Koca said.

In Pakistan, about 100 pilgrims, mostly minority Pakistani Shiites, have been quarantined at a government building after returning from Iran, officials said Tuesday. The pilgrims had returned before Pakistan on Saturday closed its border with Iran at the crossing in the town of Taftan in southwestern Baluchistan province.

More than 7,000 Pakistani pilgrims remain still in Iran where health authorities will have to declare them free of the coronavirus before they can go home. Pakistan last week suspended flight operations with China, where thousands of Pakistanis have been stranded since the infectious spread there. Islamabad has no immediate plans to evacuate Pakistani citizens from China.

Associated Press writers Aya Batrawy in Dubai, United Arab Emirates; Nasser Karimi in Tehran, Iran; Suzan Fraser in Ankara, Turkey; Munir Ahmed in Islamabad and Samya Kullab in Baghdad contributed to this report.

'Are you still alive?' Virus fears grip South Korean city

By **HYUNG-JIN KIM** Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — A woman wearing vinyl gloves on a subway train. Guests donning masks at a sparsely attended wedding ceremony. People feverishly stocking up on instant noodles and rice. Friends calling each other and asking if they're still alive.

Fears of a soaring viral outbreak are gripping the South Korean city of Daegu and the surrounding area, with residents struggling as they try to stay away from a virus that has already sickened hundreds of people in the region, killing at least 10 of them.

"We call each other here and half-jokingly ask whether they are alive and tell each other not to wander around," Choe Hee-suk, a 37-year-old office worker, said by phone.

The region hadn't reported a single case until Feb. 18, when a Daegu woman in her early 60s tested positive for the virus that first emerged in China.

But a week later, more than 790 cases have been reported around the city of 2.5 million people in the country's southeast, a sudden jump that has prompted concerns that the outbreak is getting out of control.

The Daegu region accounts for over 80% of South Korea's nearly 1,000 virus cases and 10 of its 11 deaths. South Korea has seen the largest outbreak of the virus outside mainland China, which has confirmed more than 77,660 cases and over 2,660 fatalities.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 26 of 63

More than half of the cases in the Daegu area are linked to a controversial church that is viewed as a cult by mainstream Christian organizations.

The region's first patient is a member of the Shincheonji Church of Jesus who had attended services before being diagnosed with COVID-19, the disease caused by the new virus. Authorities say it's unlikely that the woman, who has no record of recent overseas travel, set off the chain of infections.

As South Korea's central government vows all-out efforts to contain the region's outbreak, public anxiety is destabilizing everyday lives and threatening to seriously impact the local economy.

"We have never experienced anything like this. ... We are creating and refining our system as we go along," said Kim Jin-hwan, a doctor at Keimyung University Dongsan Medical Center in Daegu, where around 230 virus patients are being treated.

"We have so far managed to toughen it out. But the situation can become harder to cope with if infections continue to rise," he said. "Things are even worse for the public health centers and clinics designated to test suspected patients. ... They test for 24 hours a day, and it's still not enough."

In Daegu's usually bustling Dongseongro commercial district on Monday, only a few pedestrians were seen, making it look like a ghost town. Workers dressed in black protective gear and white masks sprayed disinfectant at a nearly deserted branch of the popular Lotte Department Store, local media photos showed.

Oh Sang-hak, a taxi driver, said he hadn't worked for several days because he was uneasy about picking up strangers with the virus circulating in the city.

"It's like time has stopped ... and there is just no movement," Oh said. "Until last week, we thought the coronavirus was someone else's problem."

Lee Nag-hyeon, 63, said he thinks media reports on virus fears in Daegu have been a bit exaggerated. But he said he saw a masked woman wearing a pair of disposable gloves when he took a subway on Monday. He said he also heard about convenience store staff wearing goggles when dealing with customers.

Daegu residents posted photos on social media of supermarket shelves devoid of staples such as instant noodles, curry and dried seaweed.

On Monday, people wearing masks stood in long lines outside an Emart discount store in Daegu's Mancheon district as they tried to stock up on face masks, which have been quickly selling out online.

Choe, the office worker, said she had three boxes of ramen, four boxes of cereal and three 20-kilogram (44-pound) bags of rice at her home. Lee said he began writing on his masks the dates he last wore them to re-use them later if no more are available for sale.

At Daegu's Gyodong traditional market on Monday, about half of the roughly 1,000 shops were closed, with the number of visitors declining recently by more than 90%.

"Maybe it would be better for all the merchants to shut their doors, but their means of a living are here. So some have made the difficult decision to open their shops," said Ahn Sook-hee, an official at an association of merchants at the market.

The virus is also changing the scenes at weddings and funerals, events that typically draw large crowds in South Korea.

At Daegu's Gangbug Convention wedding hall, only two of the 10 scheduled wedding ceremonies were held over the weekend, with the other eight couples postponing their big day at the last minute. A typical wedding ceremony draws around 200 people, but the two held on Saturday had only about 50 each, according to wedding hall employee Park Ye Jin.

At both ceremonies, everyone except for the bride and groom were required to wear masks. "We didn't let anyone enter the hall if they didn't wear masks," Park said.

She said most guests left without eating any of the food set up at the banquet reception.

Ahn said that all of her planned gatherings of relatives and friends have been canceled, and that she recently skipped a funeral and just sent condolence money to the bereaved family. Lee said that even if a loved one of a close friend were to die, he wouldn't go to the funeral — an event he would feel obligated to attend in ordinary times.

Choe said her family canceled her father's 70th birthday party, which was scheduled to take place at a

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 27 of 63

Daegu restaurant this past Saturday with about 30 guests.

"We just had barbecues at home, and my father was very disappointed," Choe said, adding that her family plans a more formal party for him at home later this week.

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

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. 'I'M SCARED OF CONTRACTING THE VIRUS' Residents of the South Korean city of Daegu are struggling as they try to avoid the new virus, stocking up on food, while others avoid any kinds of public activities.

2. RIVAL CANDIDATES UNLOAD ON SANDERS No less than three of the Vermont senator's rivals unleashed paid attack ads against him for the first time on the eve of a debate in South Carolina.

3. TRUMP GETS DOWN TO BUSINESS IN INDIA The U.S. president says he's optimistic about the prospects of inking a trade deal with India despite moves by both sides that created doubt; and there are more violent citizenship law protests in New Delhi.

4. FORMER EGYPTIAN LEADER DEAD AT 91 Hosni Mubarak, in power for almost three decades, was forced to resign in 2011 following Arab Spring uprisings that convulsed autocratic regimes across the Middle East.

5. HOW BLOOMBERG BUILT UP SUPPORT The billionaire's spending on charity and politics has skyrocketed in recent years, giving him a foundation of connections and goodwill that is helping his nascent presidential campaign.

6. UNION PROBE FINDS PLÁCIDO DOMINGO ABUSED POWER The opera legend says he's "truly sorry" after an investigation found more than two dozen people who say they were sexually harassed or witnessed inappropriate behavior in Washington and Los Angeles.

7. WEINSTEIN CONVICTION VIEWED AS WATERSHED MOMENT Prosecutors are saying the verdict against the former film titan could change the way the legal system views a type of sexual assault case historically considered difficult to prove.

8. GLOBAL SHARES MOSTLY LOWER AFTER DOW PLUMMETS Shares open lower in Europe after a mixed session in Asia as Japan's prime minister urges fresh efforts to contain the outbreak of a new virus that has spread to nearly three dozen countries.

9. 'BETTER THAT WE DIE LAUGHING THAN TO DIE SCARED' A Syrian man and his 3-year-old daughter have a unique way of dealing with the fear of exploding bombs, laughing and capturing the moments on social media as a coping mechanism.

10. IT'S FAT TUESDAY Revelers dressed in costumes and reaching for beads thrown from floats will take to the streets when Carnival season reaches its peak, marred by the deaths of two parade-goers in New Orleans.

Democrats unload on Sanders in likely debate preview

By STEVE PEOPLES, MEG KINNARD and BILL BARROW Associated Press

CHARLESTON, S.C. (AP) — Bernie Sanders is facing the greatest test of his presidential campaign as his Democratic rivals prepare to launch a series of attacks on the Vermont senator during what could be a pivotal debate on the eve of the South Carolina primary.

With mounting fear among the Democratic establishment that the self-described democratic socialist is on the verge of gaining a significant lead in the delegates needed to secure the nomination, several candidates are resorting to a last ditch effort to stop him. The day before Tuesday night's debate in Charleston, they previewed their lines of attack in a series of digital or television advertisements.

Pete Buttigieg, the former mayor of South Bend, Indiana, highlighted Sanders' call for a government-financed health care system as an example of his "polarization." Former Vice President Joe Biden accused

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 28 of 63

Sanders of trying to undermine President Barack Obama's 2012 reelection. And former New York Mayor Mike Bloomberg assailed Sanders' record on gun control.

The new wave of infighting came just hours before seven Democrats were set to meet for the party's 10th — and perhaps most consequential — debate of the 2020 primary season. And it marked a seminal moment in Sanders' political career. After spending decades as an outside agitator accustomed to attacking the party establishment, he's suddenly the one on defense.

His handling of the pressure could be crucial in determining whether he stays at the top of the Democratic pack. During a town hall Monday night televised on CNN, Sanders said he expected the attacks. But he still seemed to be adjusting to his new status.

"It is a little funny to find myself as the so-called front-runner," he said.

Other candidates also have a lot on the line for Tuesday's forum. After a stumbling debate debut last week, Bloomberg is seeking an opportunity to regain his footing. Biden, meanwhile, is looking to make a big impression in a state where he was long viewed as the unquestioned front-runner because of his support from black voters.

Campaigning in South Carolina the day before the debate, Biden predicted he would win "by plenty" on Saturday

Having finished on top in three consecutive primary contests — including a tie in Iowa — Sanders is eyeing a knockout blow, however. He has shifted new staff into the state from Nevada in recent days, expanded his South Carolina advertising and added events to his schedule.

Sanders senior adviser Jeff Weaver said there was an "air of desperation" to the fresh attacks on his candidate.

"You've got candidates, you've got super PACs, all piling on to stop Bernie Sanders," Weaver said. "They know he has the momentum in the race."

One candidate who didn't take Sanders on directly Monday: Sen. Elizabeth Warren. Though she shares many of Sanders' liberal policies and could benefit if he were to stumble, she's been reluctant to tangle with him throughout the campaign.

She was Bloomberg's fiercest critic during last week's debate and has signaled she may continue to target the former New York mayor Tuesday night.

Sanders may benefit most from the sheer number of candidates still in the race. There are still seven high-profile Democrats fighting among themselves -- and splitting up the anti-Sanders vote -- to emerge as the strongest alternative to him.

Heading into the debate, there was no sign that any of those candidates were close to getting out.

Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar, who finished in a distant fifth or sixth place in Nevada over the weekend, announced plans to launch a \$4.2 million ad buy across several Super Tuesday states.

Meanwhile, outside groups in both parties joined Sanders' Democratic rivals in trying to take him down.

The Big Tent Project, a new pro-Democratic organization trying to derail Sanders' candidacy, sought to undermine his support with African Americans.

"Socialist Bernie Sanders is promising a lot of free stuff," the group wrote in a brochure sent to 200,000 black voters in South Carolina. "Nominating Bernie means we reelect Trump. We can't afford Bernie Sanders."

Republicans working to win back the House majority jumped on comments Sanders made in a CBS News "60 Minutes" segment aired Sunday in which he praised the late Cuban ruler Fidel Castro for establishing what Sanders called a "massive literacy program" when he took power.

The House GOP campaign arm called on several House Democrats — including three facing reelection this fall in South Florida — to say if they'd support Sanders should he become the nominee. Members including Rep. Donna Shalala weren't happy.

"I'm hoping that in the future, Senator Sanders will take time to speak to some of my constituents before he decides to sing the praises of a murderous tyrant like Fidel Castro," the first-term Democrat tweeted.

Sanders forcefully stood by his comments during the CNN town hall, saying he'd criticized "authoritarian regimes all over the world," including Cuba, Nicaragua and Saudi Arabia, But he added that, after Castro took power in 1959, "the first thing he did" was initiate a literacy program.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 29 of 63

"I think teaching people to read and write is a good thing," Sanders said. "That is a fact. End of discussion."

Sanders was also in a dispute with the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, an establishment group that advocates for strong U.S.-Israel relations. Sanders said he would skip the group's conference because he was concerned about the event giving airtime to "leaders who express bigotry and oppose basic Palestinian rights."

Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO of the Anti-Defamation League, called that characterization "offensive" and "irresponsible."

Trump was encouraging the chaos from afar. During a trip to India, the Republican president predicted a long and messy primary season ahead for his Democratic rivals.

"It could go to the convention, it really could," Trump said. "They are going to take it away from Crazy Bernie, they are not going to let him win."

He added, "I actually think he would be tougher than most of the other candidates because he is like me, but I have a much bigger base."

Peoples reported from New York.

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

AP: US opera union probe finds Plácido Domingo abused power

By JOCELYN GECKER Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — An investigation into legendary singer Plácido Domingo by the U.S. union representing opera performers found more than two dozen people who said they were sexually harassed or witnessed inappropriate behavior by the superstar when he held senior management positions at Washington National Opera and Los Angeles Opera, according to people familiar with the findings.

The investigation, conducted by lawyers hired by the American Guild of Musical Artists, concluded that the accounts from 27 people showed a clear pattern of sexual misconduct and abuse of power by Domingo spanning at least two decades, according to those who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to disclose the findings.

In response to a request for comment from the AP, Domingo issued a statement saying: "I have taken time over the last several months to reflect on the allegations that various colleagues of mine have made against me. I respect that these women finally felt comfortable enough to speak out, and I want them to know that I am truly sorry for the hurt that I caused them. I accept full responsibility for my actions, and I have grown from this experience."

The union's investigation was the first of two independent inquiries launched after multiple women accused Domingo of sexual harassment and abusing his power in two AP stories published last year. The second inquiry, still ongoing, was launched by LA Opera, where Domingo had been general director since 2003 before resigning in October.

According to the people familiar with the contents of the union's investigation, lawyers from the firm Cozen O'Connor interviewed 55 people from September until late December. In addition to the 27 who said they experienced or witnessed sexually suggestive behavior on the part of Domingo in the 1990s and 2000s, 12 others said they were aware of the star's reputation and that it was common knowledge at the two companies.

Mirroring AP's reporting last year, the investigation found that the allegations included unsolicited physical touching that ranged from kisses on the mouth to groping, late-night phone calls in which Domingo asked women to come to his residence, and inviting women to go out with him socially with such persistence that some felt they were being stalked.

Two of the women told investigators that they had sexual relations with Domingo, saying they felt compelled to submit because of his position of authority and potential to damage their careers, according to the people familiar with the investigation.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 30 of 63

In the rest of his statement to the AP, Domingo said, "I understand now that some women may have feared expressing themselves honestly because of a concern that their careers would be adversely affected if they did so. While that was never my intention, no one should ever be made to feel that way.

"I am committed to affecting positive change in the opera industry so that no one else has to have that same experience. It is my fervent wish that the result will be a safer place to work for all in the opera industry, and I hope that my example moving forward will encourage others to follow."

Union officials would not directly address the contents of the report, which has not been made public. But the union's national executive director, Leonard Egert, issued a statement to the AP saying, "AGMA salutes the brave people across all our industries and encourages them to continue speaking out against wrongdoing. We call upon management, and pledge to work collaboratively with them, to get at the root causes that have allowed this behavior to occur, and go unaddressed, in opera, dance, and choral cultures for far too long."

Egert, other senior union leaders and the investigators briefed the union's Board of Governors on the findings Monday.

The people familiar with the investigation said Domingo, now 79, had reiterated his denials of wrongdoing to investigators and contended that he did not occupy a position of power over his colleagues and their careers. They said he told investigators he had engaged in flirtatious behavior but did not cross a line into inappropriate touching or behavior like asking colleagues to meet privately in his residence.

They said the investigators characterized Domingo's conduct as inappropriate workplace behavior under the norms of the 1990s or by today's #MeToo standards.

The investigators said that they found the witness accounts to be credible based on the number of people who came forward, the similarities of their stories, corroborations of their accounts, and the common theme that Domingo's behavior and reputation were such widespread knowledge that women at his companies were warned to avoid being in close contact with him.

The union announced its investigation in September, shortly after the publication of AP's stories, saying it did not trust the industry to police itself. Most of the harassment alleged in AP's stories occurred at LA Opera and at Washington opera, which has repeatedly declined to say if it would investigate the claims. LA Opera has not said when or if it will make its findings public.

In the AP stories, more than 20 women accused Domingo of sexual harassment or other inappropriate behavior in encounters taking place from the late 1980s to the 2000s. Dozens more said his behavior was an open secret in the industry.

A number of U.S. companies canceled Domingo appearances and he withdrew from others under pressure. But no European performances have been affected.

Domingo has been one of the opera's most beloved and successful figures, admired as an ambassador for the art form and valued for his enduring talent and ability to attract sellout crowds in an era of diminishing ticket sales.

He also was a prolific conductor and powerful administrator, which his accusers told the AP gave him the power to make or break careers and behave with impunity. In addition to heading Los Angeles Opera, he served as general director at Washington Opera from 2003-2011.

Most of Domingo's accusers were young and starting their careers at the time. Several told the AP that he dangled job prospects as he tried to pressure them into sexual relationships, sometimes punishing them professionally if they rebuffed him. Soprano Angela Turner Wilson said that after weeks of pursuing her, Domingo forcefully grabbed her bare breast under her robe in a backstage room.

The accusations in the union's report included multiple new accusers not interviewed by the AP, according to the people familiar with its contents.

Investigators said most of the people they interviewed requested anonymity in the final report, fearing professional retaliation or personal embarrassment, highlighting the problem the industry faces in trying to convince victims to come forward.

Syrian father teaches daughter to laugh when the bombs fall

BEIRUT (AP) — Abdullah Mohammed would do anything for his daughter, even forcing himself to laugh with her at the sound of bombs to help her overcome her fear.

In Idlib, that's a lot of laughter.

The province in northwestern Syria is the last opposition-held stronghold in the war-ravaged country. It has been the subject of a ferocious military campaign and relentless bombardment by Russia-backed Syrian government troops since early December. More than 900,000 civilians have been on the move since then, displaced from their homes. Many now live in tents, abandoned buildings, makeshift shelters and in open fields near the Turkish border.

As the advancing troops neared his hometown of Saraqeb two months ago, Mohammed fled with his wife and daughter further north to the town of Sarmada, where they are now staying in an abandoned house offered to him by a friend.

Mohammed and his daughter, 3-year-old Salwa, became overnight celebrities after a video they shot was shared widely on social media — a reminder of the horrors faced by children in Syria. In the video, Salwa, wearing a pink dress, stands on a sofa next to her father.

Mohammed asks his daughter: "Is that a plane or a shell?"

"A shell, and when it falls we will laugh!" she replies.

As the boom of the explosion is heard in the distance, the little girl jumps slightly and then bursts into hysterical giggles as her father laughs along and says: "It's funny, right?"

Mohammed said he came up with the game to help his daughter cope with her fear.

Salwa had been hearing bombs all her life. As a baby there was no fear, but that changed after her first year. One day, they were at home in Saraqeb during Eid al-Fitr, the three-day Muslim holiday that marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan. Children outside were celebrating with fire crackers, and a big one exploded nearby.

"She was frightened, but I took her out and showed her that children were playing and laughing ... she was convinced," he recalled. That was how he got the idea to connect the sound of bombs with laughter and kids playing, and to film himself laughing with her every time warplanes hit.

He said now every time they hear the jets or outgoing artillery shells, Salwa turns to him and waits for his reaction. He pulls out his cellphone for a selfie video and they wait for it — and then they burst into laughter.

On a recent day, Mohammed sat watching Salwa as she played with plastic Lego bricks, her hair in pigtails and wearing a blue dress. He said the war has wiped out the hopes and dreams of his generation and those of their children.

"The most I hope for is to stay alive, along with my daughter and everyone else," he said. "We forgot about the bigger hopes, they don't exist anymore."

Mohammed gets emotional talking about it. He says he realizes the bombs they're laughing about could be ending someone's life at that same moment.

"Maybe it hit a tent or a child, and this is not funny of course. This is very sad. But I'm laughing so that my daughter doesn't get affected by this. And if the shell were to fall on us, better that we die laughing than to die scared."

Years of largesse give Bloomberg his own political machine

By RYAN J. FOLEY and MICHELLE R. SMITH Associated Press

When Mike Bloomberg held a rally this month at the National Constitution Center in Philadelphia, the signs of his wealth and influence were everywhere.

Former Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter, long a paid adviser to one of Bloomberg's charitable programs and now to his campaign, warmed up the crowd with chants of "Mike will get it done!" That followed a performance of the Nick Jonas song "Jealous" by an a capella group from the University of Pennsylvania, where Bloomberg has funded public health research.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 32 of 63

"Bloomberg interns" have worked at the National Constitution Center and other Philadelphia cultural sites thanks to his largesse, and Bloomberg gave the center's former CEO a \$50,000 donation for his successful 2016 run for state treasurer.

Across the city, soda sales had dropped after a 2017 tax increase that Bloomberg spent millions to pass, study and defend with the support of Mayor Jim Kenney, whose reelection he backed last year with \$1 million in outside spending. And the Bloomberg-endorsed state attorney general was leading a data-driven campaign against gun crime in the city.

Bloomberg told the crowd that his spending had transformed American life: It helped shut down 300 coal-fired power plants, strengthen gun laws in 20 states and flip the U.S. House to a Democratic majority. The self-made business news and information tycoon boasted that he would be the only New York billionaire in a race against President Donald Trump, who has been accused of exaggerating his riches and running a fake charity.

Bloomberg's presidential campaign has been powered by his estimated \$60 billion fortune and by years of political and charitable giving that have given him a foundation of goodwill across the U.S. Bloomberg has long said he wants to give away nearly all of his fortune before he dies, and wants to use the money to tackle big problems that government has failed to solve.

His spending has dramatically increased since he completed his third term as New York mayor in 2013, making him one of the nation's most important philanthropists and political donors and giving him achievements to tout in his self-funded advertising blitz.

But perhaps just as important, it has created a sprawling network of powerful people and groups who have used his money to win elections, fund advocacy campaigns, pay for signature municipal and education programs and conduct important research, an Associated Press review has found.

Many of those beneficiaries and their associates are backing Bloomberg's late-launched campaign, giving the former Republican a base of Democratic Party institutional and grassroots support that he might lack if he wasn't one of the world's richest men.

They include members of Congress who were elected and reelected with his help, mayors who attended his prestigious training program at Harvard University, and gun control and environmental activists who admire his commitments to their causes. Even celebrity endorsers, from actor Ted Danson to singer John Cougar Mellencamp, have ties to his philanthropy, the AP found.

CLOUT ALL OVER

"He had the wealth to give away money for years to build friends, to build political allies, to build relationships, in ways that the average American doesn't have, can't do. That's a huge advantage," said Paul S. Ryan, a vice president at Common Cause, a government watchdog group.

The AP found signs of Bloomberg's clout all over.

A congresswoman from the Virgin Islands said she endorsed Bloomberg after his foundation helped residents there recover from devastating tropical storms in 2017. A former candidate for governor in Iowa whose campaign received \$250,000 from Bloomberg in 2018 caucused for him this month even though Bloomberg wasn't competing in the first-in-the-nation contest. The former mayor of Rhode Island's largest city says he'll endorse Bloomberg if asked, pointing to a \$5 million prize Bloomberg gave his city in 2013 and the millions of people Bloomberg's giving has helped.

His rivals for the Democratic presidential nomination have accused Bloomberg of trying to buy the election by spending \$400 million of his own money to blanket voters with ads ahead of Super Tuesday on March 3, when voters in 14 states cast their ballots.

But that is a fraction of the spending of prior years that laid the ground work for Bloomberg's campaign and has given him validators to defend his record against allegations of racism and sexism. It's helped him rise to the field's top tier while skipping the first four states and participating in a single debate in which he struggled through blistering attacks from his rivals.

"I have no doubt he is about to drop another \$100 million ... in order to erase America's memory of what happened on that debate stage," Sen. Elizabeth Warren said after Wednesday's debate in Las Vegas.

Even some who support Bloomberg's philanthropic efforts say his vast spending is unhealthy for de-

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 33 of 63

mocracy.

"It's about the principle of someone with great wealth distorting certain debates or certain social movements or influencing the direction of actual political elections," said Megan Tompkins-Stange, a University of Michigan professor who studies how elite philanthropic foundations influence public policy. She said that "no one person should have that much influence in the public sphere."

His supporters, though, tout the deep and positive impact of his work. Danson said in a Facebook message last week that Bloomberg has "the strongest track record on climate change and will do the most to fight it." Bloomberg's foundation between 2014 and 2018 gave more than \$32 million to the group Oceana, which focuses on protecting the world's oceans. Danson and another Bloomberg endorser, the actor Sam Waterston, sit on Oceana's board.

The AP review documented \$1.65 billion in grants that Bloomberg's New York-based Bloomberg Family Foundation doled out to hundreds of cities, universities, cultural groups and global institutions from 2014 through 2018, the last year in which they have been itemized in tax filings.

From Boston to Baltimore and Anchorage to Arlington, the money has helped fight climate change, championed a range of public health initiatives, promoted new programs in cities and schools and helped scores of arts and cultural institutions stay open.

The foundation's annual grant spending tripled between 2014 and 2018, when it reached \$445 million.

That sum is only a portion of the total given by Bloomberg Philanthropies, which encompasses all of the former mayor's giving: through his foundation, his company and personally. Bloomberg Philanthropies has said that from 2014 through 2018, it distributed more than \$2.9 billion. More than \$1 billion of that remains unknown to the public because only gifts that go through his foundation are required to be disclosed.

Then there's the record \$3.3 billion that Bloomberg Philanthropies says it distributed in 2019. His campaign says most of the increase can be attributed to a \$1.8 billion gift to his alma mater, Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, for financial aid and new investments to fight climate change and youth tobacco use. But those gifts aren't legally required to be even partially disclosed until after the election.

During Wednesday's debate, when asked why he hasn't released his tax returns, Bloomberg noted that the biggest item on them "is all the money I give away. And we list that, every single donation I make, and you can get that from our foundation anytime you want."

In response to questions from the AP after the debate, his campaign said "there will be more clarity" on the billions in donations since 2014 that he has yet to detail once his taxes are released.

Bloomberg said he would soon release his tax returns, but his campaign hasn't said whether it will also divulge his previously undisclosed donations.

Using publicly available information, the AP identified dozens of current and former mayors who have publicly endorsed Bloomberg's campaign after benefiting in one of several ways from his charitable giving. At least 20 attended the Bloomberg Harvard City Leadership Initiative, a one-year training program for municipal leaders that his foundation sponsors.

Several others have led cities that have received programming grants from Bloomberg Philanthropies or, in at least two cases, been paid to work as an adviser or board member.

Nutter has been a high-profile surrogate for Bloomberg's campaign as its national political chair, defending him against allegations of racism that stem from the stop-and-frisk policy in New York that disproportionately targeted young black men.

Nutter's consulting firm was paid \$45,000 in January by the campaign and is owed \$4,000 more, according to a campaign disclosure. Nutter had previously been a paid adviser for What Works Cities, a Bloomberg Philanthropies initiative that promotes municipal innovation.

Dozens of Bloomberg's employees have moved from the philanthropies to the campaign, which said its endorsements were totally separate from grant funding.

Bloomberg's campaign said only a small percentage of mayors whose cities he has helped are supporting him. Kenney, for instance, has campaigned for Warren.

"But if an elected official has seen up close how hard Mike works to find solutions to America's toughest

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 34 of 63

problems and thinks that's exactly what we need in the White House, we think that's a pretty good reason to support someone," spokeswoman Rachel Nagler said.

The AP's review tracked more than \$150 million that Bloomberg gave to dozens of candidates for state and federal office and political groups since 2014. That money helped Democrats take control of the U.S. House in 2018, pass laws and referendums requiring universal background checks on gun sales in key states and advocate for higher soda and tobacco taxes in some cities and states.

His spending soared in the 2018 midterm elections to a high of \$110 million — an investment that he credits with helping install Nancy Pelosi as House speaker and leading to Trump's impeachment.

Bloomberg's super PAC in 2018 spent millions running ads praising Democratic candidates and attacking their Republican opponents, helping win 21 of 24 races that it got involved in. At least 16 Democratic members of Congress have endorsed Bloomberg for president, including four whose candidacies were direct beneficiaries of his PAC spending.

Several others indirectly benefited from Bloomberg's generosity because their campaigns were supported by one or more of the key Democratic Party-aligned groups to which he gave tens of millions of dollars. Those groups include Emily's List, Planned Parenthood, the League of Conservation Voters and Vote Vets.

LIKE A MACHINE

Bloomberg's spending has continued in the early weeks of his presidential campaign. He gave \$10 million to a group supporting the House Democrats, \$5 million to a voting rights group led by Stacey Abrams, who nearly won the Georgia governor's race in 2018, and smaller donations to several state Democratic Party groups.

"He's like a new machine. Rather than based in the party, it's based on his immense and vast wealth," said Douglas Muzzio, a professor who studies voting behavior and politics at Baruch College in New York City.

He said Bloomberg has long targeted his philanthropic and political giving so that it hits "sources of influence" who are ideologically compatible with his centrist, data-driven approach and key policy initiatives.

That playbook, Muzzio said, dates back to Bloomberg's 12 years as New York mayor, when his donations to community groups helped blunt the impact of city budget cuts, boosted his support and neutralized potential opposition.

"The reality is that I constantly heard from friends, and normal Democrats, 'Oh, sorry, Mark, what can I do? He gave my organization \$100,000,'" said Mark Green, a Democrat whom Bloomberg defeated in the 2001 mayoral election.

In 2008, as Bloomberg was pushing to extend New York's term limits so he could run for a third term, he was able to gather support from nonprofit groups, such as the Doe Fund, a group that helps the homeless, that had benefited from his personal fortune. The measure passed the city council, and Bloomberg went on to win for a third time.

Campaign spokeswoman Nagler denied that Bloomberg used his money when he was mayor to gather support or quiet opposition, "and we are not doing it now."

Bloomberg has not only increased his giving dramatically since then, he has invested heavily in nationwide grassroots groups that can pressure lawmakers and run advocacy campaigns.

Among the most potent is Everytown for Gun Safety, whose scores of activists have pushed to tighten gun laws and elect supportive state and federal lawmakers across the nation.

The group was formed in 2013 as a merger between a group founded by Bloomberg, Mayors Against Illegal Guns, and Moms Demand Action, which was inspired by the 2012 mass shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut.

Bloomberg has given tens of millions of dollars to the group, which is independent but led by one of his former mayoral aides. His presidential campaign spent \$3.2 million last year to rent Everytown's email list, and many moms, in their signature red T-shirts, are frequently spotted at his campaign events.

Another Bloomberg investment that has paid dividends for his cause and his campaign is his more than \$100 million in contributions to the Sierra Club for its Beyond Coal and Beyond Carbon programs, which it says have closed more than 300 coal plants across the country.

He cites that achievement in campaign ads that do not mention the Sierra Club, which has 3.8 million

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 35 of 63

grassroots supporters and is among the most important environmental groups active in politics.

The group's executive director, Michael Brune, told the AP the money has had a huge impact on its work, allowing it to expand and meet its goals more quickly. Bloomberg's campaign asked for an endorsement from the Sierra Club, but Brune said they didn't feel pressured. The group, he said, is not likely to make an endorsement in the Democratic primary, in keeping with its longstanding practice.

The campaign against coal did help Bloomberg snag the endorsement of Mellencamp, who is featured in an ad targeting rural voters that has been viewed 6 million times on YouTube in recent weeks. Mellencamp recorded a song for the 2017 coal-focused documentary "From the Ashes," which was funded by Bloomberg Philanthropies.

DEFENDING BLOOMBERG

The far-reaching tentacles of Bloomberg's influence were on display at an event in Providence, Rhode Island, this month, when Gov. Gina Raimondo became the first governor to endorse Bloomberg's candidacy.

The room was packed with several of the state's influential Democrats, people wearing red Moms Demand Action shirts, as well as a handful of protesters angry about Bloomberg's record, including stop and frisk.

Raimondo and the state Democratic Party have received thousands of dollars from Bloomberg and his daughter, and groups he gave millions to in 2014 spent more than \$1 million to help her win the governor's seat.

After Raimondo introduced him, Bloomberg noted that Johns Hopkins was supporting her administration's public health work, mentioned his investment in a push to register more voters, and noted that his spending helped Democrats win the House in 2018 "so that Nancy Pelosi took over and then she started the impeachment process."

Within days, Raimondo found herself defending Bloomberg against old allegations of sexist remarks at his company, saying he has changed his behavior and has a record of giving to causes that help women.

Melissa Jenkins, a Moms Demand Action volunteer who attended the Providence event, said she was considering voting for him, in part due to his giving to causes she cares about.

"He's a self-made billionaire, and he's used his privilege to help underprivileged people and to help causes that he believes in," Jenkins said after the event.

Other politicians grateful for prior financial support and hopeful for future funding have joined Bloomberg at events.

He launched his campaign in Virginia, where his spending helped Democrats defeat two Republican incumbents in House races in 2018 and last year win majorities in both houses of the General Assembly. Key to the latter effort was more than \$2.5 million spent by Everytown and the Beyond Carbon Action Fund supporting Democrats in key races.

"Mayor Bloomberg has been a steady force here in the commonwealth and he has never, ever, said no to us," said former Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe.

Bloomberg was a featured speaker at the Virginia Democrats' annual fundraising dinner earlier this month, and gave the state party \$50,000 the day before he spoke.

After being sworn in last month, Virginia lawmakers moved swiftly to advance stricter gun laws backed by Everytown, including universal background checks on gun purchases and temporary court-ordered seizures of guns from owners exhibiting troubling behaviors.

Republicans accused Democrats of being beholden to Bloomberg, and the NRA put his face on a billboard next to the interstate warning that he wanted to confiscate guns. Bloomberg is hoping to win the state's primary next week.

In Pennsylvania, which has its primary in April, Bloomberg has wielded his influence for years for politicians of both parties in a state that Trump narrowly carried in his upset 2016 election victory.

Bloomberg's super PAC, Independence USA, spent \$6 million supporting Republican U.S. Sen. Pat Toomey's narrow 2016 reelection win over Democrat Katie McGinty. The money funded ads praising Toomey as a man of integrity who tried to strengthen gun laws after the school shooting in Newtown.

For any other Democrat, helping a Republican opponent win a crucial race might be a deal-breaker. But before and after his support for Toomey, Bloomberg has showered state Democrats' campaigns, party

organizations and causes they support with donations that appear to have mended fences.

Bloomberg's foundation last year announced a \$10 million grant to help Pennsylvania battle the opioid crisis. That donation was hailed as a potential "turning point in our efforts" by Democratic Gov. Tom Wolf, who has received \$350,000 in campaign donations from Bloomberg since 2014.

Everytown recently announced that it would spend heavily this year if necessary to support the reelection of Democratic Attorney General Josh Shapiro, who has used his office to battle gun violence in Philadelphia and beyond in ways that activists praise as innovative. Shapiro's 2016 campaign received \$250,000 from Bloomberg.

Also on this November's ballot: state Treasurer Joe Torsella, the former CEO of the National Constitution Center, who received the \$50,000 donation from Bloomberg in 2016.

"He has definitely put a lot of chips on this table — all over the place," said former Pennsylvania Democratic Party chairman Jim Burn. "Let's see if he can cash in."

Foley reported from Iowa City, Iowa, and Smith from Providence, Rhode Island. Associated Press reporter Alan Suderman contributed from Richmond, Virginia, and Associated Press researcher Rhonda Shafner contributed from New York.

Generational split among SC black voters could hurt Biden

By TOM FOREMAN Jr. Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — For James Felder, the question of which presidential candidate to support in the South Carolina primary has never been terribly complicated. The 80-year-old civil rights activist has always backed Joe Biden, appreciative of the eight years he spent as the No. 2 to the first black president.

But when Felder opened a recent forum at historically black Benedict College to questions, students in the room weren't so convinced.

J'Kobe Kelley-Mills, a junior English major, said he was torn between Biden and Bernie Sanders, the progressive Vermont senator who is now the Democratic front-runner after strong performances in the first three primary contests.

"They both have decades of political experience," Kelley-Mills said of Biden and Sanders, adding that most of his friends were siding with the senator. "They're going to really know how to communicate with people on the other side of the aisle in the Senate and I think that if we can get them in there, we can finally start to see the government start to move forward."

Faith Dupree, a senior psychology major and member of Benedict's NAACP student chapter, said she was backing Sanders, and sophomore Luis Gonzalez said he would likely vote for Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren.

The dynamic was a reminder that black voters aren't unanimous in how they're approaching the rapidly evolving Democratic contest. That's a challenge for Biden as he seeks a commanding win in South Carolina on Saturday. After disappointing finishes in Iowa and New Hampshire, he can't afford losing much black support here, which could leave him with a narrow victory or, even worse, in second place.

"We're not that monolithic group that we used to be," Felder said. "You've got a whole generation and a half, maybe, who don't know Biden, don't know what has happened in the past."

"This generation," Felder continued, "is more open to others, new faces, as opposed to us who knew what Biden did. We appreciated him as vice president and the fact he served (President Barack) Obama so well, but you've got a generation who's coming along now who says 'Well, that's fine, but let me hear over here, too.'"

A national Washington Post-Ipsos poll conducted in January found Sanders with an advantage among black voters under 35, even as Biden had a big lead among black Democratic voters overall. That poll was conducted before any of the primary contests began.

The generational split among African American voters in South Carolina parallels the divide seen among whites and Latinos in early contests, with Sanders polling stronger among younger voters. The challenge

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 37 of 63

for Sanders will be to generate enough turnout among those younger voters, who historically turn out at rates far lower than their elders.

After a second place finish in Nevada, Biden quickly focused his campaign on South Carolina over the weekend. He told parishioners at a black church in North Charleston that the election can “rip out the roots of systemic racism” if voters help him win the Democratic nomination.

But his rivals aren’t ceding the state, sensing Biden’s vulnerabilities. Billionaire Tom Steyer has flooded the airwaves with millions of dollars of television advertising. Warren and Pete Buttigieg, the former mayor of South Bend, Indiana, will hold events across the state this week. And Sanders plans to hold at least four large rallies, which tend to attract young voters, between Wednesday and Friday.

As they decide how to vote, African Americans aren’t split cleanly along generational lines. For 71-year-old Andrea Loney, the challenge is more about sifting through a large all-white field to find an appealing candidate.

It’s an unusual conundrum for Loney, who, as a longtime African American activist, often works the phone during election years to urge friends to vote and give them advice on whom to support. This year, she said she can only wring her hands.

“And by that, I mean, I am looking at who is the candidate that is most likely to be able to beat Trump,” said Loney, who works as legal counsel for poor people in South Carolina.

Loney joins her family on a group chat to discuss their choices for the Democratic nomination. One of her daughters, Kwamine Gilyard, is backing Warren.

“I am probably the only one who is firmly decided who I’m supporting and made that decision after the first debate,” said Gilyard, 49, who is a school administrator. “I’m the only one who, I think, has not changed that. For me, it’s just that she’s been very consistent in her message, and keeping the focus on Trump as the person we are trying to beat, not each other.”

George Hart, a professor and faculty adviser to Benedict’s student chapter of the NAACP, said the chapter won’t endorse a candidate, but the most important criterion for black voters of all ages is backing a contender who will beat Trump.

“It’s unfortunate that the field is as it is,” he said. “I am for the strongest candidate, and the strongest candidate would be the one who can endure what’s about to come at them.”

Associated Press writers Bill Barrow in Charleston, South Carolina, and Emily Swanson in Washington contributed to this report.

In SC, Buttigieg faces black voters wary of a gay candidate

By THOMAS BEAUMONT and TOM FOREMAN JR. Associated Press

CONWAY, S.C. (AP) — South Carolina state Sen. Gerald Malloy is fine with a gay presidential candidate like Pete Buttigieg. His older male relatives are not — and that may be the defining challenge of Buttigieg’s campaign.

As Buttigieg tries to sustain his early success in Iowa and New Hampshire, he has to prove that he can win over African American voters, who make up the vital core of the party base. A relatively small but nonetheless influential number of black South Carolinians may be resistant to him because of his sexuality.

“He’s got to convince people like my dad and my uncles, when they still unfortunately subscribe to stereotypes,” said Malloy, who is black and lives in Hartsville, a small town in rural northeast South Carolina with a black population of almost 50%.

A poll commissioned by Winthrop University in Rock Hill, South Carolina, this month found that it made no difference in the decision-making to 79% of African American voters if a candidate for president is gay. The number was only slightly lower than white voters. Conversely, 16% of black voters said they’d be less likely to support a gay candidate, slightly higher than white voters, at 13%. But in a primary race with several candidates, that small percentage could make a major difference in the outcome.

Buttigieg is appealing for the support of black voters in part as a person guided by Christian faith and

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 38 of 63

in part as a matter of inclusiveness. That approach worked among Iowa's and New Hampshire's vastly white electorates, where he finished in the top two. A poor showing in South Carolina, where black voters could make up two-thirds of the Democratic primary electorate, might suggest that he cannot win over black Democrats.

Buttigieg has been careful not to equate the struggle for acceptance among gays to that of African Americans seeking equality and civil rights. At the same time he has tried to reach voters with a message of belonging, with the hope that it resonates in the state's robust Christian community.

"I think for those who haven't quite found their way all the way to the right side of history, it's important to beckon them in the right direction," Buttigieg said during a CNN town hall last week, "instead of clubbing them over the head and telling them they're bad people until they see it just the right way."

Buttigieg's sexuality reappeared in the campaign when Rush Limbaugh said on his radio show that "America's still not ready to elect a gay guy kissing his husband on the debate stage."

With faith-minded South Carolina voters paying closer attention now, Buttigieg held up his marriage as an example in contrast with President Donald Trump, the thrice-married billionaire who has been shadowed by accusations of infidelity and sexual assault.

"I mean, I'm sorry, but one thing about my marriage is it's never involved me having to send hush money to a porn star after cheating on my spouse with him or her," Buttigieg said during the CNN event. "So they want to debate family values? Let's debate family values."

The defiance betrays the more subtle approach Buttigieg takes in courting black voters in South Carolina and referencing his Christian faith, often discussing a passage from the Book of Matthew.

"Whatever happened to, 'I was hungry and you fed me? I was a stranger and you welcomed me?'" Buttigieg told the audience at the South Carolina Democratic Party Convention in Columbia last June, invoking Scripture's metaphors for child welfare and immigration.

Buttigieg's team hasn't focused on winning over voters resolutely opposed to him based on his sexuality. "It's not something we spend a lot of time thinking about," Buttigieg's national campaign spokesman Chris Meagher said. "He is who he is."

And yet, the discomfort lingers in the minds of men like Henry Baldwin at an evening service at Mason Temple Church of God in Christ in Conway on Sunday.

"I don't support that lifestyle, to be honest," said the 54-year-old Baldwin, who is black. "A lot of church people don't support that lifestyle. I'm supporting my beliefs."

Buttigieg's campaign has discussed internally the importance of reaching black women of faith, hoping his message of inclusiveness outweighs discomfort with his sexuality. There are at least some signs that it has.

The Rev. DeMett Jenkins, an associate minister in Charleston, South Carolina, said she was drawn to Buttigieg's eloquence, calm and intellectual depth, but sold by the faith he projects.

"I just don't see him spending time trying to convince people to accept his sexuality. Nothing he says is going to matter unless they have a change of heart," Jenkins said. "What I hear is a man who seems to care about all people, truly is guided by his integrity, his principles in life and his spirituality."

Yet there there remains an intransigence, even among the black women Buttigieg is targeting.

"I just can't see him being a representative for the United States of America," said Karen Wilkerson, a 69-year-old retired teacher from Cheraw. "When you think about all of the state things that he has to attend to, being in the public eye in a foreign stage and having to have the company of his partner with him. I guess, coming from my era, my age, it just bothers me. I don't think I will vote for him"

Some African American pastors such as the Rev. Titus Thorn say Buttigieg's sexuality hasn't deterred congregants. He said those attending his small parish in Rock Hill have considered Buttigieg's candidacy, though he does hear a common refrain of doubt.

"Individually, people say, 'I'm not opposed to him,'" Thorn said. "But they worry America's not ready for it."

There is a sizable pocket of voters in South Carolina for whom gay rights are paramount, the pro-gay rights group Human Rights Campaign reported Friday. Roughly 289,000 describe themselves as prioritiz-

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 39 of 63

ing gay rights when they vote, while about 137,000 voters in South Carolina identify as LGBTQ, the group reported.

The bigger problems in South Carolina for Buttigieg, the former mayor of South Bend, Indiana, may be that he has not campaigned frequently in the state and that many black voters mainly know him by the criticism of his city's police relations with minority residents, said former South Carolina state Rep. Bakari Sellers.

"Pete's problem with black voters is not that he's gay," said Sellers, who has not endorsed a candidate. "The reason not that many black folk are with Pete is they don't know him, and by virtue of that, they don't trust him."

Though there's less than a week to convince voters, Buttigieg on Monday seemed aware of Sellers' point as he addressed hundreds at a Baptist church banquet hall in North Charleston.

"I also know when I am asking voters, and in particular black voters, to trust me in this election," Buttigieg said, "that I'm asking someone who has perhaps never met me to trust me with their lives."

In endorsing Buttigieg in an editorial posted Monday night, Columbia's daily newspaper The State said Democrats needed "an energetic, disciplined candidate who can offer voters a powerful yet pragmatic vision of a better America" and bring people together.

The paper also said: "Too often Buttigieg's critics have ignored his substantive efforts to earn the support of black voters, and Buttigieg's appeals to African Americans should be judged by this standard: Is his outreach genuine, and is it being undertaken in good faith?"

Beaumont reported from Des Moines, Iowa. Associated Press writers Meg Kinnard and Elana Schor in Charleston, South Carolina, contributed to this report.

Crackdown on immigrants who use public benefits takes effect

By ANITA SNOW Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Pastor Antonio Velasquez says that before the Trump administration announced a crackdown on immigrants using government social services, people lined up before sunrise outside a state office in a largely Latino Phoenix neighborhood to sign up for food stamps and Medicaid.

No more.

"You had to arrive at 3 in the morning, and it might take you until the end of the day," he said, pointing behind the office in the Maryvale neighborhood to show how long the lines got.

But no one lined up one recent weekday morning, and there were just a handful of people inside.

With new rules taking effect Monday that disqualify more people from green cards if they use government benefits, droves of immigrants, including citizens and legal residents, have dropped social services they or their children may be entitled to out of fear they will be kicked out of the U.S., said Velasquez and other advocates.

"This will bring more poverty, more homeless, more illness," said Velasquez, a well-known leader among Spanish-speaking immigrants in the Phoenix area.

Advocates around the U.S. gathered Monday to discuss and criticize the policy.

Participants at a New York City roundtable said that in anticipation of the change, neighborhoods with higher immigrant populations had seen enrollment declines in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, known as WIC. They also urged immigrants to get legal advice on how they may be affected.

In Boston, the Rev. Dieufort Fleurissant said some Haitian immigrants worry that accepting benefits could keep their relatives from coming to the U.S.

Bethany Li, of Greater Boston Legal Services, said Chinese families are passing on WIC benefits not covered by the new rules.

The guidelines that aim to determine whether immigrants seeking legal residency may become a government burden are part of the Trump administration's broader effort to reduce immigration, particularly

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 40 of 63

among poorer people.

The rules that critics say amount to a "wealth test" were set to take effect in October but were delayed by legal challenges alleging a violation of due process under the U.S. Constitution. The Supreme Court last month cleared the way for the Trump administration to move forward while the rules were litigated in the courts.

A 5-4 vote Friday by the high court sided with the Trump administration by lifting a last injunction covering just Illinois, giving White House adviser Stephen Miller and other hardliners a resounding win in one of their boldest attempts to limit legal immigration.

Justice Sonia Sotomayor issued a blistering dissent, criticizing the administration for quickly turning to the Supreme Court after facing losses in lower courts and suggesting that her conservative colleagues handled the litigation inconsistently in their desire to give Trump a victory.

White House press secretary Stephanie Grisham said Saturday that the change will "reestablish the fundamental legal principle that newcomers to our society should be financially self-reliant and not dependent on the largess of United States taxpayers."

Ken Cuccinelli, acting deputy Homeland Security secretary, said Monday on Fox News Channel's "Fox & Friends" that the change is "not a moral judgment on individuals, it is an economic one."

He said the government expects "people seeking to be long-term immigrants here, and maybe join us as citizens, will be able to stand on their own two feet." He said the rules were "a major priority for the president."

Federal law already requires those seeking permanent residency or legal status to prove they will not be a burden to the U.S. — a "public charge," in government lingo. But the new rules include a wider range of programs that could disqualify them, including using Medicaid, food stamps and housing vouchers.

The chilling effect spreading through immigrant communities recalls how millions of refugees dumped social services during the welfare changes of the 1990s, even though the legislation that prompted the cuts explicitly exempted them.

Nazanin Ash, Washington-based vice president for global policy and advocacy for the nonprofit International Rescue Committee, pointed to research showing some 37 percent of refugees exempted from the Clinton-era changes in welfare benefits dropped food stamps they were entitled to.

Ash said the Trump administration rules would likely cause similar hardships for immigrants who contribute to the American economy.

"To call them a burden on society is factually incorrect," she said.

The nonprofit Migration Policy Institute in Washington said in an August policy paper that it expects "a significant share" of the nearly 23 million noncitizens and U.S. citizens in immigrant families who use public benefits will drop them.

Julia Gelatt, a senior policy analyst with the institute, said the guidelines are so complicated that there have even been reports of parents dropping their kids' free school lunches, which are not affected.

Gelatt noted that the rules apply only to social services used after Monday and do not affect citizens or most green card holders. Refugees vetted by federal agencies before their arrival, as well as people who obtain asylum, are not affected.

The guidelines don't apply to many programs for children and pregnant and postnatal women, including Head Start early childhood education and WIC.

Nevertheless, Stephanie Santiago, who manages two Phoenix-area clinics for the nonprofit Mountain Park Health Center, said during the last three months of 2019 she suddenly saw scores of immigrants drop those and other benefits.

"People are very scared about the rules," Santiago said. "The sad thing is that they even drop the services their U.S. citizen kids qualify for. A lot of these kids are going to school sick or their parents are paying out of pocket for services they should get for free."

Cynthia Aragon, outreach coordinator for the nonprofit Helping Families in Need in Phoenix, said that because of the confusion, she is steering people to private sources of aid, like food banks and church-run

clinics.

"I think people will start applying for government services again after it becomes clearer how things are going to work," Aragon said. "In the meantime, we tell immigrants to look for some of the other resources out there and don't feel like a victim."

Associated Press writers Philip Marcelo in Boston, Deepti Hajela in New York and Elliot Spagat in San Diego contributed to this report.

Follow Anita Snow: <http://twitter.com/asnowreports>

Asian shares extend losses after Dow drops more than 1,000

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

Shares are mostly lower in Asia on Tuesday after Wall Street suffered its worst session in two years, with the Dow Jones Industrial Average slumping more than 1,000 points on fears that a viral outbreak that began in China will weaken the world economy.

Japan's Nikkei 225 index lost 3%, to 22,686.61 after it reopened from a holiday on Monday. Hong Kong's Hang Seng edged 0.2% lower to 26,777.88 and the Shanghai Composite index sank 1.6% to 2,984.19. In Australia, the S&P ASX/200 shed 1.2% to 6,896.10.

South Korea's Kospi rebounded from a steep loss on Monday, adding 0.6% to 2,091.80. Shares also rose in Singapore but fell elsewhere in the region.

In Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia's main benchmark dropped 2.7% amid a political upheaval after Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad offered his resignation to Malaysia's king while his political party quit the ruling alliance.

Overnight on Wall Street, traders sought safety in U.S. government bonds, gold and high-dividend stocks like utilities and real estate. The yield on the 10-year Treasury fell to the lowest level in more than three years.

Technology companies, whose supply chains have been disrupted, accounted for much of the broad market slide, which wiped out all of the Dow's and S&P 500's gains for the year.

More than 79,000 people worldwide have been infected by the new coronavirus. China, where the virus originated, still has the majority of cases and deaths. The country's economy has been hardest hit as businesses and factories sit idle and people remain home-bound because the government has severely restricted travel and imposed strict quarantine measures to stop the virus from spreading. Economists have cut growth estimates for the Chinese economy.

The ripple effects of the outbreak are being felt all around the world, as China is both a major importer of goods and a source of parts for intricate supply chains.

China's government promised tax cuts and other aid Monday to help companies recover despite anti-disease controls that shut down much of the world's second-largest economy last month. Economists say it is likely to be at least mid-March before automakers and other companies return to full production.

Still, while concern about the virus has prompted some sporadic selling in the past few weeks, for the most part global markets have traded as if the virus' impact would be limited. Until Monday, the major U.S. stock indexes had all been in the green.

Crude oil prices slid 3.7% on Monday but were stable early Tuesday. Benchmark U.S. crude oil rose 26 cents to \$51.69 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It fell \$1.95 to settle at \$51.43 a barrel on Monday. Brent crude oil, the international standard, gained 28 cents to \$56.06 per barrel. On Monday, it dropped \$2.17 to close at \$55.77 a barrel.

The rapid spread from China to other countries is upping anxiety about the growing threat the outbreak poses to the global economy.

"Stock markets around the world are beginning to price in what bond markets have been telling us for weeks – that global growth is likely to be impacted in a meaningful way due to fears of the coronavirus," said Chris Zaccarelli, chief investment officer for Independent Advisor Alliance.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 42 of 63

The Dow lost 1,031.61 points, or 3.6%, to 27,960.80. The S&P 500 index skidded 3.4%, to 3,225.89. The Nasdaq dropped 3.7% to 9,221.28 - its biggest loss since December 2018. The Russell 2000 index of smaller company stocks gave up 3% to 1,628.10.

The slump in U.S. indexes followed a sell-off in markets overseas. Italy's benchmark tumbled after the number of virus cases there rose dramatically and a dozen towns in the northern part of the country were put under quarantine. There are also more cases of the virus being reported in the Middle East as it spreads to Iran, Iraq, and Kuwait, among others.

Technology companies were among the worst hit by Monday's sell-off. Apple, which depends on China for a lot of business, slid 4.8%. Microsoft dropped 4.3%. Banks such as JPMorgan and Bank of America were also big losers.

Cruise lines suffered steep losses, as Carnival, Royal Caribbean Cruises and Norwegian Cruise Line were three of the top four decliners in the S&P 500, each falling around 9%. American Airlines also dropped sharply, and after the market closed, United Airlines withdrew its earnings estimate for 2020 because of uncertainty over how long the virus outbreak will last.

Gilead Sciences climbed 4.6% and was among the few bright spots. The biotechnology company is testing a potential drug to treat the new coronavirus. Bleach-maker Clorox was also a standout, rising 1.5%.

Utilities and real estate companies held up better than most sectors. Investors tend to favor those industries, which carry high dividends and hold up relatively well during periods of turmoil, when they're feeling fearful. They're now the best-performing sectors in the S&P 500 for the year, while the tech sector has lost ground.

In the eyes of some analysts, stocks are finally catching up to the bond market, where fear has been dominant for months.

Investors have turned to the safety of bonds throughout 2020, even as stocks overcame stumbles to set more records. The 10-year yield had recovered to 1.40% early Tuesday after dipping to an intraday record low Monday of 1.325% set in July 2016, according to Tradeweb. The 30-year Treasury yield fell further after setting its own record low, down to 1.83% from 1.92% late Friday.

Gold retreated as shares steadied, losing \$16.50 to \$1,660.30 ounce, silver lost 28 cents to \$18.60 per ounce and copper fell 3 cents to \$2.59 per pound.

The dollar rose to 110.85 Japanese yen from 110.68 yen on Monday. The euro strengthened to \$1.0865 from \$1.0853.

AP Business writers Alex Veiga, Damian Troise and Stan Choe contributed.

Worried Democrats rush to slow front-runner Sanders

By **STEVE PEOPLES, MEG KINNARD and BILL BARROW** Associated Press

HILTON HEAD ISLAND, S.C. (AP) — Worried Democrats on Monday intensified their assault against the party's presidential front-runner, Bernie Sanders, as the Vermont senator marched toward South Carolina's weekend primary eyeing a knockout blow.

At least three leading candidates, Joe Biden, Pete Buttigieg and Mike Bloomberg, reinforced their anti-Sanders rhetoric with paid attack ads for the first time. And a new political group was spending big to undermine Sanders' standing with African American voters.

"Socialist Bernie Sanders is promising a lot of free stuff," says a brochure sent to 200,000 black voters in South Carolina by The Big Tent Project, a new organization trying to derail Sanders' candidacy. "Nominating Bernie means we reelect Trump. We can't afford Bernie Sanders."

The multi-pronged broadside just five days before South Carolina's first-in-the-South primary represents the Democrats' most aggressive attempt to knock Sanders down. It reflects growing concern within his party that the self-described democratic socialist is tightening his grip on the presidential nomination while they fear he's too extreme to defeat President Donald Trump this fall.

It also underscores the precarious state of Biden's campaign. The former vice president has long been

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 43 of 63

viewed as the unquestioned front-runner in South Carolina because of his support from black voters. But as the contest nears, Sanders is also making a strong play here. If he can eat into Biden's base of support, that would raise fundamental questions about the future of Biden's candidacy.

Sanders has shifted new staff into the state from Nevada in the last 24 hours, expanded his South Carolina advertising and added events to his schedule.

Sanders senior adviser Jeff Weaver said there was an "air of desperation" to the fresh attacks on his candidate.

"You've got candidates, you've got super PACs, all piling on to stop Bernie Sanders," Weaver said. "They know he has the momentum in the race."

Biden still predicted he would win "by plenty" in Saturday's contest, the first with a sizable black population to weigh in.

Beyond South Carolina, polls suggest Sanders will perform well when more than a dozen states vote in the March 3 Super Tuesday contests. That's when critics fear Sanders could build an insurmountable delegate lead.

Sanders was the focus of Buttigieg's first attack ad of the 2020 campaign. In the ad, which began running Monday as part of the former South Bend mayor's multimillion-dollar South Carolina advertising campaign, Buttigieg highlights Sanders' call for a government-financed health care system as an example of the Democratic front-runner's "polarization."

Biden released an online ad accusing Sanders of trying to undermine President Barack Obama's 2012 reelection campaign with a possible primary challenge. Sanders, of course, ultimately did not challenge Obama from the left.

"When it comes to building on President Obama's legacy, Bernie Sanders just can't be trusted," the Biden ad says.

And Bloomberg released a new ad of his own assailing Sanders' record on gun control, citing the senator's endorsement by the National Rifle Association when he first ran for Congress decades ago.

While he once had the NRA's backing, Sanders proudly proclaims his "F" rating from the pro-gun organization now. And just last week, several gun control advocates who survived the Parkland, Florida, school shooting endorsed him.

Still, Bloomberg tweeted: "The NRA paved the road to Washington for Bernie Sanders. We deserve a president who is not beholden to the gun lobby."

One candidate who didn't take Sanders on directly Monday: Sen. Elizabeth Warren. Though she shares many of Sanders' liberal policies and could benefit if he were to stumble, she's been reluctant to tangle with him throughout the campaign.

Some of Warren's supporters say she has to start drawing a sharper contrast with Sanders if she's to break out after middling performances in the first three contests.

"She needs to get out tomorrow night and get after him," said Beth Maass, 79, referring to Tuesday's debate. "She's in the lane with Bernie and only one is going to make it out of the lane."

Sanders may benefit most from the sheer number of candidates still in the race. There are still seven high-profile Democrats fighting among themselves -- and splitting up the anti-Sanders vote -- to emerge as the strongest alternative to him.

There was no sign Monday that any of those candidates were close to getting out.

Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar, who finished in a distant fifth or sixth place in Nevada over the weekend, announced plans to launch a \$4.2 million ad buy across several Super Tuesday states.

Billionaire activist Tom Steyer has yet to spend money on an anti-Sanders campaign, but he went after him by name Monday before more than 100 voters at a breakfast in Hilton Head.

Steyer warned, "We can't nominate someone who is going to divide us."

There were also new signs Monday that Sanders' emergence as the possible face of the Democratic Party in 2020 could cause problems for vulnerable House and Senate candidates across the country.

Republicans working to win back the House majority jumped on comments Sanders made in a CBS News

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 44 of 63

"60 Minutes" segment aired Sunday in which he praised the late Cuban ruler Fidel Castro for establishing what Sanders called a "massive literacy program" when he took power.

The House GOP campaign arm called on several House Democrats — including three facing reelection this fall in South Florida — to say if they'd support Sanders should he become the nominee. Members including Rep. Donna Shalala weren't happy.

"I'm hoping that in the future, Senator Sanders will take time to speak to some of my constituents before he decides to sing the praises of a murderous tyrant like Fidel Castro," the first-term Democrat tweeted.

Sanders was also in a dispute with the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, an establishment group that advocates for strong U.S.-Israel relations. Sanders said he would skip the group's conference because he was concerned about the event giving airtime to "leaders who express bigotry and oppose basic Palestinian rights."

Jonathan Greenblatt, CEO of the Anti-Defamation League, called that characterization "offensive" and "irresponsible."

Rep. Elaine Luria, a Virginia Democrat who is Jewish, issued a statement condemning Sanders' remarks, which she said "contribute to the divisive rhetoric often used when discussing the issue of Israel's right to exist."

Watching the tumult from afar during a trip to India, Trump predicted a long and messy primary season ahead for his rivals.

"It could go to the convention, it really could," Trump said. "They are going to take it away from Crazy Bernie, they are not going to let him win."

He added, "I actually think he would be tougher than most of the other candidates because he is like me, but I have a much bigger base."

EDITORS: This story has been corrected to say that Sanders' dispute is with American Israel Public Affairs Committee, not Anti-Defamation League. It has also been corrected to reflect that The Big Tent Project is not a PAC.

Peoples reported from New York and Barrow reported from Charleston, South Carolina. AP writers Alan Fram in Washington, Elana Schor and Julie Pace in Charleston, Jill Colvin with Trump and Thomas Beaumont in Des Moines, Iowa, contributed.

'A new day': Harvey Weinstein convicted, led away in cuffs

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and TOM HAYS undefined

NEW YORK (AP) — Former Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein was convicted of rape and sexual assault against two women and led off to prison in handcuffs Monday in what his foes hailed as a landmark moment for the legal system and a long-overdue reckoning for the man vilified as the biggest monster of the #MeToo era.

The 67-year-old Weinstein had a look of resignation on his face as he heard the verdict: guilty on two charges, not guilty on a set of more serious ones.

While it was not the across-the-board victory prosecutors and his accusers had hoped for, it could put the stooped and feeble-looking Weinstein behind bars for the rest of his life. The charges carry up to 29 years in prison.

District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr. saluted the women who came forward against the once-feared studio boss, saying they "changed the course of history in the fight against sexual violence" and "pulled our justice system into the 21st century."

"This is the new landscape for survivors of sexual assault in America, I believe, and it is a new day. It is a new day because Harvey Weinstein has finally been held accountable for crimes he committed," Vance said.

Weinstein's lawyers said they will appeal.

"Harvey is unbelievably strong. He took it like a man," defense attorney Donna Rotunno said. "He knows

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 45 of 63

that we will continue to fight for him, and we know that this is not over." Another of his lawyers, Arthur Aidala, quoted Weinstein as telling his legal team: "I'm innocent. I'm innocent. I'm innocent. How could this happen in America?"

The jury of seven men and five women took five days to find Weinstein guilty of raping an aspiring actress in a New York City hotel room in 2013 and sexually assaulting production assistant Mimi Haley in his apartment in 2006 by forcibly performing oral sex on her.

He was acquitted on the most serious charges, two counts of predatory sexual assault, each carrying up to life in prison. Both of those counts hinged on the testimony of "Sopranos" actress Annabella Sciorra, who said Weinstein barged into her apartment, raped her and forcibly performed oral sex on her in the mid-1990s.

Judge James Burke ordered Weinstein taken to jail immediately. Court officers handcuffed Weinstein and put their arms under his, leading him unsteadily out of the courtroom via a side door without the use of the walker he relied on for much of the trial. He was later taken from the courthouse in an ambulance, strapped to a stretcher in his suit, and taken to a locked unit at Bellevue Hospital.

The judge said he would ask that Weinstein, who had been free on bail since his arrest nearly two years ago, be held in the infirmary at the city's Rikers Island jail complex after his lawyers said he needs medical attention following unsuccessful back surgery.

Rotunno said in an appearance on Fox News that Weinstein was initially headed to the jail, but was diverted to Bellevue to be checked out for heart palpitations and high blood pressure. "He's O.K.," she added.

Sentencing was set for March 11. The sexual assault charge carries up to 25 years in prison, while the third-degree rape count is punishable by up to four years. (The jury acquitted Weinstein of first-degree rape, which requires the use of force or the threat of it, and found him guilty of third-degree rape, which involves a lack of consent.)

The verdict followed weeks of often harrowing and excruciatingly graphic testimony from a string of accusers who told of rapes, forced oral sex, groping, masturbation, lewd propositions and excuses from Weinstein about how the Hollywood casting couch works. In addition to the three women he was charged with attacking, three more who said they were assaulted by Weinstein testified in an effort by prosecutors to show a pattern of brutish behavior.

Whispers about Weinstein circulated in Hollywood for years before they finally turned into a torrent of accusations in 2017 that destroyed his career and gave rise to #MeToo, the global movement to encourage women to come forward and hold powerful men accountable for their sexual misconduct.

The trial was the first criminal case to arise from the barrage of allegations against Weinstein from more than 90 women, including actresses Gwyneth Paltrow, Salma Hayek, Ashley Judd, Uma Thurman and Mira Sorvino. Most of those cases were too old to prosecute.

While prosecutors and other Weinstein foes were disappointed by his acquittal on the most serious charges, they exulted over the guilty verdicts.

"The era of impunity for powerful men who rape people is over," Sorvino said, breaking down in tears on a conference call of Weinstein's former accusers. "He will rot in jail as he deserves."

Judd, who accused Weinstein of damaging her career by spreading lies about her after she rejected his advances, tweeted: "For the women who testified in this case, and walked through traumatic hell, you did a public service to girls and women everywhere, thank you."

While Weinstein did not testify, his lawyers contended that any sexual contact was consensual and that his accusers went to bed with him to get ahead in Hollywood. The defense seized on the fact that the two women he was convicted of attacking had sex with him — and sent him warm and even flirty emails — well after he supposedly attacked them.

In the end, that argument didn't seem to gain any traction. Instead, the jury had trouble with Sciorra's allegations. Four days into deliberations, the jurors sent out a note indicating they were deadlocked on the two predatory sexual assault counts but had reached a unanimous verdict on the others. The judge told them to keep on deliberating.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 46 of 63

After the verdict, jury foreman Bernard Cody was asked what the deliberations were like for him personally and responded: "Devastating." He did not elaborate.

Sciorra said in statement: "While we hope for continued righteous outcomes that bring absolute justice, we can never regret breaking the silence. For in speaking truth to power we pave the way for a more just culture, free of the scourge of violence against women."

The Associated Press does not typically identify people who say they are victims of sex crimes unless they grant permission, as Haley and Sciorra did.

The phenomenally successful movie executive helped bring to the screen such Oscar winners as "Good Will Hunting," "Pulp Fiction," "The King's Speech," "Silver Linings Playbook" and "Shakespeare in Love" and nurtured the careers of celebrated filmmakers like Quentin Tarantino and Kevin Smith.

Weinstein now faces charges in Los Angeles. In that case, announced just as the New York trial was getting under way in early January, authorities allege he raped one woman and sexually assaulted another on back-to-back nights during Oscars week in 2013.

During the trial, Weinstein regularly trudged into the courthouse stooped and unshaven, using his walker — a far cry from the way he was depicted in court as a burly "Jekyll-and-Hyde" figure whose eyes seemed to turn black with menace when his anger flared.

"If he heard the word 'no,' it was like a trigger for him," his rape accuser testified. One woman said that when she laughed off his advances, he sneered, "You'll never make it in this business. This is how this industry works."

The jury heard lurid testimony that Weinstein injected himself with a needle to get an erection, that his genitals appeared disfigured, that he sent Sciorra a box of chocolate penises and that he once showed up uninvited at her hotel room door in his underwear with a bottle of baby oil in one hand and a video in the other.

The prosecution's task was made more complicated because Haley testified that she had sex with him two weeks after she was supposedly attacked, while the rape accuser whose name was withheld said she had a sexual encounter with him more than three years afterward.

The rape accuser admitted sending Weinstein emails saying "Miss you big guy" and "I love you, always do. But I hate feeling like a booty call." Under fierce cross-examination from Weinstein's lawyers, she explained that she was afraid of the movie executive's unpredictable anger and "I wanted him to believe I wasn't a threat."

To blunt that line of questioning, prosecutors called as a witness a forensic psychiatrist who said that most sexual assault victims struggle to comprehend what happened to them and continue to have contact with their attackers.

During closing arguments, Rotunno charged that Weinstein had become "the target of a cause and a movement" — #MeToo — and asked the jury to ignore "outside forces." She said the case against Weinstein amounted to "regret renamed as rape," arguing that the women exercised their free will to try to further their careers.

Weinstein's lawyers repeatedly raised objections during the case that could form the basis of an appeal. Among other things, the defense complained that the Los Angeles charges were timed to influence jury selection, and they unsuccessfully opposed the seating of a juror who wrote a novel involving predatory older men.

Over the years, Weinstein managed to silence many accusers with payoffs, nondisclosure agreements and the constant fear that he could crush their careers if they spoke out. He also employed an army of attorneys, publicists and private investigators to thwart journalists and suppress news stories about his behavior.

Weinstein was finally arrested in May 2018, seven months after The New York Times and The New Yorker exposed his alleged misconduct in stories that would win the Pulitzer Prize. Among other men taken down by the #MeToo movement since the scandal broke: news anchors Matt Lauer and Charlie Rose, actor Kevin Spacey and Sen. Al Franken.

Weinstein's studio, the Weinstein Co., went bankrupt after his disgrace. A tentative settlement was

reached last year to resolve nearly all lawsuits stemming from the scandal. It would pay Weinstein's accusers about \$25 million, but he would not have to admit any wrongdoing or personally pay anything; the studio's insurance would cover the cost.

On Twitter, follow Michael Sisak at twitter.com/mikesisak and Tom Hays at twitter.com/aptomhays

Tears from a comic, a mom and a legend mark Bryant memorial

By **ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer**

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Memorable moments from inside the memorial for Kobe Bryant and his daughter Gianna.

BEYONCÉ, ALICIA, CHRISTINA AND 'MARIA'

Practically everything about what would happen at Kobe Bryant's memorial was a mystery to nearly everyone watching, and when Beyoncé took the stage to open the celebration of life, a gasp went up among the until-then subdued crowd at Staples Center in Los Angeles. The big screen in the arena soon showed that many major entertainment figures were in the audience along with the expected NBA stars, including Jennifer Lopez, Kanye West and Kim Kardashian.

The memorial's other musical moments would provide their own surprises. A harp and grand piano that a scrambling crew set up on stage between speakers led to speculation about who else would perform. The harp accompanied Christina Aguilera as she sang "Ave Maria," a nod to the Bryant family's Catholic faith and to Kobe Bryant's Italian upbringing. The piano was for Alicia Keys, who used it to play Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata," which the crowd had just learned the usually non-musical Bryant had learned to play for his wife's wedding anniversary.

SHAKEN KIMMEL SETS THE TONE

The crowd was more perplexed than surprised moments after Beyoncé's polished opening when the Staples Center announcer said a "good friend of the Bryants and the Lakers family is here to help guide us through this morning's celebration," and introduced not a priest or pastor, but Jimmy Kimmel. The late-night host, professional prankster, and sometime Academy Awards emcee agreed he was an odd choice, but his shaken, tearful delivery set the tone for the deep emotions that were to follow. "You picked the wrong person to guide you through, I'm going to tell you that right now," a choked-up Kimmel said.

Even more tears came as he listed the names of the nine killed in the helicopter crash, and he was practically weeping when he said of Kobe and Gianna Bryant, "everywhere you look you see his face, his number, Gigi's face, Gigi's number." He drew laughs from the tears when he said those places included "Boston, for God's sake. In places where he would be booed on the court, Kobe was missed. Even the great Boston Celtic Bill Russell (who sat nearby in the crowd) wore number 24 and a Lakers jersey to yesterday's game. I knew he would come to us eventually."

A DAUGHTER, AND A FUTURE, LOST

Vanessa Bryant would soon take the room to new depths of emotion as she paid tribute to the 13-year-old daughter and the husband she lost. Deep silence ran through the crowd of some 20,000 at Staples Center, broken only by sniffs that came even from the usually emotion-free press section of the arena, as she described the imagined future a mother would never know for her child. "We will not be able to see Gigi go to high school," Vanessa Bryant said, her voice breaking. "We didn't get the chance to teach her how to drive a car. I won't be able to tell her how gorgeous she looks on her wedding day. ... Gigi would have most likely become the best player in the WNBA. She would have made a huge difference for women's basketball."

TAURASI AND IONESCU, KOBE AND GIANNA

Everyone expected to see and hear from legends of the NBA game, but giants of the women's game showed viewers how much this side of basketball also shaped Bryant's life as he coached Gianna's team and fueled her future career. Both WNBA all-time great Diana Taurasi and collegiate all-time great Sabrina Ionescu said they learned and used Kobe's signature moves. "He taught me his step-back, he told me

that if I could bring that to my game it would be over for any defender trying to guard me," Ionescu said. "He was giving me the blueprint. He was giving Gigi the same blueprint.

A STAR AMONG STARS

Even in an arena loaded with superstars from sports and entertainment, Michael Jordan taking the stage left the audience awestruck. The crowd had been growing a little restless after an unbroken string of speakers, and some headed for restroom and concession trips after 90 minutes of sitting still, but when the Chicago Bulls legend walked on to stage, Staples Center snapped back to full attention, and when Jordan was crying from his first words, the room knew it was witnessing a truly rare moment from the superstar.

He even acknowledged that his tears invoked the photo meme that dominated social media several years ago. "Now he's got me," Jordan said of Bryant. "I'm going to have to look at another crying meme for the next" and was cut off by laughs and howls from the crowd.

BRYANT'S LAST TEXTS FROM THE AIR

Kobe's best friend, former agent and current Lakers General Manager Rob Pelinka had the crowd riveted when he described the last messages Bryant sent him, moments before the helicopter crash that killed him. Pelinka said he was in church and Bryant was in the air when Bryant texted him to ask if he knew a baseball agent who could help a hard-working, ambitious girl get an internship. The story took a truly touching twist when Pelinka revealed that the girl was Lexi Altobelli, the surviving daughter of John Altobelli, who died in the crash with Bryant.

"Kobe's last human act was heroic," Pelinka said. "He wanted to use his platform to bless and shape a young girl's future."

SHAQ OUT

It was not clear when Shaquille O'Neal took the stage that he would be the final speaker, but in retrospect it could not have been more fitting that the man whose name will always be tied to Bryant's went last in the building where they built their legacy together.

The always playful Shaq showed why he and the refined, serious Bryant were such an odd couple. "Sometimes like immature kids, we argued, we fought, we bantered or insulted each other," O'Neal said. But, he added, "when the cameras were turned off we threw a wink at each other and said, 'Let's go and whoop some ass.'" And he showed Bryant wasn't above having the occasional outrageous moment himself. He recalled an early conflict with Bryant, who wasn't passing as much as O'Neal would've liked. O'Neal said he told Kobe: "There's no 'I' in team." Kobe responded: "Yeah, but there's an 'M-E,'" followed by an F-bomb that broke the somber tone and made the crowd roar.

Follow AP Entertainment Writer Andrew Dalton on Twitter at: <https://twitter.com/andyjamesdalton>.

Italian hikers rescued in Alaska after visiting infamous bus

By RACHEL D'ORO Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — An Italian man suffering from frostbite and four other tourists were rescued in the Alaska wilderness after visiting an abandoned bus that has become a lure for adventurers since it was featured in the "Into the Wild" book and movie.

Alaska State Troopers say the five Italians were rescued Saturday from a camp they set up after visiting the dilapidated bus on the Stampede Trail near the interior town of Healy.

The hikers were found 13 miles from the trailhead, Trooper spokesman Tim DeSpain said. He didn't know how far they were from the bus.

One of the hikers had frostbite to his feet and was transported to Fairbanks for treatment, DeSpain said. The hiker's injuries are not considered life-threatening. The other four hikers were picked up by friends in Healy.

Rescuers were alerted by the hikers with a satellite-based emergency device that notified the International Emergency Response Coordination Center of a medical emergency, troopers said. That international group then notified rescuers, who reached the site by snowmobile, DeSpain said.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 49 of 63

The rescue was the latest episode involving the bus, first made famous by Jon Krakauer's book published in 1996 and then by Sean Penn's 2007 film of the same name. Both fueled a lingering mystique about a young idealist, Christopher McCandless, who met his death from starvation in the bus, which is about 10 miles north of the entrance to Denali National Park and Preserve.

Over the years, some hikers have been rescued and others have died while trying to retrace McCandless' last steps.

In July, a newlywed woman from Belarus died after she was swept away by the Teklanika River while trying to reach the bus with her husband.

In 2013, three German hikers trying to reach the bus were rescued after a river they crossed became impassable because of high, fast-moving water.

Families of some of those who died are now behind a proposal before Denali Borough for a feasibility study for construction of a footbridge over the Teklanika.

The idea is in the early stages, and no decision has been made. But borough Mayor Clay Walker said there are several concerns among officials. A footbridge might give people a false sense of security. It could lead to more people trying to reach the bus, and that could lead to more rescues, Walker said.

There are more hazards in the unforgiving wilderness surrounding the bus, as Saturday's rescue illustrates. "A footbridge wouldn't have changed the need for a rescue," Walker said.

As far as he's concerned, a better solution would be to remove the bus. "The fact that the bus is there raises that attraction level," he said.

Follow Rachel D'Oro at <https://twitter.com/rdoro>

Altuve nicked by pitch, Astros stars booed on road vs Tigers

By FRED GOODALL AP Sports Writer

LAKELAND, Fla. (AP) — José Altuve insisted he tuned out the hecklers. He couldn't avoid a pitch that grazed him.

"He was hit in the foot. That ain't nothing, you know what I mean?" Houston Astros manager Dusty Baker said Monday after an 11-1 win over Detroit at half-empty Joker Marchant Stadium. "It wasn't intentional."

Altuve was loudly booed when he was introduced for his spring training debut, cheered when he struck out and called a cheater by several fans. Quite a difference from past years, when the diminutive All-Star second baseman was among the most popular players in the majors.

But that was before Altuve and his Houston teammates were implicated in the sign-stealing scandal that's rocked baseball.

"We just heard a lot of noise, and that's it," Altuve said.

Altuve and fellow starters Alex Bregman, Carlos Correa and Yuli Gurriel all played for the first time in the exhibition season. After Houston opened the Grapefruit League in the stadium it shares with the World Series champion Washington Nationals, this was the first time the Astros were away from their complex — providing a taste of the reaction they might receive on the road this year.

"We were focused on playing baseball. We know that we need to go on the field and get ready and prepared for the coming season," Altuve said. "That's what we're thinking about right now."

Actually, the reception during the visit to Tigertown USA was fairly tame compared to what it figures to be during the regular season.

"What reaction?" Correa said.

Early arrivals in the announced crowd of 4,891 were discouraged by ushers from gathering near the Astros dugout unless they had box seats along the third base line.

Hecklers aired their voices after batting practice, booing during introduction of lineups and each time Altuve, Bregman, Correa and Gurriel stepped up to the plate. Altuve got some cheers, too, when he was charged with an error for dropping a throw by Bregman from third base on a force play.

The quartet was treated to one more round of boos when they left the game and made the long walk

up the first base line to the visiting clubhouse.

"There's frustration in the fan base and they have a right to voice their opinion. ... The Astros are going to have to wear it for a while, and eventually it'll move on. But fans are going to voice their opinions and they have a right to," Tigers manager Ron Gardenhire said. "Those guys understand it over there, and they're going about their business of getting ready for the season."

Altuve took a third called strike to a round of cheers in his first at-bat, then lined a crowd-quieting RBI double into the left-field corner his next time up.

Altuve showed no signs of being upset when he was grazed with a pitch by Tigers reliever Nick Ramirez after the batter before him, Myles Straw, homered in the fifth inning. The 2017 AL MVP was replaced by a pinch runner.

Baker planned to play Altuve, Bregman, Correa and Gurriel no more than five innings anyway in Houston's first true road exhibition since a Major League Baseball investigation found the Astros broke rules by illegally stealing signs during their championship season in 2017.

While most of the team made the three-hour trip from West Palm Beach by bus early Monday, Baker said the team's starting infield traveled the previous day and spent the night in Orlando. Established players rarely make such long road trips in spring training camp.

"That made it easier for them to show up here, and it makes easier for me to say: 'Hey, man, do you want to come,'" Baker said before the game, adding he had not tried to prepare Altuve, Bregman, Correa and Gurriel about what to expect Monday.

"No, I don't tell 'em anything. There might not be any noise," Baker said. "Everybody keeps anticipating noise, and there might not be noise. It's hard to warn somebody that something's coming and it never comes because you'll be looking out for it instead of playing the game. If it comes, you deal with it. If not, you go ahead and live your life."

Two other Astros were hit by pitches in the late innings, though Gardenhire stressed it wasn't on purpose.

Earlier, Detroit's starting pitcher Matthew Boyd, who fanned Altuve in the first inning, said it wasn't difficult to block out the booing and heckling and remained focused on playing the game.

"It's spring training. Honestly, let's let it die. What's done is done. I know how everybody feels, but no one is going to change anything now," Boyd said. "The punishment's been handed out, the line's been drawn in the sand. Hopefully that shuts it down, and it's just best for everyone to move forward. They've got to live with it. That's more than enough punishment."

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

Public memorial service remembers the private Kobe Bryant

By GREG BEACHAM AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Kobe Bryant's wife remembered him as a devoted father and husband who arrived early for school pickups and wrote heartfelt cards and letters.

Rob Pelinka, Bryant's longtime agent and close friend, recalled his final texts from the NBA superstar minutes before he was killed last month in a helicopter crash. Bryant was attempting to secure an internship for the daughter of another friend who was sitting with him in the chopper.

Michael Jordan called Bryant "a little brother" and said that when he died, "a piece of me died."

Bryant's athletic achievements were only part of the reason roughly 20,000 people gathered Monday for a public memorial service honoring him at Staples Center in downtown Los Angeles. The event offered another chance to celebrate Bryant, his 13-year-old daughter, Gianna, and the other seven victims of the crash with tears, memories and laughs.

Los Angeles already knew Bryant was much more than a basketball icon. His friends and family told the world.

"I couldn't see him as a celebrity, nor just an incredible basketball player," Vanessa Bryant said. "He was my sweet husband and the beautiful father of my children. He was mine. He was my everything."

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 51 of 63

The ceremony included musical numbers by Beyonce, Alicia Keys and Christina Aguilera. The event concluded with a screening of "Dear Basketball," Bryant's Academy Award-winning short film about reluctantly saying goodbye to his passion upon his retirement from the Lakers in 2016.

Fans, many wearing Bryant's jersey or team colors, filled the seats at the arena where Bryant played for the final 17 seasons of a two-decade NBA career spent entirely with Los Angeles' most popular sports franchise.

The mourners included Lakers legends Jerry West, Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Magic Johnson and Pau Gasol. NBA Commissioner Adam Silver joined Jordan, Shaquille O'Neal, Phil Jackson, Dwyane Wade and dozens of current NBA players. Celebrities such as Kanye West, Kim Kardashian, Jennifer Lopez and Alex Rodriguez also attended.

After Jimmy Kimmel welcomed the crowd, Vanessa Bryant provided a poignant window into the family's life with Gianna and her three sisters — Natalia, Bianka and Capri. She emphasized Kobe Bryant's paternal devotion, which had only grown after his retirement from the Lakers.

"God knew they couldn't be on this Earth without each other," said Vanessa Bryant, who had been with Kobe since 1999. "He had to bring them home to have them together. Babe, you take care of our Gigi. And I got Nati, Bibi and Coco. We're still the best team."

Vanessa Bryant was followed on the podium by basketball stars Diana Taurasi and Sabrina Ionescu and University of Connecticut women's coach Geno Auriemma. Kobe Bryant was a passionate advocate for women's basketball, and Gigi Bryant was a promising young player who aspired to play at UConn.

"If I represented the present of the women's game, Gigi represented the future, and Kobe knew it," said Ionescu, the Oregon star who was mentored by Bryant.

Pelinka referred to the day of the crash as "when the axis of the world seemed to shift forever, for all of us." Pelinka was also Gigi Bryant's godfather, and the families were close.

He revealed that Bryant had texted him asking for help in getting an internship with a baseball agent for teenager Alexis Altobelli, who lost her parents and younger sister in the crash.

"Kobe lived to make other people's lives better, all the way up to his final text," Pelinka said.

Jordan, the Chicago Bulls star whose career was wrapping up as Bryant's was starting in the late 1990s, praised Bryant as "one of my dear friends. He was like a little brother. ... As I got to know him, I wanted to be the best big brother that I could be."

O'Neal and Bryant joined the Lakers together in 1996 and won three consecutive championships during eight tumultuous seasons in purple and gold. Although their relationship was often rocky in public, O'Neal said the two were always friendly in private, even comparing their dynamic to John Lennon and Paul McCartney.

Calling Bryant "a loyal friend and a true Renaissance man," O'Neal said the pair "pushed each other to play some of the greatest basketball of all time."

O'Neal also got the biggest laugh in the somber service with a profane joke about an exchange in which Shaq told Kobe there was no "I" in team, but Bryant responded by noting that there is an "M-E."

The ceremony began with Beyonce performing her songs "XO" and "Halo" with dozens of backup musicians. Keys performed Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata" later in the program, and Aguilera sang "Ave Maria."

The five-time NBA champion's two retired jersey numbers — 8 and 24 — hang high above the arena where he became the third-leading scorer in league history. Lakers star LeBron James surpassed him on the night before Bryant's death.

Hours before the service, Vanessa Bryant sued the owner of the helicopter that crashed in the fog. The wrongful-death lawsuit claimed that the pilot, Ara Zobayan, was careless and negligent by flying in cloudy conditions.

The National Transportation Safety Board has not concluded what caused the crash on the outskirts of Los Angeles County but said there was no sign of mechanical failure. A final report is not expected for a year or so.

Money from ticket sales at the sold-out memorial will be given to the Mamba and Mambacita Sports

Foundation, which supports youth sports programs in underserved communities and teaches sports to girls and women.

Samantha DeJesus, 32, and her brother George Galano, 31, paid \$448 for their two seats. DeJesus said she got notified late that she had received tickets in a lottery and wasn't sure if she wanted to pay that much.

But the siblings, who saw their first Lakers game at the Forum against the Utah Jazz in the 1990s, said they couldn't miss it.

DeJesus called the ceremony "very emotional" and cried throughout.

"I loved every single eulogy that was given," she said. "You knew it was meant from the heart."

Galano said he's struggled to accept the tragedy since Jan. 26 and the memorial brought him closure.

"Now it's just reality," he said. "I'm glad they did this so we could move on and heal."

Associated Press Writer Stefanie Dazio in Los Angeles contributed to this story.

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

Victims turn to media to expose sex abuse by college doctors

By TAMMY WEBBER and KATHLEEN FOODY Associated Press

Robert Julian Stone was tired of waiting, afraid that complaints of sexual abuse at the hands of a former University of Michigan doctor would be covered up.

So five months after contacting the university to report that he'd been assaulted during a 1971 medical exam — and after learning there were more alleged victims — the 69-year-old Stone turned to The Detroit News.

The newspaper last week was the first to report Stone's allegations against the late Dr. Robert E. Anderson, triggering similar reports. It was reminiscent of sex abuse scandals at other universities, where the media reported allegations before officials publicly acknowledged complaints against doctors.

A 2016 Indianapolis Star investigation of sexual abuse in USA Gymnastics prompted former gymnast Rachael Denhollander to alert the newspaper to the decades-long sexual abuse of girls by Michigan State University doctor Larry Nassar, who's now in prison.

In 2011, the Patriot-News broke the story that former Penn State assistant football coach Jerry Sandusky was being investigated by a grand jury. Sandusky ultimately was convicted of 45 counts of child sexual abuse and sentenced to prison.

A former Ohio State University wrestler contacted The Columbus Dispatch in 2018 about a sports doctor's decades of abuse, although the university announced an investigation before the newspaper could finish reporting. More than 350 alleged victims are suing the university.

Kelly McBride, senior vice president at the Poynter Institute for Media Studies and chair of its ethics and leadership center, said the media's role in reporting such abuses and holding institutions accountable shows "the power of local journalism."

"You cannot possibly overestimate the importance of public scrutiny on an institution, whether it's public or private," said McBride, comparing it to abuse in the Catholic Church.

At Nassar's 2018 sentencing hearing, where more than 150 women and girls gave victim statements, a prosecutor said the doctor likely still would be sexually assaulting girls if not for The Indianapolis Star investigation.

"We as a society need investigative journalists more than ever," Assistant Attorney General Angela Povolaitis said at the time.

The praise comes as newspaper readership overall is declining and amid increased attacks on the credibility of news organizations by President Donald Trump, who often derides news he doesn't like as "fake."

Stone said he emailed two university officials in August 2019 to report that Anderson assaulted him during a 1971 medical exam. He said Anderson had exposed himself and used Stone's hand to fondle himself.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 53 of 63

Stone said he did not report it at the time.

He said he decided to contact the newspaper in January because he began to feel “stonewalled” by the university as he tried to get a copy of his case file. He said a university official told him he couldn’t have it because a broader investigation involving more victims wasn’t finished.

Stone feared the university and the prosecutor could keep the case open indefinitely, and no one would ever know about the allegations, said Detroit News Editor Gary Miles. After preliminary interviews with Stone, Miles said, the newspaper put higher education reporter Kim Kozlowski “on a plane to meet with him” at his Palm Springs, California, home.

“We had the sense ... that this could be much bigger than just him. But without people coming forward, how would you know there were other victims?” said Miles.

University of Michigan officials said last week that they had begun investigating complaints against Anderson in 2018 after a former wrestler reported that he was fondled during medical exams in the 1970s. They said the investigation involved five ex-students, and documents released to The Associated Press on Friday show Stone was among them.

The university said it hadn’t announced the investigation or called for others to come forward while waiting for prosecutors to finish reviewing the case for potential charges.

University spokesman Rick Fitzgerald said Saturday the school had been asking the Washtenaw County prosecutor’s office if charges would be coming against Anderson for months and found out none would be authorized on Tuesday at the same time the Detroit News was notified. It’s the same day the university was contacted by the newspaper for comment.

Stone said he believed contacting the newspaper “did serve my purpose of finally getting the university to own” the situation and reach out to other victims.

Others have since come forward with similar allegations. The former wrestler whose complaint in July 2018 set off the investigation also said he’d complained decades ago.

Denhollander blasted Michigan’s response, saying it forced the survivors to have to speak publicly to get anything to happen, which she called “re-victimizing and re-violating.”

Miles said that he doesn’t underestimate the courage it took Stone to call the newspaper.

“It was such a leap of faith,” he said. “But it’s critically important that people realize the important function that the media plays in exposing wrongdoing.”

Follow Webber on Twitter @twebber02 and Food on Twitter @Katiefoody

This story corrects the spelling of Rachael Denhollander’s first name.

Sanders comments on Castro could pose hurdles in Florida

By **BOBBY CAINA CALVAN** and **ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON** undefined

MIAMI (AP) — Like many young voters in Florida, Jared Machado is concerned about rising sea levels, college tuition and landing a job when he graduates from the University of Florida in a few months. But the political science and history major can’t ignore how his father and grandparents came to the United States: as refugees fleeing communist Cuba.

As he considers his options for president in Florida’s March 17 primary, Machado was disappointed and disturbed when U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders, a self-described democratic socialist, seemed to praise former Cuba dictator Fidel Castro in a recent interview.

“He doesn’t understand the traumatizing experience endured by the Cuban people,” said Machado, 22, whose grandparents left the island more than a half century ago, carrying his father, then just a few months old.

Making inroads into Latino communities has been a priority among Democrats and Republicans alike — and Sanders’ big win in the Nevada caucuses Saturday demonstrated his progress toward that goal. But the 78-year-old senator’s remarks, aired Sunday as the candidate was still celebrating, may also show

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 54 of 63

where Sanders' outreach hits a speed bump.

Sanders' socialist identification and his willingness to praise leftist regimes have given his Democratic opponents ammunition to question his electability in a state with a large Cuban American population that remains fiercely skeptical of leftist governments.

In Florida, where Hispanics account for nearly one in every five voters, that skepticism could present a major hurdle for Sanders in the state's primary, and for Democrats hoping to win Florida's 29 electoral votes in November.

"Candidates need to understand our immigrant communities' shared stories, as well as provide solutions to issues that matter to all Floridians," Florida Democratic Party Chair Terrie Rizzo said Monday.

During an interview aired Sunday on the CBS news program "60 Minutes," Sanders said he opposes Cuba's authoritarian regime but "it's unfair to simply say everything is bad."

He went on to say: "You know, when Castro came in office, you know what he did? He had a massive literacy program. Is that a bad thing, even if Fidel Castro did it?"

A Sanders spokesman on Monday downplayed the controversy.

"Senator Sanders has clearly and consistently criticized Fidel Castro's authoritarianism and condemned his human rights abuses, and he's simply echoing President Obama's acknowledgment that Cuba made progress, especially in education," said the spokesman, Mike Casca.

His rivals seized on the unforced error to deepen questions about his ability win support in November among independents and Hispanic voters in Florida, particularly those whose families escaped repressive regimes.

"Fidel Castro left a dark legacy of forced labor camps, religious repression, widespread poverty, firing squads, and the murder of thousands of his own people," former New York City Mayor Mike Bloomberg tweeted Monday afternoon. "But sure, Bernie, let's talk about his literacy program."

Florida Sen. Marco Rubio, arguably the most prominent Cuban American in the country, also railed against his Senate colleague from Vermont.

While democratic socialism might sound benign, Rubio said in a video that he tweeted, at the core it's Marxism and "this fake offer" of security, free healthcare and education.

The state Democratic party has hired scores of Spanish-speaking staffers to fan out into Hispanic communities in preparation for November. Republicans widely view Florida as a must-win state for President Donald Trump and Democrats are determined to force him into an expensive fight to defend it.

Nationally, two-thirds of Hispanic voters casting ballots in 2018 supported Democratic candidates for the U.S. House, according to AP VoteCast, a survey of voters. In Florida, only 53% favored Democratic House candidates.

And Cuban Americans in Florida were more likely to support Republicans than other Hispanic voters, 56% to 42%.

According to the AP survey, about a third of Cuban American midterm voters identified as Democrats.

However, Democrats hardly have a lock on that vote in battleground Florida, particularly among the nearly 2 million Floridians of Cuban, Venezuelan and Nicaraguan origin.

In 2018, Republican Ron DeSantis narrowly won Florida's governor's mansion. While more than two-fifths of Florida Latinos voters favored DeSantis overall, a clear majority of Cuban American voters — 57% — cast their support for the Republican.

Critics say Sanders needs to more strongly disavow Cuba and other authoritarian regimes.

"It's not just about Cuban American voters, it's Hispanic voters as well, many of whom would never consider voting for an avowed socialist ...," said Fernand Amandi, a Cuban American pollster based in Miami.

Geraldo Cadava, a professor of history and Latino studies at Northwestern University, says Sanders must address his stance on left-wing governments, such as when he traveled to Nicaragua to celebrate the sixth anniversary of the Sandinista revolution with Daniel Ortega.

"He is in a bit of a difficult spot trying to figure out how to answer these questions," said Cadava, who wrote a book about how the Republican party has rallied Hispanics.

For the past decade, Cadava says, Democrats have courted the younger generation of Cuban-Americans,

seeing that more new voters in the Miami area register as independent.

Machado, the University of Florida student, is among them.

Until the Florida primaries arrive, he said, he remains undecided — even if he's currently leaning toward supporting former South Bend, Indiana, mayor Pete Buttigieg.

Machado comes from a politically split household, the product of a Puerto Rican mother and Cuban father.

"My parents definitely vote, but they split between Democrat and Republican," he said. "That's how you get a centrist child like me."

Calvan reported from Tallahassee, Florida. Associated Press reporters Hannah Fingerhut in Washington and Will Weissert contributed to this report.

Actor Jussie Smollett pleads not guilty to restored charges

By DON BABWIN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Former "Empire" actor Jussie Smollett pleaded not guilty Monday to restored charges that accuse him of staging a racist, homophobic attack against himself last year in Chicago and falsely reporting to police that the phony attack was real.

His lawyer, Tina Glandian, entered the not guilty pleas on his behalf to six counts of felony disorderly conduct. She also told Judge James B. Linn that she has asked the Illinois Supreme Court to halt the case.

A somber looking Smollett, 37, entered the Cook County courthouse wearing sunglasses and sporting a beard, flanked by his legal team and surrounded by reporters.

"He's obviously frustrated to be dragged through this process again," Glandian told reporters after the hearing.

She called the revived prosecution "an ordeal" for Smollett and said he has the support of relatives, some of whom flew out from California to be with him.

"He's strong, he's resilient, he'll get through this, but he's frustrated," she added.

Smollett pleaded not guilty to 16 counts of the charge in the same courthouse last year, just weeks before the Cook County State's Attorney Kim Foxx's office abruptly announced it was dismissing the case, angering police and City Hall.

Smollett's attorneys also have filed a motion in Cook County court arguing that the refile of charges violated protections against being charged twice for the same crime, known as double jeopardy. Prosecutors have said double jeopardy does not apply because Smollett was not prosecuted last year.

Linn on Monday set a \$20,000 personal recognizance bond, which means Smollett does not have to pay any of it. He was not taken into custody. His next court date is March 18.

Special Prosecutor Dan Webb, a former U.S. attorney who was appointed to examine the state's attorney's office's handling of the case, represented the state. Foxx's office is not involved in the new case against Smollett.

The Chicago Sun-Times reported that the defense motion filed with Illinois' high court argues that the appointment of the special prosecutor was legally flawed.

Smollett has repeatedly denied police allegations that he staged the attack to get attention and further his career.

Smollett, who is black and gay, told police that two masked men attacked him as he was walking home in the early hours of Jan. 29, 2019. He said they made racist and homophobic insults, beat him and looped a noose around his neck before fleeing, and that at least one of his attackers was a white man who told him he was in "MAGA country," a reference to President Donald Trump's campaign slogan, "Make America Great Again."

Weeks later, police alleged that Smollett had paid two black friends to help stage the attack because he was unhappy with his salary as an actor on "Empire," a Fox series filmed in Chicago that follows a black family as they navigate the ups and downs of the recording industry.

The friends, brothers Abimbola "Abel" Osundairo and Olabinjo "Ola" Osundairo, were among those who

attended Monday's proceedings. If Smollett's case makes it to trial, they would be the state's star witnesses. The brothers are bodybuilders and aspiring actors whom Smollett knew from the "Empire" set and the gym.

Their attorney, Gloria Schmidt Rodriguez, told reporters after the hearing that the brothers were there to "support the process."

"They are here because they want the truth to be told. ... The brothers are sorry for their involvement and ... they're going to do everything they can to make this right," she said.

Glandian, Smollett's lawyer, said she was "surprised" the brothers showed up.

"There was no reason for them to appear in court," she said.

Glandian has questioned the integrity of the special prosecutor's investigation, pointing out that Webb's probe relied on the same detectives who were part of the original investigation despite pending civil claims that Smollett is pursuing against the city and police for malicious prosecution.

Foxx's handling of the case has become a key issue in her bid for re-election, with her opponents accusing her of having acted haphazardly and indecisively.

Associated Press writer Michael Tarm contributed to this report.

US appeals court upholds Trump rules involving abortions

By GENE JOHNSON Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — In a victory for the Trump administration, a U.S. appeals court on Monday upheld rules that bar taxpayer-funded family-planning clinics from referring women for abortions.

The 7-4 ruling by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals overturned decisions issued by judges in Washington, Oregon and California. The court had already allowed the administration's changes to start taking effect while the government appealed those rulings.

The changes ban taxpayer-funded clinics in the Title X program for low-income women from making abortion referrals, a restriction opponents characterize as a "gag rule."

Beginning March 4, the rules will also prohibit clinics that receive federal money from sharing office space with abortion providers, which critics said would force many Title X providers to find new locations, undergo expensive remodels or shut down — further reducing access to the program.

Title X patients receive affordable birth control, reproductive care and other care through the program, including breast and cervical cancer screenings and HIV testing.

Abortion is a legal medical procedure, but federal laws prohibit the use of Title X or other taxpayer funds to pay for abortions except in cases of rape, incest, or to save the life of the woman. Under Title X, a 1970 law designed to improve access to family planning services, federal money may not be used in programs "where abortion is a method of family planning."

Abortion rights supporters and opponents have argued for decades whether counseling a patient about abortion or referring a patient to a different provider for an abortion violates that language. Abortion opponents and religious conservatives say Title X has long been used to indirectly subsidize abortion providers.

"Congress has long prohibited the use of Title X funds in programs where abortion is a method of family planning and (the Department of Health and Human Service's) recent rule makes that longstanding prohibition a reality," U.S. Justice Department spokeswoman Mollie Timmons said in a written statement celebrating the 9th Circuit's ruling. "We look forward to continuing to defend this vital rule against all challenges."

More than 20 states and several civil rights and health organizations challenged the rules in cases filed in Oregon, Washington and California. Judges in all three states blocked them from taking effect, with Oregon and Washington courts issuing nationwide injunctions. One judge called the new policy "madness" and said it was motivated by "an arrogant assumption that the government is better suited to direct women's health care than their providers."

Planned Parenthood, which served 1.6 million of the 4 million patients who received care through Title

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 57 of 63

X, has already left the program in protest, giving up about \$60 million a year in federal funding.

Overall, nearly 1,000 clinics have left Title X, according to the National Family Planning and Reproductive Health Association. Washington and Oregon have abandoned the program entirely. In Vermont, all of the Title X clinics were Planned Parenthood, leaving none there.

In California, the number of patients served by the program has fallen 40 percent under Trump's rules — and it will fall further once the physical separation requirement takes effect March 4, said Essential Access Health, which administers Title X in California.

The administration's new rules are a return to the spirit of rules that were adopted in 1988 and subsequently upheld by the Supreme Court in the 1991 case *Rust v. Sullivan*. Under the Clinton administration, those rules were abandoned in favor of a requirement that the clinics provide neutral abortion counseling and referrals upon request.

The 9th Circuit's majority opinion, by Judge Sandra Ikuta, stressed the *Rust* decision.

"In light of Supreme Court approval of the 1988 regulations and our broad deference to agencies' interpretations of the statutes they are charged with implementing, plaintiffs' legal challenges to the 2019 rule fail," she wrote.

Further, she said, the so-called gag rule is no such thing: While providers may not make a referral for an abortion, they may discuss abortion with their patients.

The dissent, by Judge Richard Paez, argued that since the *Rust* decision, Congress had barred the Department of Health and Human Services from imposing rules "that frustrate patients' ability to access health care." He called the ruling a throwback to the "paternalism of the past."

"The majority would return us to an older world, one in which a government bureaucrat could restrict a medical professional from informing a patient of the full range of health care options available to her," Paez wrote.

He also said the rule violates the requirement that pregnancy counseling be neutral: "It requires a doctor to refer a pregnant patient for prenatal care, even if she does not want to continue the pregnancy, while gagging her doctor from referring her for abortion, even if she has requested specifically such a referral," he wrote.

The American Medical Association criticized the ruling as "government overreach and interference" that prohibits frank conversations between physicians and their patients.

Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of the anti-abortion group Susan B. Anthony List, insisted in a written statement that "abortion is not 'family planning.'"

"President Trump's Protect Life Rule honors ... the plain language of the Title X statute by stopping the funneling of Title X taxpayer dollars to the abortion industry, without reducing family planning funding by a dime," Dannenfelser said.

Kobe Bryant's widow sues helicopter operator for deaths

By BRIAN MELLEY Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Kobe Bryant's widow sued the owner and operator of the helicopter that crashed in fog and killed the former Los Angeles Lakers star and their 13-year-old daughter last month as she publicly mourned their deaths Monday in an emotional public ceremony.

The wrongful death lawsuit filed by Vanessa Bryant in Los Angeles Superior Court said the pilot was careless and negligent by flying in cloudy conditions Jan. 26 and should have aborted the flight that killed all nine people aboard.

The lawsuit names Island Express Helicopters Inc., operator of the service, and Island Express Holding Corp., owner of the craft. It also targets pilot Ara Zobayan's representative or successor, listed only as "Doe 1" until a name can be determined.

Calls to Island Express Inc. seeking comment were not answered, and its voicemail was full.

The lawsuit asserts Zobayan was negligent in eight different ways, including failing to properly assess the weather, flying into conditions he wasn't cleared for and failing to control the helicopter.

It was filed the morning that a star-studded public memorial service for Kobe Bryant, his daughter and

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 58 of 63

all the victims, including Zobayan, was held before a sold-out crowd at Staples Center, the arena where Bryant played most of his career.

Late night host Jimmy Kimmel read Zobayan's name among the victims and encouraged donations to a fund set up for their families.

Plaintiffs have two years to pursue a wrongful death claim in California, which made the timing of the lawsuit unusual.

"That is a bit odd," aviation attorney Robert Hajek said. "I don't know what the strategy of that would be."

Attorneys for Vanessa Bryant would not comment on why they filed the case on the day of the memorial service.

Zobayan, Bryant's frequent pilot, was flying the basketball star, his daughter Gianna, and six of their friends to a basketball tournament at his Mamba Sports Academy when the helicopter crashed in Calabasas.

Zobayan had been trying to navigate in heavy fog that limited visibility to the point that the Los Angeles police and sheriff's departments had grounded their helicopter fleets.

Bryant never indicated anything was awry with the flight as he texted just before the crash, his friend and Lakers general manager Rob Pelinka said at the memorial.

Under the visual flight rules Zobayan was following, he was required to see where he was going. Zobayan was cited by the Federal Aviation Administration in May 2015 for violating those rules by flying into reduced visibility airspace, the lawsuit said.

In his last transmission, Zobayan told air traffic control that he was climbing to 4,000 feet (1,219 meters) to get above the clouds. He was 100 feet (30 meters) short of breaking through the cloud cover when the helicopter banked left and plunged into a grassy hillside, according to the National Transportation Safety Board.

The NTSB hasn't concluded what caused the crash on the outskirts of Los Angeles County but said there was no sign of mechanical failure. A final report isn't expected for a year or so.

The lawsuit seeks unspecified damages for Vanessa Bryant's grief, sorrow, loss of companionship and funeral expenses, among other things.

It also seeks punitive damages to "deter future wrongdoing," the lawsuit said. "Acts and omissions of the defendant has manifested such reckless and complete indifference to and a conscious disregard for the safety of others."

The lawsuit said Island Express Inc. was liable for the actions of the pilot, who had worked there 10 years. It said the company failed to supervise and train him, allowed him to fly in unsafe weather and didn't implement reasonable flight safety rules and policies.

It asserted the helicopter owner failed to install an alarm system that would have warned the pilot he was close to hitting the ground. The NTSB has recommended that helicopters like the Sikorsky model that crashed be equipped with a terrain avoidance and warning system, but the FAA only requires it for air ambulances.

Island Express Inc. issued a statement Jan. 30 on its website saying the shock of the crash had prompted it to suspend service until it was appropriate for staff and customers.

The company has had at least three previous helicopter crashes since 1985, two of them fatal, according to the NTSB's accident database. All involved flights to or from the company's main destination of Santa Catalina Island, about 20 miles (32 kilometers) off the Southern California coast.

FBI official: Russia wants to see US 'tear ourselves apart'

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Russia wants to watch Americans "tear ourselves apart" as the United States heads toward elections, an FBI official warned Monday.

David Porter, an assistant section chief with the FBI's Foreign Influence Task Force, accused Russia of conducting brazen operations aimed at spreading disinformation, exploiting lines of division in society and sowing doubt about the integrity of U.S. elections and the ability of its leaders to govern effectively.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 59 of 63

Porter spoke at an election security conference on Capitol Hill just days after conflicting accounts emerged of a closed-door briefing intelligence officials had given to House lawmakers on threats from Russia and other nations in the 2020 election. That briefing focused attention on the possibility that Russia could work to aid President Donald Trump's reelection. Democratic rival Sen. Bernie Sanders has said intelligence officials told him that Russia was looking to boost his candidacy, too.

Porter did not address the briefing or whether Russia had a preference for particular candidates. But he said Russia was generally engaged in "information confrontation" aimed at blurring fact from fiction, eroding American confidence in democratic institutions and driving wedges into society's fracture lines.

"The primary objective is not to create a particular version of the truth but rather to cloud the truth and erode our ability to find it, creating a sentiment that no narrative or news source can be trusted at all," Porter said.

The FBI formed the Foreign Influence Task Force after widespread interference by Russia in the 2016 presidential campaign. The task force was initially intended to focus primarily on Russia, but it also works to counter influence operations — including hacking and more covert methods — from adversaries including China, North Korea and Iran.

U.S. officials see China as an aggressive threat, particularly when it comes to espionage and theft of intellectual property, but Porter said Beijing's goal was less about sowing general chaos in the U.S. and more about promoting and developing its own economic standing in the world.

"To put it simply, in this space, Russia wants to watch us tear ourselves apart, while it seems that China would rather manage our gradual economic decline over the course of generations," Porter said.

Intelligence officials have not commented publicly on the Feb. 13 briefing given to members of the House Intelligence Committee. One intelligence official said lawmakers were not told that Russia was working directly to aid Trump. But other people familiar with the meeting said they were told the Kremlin was looking to help Trump's candidacy. The people spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the classified briefing.

Carrie Cordero, a former Justice Department national security lawyer, lamented the lack of public information about the briefing and the underlying intelligence, particularly since a recent Senate Intelligence Committee report faulted the Obama administration for not being sufficiently transparent about Russian election interference ahead of the 2016 presidential contest.

She said it remains unclear from the news reporting exactly what message was communicated to the committee.

"What I have really been encouraging is that the government be more forthcoming of information that is more indicative of the current election threats," Cordero said.

Other speakers at the symposium, whose sponsors included the Center for Democracy and Technology and Penn State Dickinson Law, focused on more domestic threats to election security.

Lawrence Norden, the director of the Election Reform Program at the Brennan Center for Justice, said he was concerned that there were no federal regulations governing the vendors who supply local election infrastructure.

"I do think this is a real weakness going into 2020, and the solution as always in elections is to hope for the best and prepare for the worst," Norden said.

Meanwhile, Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer of New York, along with Democratic Sens. Sherrod Brown of Ohio and Robert Menendez of New Jersey, sent a letter Monday to Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo urging sanctions for "all those determined to be responsible for ongoing elections interference," including Russia President Vladimir Putin.

Follow Eric Tucker on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/etuckerAP>

Virus pushes beyond Asia, taking aim at Europe, Mideast

By KIM TONG-HYUNG and MATT SEDENSKY Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — The new virus took aim at a broadening swath of the globe Monday, with officials in Europe and the Middle East scrambling to limit the spread of an outbreak that showed signs of stabilizing at its Chinese epicenter but posed new threats far beyond.

In Italy, authorities set up roadblocks, called off soccer matches and shuttered sites including the famed La Scala opera house. In Iran, the government said 12 people had died nationwide, while five neighboring countries — Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman and Afghanistan — reported their first cases of the virus, with all those infected having links to Iran.

Across the world, stock markets and futures tumbled on fears of a global economic slowdown due to the expanding spread of the virus. The Dow Jones Industrial Average sank more than 1,000 points, its biggest decline in two years.

The number of people sickened by the coronavirus topped 79,000 globally, and wherever it sprung up, officials rushed to try to contain it.

"The past few weeks has demonstrated just how quickly a new virus can spread around the world and cause widespread fear and disruption," said the head of the World Health Organization, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

"Does this virus have pandemic potential? Absolutely, yes," Tedros said, but "for the moment we're not witnessing the uncontained global spread of this virus."

"I have spoken consistently about the need for facts not fear. Using the word pandemic now does not fit the facts but it may certainly cause fear," Tedros said, speaking in Geneva.

He said a WHO expert team currently in China believes the virus plateaued there between Jan. 23 and Feb. 2 and has declined since. The team also said the fatality rate in China was between 2% and 4% in Wuhan, the epicenter of the outbreak, and 0.7% outside of Wuhan.

Clusters of the virus continued to emerge outside China, including in Qom, an Iranian city where the country's semiofficial ILNA news agency cited a lawmaker as reporting a staggering 50 people had died of COVID-19, the disease caused by the virus. The country's Health Ministry rejected that, insisting the death toll remained at 12, with total infections numbering 61.

The conflicting reports raised questions about the Iranian government's transparency concerning the scale of the outbreak. But even with the lower toll of 12, the number of deaths compared to the number of confirmed infections from the virus is higher in Iran than in any other country, including China and South Korea, where the outbreak is far more widespread.

Asked about the spike in cases in Iran, WHO's emergencies program director, Michael Ryan, cautioned that in the first wave of infections reported from a country, only the deaths may be being picked up and therefore be over-represented. "The virus may have been there for longer than we had previously suspected," he said.

Ryan said a WHO team would be arriving in Iran on Tuesday and in Italy on Monday.

"What we don't understand yet in COVID-19 are the absolute transmission dynamics," Ryan said, noting that in China there's been a significant drop in cases. "That goes against the logic of pandemic."

Authorities in Iran closed schools across much of the country for a second day Monday. Movie theaters and other venues were shuttered through at least Friday, and daily sanitizing of public buses and the Tehran metro, which is used by some 3 million people, was begun.

Recognition grew that the virus was no longer stemming only from contact with infected people in China.

"Many different countries around the world may be sources of COVID-19 infections," said Mark Woolhouse, a professor of infectious disease epidemiology at the University of Edinburgh. "This makes it much harder for any one country to detect and contain."

China still has the vast majority of cases, but as it records lower levels of new infections, attention has shifted to new fronts in the outbreak. Chief among them is South Korea, where President Moon Jae-in placed the country under a red alert, the highest level, allowing for "unprecedented, powerful steps" to

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 61 of 63

stem the crisis.

Beyond expanding a delay to the start of the school year from the hardest-hit area of Daegu nationwide, though, it remains to be seen how far the government will go. A Chinese-style lockdown of Daegu — a city of 2.5 million people that is the country's fourth largest — appeared unlikely, even as signs of the response to a broadening problem could be seen nearly everywhere in the nation.

More than 600 police officers in Daegu fanned out in search of hundreds of members of a church that has been identified as a source for hundreds of infections. The country's National Assembly was temporarily closed Monday as workers sterilized its halls. At shops and food stalls in the capital of Seoul, a misty fog surrounded crews in protective suits who sprayed disinfectants.

"The changes have been dramatic," said Daegu resident Nah Young-jo, who described an increasingly empty city of few passersby and closed restaurants.

South Korean officials recommended that courts consider postponing trials of cases not deemed urgent, while Mayor Park Won-soon of Seoul threatened tough penalties for those who defy a ban on rallies in major downtown areas. Work schedules for city employees in Seoul were staggered to reduce crowding on subways, where packed cars could become petri dishes if an infected passenger were aboard.

"If we fail to effectively prevent the spread of the virus into the local communities, there would be a large possibility (that the illness) spreads nationwide," warned Kim Gang-lip, South Korea's vice health minister.

Health workers said they planned to test every citizen in Daegu who showed cold-like symptoms, estimating around 28,000 people would be targeted.

In Italy, where 229 people have tested positive for the virus and seven have died, police manned checkpoints around a dozen quarantined northern towns as worries grew across the continent.

Austria temporarily halted rail traffic across its border with Italy. Slovenia and Croatia, popular getaways for Italians, were holding crisis meetings. Schools were closed, theater performances were canceled and even Carnival celebrations in Venice were called off.

It was a sign of how quickly circumstances could change in the widening COVID-19 scare. Italy had imposed more stringent measures than other European countries after the outbreak began, barring flights beginning Jan. 31 to and from China, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau.

Until last week, Italy had reported just three cases of infection.

"These rapid developments over the weekend have shown how quickly this situation can change," the health commissioner for the European Union, Stella Kyriakides, said in Brussels. "We need to take this situation of course very seriously, but we must not give in to panic, and, even more importantly, to disinformation."

China reported 409 new cases of the illness on Monday, raising the mainland's total to 77,150. It also announced 150 new deaths for a 2,592 total.

Dr. Liang Wannian, the leader of a team of Chinese experts working with WHO to study the outbreak, said more than 3,000 medical workers had been infected, the majority of them in Wuhan. Liang said while the origins of the virus were still being studied, research suggested that bats may have been one of the hosts and that pangolins, a type of anteater, may have been an intermediate host.

Meantime, China announced it would postpone the annual meetings of the National People's Congress, among the most important political gatherings of the year, citing the virus outbreak.

Sedensky reported from Bangkok. Associated Press writers Hyung-jin Kim in Seoul, Ken Moritsugu and Yanan Wang in Beijing, Danica Kirka in London, Aya Batrawy in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Lauran Neergaard in Washington and Frank Jordans in Berlin contributed to this report.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 62 of 63

German man drives car into Carnival crowd, injures 30

By **DAVID RISING** and **FRANK JORDANS** Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — A man intentionally drove a car into a crowd at a Carnival parade in a small town in central Germany, injuring around 30 people including children, officials said Monday.

The driver, a 29-year-old German citizen who lived locally, was arrested at the scene in Volkmarsen near Kassel, about 280 kilometers (175 miles) southwest of Berlin, prosecutors said. He is being investigated on suspicion of attempted homicide.

A spokesman for Frankfurt prosecutors, Alexander Badle, said in a statement that “about 30 people” were injured. They were taken to surrounding hospitals, some with life-threatening injuries.

The suspect was also injured, said Badle.

“The investigation, especially into the circumstances of the crime, continues,” he said. “In particular, no information can yet be provided about a motive. The investigation is exploring all avenues.”

“This is a terrible act committed against people who simply wanted to celebrate Carnival,” said Peter Beuth, the interior minister for the state of Hesse, where Volkmarsen is located. He declined to comment on reports that a second person was detained following the crash.

Beuth said about a third of those injured were children, who had come to watch the parade and collect candy that’s traditionally thrown into the crowds at Carnival celebrations in Germany.

Chancellor Angela Merkel sent her condolences to those injured in the crash, wishing them a speedy and full recovery. She also thanked the police and all medical personnel involved.

Emergency responders set up a makeshift clinic in a town pharmacy to treat casualties with minor injuries, the regional Frankfurter Rundschau newspaper reported.

Witnesses said the car drove around a barrier blocking off traffic from the parade, according to the paper.

Video from the scene showed a silver Mercedes station wagon with local license plates on a sidewalk, its front windshield badly smashed and hood dented, and its hazard lights blinking, while emergency crews walked by. Forensic experts could be seen taking photos and measurements around the crashed car, walking around fragments of Carnival costumes that littered the ground.

The crash came amid the height of Germany’s celebration of Carnival, with the biggest parades in Cologne, Duesseldorf and Mainz.

All other Carnival parades in the central state of Hesse were ended Monday as a precaution.

Hesse state is still reeling from a racist shooting last week in the Frankfurt suburb of Hanau. A 43-year-old man killed nine people with immigrant backgrounds late Wednesday before killing his mother and then himself.

Today in History

By **The Associated Press** undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Feb. 25, the 56th day of 2020. There are 310 days left in the year.

Today’s Highlight in History:

On Feb. 25, 1964, Muhammad Ali (then known as Cassius Clay) became world heavyweight boxing champion as he defeated Sonny Liston in Miami Beach.

On this date:

In 1793, President George Washington held the first Cabinet meeting on record at his Mount Vernon home; attending were Secretary of State Thomas Jefferson, Treasury Secretary Alexander Hamilton, Secretary of War Henry Knox and Attorney General Edmund Randolph.

In 1836, inventor Samuel Colt patented his revolver.

In 1862, Nashville, Tennessee, became the first Confederate state capital to be occupied by the North during the Civil War.

In 1901, United States Steel Corp. was incorporated by J.P. Morgan.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Feb. 25, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 238 ~ 63 of 63

In 1913, the 16th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, giving Congress the power to levy and collect income taxes, was declared in effect by Secretary of State Philander Chase Knox.

In 1954, Gamal Abdel Nasser became Egypt's prime minister after the country's president, Mohammed Naguib, was effectively ousted in a coup.

In 1964, Eastern Airlines Flight 304, a DC-8, crashed shortly after taking off from New Orleans International Airport, killing all 58 on board.

In 1986, President Ferdinand Marcos fled the Philippines after 20 years of rule in the wake of a tainted election; Corazon Aquino assumed the presidency.

In 1991, during the Persian Gulf War, 28 Americans were killed when an Iraqi Scud missile hit a U.S. barracks in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia.

In 1994, American-born Jewish settler Baruch Goldstein opened fire with an automatic rifle inside the Tomb of the Patriarchs in the West Bank, killing 29 Muslims before he was beaten to death by worshippers. At the Winter Olympics in Norway, Oksana Baiul (ahk-SAH'-nah by-OOL') of Ukraine won the gold medal in ladies' figure skating while Nancy Kerrigan won the silver and Chen Lu of China the bronze; Tonya Harding came in eighth.

In 2007, "The Departed" won best picture at the Academy Awards; its director, Martin Scorsese, won an Oscar on his sixth nomination.

In 2018, China's official news agency said the country's ruling Communist Party had proposed scraping term limits for China's president, appearing to lay the groundwork for Xi Jinping to rule as president beyond 2023. (China's rubber-stamp lawmakers approved that change on March 11.)

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama convened a health care summit with Democrats and Republicans; after a day of debate and disagreement, the president concluded the talkfest with a bleak assessment that an accord might not be possible. In Vancouver, the Canadian women beat the United States 2-0 for their third straight Olympic hockey title. Americans Billy Demong and Johnny Spillane finished 1-2 in a Nordic combined race. Yuna Kim of South Korea won ladies' figure skating.

Five years ago: Secretary of State John Kerry fielded dozens of questions from House Foreign Affairs Committee members worried about what Iran could get in a deal being negotiated to block its ability to make an atomic weapon.

One year ago: R&B star R. Kelly pleaded not guilty to allegations that he sexually abused four people dating back to 1998, including three underage girls. The Trump administration announced new sanctions on allies of Venezuela's Nicolas Maduro as it struggled to find new ways to boost his opponent. Responding to director Spike Lee, who had used an Oscars acceptance speech to urge mobilization for the 2020 election, President Donald Trump tweeted that Lee did a "racist hit on your President."

Today's Birthdays: Actress Ann McCrea is 89. Actor Tom Courtenay is 83. Former CBS newsman Bob Schieffer is 83. Actress Diane Baker is 82. Actress Karen Grassle is 78. Former talk show host Sally Jessy Raphael is 78. Former professional wrestler Ric Flair is 71. Humorist Jack Handey is 71. Movie director Neil Jordan is 70. Rock singer-musician/actor John Doe (X) is 67. Rock musician Dennis Diken (The Smithereens) is 63. Rock singer-musician Mike Peters (The Alarm; Big Country) is 61. Comedian Carrot Top is 55. Actress Veronica Webb is 55. Actor Alexis Denisof is 54. Actress Tea (TAY'-ah) Leoni is 54. Actress Lesley Boone is 52. Actor Sean Astin is 49. Singer Daniel Powter is 49. Latin singer Julio Iglesias Jr. is 47. Rhythm-and-blues singer Justin Jeffre is 47. Rock musician Richard Liles is 47. Actor Anson Mount is 47. Comedian-actress Chelsea Handler is 45. Actress Rashida Jones is 44. Country singer Shawna Thompson (Thompson Square) is 42. Actor Justin Berfield is 34. Actors James and Oliver Phelps ("Harry Potter" movies) are 34. Actress Jameela Jamil is 34. Rock musician Erik Haager (Carolina Liar) is 33.

Thought for Today: "Hero-worship is strongest where there is least regard for human freedom." — Herbert Spencer, British philosopher (1820-1903).

Copyright 2020, The Associated Press. All rights reserved.