

Groton Daily Independent

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Church Services

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church: Worship in the church at 8:30 a.m. (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/215332349572015/>)

Groton Christian & Missinary Alliance Church: Worship in the church at 10:30 a.m.: (<https://www.facebook.com/GrotonCMA/>)

St. John's Lutheran Church: Worship in the church at 9 a.m. (<https://www.facebook.com/stjohnsgroton/>)

Emmanuel Lutheran Church - Worship inside at 9 a.m.

(<https://www.facebook.com/Emmanuel-Lutheran-Church-GrotonSD-ELCA-636505039852208/>)

United Methodist Church: Worship, at 11 a.m. inside (<https://www.facebook.com/grotonsdumc>)

Buffalo Lake Lutheran Church, rural Eden, 10:30 a.m. Worship inside or stay in vehicle and listen on the FM.

Heaven Bound Ministries of Pierpont has worship on Saturdays at 5:30 p.m. in the basement.

Heaven Bound Ministries of Pierpont / Buffalo Lake Lutheran Church, rural Eden - will have a podcast posted. <https://anchor.fm/paul-irvin-kosel>



OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

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Upcoming Schedule

Monday, Jan. 18

5:30 p.m.: Junior High Boys Basketball hosts Aberdeen Christian with 7th grade at 5:30 p.m. followed by 8th grade at 6:30

6:30 p.m.: Girls Basketball at Langford Area with JV followed by Varsity

Tuesday, Jan. 19

Doubleheader basketball at Ipswich with girls JV starting at 4 p.m. followed by boys JV, girls varsity and boys varsity.

Junior high boys basketball at Waubay with 7th grade at 4 p.m. and 8th grade at 8 p.m.

5 p.m.: Wrestling Quad at Groton (with Britton-Hecla, Clark/Willow Lake, Hamlin)

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

Thursday, January 21, 2021

Junior High Boys Basketball at Britton-Hecla (7th at 5 p.m., 8th at 6 p.m.)

Girls Basketball hosting Clark/Willow Lake. JV at 6 p.m. followed by varsity

Friday, January 22, 2021

Boys Basketball at Clark. 7th grade at 4 p.m., 8th at 5 p.m., JV at 6 p.m. followed by varsity.

Saturday, January 23, 2021

10:00am: Wrestling: Boys Varsity Invitational at Arlington

Livestreamed Events this week

We hope to do the Langford game on Monday - time snuck up on me and I need to order a line into the Langford gym. We already have a line there - just need to get it activated. Hopefully Venture can get that done for us on Monday. It's also Martin Luther King day so I'm not even sure if the phone company is open on Monday. Worse case scenario - we'll record it and then upload to 397news.com when we get back home.

We will be doing all of the games at Ipswich on Tuesday, all of the games on Thursday with Clark/Willow Lake. The Boys will be playing at Clark on Friday. We plan to do the 7th grade game along with the JV and varsity. Is anyone interested in sponsoring the 8th grade game?

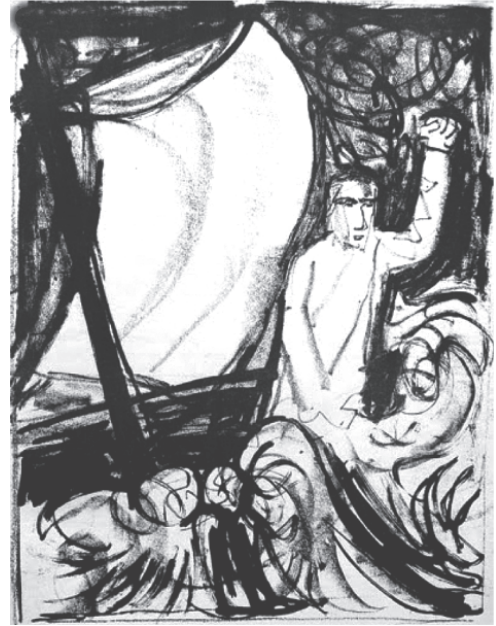
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THE ILLUSTRATED BIBLE

But as they sailed He fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water, and were in jeopardy. And they came to Him and awoke Him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" Then He arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water. And they ceased, and there was a calm. LUKE 8: 23,24



"Jesus Quiets the Waves" by Otto Dix (1960)

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BIBLE TRIVIA by Wilson Casey

1. Is the book of Samaria in the Old or New Testament or neither?
2. In 1 Peter 2, all believers are called to be part of a royal ...? *Family, Priesthood, Flock, Wedding*
3. From Judges 11, what judge of Israel was a prostitute's son? *Hosea, Jephthah, Samson, Lot*
4. In Revelation 12:3, how is Satan depicted? *Silver goat, Black horse, Red dragon, 7-winged bat*
5. From 2 Kings 23, where was King Josiah killed? *Megiddo, Anathoth, Philadelphia, Jericho*
6. In Esther 1, what king did she marry? *Jehu, Omri, Ahasuerus, Zedekiah*

ANSWERS: 1) Neither; 2) Priesthood; 3) Jephthah; 4) Red dragon; 5) Megiddo; 6) Ahasuerus

Hardcore trivia fan? Visit Wilson Casey's subscriber site at www.patreon.com/triviaguy.

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Comfort foods Made fast and healthy by Healthy Exchanges

Comfort Franks With Mac & Cheese

Throw all this into your slow cooker and return later to something as comforting as anything to be found in "comfort food land." It's guaranteed to bring out the kid in any adult!

- 4 cups cooked elbow macaroni, rinsed and drained
- 1 (12-fluid-ounce) can evaporated fat-free milk
- 1 cup fat-free milk
- 1 teaspoon dried onion flakes
- 1 teaspoon dried parsley flakes
- 2 cups shredded reduced-fat Cheddar cheese
- 8 ounces reduced-fat frankfurters, diced into 1/2-inch pieces

1. In a slow-cooker container sprayed with butter-flavored cooking spray, combine macaroni, evaporated milk, milk, onion flakes and parsley flakes. Add cheddar cheese and frankfurter pieces. Mix well to combine.

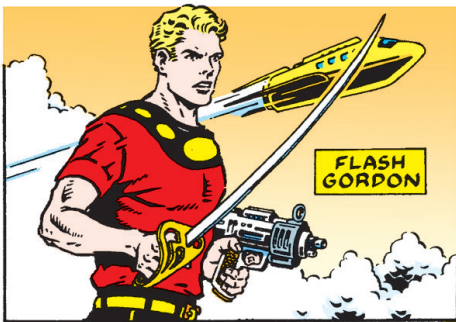
2. Cover and cook on LOW for 3 to 4 hours. Mix well before serving. Makes 8 (1 cup) servings.

• Each serving equals: 246 calories, 6g fat, 18g protein, 30g carb., 525mg sodium, 1g fiber; Diabetic Exchanges: 2 Meat, 1 1/2 Starch, 1/2 Fat-Free Milk.

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FLASH GORDON By JIM KEEFE

1-10

NIGHTFALL ON MONGO.

AS DALE SLOWLY DRIFTS OFF TO SLEEP, HER THOUGHTS RETURN TO THAT FATEFUL DAY LONG AGO...

...WHEN A NEWLY DISCOVERED PLANET HERALDED EARTH'S IMMINENT DESTRUCTION!

ABOARD AN EASTBOUND TRANSCONTINENTAL FLIGHT WE FIND FLASH GORDON, YALE GRADUATE AND WORLD-RENOUNDED ATHLETE.

SHARING THE CABIN, FELLOW PASSENGER DALE ARDEN.

THE PLANE IS HIT BY A METEOR SHOWER CAUSED BY THE APPROACHING PLANET.

FLASH AND DALE BARELY ESCAPE WITH THEIR LIVES!

SETTING DOWN, THEY'RE CONFRONTED BY A DISHEVELED FIGURE...

...DR. HANS ZARKOV.

DRIVEN MAD BY THE INTENSITY OF HIS EFFORTS TO SAVE THE EARTH, HE TAKES FLASH AND DALE CAPTIVE.

WITH A DEAFENING ROAR, THE TRIO TAKES OFF IN A ROCKETSHIP OF THE SCIENTIST'S DESIGN...

...THE FATE OF THE WORLD RESTING ON THEIR SHOULDERS!

TO BE CONT'D ~

Play Better Golf with JACK NICKLAUS

FORCED TO MAKE A RESTRICTED SWING?

BEGIN BY REHEARSING THE FEEL OF THE SMALLER ARC WITH PLENTY OF PRACTICE SWINGS.

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NEXT, PUT THE OBSTACLE OUT OF MIND BY FOCUSING ON SWINGING AS SLOWLY AND SMOOTHLY AS POSSIBLE.

FINALLY WATCH THE BALL CAREFULLY UNTIL IT VANISHES.



No Cure, Just Treatment for Rare Skin Disorder

DEAR DR. ROACH: My girlfriend has necrobiosis lipoidica. She suffers from this on her shins, as did her mother. She is not diabetic. We cannot find good information on how to rid her of this. The information we find is not about cures, but treatments that mask the symptom, such as steroids. We cannot even find a doctor that specifically treats this condition. Can you help? — *M.B.*

ANSWER: Periodically I get letters referencing a condition like this one that I know absolutely nothing about. Fortunately, I have the time to do a lot of reading, and I talked to several people with the condition. Here is what I found.

Necrobiosis lipoidica is a rare skin disorder, usually but not always associated with diabetes. It occurs mostly in young adults (the average is 25 years old when associated with diabetes, 46 years if not), and is more common in women. It may also be associated with thyroid disorders and celiac disease. The cause is unknown.

The diagnosis is made by skin biopsy. The appearance is usually of a large, variably colored and elevated patch of skin, most commonly on the shins, as your girlfriend's is, but it can spread to other parts of the body, especially skin that has been scraped or damaged. Because necrobiosis lipoidica can occasionally transform to skin cancer, it needs careful surveillance.

There is no cure for necrobiosis lipoidica. However, there are treatments that can reduce the inflammation. Steroids, either topical or injected, are the usual first choice. Topical steroids are more effective if they are

given as ointment and covered with an air- and water-tight dressing. If topical steroids are not as effective, there are many other therapies that have been tried, including: the medication tacrolimus, which decreases the immune response; ultraviolet light A; antimalarial drugs (also used for autoimmune diseases); and others. The disease normally progresses slowly, then stabilizes, but it can spontaneously resolve in some people.

Necrobiosis lipoidica may also ulcerate, at which point a wound care specialist may be of tremendous value.

It may not be easy to find an expert dermatologist for this condition. I would start with a support group, as you can get expertise from others who have been living with this condition. I found one large group on Facebook. I read some tips on makeup and temporary tattoos for cosmetic improvement.

I found two clinical trials recruiting subjects, one in Boston and one in Pennsylvania. You can find clinical trial information at clinicaltrials.gov. More good information is available at <https://tinyurl.com/NLskin>.

DEAR DR. ROACH: My granddaughter, age 21, suddenly developed a nut allergy while away at college, when she had grown up eating every type of nut there is. She had such a reaction that she had to be taken to the emergency room, tested and was given an EpiPen, which she will have to carry with her everywhere. Is this a common occurrence? Is it possible that she can grow out of this in the future? — *V.P.*

ANSWER: Although food allergies most often start in adulthood, they may develop at any time of life. Peanuts and tree nuts are among the most common food allergies that develop in adults. Outgrowing a peanut allergy is uncommon, but when it does happen, it usually happens at a young age. I would not expect her to grow out of it.

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



1. Who wrote and sang about “Kodachrome”?
2. What was the first single released by David Bowie?
3. Where did Lynyrd Skynyrd get its name?
4. Which artist was called “Little Miss Dynamite”?
5. Name the song that contains this lyric: “You’re looking kinda lonely, girl, Would you like someone new to talk to? Ah-yeah, alright, I’m feeling kinda lonely too.”

Answers

1. Paul Simon, in his 1973 hit. Kodachrome was one of the first types of color film.
2. “Liza Jane,” in 1964. It was credited to Davie Jones with the King-Bees. Bowie was born David Robert Jones.
3. They named themselves after a strict high-school gym teacher, Leonard Skinner, who didn’t like boys to have long hair. Tired of being hassled over his hair, band member Gary Rossington had dropped out of school.
4. Brenda Lee, who stood only 4-foot-9. She used to go to a local store where she would sing for money or candy — before she was even 3 years old. By the age of 10, Brenda was the breadwinner for her family.
5. “Sharing the Night Together,” originally recorded by Lenny LeBlanc and then Arthur Alexander in 1976. But it was Dr. Hook who sent the song up the charts internationally in 1978.

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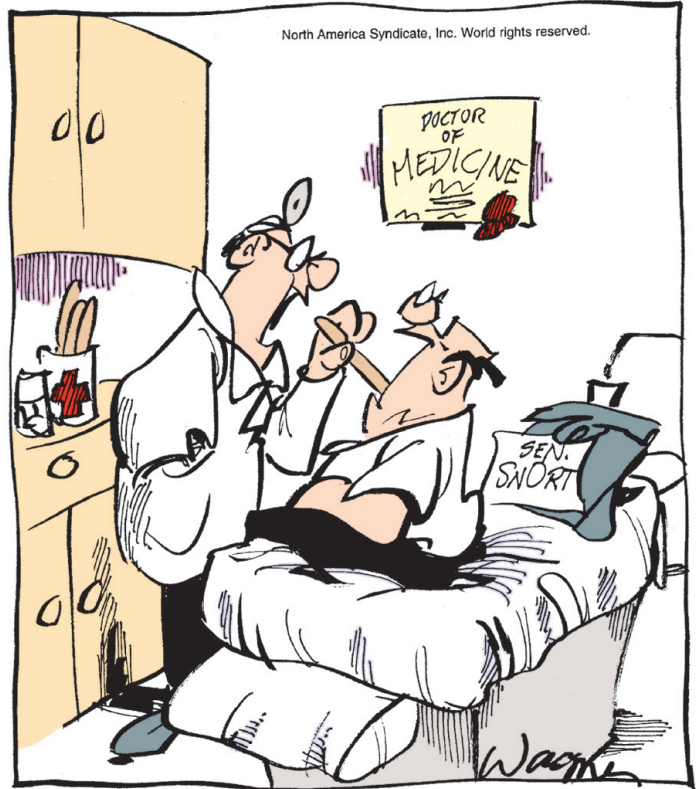
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Just Like Cats & Dogs by Dave T. Phipps



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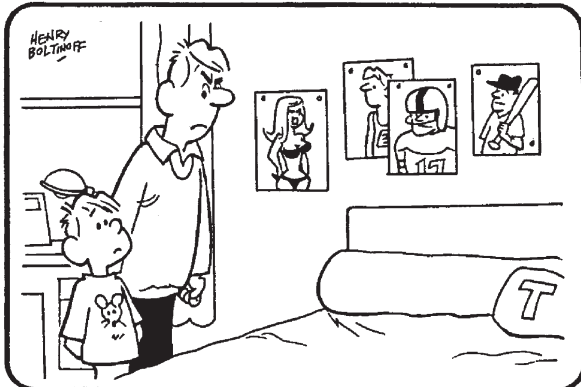
GRIN and BEAR IT ^{by Waugh}



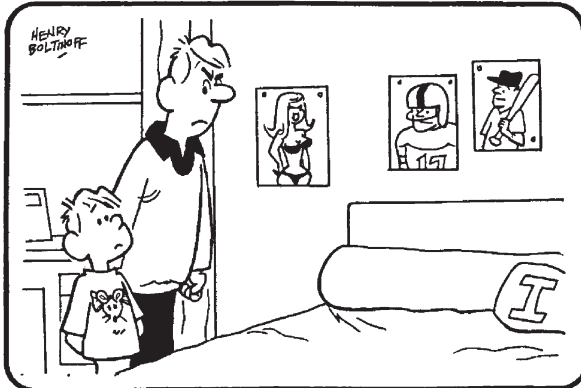
"Ah! I found your shoe!"

HOCUS-FOCUS

BY HENRY BOLTINOFF



Find at least six differences in details between panels.



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Differences: 1. Letter on pillow is different. 2. Man's shirt is black. 3. Mouse design is different. 4. Lamp is missing. 5. Picture on wall is missing. 6. Curtain is longer.



• “If you have a bunch of picture frames that don’t match or ones that are nicked or have small cosmetic damages, just paint them. Choose a matching color for all, and you have a collection.” — *T.L. in Florida*

• Kitchen tip: You can slice mushrooms in an egg slicer.

• If your sneakers are smelly, try this: Stick a sheet of fabric softener in each one. Let them set overnight, and most of the time, the smell will be gone by morning. Of course, you should rotate your tennies to help them “breathe,” since wearing your shoes day after day can foster bacteria growth — meaning your sneaks will be really stinky.

• “To get sheets and towels to dry faster, try adding a tennis ball to the dryer. It bounces around inside while the cycle is going, and breaks up large items that tend to crumple into a ball.” — *C.L. in Illinois*

• When you get near the end of a roll of paper towels, save it to put in your car. Pull together a kit to keep in the car with the following items: a small bottle of glass cleaner, a squeeze bottle of water, some wet wipes and the short roll of paper towels. You will always be ready for a quick on-the-road cleanup.

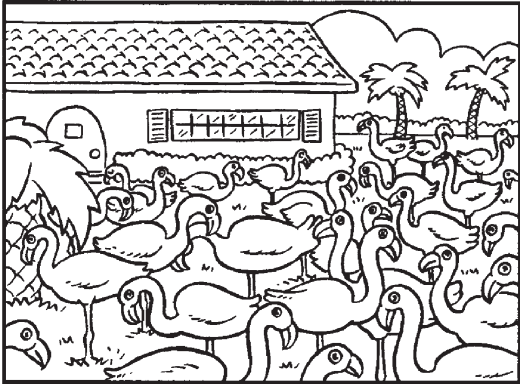
• The kitchen and the bathroom are the worst places in the house to store medicines and vitamins. Humidity and heat can damage the properties of the compounds.

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

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AUNT FLO'S FLAMINGO FRENZY! See if you can add up all of the pink flamingoes that Aunt Flo has put in her front yard. (Count them with a friend and see if you both get the same total.)

Junior Whirl

by Charles Barry Townsend

1.	A						K
2.		A					K
3.			A			K	
4.				A	K		
5.				K	A		
6.			K			A	
7.		K					A
8.	K						A

FIND THE BIG WORDS!

Using the definitions and the anagrams below, you must find the eight eight-letter words that fit into the framework pictured on the left. For each definition, the letters in the two anagram words must be unscrambled and used to form the word asked for.

Illustrated by David Coulson

MESMERIZING MATH!

The swami has discovered that if you multiply 99 by any number from 1 to 100, the product will always contain digits that total 18. Try it out: $(99 \times 9 = 891; 8 + 9 + 1 = 18)$, $(99 \times 4 = 396; 3 + 9 + 6 = 18)$.



DEFINITIONS:

1. A footnote reference.
2. Narrow, elevated walkways.
3. A wine container.
4. What waves become.
5. Christmas post office headache.
6. Lacking in conviction.
7. A small head covering.
8. A Polish treat.

ANAGRAM:

- skit + ears
- talk + caws
- oink + tags
- reek + bars
- cake + gasp
- wale + murk
- pull + sack
- sail + bake

LINK-UPS! Here's a list of 12 short words, divided into two columns. Turn them into six longer words by linking them together. To do this, draw a line from one word in the left column to one word in the right.

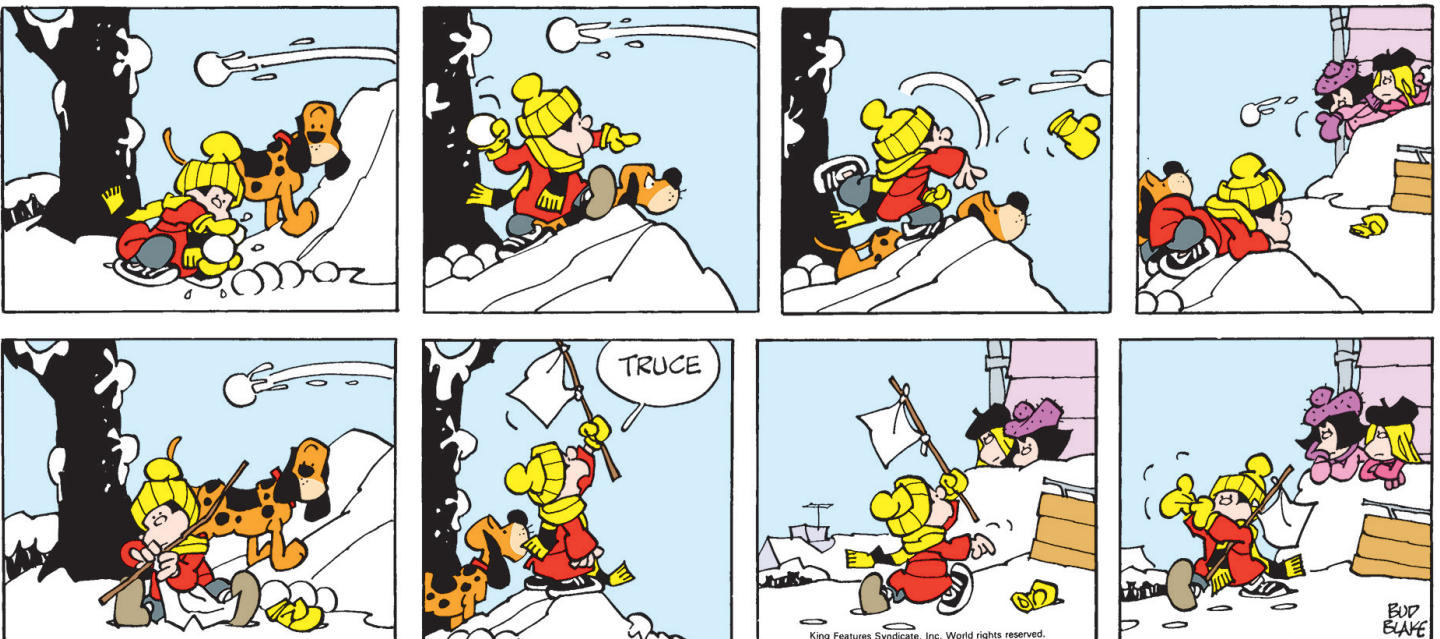
1. LEG	LACE
2. MALE	ATE
3. NEED	ION
4. REP	LED
5. NONE	MUTE
6. PAL	VENT

Answers: Legion; Ledge; Malemute, malemute, needed, needed, replace, nonevent, palate.

Answers: 1. Asterisk. 2. Catwalks. 3. Goatskin. 4. Breakers. 5. Packages. 6. Lukewarm. 7. Skullcap. 8. Kielbasa.

TIGER

by BUD BLAKE



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BUD BLAKE

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King Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Wordsworth work
- 5 Spasm
- 8 Billie — King
- 12 Against
- 13 Granada gold
- 14 Sea eagle
- 15 500 sheets
- 16 Chess piece
- 17 Right on the map?
- 18 On an angle
- 20 Dines
- 22 Donald Duck's outfit
- 26 Birth-related
- 29 "Exodus" hero
- 30 Vitamin stat
- 31 Prior nights
- 32 Pvt.'s superior

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11
12					13				14			
15					16				17			
18				19			20	21				
			22			23					24	25
26	27	28				29				30		
31					32				33			
34				35				36				
37			38				39					
		40					41			42	43	44
45	46				47	48			49			
50					51				52			
53					54				55			

- 33 Grant basis, at times
- 34 Seminary subj.
- 35 Take to court
- 36 Smartens (up)
- 37 Produce aisle display
- 40 Pan handler?
- 41 Rookie
- 45 Boyfriend
- 47 Business mag
- 49 Press
- 50 Formerly, once
- 51 French vineyard

- 52 Bandleader Puente
- 53 Makes lace
- 54 "Dig in!"
- 55 Salty septet

DOWN

- 1 Law firm aide, for short
- 2 Till bills
- 3 List-ending abbr.
- 4 Brunch cocktails
- 5 "Only Love" actress Marisa

- 6 Lyricist Gershwin
- 7 Monarch's spouse
- 8 Army vehicles
- 9 Test-paper smudges
- 10 Reply (Abbr.)
- 11 Court divider
- 19 Chum
- 21 Swiss canton
- 23 Beer type
- 24 Nantes notion
- 25 Tiny amounts
- 26 Soft ball?
- 27 Say it's so
- 28 Put on the air

- 32 Be enough
- 33 Blockheads
- 35 That lady
- 36 Golfer Michelle
- 38 Closes
- 39 Full-length
- 42 Party cheese
- 43 Greek vowel
- 44 Seth's son
- 45 Wager
- 46 Historic period
- 48 Big D.C. lobby

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— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 25 mins.

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

LAFF - A - DAY



"I warned you not to forget to ask the waiter for a doggie bag."

Out on a Limb

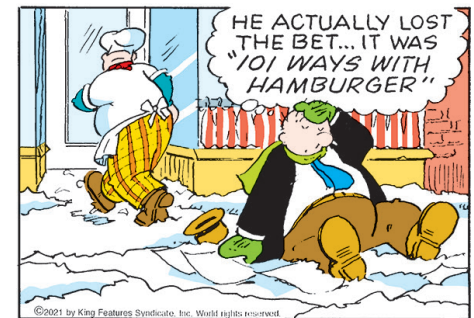
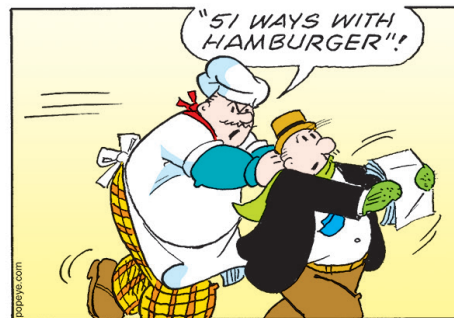
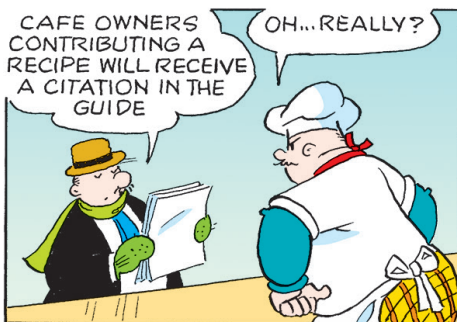
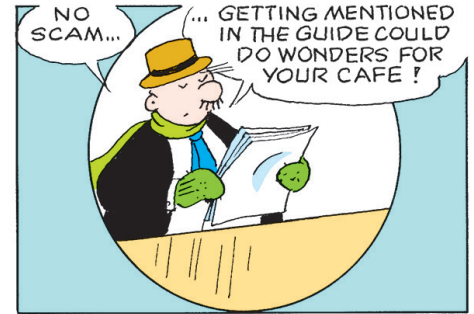
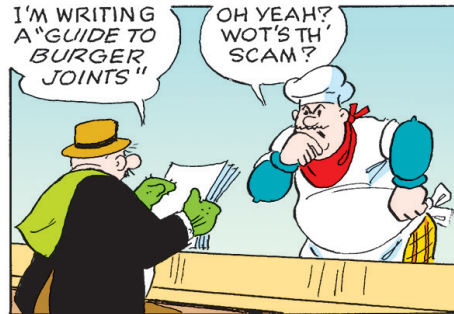
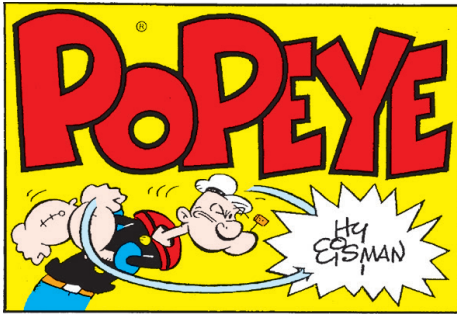
by Gary Kopervas



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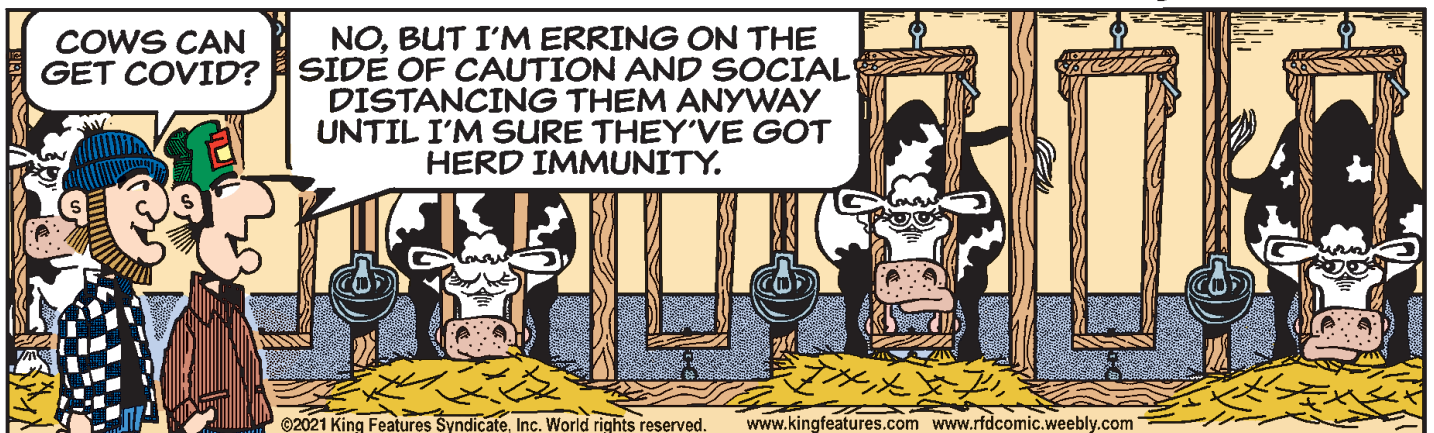
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R.F.D.

by Mike Marland



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HAL FOSTER'S
Prince Valiant
GIANNI AND SCHULTZ®

Our Story: LED BY IG'S SENSITIVE NOSE, LIT BY MERLIN'S GEMS AND GUIDED BY SIR TROLLENBERG'S SKILL WITH ROUGH TERRAIN, VAL'S COMPANY DESCENDS THROUGH THE CAVERNS UNDERLYING ENGLAND.

GAWAIN, WHO APPRECIATES BEAUTY, PAYS TOO MUCH ATTENTION TO THE CRYSTALLINE MARVELS, AND NOT ENOUGH TO HIS FOOTHOLDS. THE LIMESTONE IS SLIPPERY...



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"CAREFUL, MY FRIEND, OR YOUR HARD HEAD MAY DAMAGE GOD'S ANCIENT HANDIWORK," VAL JESTS.



BUT IG HAS SPIED SOMETHING. "LOOK! GAWAIN'S HARD HEAD FINDS MORE THAN ROCK!"

IT IS A SHRED ...

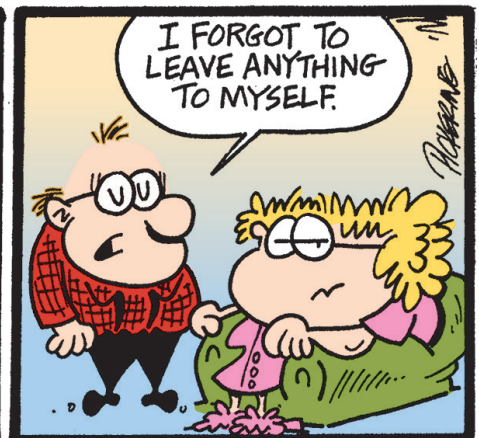
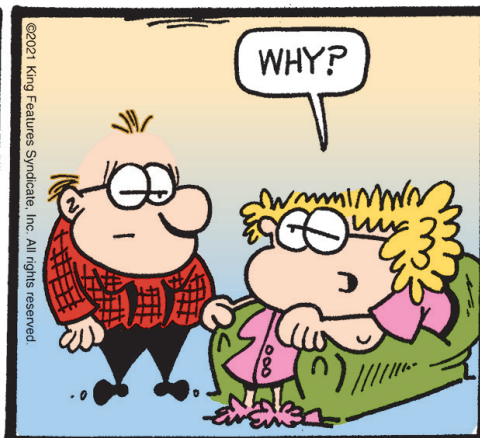


"... FROM THE HEM OF ALETA'S GOWN!" SAYS VAL. "SHE'S LEAVING A TRAIL!"

NEXT:
Unearthly

The Spats

by Jeff Pickering



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SENIOR NEWS LINE

by Matilda Charles

Ordering Your Free Credit Reports

For years we've been able to get one free credit report per year from each of the three credit bureaus. Right now, we're able to get a free one each week until the middle of April.

Why? Their generosity is likely due to the astronomical number of scams coming out of the COVID crisis. The number of unemployed crooks has surely gone up, making your good credit too enticing to pass up.

This is one time when constantly monitoring our credit is a good idea. Besides ordering your credit reports, one additional big step is to freeze your account, making it impossible for someone to apply for credit in your name.

All three credit bureaus (TransUnion, Equifax and Experian) can be accessed in the government clearinghouse website www.annualcreditreport.com ... theoretically, that is. In 2015, 2017 and today, I was only able to access TransUnion. For the other two I had to go to the individual website. One I had to call, as the website was down.

If you decide to order your credit reports by phone, allot several hours to the task and turn down any background noise so you'll be able to hear clearly.

Go to www.usa.gov/credit-reports to learn more about credit reports, scores, freezes and errors.

If you want to try to get all three reports at once, call 1-877-322-8228 at the Annual Credit Report location. The others are:

Equifax: 1-888-548-7878 or 1-800-685-1111; equifax.com.

Experian: 1-888-397-3742; experian.com.

TransUnion: 1-800-916-8800 or 888-909-8872; transunion.com.

Once you get your report, either online or in the mail, study it carefully. Look for accounts that you never opened and the names of people you don't know. Be sure all the information is correct. If you need to file a complaint, go to ftc.gov/complaint or call 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357).

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1. Doak Walker won the Heisman Trophy in 1948 playing multiple positions for what college team?

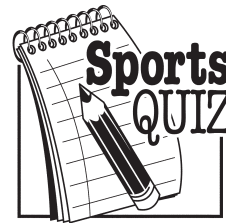
2. In 1973, what Pittsburgh Pirates pitcher had such a severe case of the yips that the "condition" was colloquially named after him?

3. What team drafted Purdue quarterback Jim Everett with the third overall pick in the 1986 NFL Draft, then traded his rights to the Los Angeles Rams?

4. In December 2004, who was hired as head coach of the USC Trojans men's basketball team only to resign five days later?

5. What baseball team won the 2020 KBO League championship with a 4-2 Korean Series win over the Doosan Bears?

6. What three-time winner of the Formula One World Drivers' Championship was killed in an accident while lead-



by Ryan A. Berenz

ing the 1994 San Marino Grand Prix?

7. What San Diego Chargers player set the NFL record for longest play by returning a missed field goal 109 yards for a touchdown in a 2007 game against the Minnesota Vikings?

Answers

1. The Southern Methodist University Mustangs.

2. Steve Blass.

3. Houston Oilers.

4. Rick Majerus.

5. The NC Dinos.

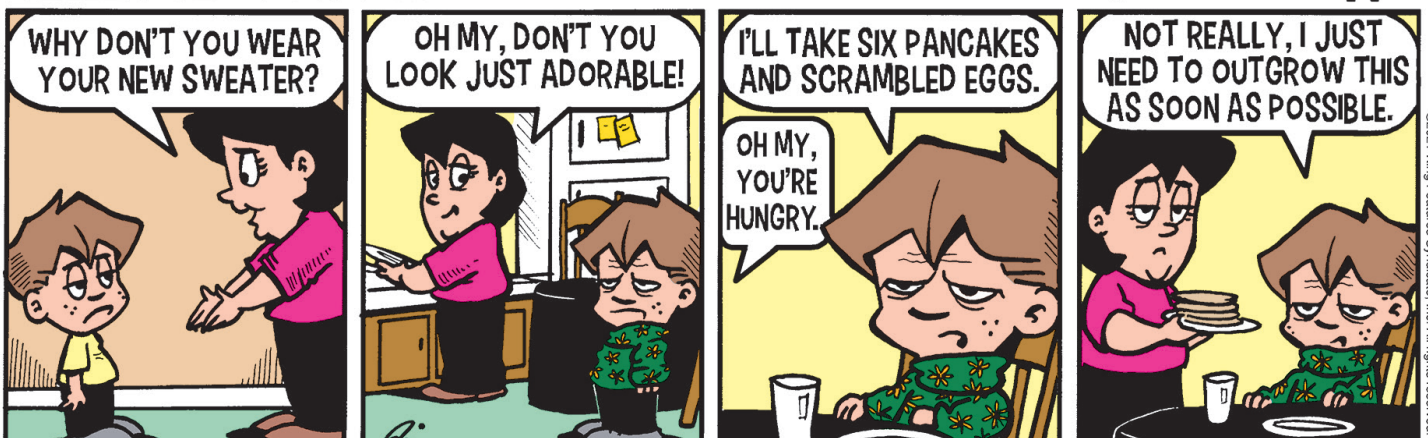
6. Ayrton Senna.

7. Antonio Cromartie.

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Amber Waves

by Dave T. Phipps





Cat Frees Crickets, Gecko Goes Hungry

DEAR PAW'S CORNER: I have a leopard gecko named Lenetta, and I wouldn't trade her for the world. There's a problem, though. I also have a cat, and that cat always finds a way into the room where Lenetta is kept, and spends his time chasing the crickets through the plastic "kritter keeper." Sometimes it gets flipped over and the crickets escape. Then I have nothing to feed to Lenetta, and there are loose crickets all over the house. How do I get this cat to stop obeying his instinct to chase these bugs? Help, before any more crickets get loose! — *Josiah from New York*

DEAR JOSIAH: Ah, that's the thing: It's a cat's instinct to chase small, hopping things. Cats think it's awesome.

Rather than try and teach your cat not to chase crickets — a tough job that

will require long-term commitment, daily training sessions and possibly some genetic manipulation to remove that hunting instinct — make it tougher for the kritter keeper to get turned over.

Solution 1: Duct tape. One piece on each side of the lid, being careful not to cover the air vents. If you use a cricket shaker or something similar, take out the shaker tube and secure the lid.

Solution 2: Camouflage. Make the cricket cage invisible. Put it on a shelf that the cat can't reach. Cover it with a thin cloth (that air can get through) or place it behind other objects. Out of sight, out of mind.

Solution 3: Keep the door to Lenetta's room closed. This may be more difficult because your cat clearly has figured out how to get in. Think about other ways to discourage his entry.

Good luck!

Send your pet care questions to ask@pawscorner.com.

Strange BUT TRUE

By Lucie Winborne

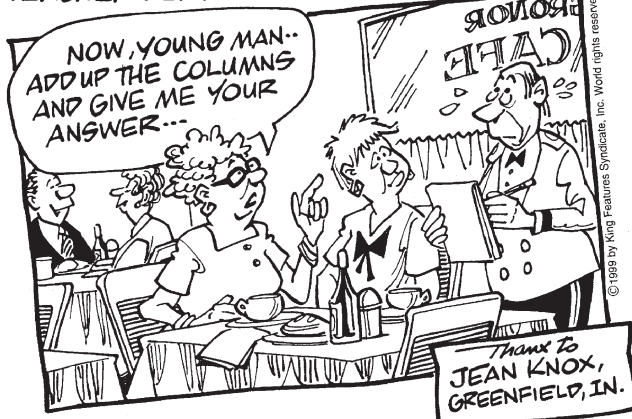
- The most leaves ever found on a clover is 56.
- In 2012, General Mills sent professional basketball player Jeremy Lin a special jersey made entirely out of Fruit Roll-Ups after he tweeted about his love for the snack.
- The southern polar region of Enceladus, one of Saturn's moons, contains cryovolcanoes, an exotic type of geyser that spews ice instead of magma.
- Aluminum is infinitely recyclable, with nearly 75% of all aluminum ever produced still in use today.
- The first footprints on the moon will remain there for a million years.
- A Kansas man requested that an Iowa court grant his motion for trial by combat. His opponents? His ex-wife and her attorney, whom he desired to meet "on the field of battle" in order to "rend their souls from their corporeal bodies."
- The world's largest recorded snowflake measured 15 inches wide and 8 inches thick.
- Similar to how human babies suck their thumbs for comfort, baby elephants suck on their trunks.
- In the Middle Ages, a man's wealth was measured by his stockpile of pepper.
- A 639-year performance by an automated organ, based on avant-garde composer John Cage's "As Slow as Possible," started in September 2001 and is still running at St. Burchard Church in Germany. Progressing so slowly that visitors have to wait months for a chord change, it is scheduled to conclude in 2640.
- Apollo 11 astronaut Buzz Aldrin brought a chalice, bread and wine to the moon to take communion.

Thought for the Day: "Yet I had rather be remembered as those brave beginners are, though many of them missed the triumph, than as the late-comers will be, who only beat the drums and wave the banners when the victory is won." — *Louisa May Alcott*

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THEY'LL DO IT EVERY TIME

ONCE A TEACHER ALWAYS A
TEACHER DEPT.



BY AL SCADUTO

PUZZLE PIC-FIND THE GUY WHO LOST 45 LBS.-BOUGHT
A NEW WARDROBE-AND IS ON THE FEED BAG AGAIN..



URGE TO KILL
DEPT-JUST AS
YOU'RE HANGING
UP THE CLEAN
WASH, DIZZIA,
NEXT DOOR,
THROWS THE
VACUUM BAG
TO THE FOUR
WINDS...

Thank to
LISA and REGGIE,
SILVER SPRING,
MD.



Songbirds in winter

Missing your wild feathered friends? If you stand near some trees and make soft

“psh-psh-psh” sounds, this is bird parlance for “a predator is near,” and even in winter, some birds may pop by to investigate! They may also make a few short “call notes” of their own to help warn of danger. Your best ally in this trick is the black-capped chickadee, often the first to respond. They can vary the rate or urgency of their calls to convey the distance or the immediacy of the threat. - Brenda Weaver

Source: northernwoodlands.org





by Freddy Groves

Get the VA Welcome Kit

It doesn't matter if you've been out for years or are just now separating from the service, the Department of Veterans Affairs has a gift for you: the VA Welcome Kit. It's something every veteran needs to have on hand for current information you need now or things that can come up over the years.

It's all about your VA benefits and the services it offers for the veteran, families, survivors and caregivers. Each kit has over a dozen quick-start guides for a wide array of topics, including health services for women, accessing urgent care, mental health services, getting caregiver benefits, home loans, explanation of disability ratings, applying for burial in a VA cemetery and getting educational benefits. They give step-

by-step instructions, as well as listing the documents you'll need, links to specific web pages (put your cursor on one and click), telephone numbers and departments within the VA system.

Getting one of the kits is easy: Just download it (www.va.gov/welcome-kit) as a .PDF file either in black and white or color. If you only want one specific guide, scroll down the page and pick your topic. Further down are links to other topics such as housing assistance, careers, life insurance, pension and more.

I give this kit an A grade. The VA put a lot of thought into it, and it's well done. Take a look. So far there have been over 1 million downloads. Suggestion: Print it out (42 pages) and put it in a folder so it's handy.

As a final note: Are you still doing the full minute hand washing? Never mind the 20 second wash, go for the full minute. Keep your nails short and scrubbed. Wash often. It doesn't matter that the vaccine is now being given. Don't slack off. For a long time we'll still need to do the distancing and mask wearing ... and hand washing.

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



Survey Says

In December, Members of Congress were given early access to the COVID-19 vaccine, and I asked for South Dakota to decide whether I should take the vaccine early to instill public confidence or wait my turn. Nearly 9,000 South Dakotans participated in the poll.

Engagement from South Dakotans truly helps guide the decisions I make in Congress. My office gets thousands of incoming messages every week, and even more in recent months, but I take every comment into consideration.

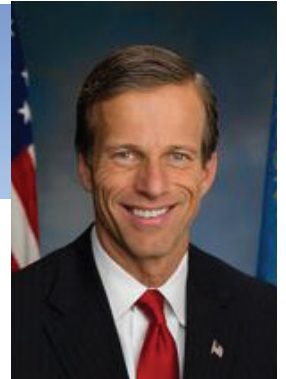
The purpose of this poll was not only to seek advice from South Dakotans, but also to increase engagement on the topic of the vaccine in general. It's no secret that there is some distrust behind vaccines, but the full weight of the federal government and private sector went behind the COVID-19 vaccine to ensure the world can return to normalcy. I have full faith in its ability to eradicate this deadly disease.

That being said, 56% of South Dakotans responding to the poll asked that I wait my turn and I plan to honor that decision. I can understand why it doesn't seem right to many South Dakotans for me to be vaccinated before a frontline nurse, a senior in a nursing home, or an at-risk veteran.

South Dakota has consistently been among the states that are vaccinating at the highest rate of allocations so far – that's great news. More than 42,000 South Dakotans have received the vaccine, and this week, the Department of Health is moving forward with providing the vaccine to individuals 80 years and older.

I'm looking forward to getting it myself when it's my turn. This vaccine will ensure our businesses and schools stay open. When the time comes to get your shot, I hope you'll be first in line.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



Honoring Our Law Enforcement Heroes

The consequences of the Capitol riots on January 6 will last years, as our nation comes to grips with what led to this point. Every day since, we have learned new details that show how close our country came to even greater tragedy and loss of life. Many questions are still unanswered, but one thing is clear: the violence would have been much worse without the brave men and women of law enforcement who put their lives on the line.

Americans died or were severely injured because of this mob violence – including officers of the United States Capitol Police. My heart goes out to their families, friends, and fellow U.S. Capitol Police officers who are in mourning. My wife Kimberley and I have kept these heroic Americans in our prayers and hope that justice is served.

For every terrifying moment last Wednesday, there were also moments of inspiring heroism. One U.S. Capitol Police officer can be seen in a video leading rioters away from the Senate floor. He was outnumbered and his safety jeopardized, but his bravery and quick thinking undoubtedly saved countless lives. I can't thank him enough for that. His story of heroism is just one of many stories of law enforcement officers who showed true courage that day.

In the days since, more scenes of selfless patriotism are emerging. If you were to walk through the halls of the Capitol right now, it'd be impossible to miss the National Guardsmen sleeping on the cold marble floors. More troops have been called to defend our Capitol than at any point since the Civil War, and these brave Americans—including some from South Dakota's National Guard—will be working alongside Capitol Police to ensure that our Capitol remains secure for the inauguration and that the events of January 6 cannot be repeated. It is a sight that instills gratitude. These men and women, many young and far from home, have put aside their lives to protect our democracy.

Now more than ever, it is important to acknowledge those who wear a uniform. We are always grateful for the service and sacrifice of the police officers who protect our streets 365 days a year, pandemic or no pandemic, no matter what the challenges. But this year, with the courageous acts of January 6 fresh in our minds, our appreciation is especially profound.

The past year has been incredibly tough for our law enforcement officers, especially as they faced widespread calls by left-wing politicians to be defunded. As protests and civil unrest arose throughout the country, police officers were called upon to respond, and several of them lost their lives. Day in and day out, law enforcement officials across the nation put their lives on the line to protect our communities. I am so thankful to those in South Dakota law enforcement who have made our state such a safe place to live, work, and raise a family.

South Dakota Governor

Kristi Noem



South Dakota: *Under God, the People Rule*

Civic Education for the Next Generation

Across America these last several months, we have witnessed a very troubling situation where violent actors are trying to do an end-run around public discourse. This is done to intimidate and silence voices. These folks want to short-cut public debate through fear. They want to make people scared. This is un-American. And it certainly has no place in South Dakota.

Whether on the left or the right, political violence is not the answer. Our political process, though contentious at times, works because we resolve issues through discussion and rigorous debate. Sometimes, political debate will include peaceful protests. Assembly is a tool, enshrined in the Constitution, to help drive a point home. Every American has a right to protest peacefully. That right ends where violence begins.

We saw a similar situation play out on Capitol Hill a few days ago. We were all appalled by it. Frankly, it was horrible to watch. Today, we have an opportunity to address the root cause of this problem: we must reform young Americans' civic education.

Students should be taught our nation's history and all that makes America unique. They should see first-hand the importance of civic engagement. And they should have robust discussions in the classroom so they can develop critical thinking skills.

Our young people need more experience engaging with elected officials and practicing the art of debate. It is also our responsibility to show them how government works.

I have tasked my administration with creating instructional materials and classroom resources on America's founding, our nation's history, and the state's history. We must also do a better job giving teachers preparational materials on these three subjects.

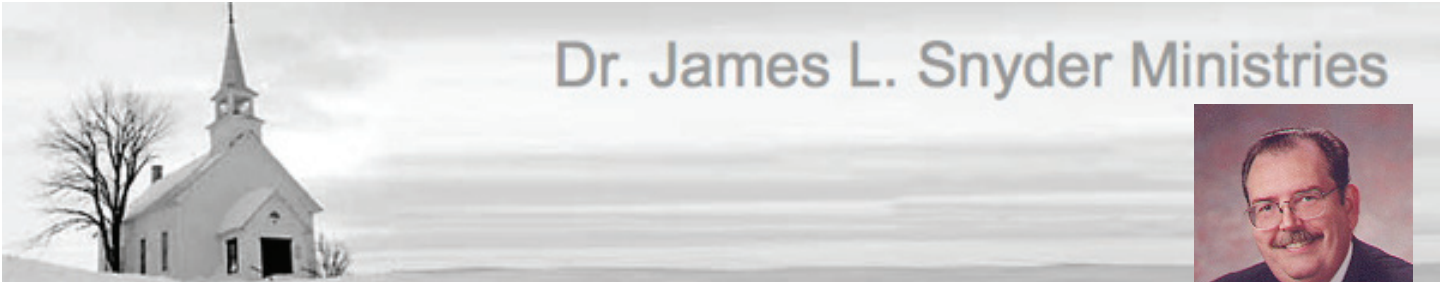
Through all of this, our common mission and key objective needs to be explaining why the United States of America is the most unique nation in the history of the world. With this knowledge as a foundational building block, every South Dakotan can then chart their own path in the future and pursue their own American Dream.

We all know that good education starts in the home. It starts with strong families. We have decades of research to show that families are the most critical influence on a child's success in the classroom. COVID-19 underscored just how involved parents need to be in their children's day-to-day education. It's our duty to find innovative solutions that empower parents to set their children up for success.

Coupled with the tremendous work that South Dakota teachers are doing, I believe we can make immediate and long-lasting change in the lives of young South Dakotans. Together, my administration will work to support them and ensure that they are getting the very best materials to achieve that goal.

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Dr. James L. Snyder Ministries



Riding the Hallelujah Train To the End

We had a long, hard week with problems and difficulties that took time to solve if they even were solved. It is quite interesting to me that when I solve one problem, two other problems appear. I think they're all waiting in line.

In particular, one day was rather difficult and zapped both of us of energy. I ordered a new desk for my office, and there were so many problems getting it delivered that I almost gave up. Along the way the desk was damaged and they returned it back to the store without even telling us. We had to reorder it all over again and wait for it. But then it came. Problem solved.

That evening the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage and I sat down after supper to watch a little TV news and drink our evening coffee. We like to get caught up on the news of the day so we know what's happening.

There is nothing like relaxing after a hard day's work and just getting a little bit of energy back into the system again, and at our age, that takes time of which we have little.

As we were watching the news, the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage sighed very deeply and said, "Why does the news always have to be negative?"

She had a point there. Every story on the news that evening was negative and left you just a little more depressed than when you started watching it.

We discussed some of the negative news being broadcast. None of it made sense to either of us. My opinion is simply, if it doesn't make sense to the Gracious Mistress of the Parsonage, I'm not going to try to find any sense for myself.

Each story was worse than the one before it. I felt the attitude in the room was going further south than I wanted it to go. Nothing on the news in any way sparked any bit of inspiration in my life.

For every negative story the news presents, there should be at least five positive stories that counter the negativity.

I looked over at my wife, smiled one of my gregarious smiles, and said, "I'm going to be riding the hallelujah train to the end. You want to join me?"

Looking at me quizzically, she said, "What in the world does that mean?"

I chuckled, and when I got control of my chuckling, "Do you remember good old uncle Ned?"

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She shook her head and said that she never met him, so she did not know who I was talking about.

So I told her the good old uncle Ned story. He was the kind of guy that if you could discourage him, you were the only person that could do that.

He always had such a happy demeanor that when you were depressed, you just wanted to get around him to give you a little bit of cheer along with one of his nonsensical stories.

Uncle Ned went through trouble in his life, probably more trouble than the rest of the family knew, but if you talked to him, you wouldn't know he had a single trouble in the world. He was the most positive person I've ever known. I think he was more positive than Norman Vincent Peale.

When everything was going against him, and it didn't look like there was any solution to the problem, uncle Ned would say, "I'm just gonna ride the hallelujah train to the end." Then he would break into one of his infamous hallelujah dances.

It took me a long time to understand what he meant by that. If there is anybody who didn't have a reason to be happy, it was uncle Ned. But, you would never be able to find anybody happier than uncle Ned.

It wasn't until after he had passed that I begin to understand what he was talking about.

The "hallelujah train" that he talked about was simply him taking control of his attitude at the time. He never allowed an incident, person or even family member to take away his happiness.

I begin to understand that he deliberately chose to ride the "hallelujah train," which made him in charge of his life.

As I told my wife the story, she leaned back and smiled one of her gracious smiles. Then she said, "I think I understand what he meant by that hallelujah train."

I can't remember anything that uncle Ned really did or accomplished in life. I'm sure there were things, but nothing came to my attention as I thought of him. The only thing was his attitude of happiness that nothing or no one could take away for him.

Walking into the house the next day, my wife looked at me and said, "Well, I'm riding the hallelujah train today."

I didn't have to ask her to explain, I knew exactly where she was going with this.

Troubles come and go, but if I allow them to control me in any regard, I am the loser. Therefore, each day I'm going to ride the hallelujah train to the end.

That evening I thought of one of the wise sayings of King Solomon. "He that handleth a matter wisely shall find good: and whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he" (Proverbs 16:20).

The door into the hallelujah train is simply trusting in the Lord

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Groton wrestling team places third at Gettysburg

Groton Area's wrestling team placed third at the Battler Invitational held Saturday at Gettysburg. Wessington Springs/Woonsocket/Wolsey-Wessington placed first with 204.5 points, Webster Area edged out Groton Area for second place, 83-82. There were 12 teams in the tournament.

Three grapplers placed first: Dragr Monson, Christian Ehresmann and Lane Krueger. Cole Bisbee placed third, Korbin Kucker placed fourth and Easten Ekern placed sixth.

113: Dragr Monson (17-0) placed 1st and scored 18.0 team points.

Dragr Monson (Groton) 17-0 pinned Ivan Stuwe (Potter County) 3-10 (Fall 0:51); he pinned Hayden Landmark (Deuel) 2-14 (Fall 1:01); he pinned Kayden Carter (Wessington Springs Woonsocket Wolsey Wessington) 13-5 (Fall 1:09); and in the championship match, he pinned Brady Unser (Ipswich/Bowdle) 16-7 (Fall 1:13)

126: Christian Ehresmann (14-2) placed 1st and scored 24.0 team points.

Christian Ehresmann (Groton) 14-2 pinned Lincoln Dikoff (Faulkton Area) 4-5 (Fall 1:15); and in the championship match, he pinned Troy Fastnacht (Wessington Springs Woonsocket Wolsey Wessington) 7-9 (Fall 3:08)

126: Easten Ekern (6-4) placed 6th.

Easten Ekern (Groton) 6-4 was pinned by Lincoln Dikoff (Faulkton Area) 4-5 pinned (Fall 1:27); he was pinned by Aaron Neugebauer (Webster) 2-6 (Fall 0:32); and in the fifth place match, he was pinned by Tayten Walker (Stanley County) 3-8 (Fall 3:15)

138: Korbin Kucker (8-7) placed 4th and scored 14.0 team points.

Korbin Kucker (Groton) 8-7 pinned Matt Mork (Webster) 2-14 (Fall 3:24); he was pinned by Brayden Schlachter (Potter County) 13-9 (Fall 1:22); he pinned Colton Brady (Stanley County) 2-2 (Fall 4:48); and in the third place match, he was pinned by Tyson Eddy (Wessington Springs Woonsocket Wolsey Wessington) 8-9 (Fall 1:50)

160: Cole Bisbee (7-9) placed 3rd and scored 7.0 team points.

Cole Bisbee (Groton) 7-9 was decided by Carter Grohs (Wessington Springs Woonsocket Wolsey Wessington) 13-8 (Dec 8-4); he pinned Case Kolda (Stanley County) 0-4 (Fall 0:46); he was pinned by Easton Steinbach (Warner Northwestern) 13-3 (Fall 1:30); and in the third place match, he pinned Jimmy Burma (Sunshine Bible Academy) 2-11 (Fall 0:28)

195: Lane Krueger (9-2) placed 1st and scored 16.0 team points.

Lane Krueger (Groton) 9-2 pinned Landyn Weber (Faulkton Area) 1-5 (Fall 1:15); he pinned Justin Granum (Deuel) 9-9 (Fall 4:01); he scored a decision over Preston Cavalier (Warner Northwestern) 9-6 (Dec 5-2); and in the championship match, he pinned Brock Stevens (Wessington Springs Woonsocket Wolsey Wessington) 11-6 (Fall 5:06)

285: Adrian Knutson (6-10) placed 4th and scored 3.0 team points.

Adrian Knutson (Groton) 6-10 was pinned by Parker Bode (Faulkton Area) 6-12 (Fall 4:00); he was pinned by Lucas Rowland (Ipswich/Bowdle) 15-5 (Fall 1:20); he was pinned by Quinten Christensen (Wessington Springs Woonsocket Wolsey Wessington) 18-0 (Fall 1:17); and in the third place match, he pinned Ethan Nehl (Lemmon/McIntosh) 4-8 (Fall 2:34).

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#328 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

It's the weekend, and everything is, predictably, down today. There were 206,600 new cases reported today. That brings us to 23,795,200 total cases so far in the US, 0.9% more than yesterday. Another day like today will put us over 24 million tomorrow; if we get lucky and have a typical Sunday, that might not happen until Monday. We'll see. Hospitalizations are about 5000 off the record at 127,235. We have lost 395,564 Americans to this virus, 0.9% more than yesterday. Unless tomorrow's exceptionally terrible, it will be Monday when we surpass 400,000. There were 3415 deaths reported today, which these days passes for a good day.

Here's some depressing news: In an analysis published in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, a group of scientists at the University of Southern California and Princeton University found that the deaths caused by Covid-19 have shortened life expectancy in the US by 1.13 years. It did that in less than a year; that's a strong impact in a short time. The researchers wrote, "This impact is about 10 times as large as the worrisome annual decreases several years ago that were attributed largely to drug overdoses, other external causes, and respiratory and cardiovascular diseases." Worse, the effect is far worse on people of color, looking more like 2.10 years for Blacks and 3.05 years for Latinos. The decrease seen in white people is 0.68 years. We knew minority communities were disproportionately affected by this disease; this is just another metric that rings alarm bells.

This is striking, especially with respect to Latino people because they are, on the whole, healthier than other groups in the population, suffering fewer of the kinds of chronic conditions that place one at high risk for severe disease. They should have been at lower risk for bad outcomes, but it hasn't worked out that way at all. The thing this points up is the huge impact of social and economic disadvantage on health outcomes; here it completely overcame any benefit conferred by good health going into this pandemic.

The other striking finding, one that should alert us to the kind of work we should be focusing on once we're through the pandemic is best expressed in their words: "The U.S. reduction in 2020 life expectancy is projected to exceed that of most other high-income countries, indicating that the United States—which already had a life expectancy below that of all other high income developed nations prior to the pandemic—will see its life expectancy fall even farther behind its peers." We need to get on this issue for all of us and most especially for disadvantaged populations. There isn't much excuse for a "high-income country" like the US to be in this position.

Here's a disappointment: Remember a few days ago when it was announced the government was releasing all of the held-back-for-second-doses vaccine supply? Everyone got excited (me too), thinking we were going to be able to cover a lot more people sooner. Well, turns out most of that supply had already been shipped out when the announcement was made; in fact, that started last year already. Looks very much like they never were holding doses back at all as they had announced, so there's no big supply waiting for shipment after all. Since many states went ahead and opened up vaccination to more groups of people and there's really no way to put that genie back in the bottle, I expect we're going to see major bottlenecks in distribution programs until this sorts itself out. This is really unfortunate.

The good news is the production process appears to be going beautifully as both manufacturers ramp up for huge volume. Projections are that we're going to have 200 million doses of each of the two authorized vaccines by the end of July. That's enough for the proportion of adults who now say they are willing to get vaccinated. Understand that this is so far above the numbers of vaccine doses produced in the US in any preceding year—ever—it's quite a remarkable accomplishment to reach this level of production so very quickly. Now we just have to sort out how to get it from vial to arm as efficiently as possible over the next few months.

Meanwhile, there are other vaccines in the pipeline. Johnson & Johnson, which is on-track to receive emergency use authorization (EUA) for its vaccine mid-February, if all goes well (and indications are that it will) was hoping to have 12 million doses by the end of that month; now it looks like they're going to fall a bit short of 10 million. This is the kind of thing that happens; Pfizer had similar manufacturing difficulties

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early-on, and now it appears they're going to produce two billion doses this year. Moderna has revised its estimate for the year from 500 million to 600 million doses. Their primary limiting factor seems to be raw materials. Because they're running around the clock, if production stops because some raw material is unavailable, you can't make up for it later; all of the later production capacity was already scheduled. The government has contracts for another 600 million doses of various vaccines in development—part of that plan to hedge our bets because we couldn't know back when those were signed which vaccines were going to work out. This can provide a cushion against unanticipated manufacturing difficulties with one or another; and if all of those doses materialize, there will be no shortage of buyers—no worry about that.

Predictions are that demand will slacken as those willing, even eager, for vaccine are dealt with. After that, it should be easier to keep up. Scott Gottlieb, former FDA commissioner, told CNBC he thinks demand will plateau. "I think by the end of February, we're going to find that we have to open up eligibility pretty wide to get people to come in to get inoculated. We're not going to be in this rationing situation." That's good news for those of us who are willing, even eager to be vaccinated; but bad news for the society. We need a whole lot of people vaccinated in order to put this nightmare behind us.

The CDC posted an update to their website yesterday morning which indicates more than 12 million doses of vaccine have been administered in the US, seven million from Pfizer/BioNTech and five million from Moderna. There were 10.6 million recipients, fewer recipients than doses because some folks have now received second doses. Thirty-nine percent of doses distributed have been administered; I hope that percentage can grow rapidly.

We are finally ramping up our genomic surveillance for this new variant, B.1.1.7, which is posing a threat with its greater transmissibility. In the CDC's weekly report, the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly (MMWR), they write, "CDC has also contracted with several large commercial clinical laboratories to rapidly sequence tens of thousands of SARS-CoV-2-positive specimens each month and has funded seven academic institutions to conduct genomic surveillance in partnership with public health agencies." They add that state and local public health agencies are sequencing the virus too. It's about time. In fact, like so much else in this pandemic, it's about ten minutes past too late.

If indoor spaces are a problem for transmission—and they most definitely are—then cars are really problematic with their small, confined spaces all sealed up against the outside with whatever aerosols are emitted by the occupants just circulating throughout the cabin. There's been some attention given to this lately, for example, last year in an op-ed written by a ventilation expert at the Harvard TH Chan School of Public Health and an air quality expert at Portland State University and published in USA Today last spring. In that piece, they pointed out the risks to occupants of a car and suggested fully opening windows can make a difference. One of those authors, in unpublished research, found that a 20-minute car ride with someone who is infected is far more dangerous than sharing a classroom or restaurant with an infected person for more than an hour. Of course, in winter, driving around with four open windows isn't really a great option.

Some other scenarios were explored recently in a study by a team at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and Brown University and published in Science Advances. They used something called computational fluid dynamic simulations, a sort of computer modeling used to examine how gases or liquids move. These techniques are used for things like automotive design to reduce drag or airplane design to optimize lift, and now they've been used to evaluate how airborne particles might circulate through the cabin of an automobile. They simulated a car based on a Toyota Prius traveling 50 miles per hour with two occupants, the driver in the front left seat and a passenger in the rear right seat, the sort of thing you're going to see a lot in ride-sharing or taxi services.

They found that with the windows closed the air pressure in the front seat is slightly lower than in the back, so air flow runs from back to front. Their modeling suggests around 8 to 10 percent of aerosols emitted by one occupant reached the other, whereas with all the windows fully open, only 0.2 to 2 percent of aerosols reached other occupants. Looking for some sweet spot in between those two extremes, they discovered that the best configuration is to open the windows opposite each occupant—so the front right window and the rear left one. They described this airflow through the car as "like an air curtain" that

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prevents air flow between the occupants and flushes out air released by the passenger.

Still, even two wide-open windows is going to be pretty miserable at sub-zero temperatures, so in a follow-up study, also unpublished, one of the authors has found that opening the same two windows half-way was just about as beneficial. Opening them just a quarter of the way was less so. I'm going to guess that, the slower the car's speed, the less helpful open windows will be; but it appears you can mitigate risk to some extent by strategically opening them. If you must share a vehicle with another person who is not a member of your household, this may be useful information.

You may have heard of the practice engaged in by coffee drinkers in some US cities called suspended coffees. The idea is that, when you pay for your own beverage at a coffee shop, you pay double, leaving a coffee "suspended" at the shop for use by someone who can't afford one. Well, we're not the only place where things like that happen; in Naples, Italy, it's called *caffè sospeso*, and it's been a thing for a good long while there.

The Neapolitans, however, have adapted this practice to pandemic times. Turns out, as case numbers have risen in recent weeks, the local health service's budget has been strained such that free coronavirus tests are getting hard to come by. Tests in a private clinic can cost between 30 and 45 euros (\$35 to \$55), and a PCR test can run to 70 euros (\$85). For some residents, this is prohibitively expensive, so a local community organization in one of the most densely-populated areas of the city where poverty is high is offering lower-cost tests for only around \$20 each. The money pays for the actual test and the nurses; everyone else at the testing site in donated space is a volunteer. This keeps costs lower, but still too high for some residents, which is why the clinic offers its own coronavirus version of *caffè sospeso*. That's right: You can pay for your test and leave money for another one for someone who hasn't the means to pay. Of the 1000 tests performed at this clinic in two weeks, 300 were donated, which is quite beautiful, I think.

One resident who paid for an extra test told AFP, "We Neapolitans have a big heart, in good and in bad times we share everything." Another said helping others is "a civil and moral duty."

Residents have another way to help. There is a rather ingenious practice in the city for second-floor dwellers to suspend a basket from their window down to the street. They place their groceries in it when they return from shopping, and then when they get upstairs, pull the basket up rather than hauling bags of groceries up the stairs. Nowadays, they are using those baskets to distribute, rather than to collect groceries. Passers-by drop off food in the baskets so that those in need can stop by and take what they need.

One of the city's residents explained to CBS News, "When you give, it doesn't make you poorer; it makes you richer." I like the way he thinks. I wonder whether we can import some of that.

Take care. I'll see you tomorrow.

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Jan. 15th COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

South Dakota: Community Spread for week of Jan. 11:

Moderate: Faulk, Sanborn changed from minimal to moderate.

Positive: +341 (105,278 total) Positivity Rate: 7.6%

Total Tests: 4496 (821,580 total)

Total Persons Tested: 1012 (390,520 total)

Hospitalized: +16 (6039 total) 209 currently hospitalized (-18)

Avera St. Luke's: 7 (-0) COVID-19 Occupied beds, 0 (-0) COVID-19 ICU Beds, 0 (-0) COVID-19 ventilators.

Sanford Aberdeen: 5 (+2) COVID-19 Occupied beds, 1 (+0) COVID-19 ICU Beds, 1 (+0) COVID-19 ventilators.

Deaths: +4 (1633 total)

60s=1, 70s=1, 80+=2

Female: 1, Male: 3

Counties: Hutchinson-1, Lincoln-1, Minnehaha-2.

Recovered: +232 (98,808 total)

Active Cases: +105 (4837)

Percent Recovered: 93.9%

Vaccinations: +1756 (55531)

Vaccinations Completed: +17 (9735)

Brown County Vaccinations: +51 (2282) 22 (+0) completed

Beadle (38) +4 positive, +2 recovered (79 active cases)

Brookings (32) +15 positive, +5 recovered (244 active cases)

Brown (72): +14 positive, +16 recovered (259 active cases)

Clark (4): +0 positive, +0 recovered (4 active cases)

Clay (12): +4 positive, +2 recovered (81 active cases)

Codington (73): +9 positive, +10 recovered (178 active cases)

Davison (54): +2 positive, +4 recovered (105) active cases)

Day (23): +0 positive, +4 recovered (28 active cases)

Edmunds (5): +1 positive, +2 recovered (53 active cases)

Faulk (13): +1 positive, +1 recovered (5 active cases)

Grant (35): +1 positive, +1 recovered (35 active cases)

Hanson (3): +1 positive, +1 recovered (13 active cases)

Hughes (30): +6 positive, +5 recovered (88 active cases)

Lawrence (33): +3 positive, +4 recovered (927 active cases)

Lincoln (69): +25 positive, +15 recovered (322 active cases)

Marshall (5): +0 positive, +0 recovered (12 active cases)

McCook (22): +0 positive, +3 recovered (24 active cases)

McPherson (3): +2 positive, +0 recovery (26 active case)

Minnehaha (293): +51 positive, +52 recovered (1088 active cases)

Pennington (152): +33 positive, +28 recovered (573 active cases)

Potter (3): +1 positive, +1 recovered (27 active cases)

Roberts (32): +5 positive, +3 recovered (65 active cases)

Spink (24): +4 positive, +2 recovered (34 active cases)

Walworth (14): +3 positive, +3 recovered (46 active cases)

NORTH DAKOTA

COVID-19 Daily Report, Jan. 16:

- 4.1% rolling 14-day positivity
- 127 new positives
- 4260 susceptible test encounters
- 95 currently hospitalized (+7)
- 1,513 active cases (-162)
- 1,381 total deaths (+8)

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased Among Cases	Community Spread	% RT-PCR Test Positivity Rate (Weekly)
Aurora	436	404	800	11	Moderate	17.24%
Beadle	2573	2456	5377	38	Substantial	10.69%
Bennett	371	353	1096	8	Moderate	4.44%
Bon Homme	1502	1454	1928	23	Substantial	15.52%
Brookings	3283	3007	10540	32	Substantial	13.38%
Brown	4755	4424	11496	72	Substantial	22.59%
Brule	668	629	1734	7	Moderate	26.09%
Buffalo	415	402	855	11	Minimal	19.05%
Butte	934	885	2942	20	Substantial	16.13%
Campbell	116	108	229	4	Minimal	25.00%
Charles Mix	1178	1100	3637	14	Substantial	12.05%
Clark	324	316	891	4	Moderate	2.22%
Clay	1715	1622	4764	12	Substantial	16.74%
Codington	3661	3410	8863	73	Substantial	19.61%
Corson	457	440	926	11	Moderate	19.35%
Custer	709	678	2496	10	Substantial	12.79%
Davison	2846	2687	5915	54	Substantial	15.84%
Day	579	528	1594	23	Substantial	17.65%
Deuel	447	406	1034	7	Substantial	9.09%
Dewey	1367	1291	3603	17	Substantial	21.25%
Douglas	404	375	842	9	Substantial	31.58%
Edmunds	437	379	912	5	Substantial	9.09%
Fall River	482	451	2369	13	Substantial	9.41%
Faulk	321	303	628	13	Moderate	14.29%
Grant	861	791	1998	35	Substantial	21.05%
Gregory	493	459	1137	26	Moderate	0.00%
Haakon	239	224	494	9	Moderate	10.00%
Hamlin	649	571	1588	38	Substantial	10.75%
Hand	320	307	719	4	Minimal	8.33%
Hanson	325	309	637	3	Moderate	23.81%
Harding	89	88	162	1	Minimal	0.00%
Hughes	2118	1998	5897	30	Substantial	4.11%
Hutchinson	731	680	2115	22	Substantial	13.21%

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Hyde	134	130	378	1	Minimal	0.00%
Jackson	267	252	873	13	Minimal	33.33%
Jerauld	265	242	519	16	Minimal	15.79%
Jones	74	69	185	0	Minimal	10.00%
Kingsbury	584	537	1471	13	Substantial	9.33%
Lake	1093	1020	2904	16	Substantial	29.13%
Lawrence	2695	2565	7864	33	Substantial	11.54%
Lincoln	7215	6824	18195	69	Substantial	19.74%
Lyman	572	523	1774	9	Moderate	16.67%
Marshall	275	259	1053	5	Moderate	4.00%
McCook	709	664	1464	22	Substantial	29.31%
McPherson	219	188	513	3	Moderate	2.94%
Meade	2400	2251	6992	26	Substantial	21.02%
Mellette	230	224	679	2	Minimal	10.34%
Miner	251	216	519	7	Moderate	10.00%
Minnehaha	26339	24958	70720	293	Substantial	16.17%
Moody	582	528	1616	15	Substantial	22.73%
Oglala Lakota	2003	1884	6330	38	Substantial	16.17%
Pennington	12015	11290	35635	152	Substantial	21.05%
Perkins	311	277	715	11	Substantial	16.67%
Potter	337	307	751	3	Moderate	8.57%
Roberts	1077	980	3844	32	Substantial	20.27%
Sanborn	321	302	622	3	Moderate	35.71%
Spink	739	681	1923	24	Substantial	10.20%
Stanley	300	283	811	2	Substantial	6.52%
Sully	128	111	259	3	Moderate	10.00%
Todd	1190	1153	3937	19	Substantial	8.42%
Tripp	645	619	1370	14	Substantial	12.12%
Turner	1020	920	2443	49	Substantial	23.53%
Union	1795	1612	5653	32	Substantial	14.38%
Walworth	676	616	1684	14	Substantial	23.00%
Yankton	2682	2493	8458	27	Substantial	12.68%
Ziebach	330	295	815	8	Moderate	14.29%
Unassigned	0	0	2055	0		

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South Dakota



AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range with Years	# of Cases	# of Deaths Among Cases
0-9 years	4019	0
10-19 years	11656	0
20-29 years	19085	4
30-39 years	17345	14
40-49 years	15055	32
50-59 years	14868	86
60-69 years	11994	207
70-79 years	6371	361
80+ years	4885	929

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths Among Cases
Female	54999	781
Male	50279	852

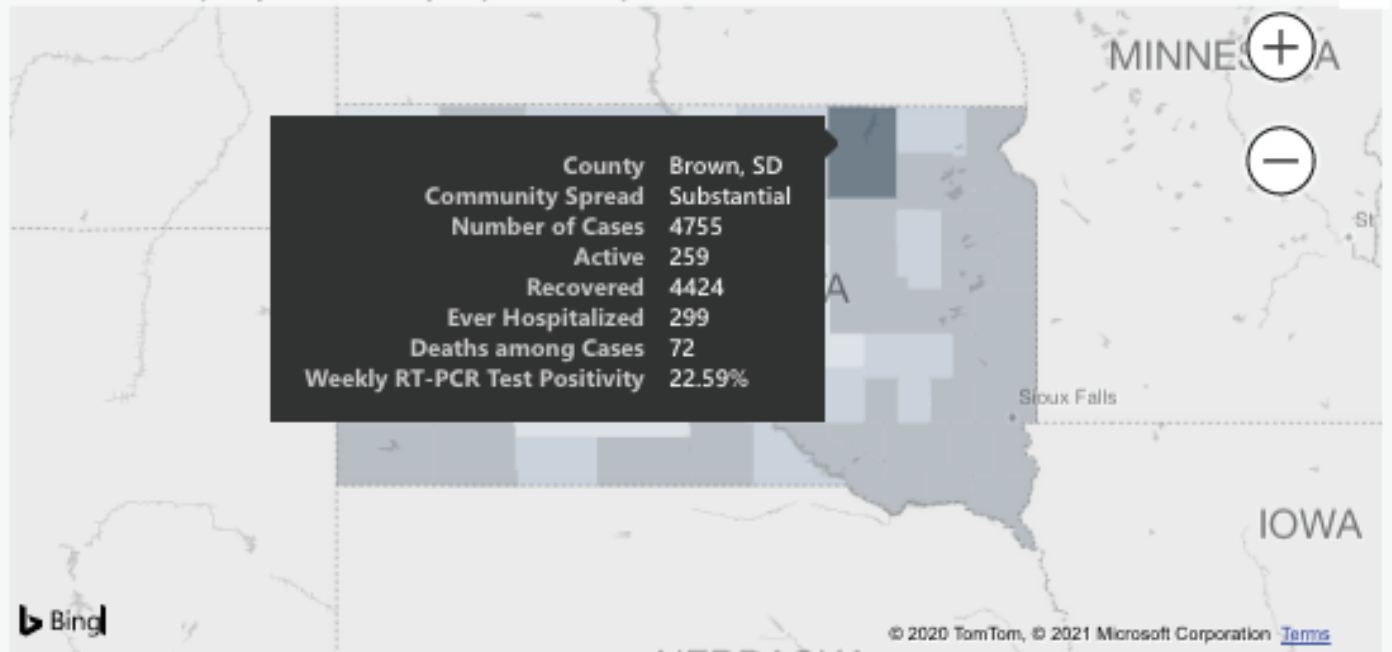
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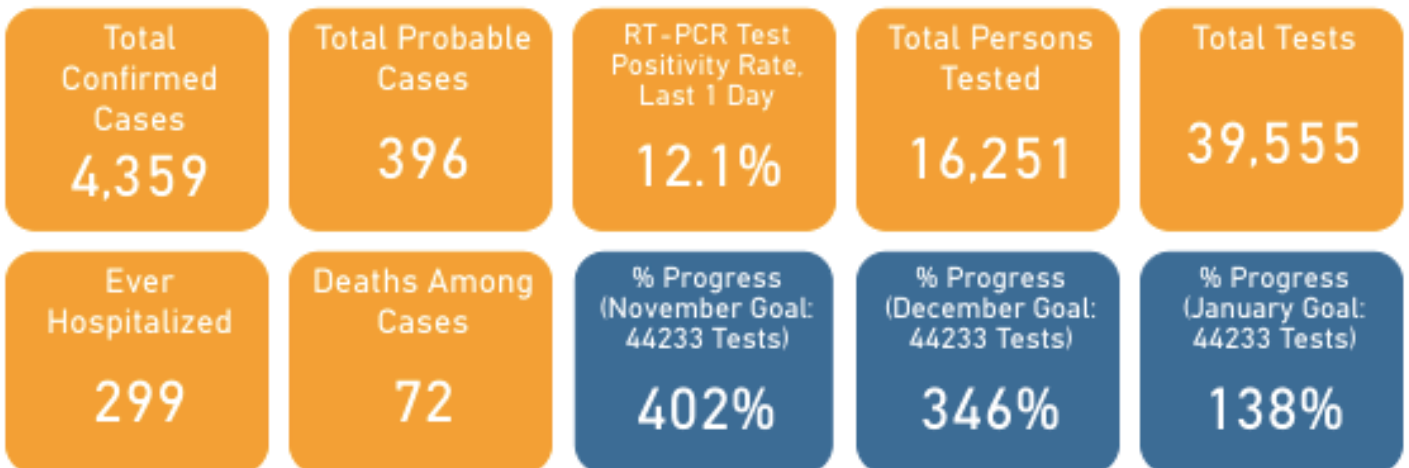
Brown County



Community Spread Map by County of Residence



Hover over a county to see its details, or click county to update the orange boxes.



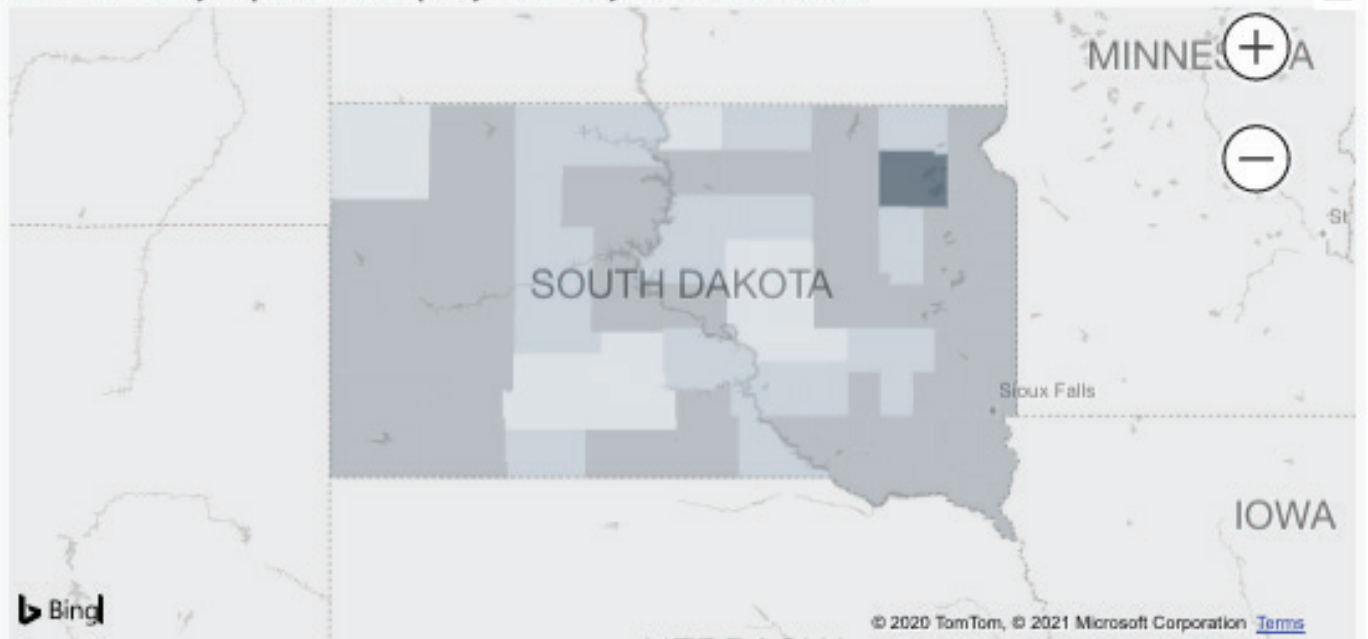
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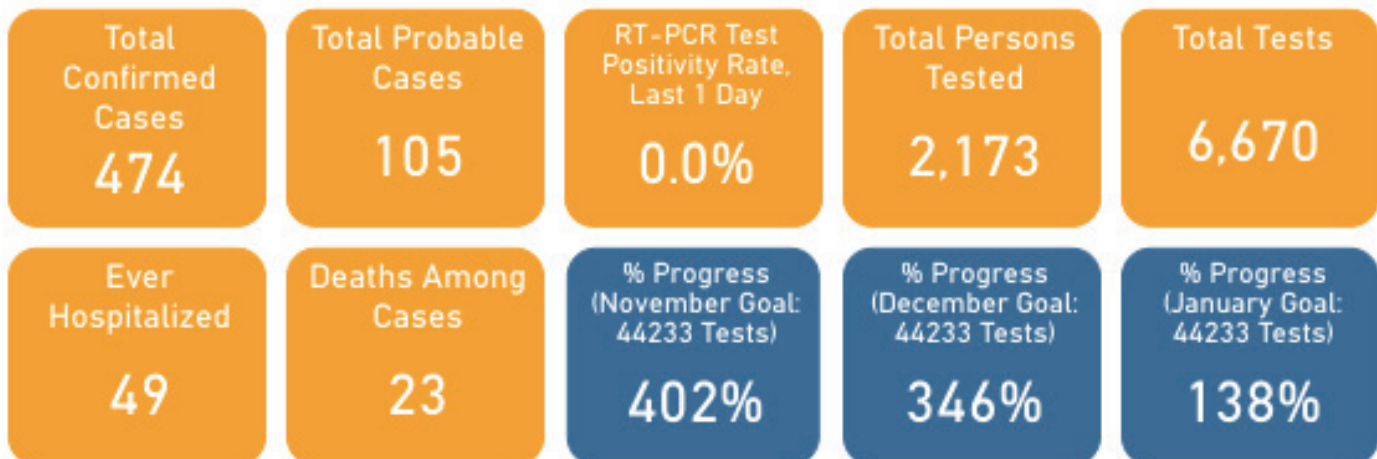
Day County



Community Spread Map by County of Residence



Hover over a county to see its details, or click county to update the orange boxes.



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Vaccinations

Total Doses Administered

55,531

Total Persons Administered a Vaccine

45,796

Manufacturer	Number of Doses
Moderna	26,859
Pfizer	28,672

Doses	Number of Recipients
Moderna - 1 dose	26,859
Pfizer - 1 dose	9,202
Pfizer - Series Complete	9,735

County	# Doses	# Persons (1 dose)	# Persons (2 doses)	Total # Persons
Aurora	85	85	0	85
Beadle	1047	663	192	855
Bennett*	51	47	2	49
Bon Homme*	443	429	7	436
Brookings	1498	1,064	217	1,281
Brown	2282	2,238	22	2,260
Brule*	232	228	2	230
Buffalo*	4	4	0	4
Butte	187	183	2	185
Campbell	202	176	13	189
Charles Mix*	313	307	3	310
Clark	168	156	6	162
Clay	788	716	36	752
Codington*	1571	1,201	185	1,386
Corson*	16	14	1	15
Custer*	336	306	15	321
Davison	1441	1,365	38	1,403
Day*	335	317	9	326
Deuel	186	158	14	172
Dewey*	88	86	1	87
Douglas*	207	203	2	205
Edmunds	167	163	2	165
Fall River*	332	326	3	329
Faulk	162	160	1	161
Grant*	438	422	8	430
Gregory*	238	230	4	234
Haakon*	90	90	0	90

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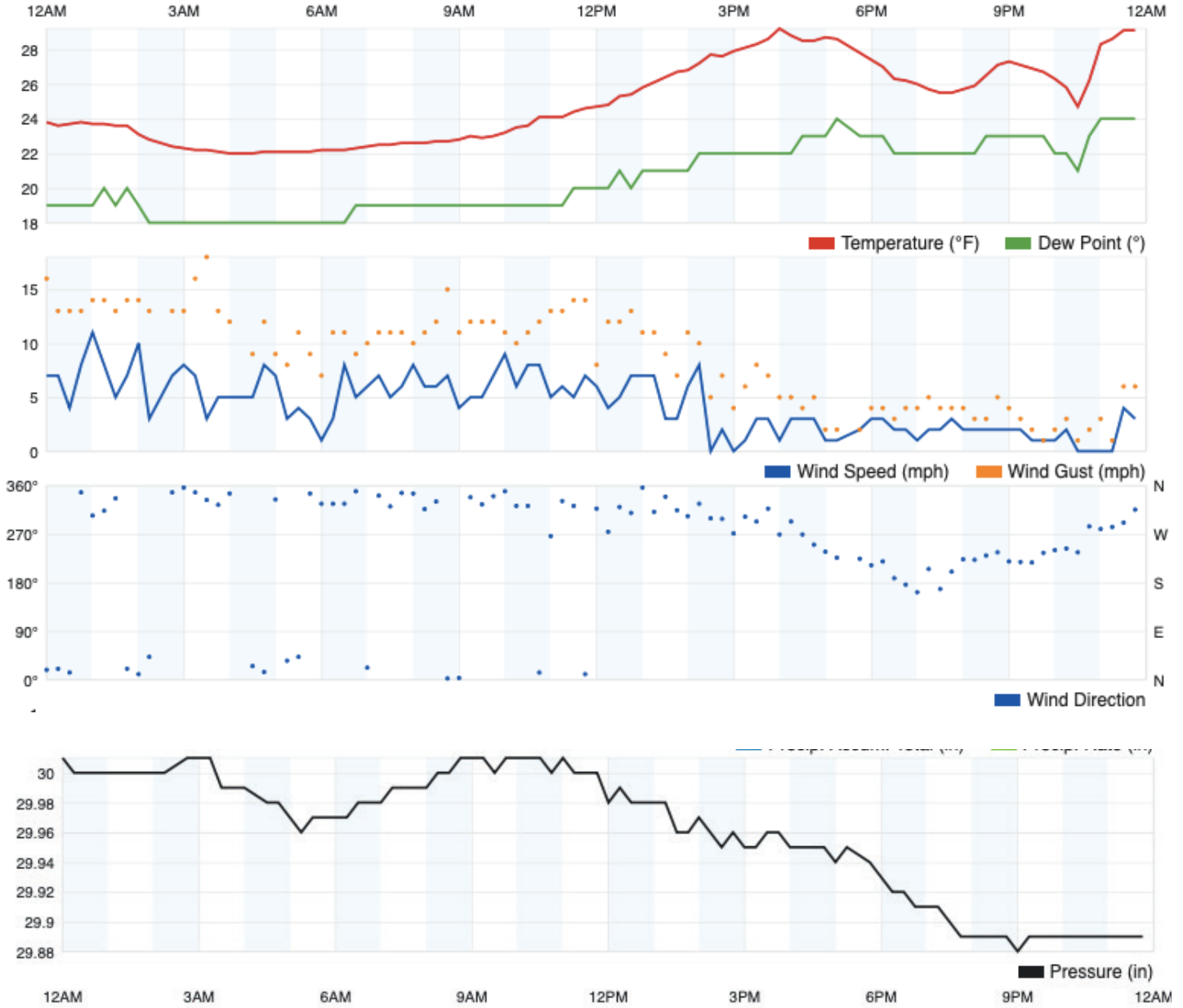
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Hamlin	237	187	25	212
Hand	208	190	9	199
Hanson	71	63	4	67
Harding	3	3	0	3
Hughes*	1052	1,020	16	1,036
Hutchinson*	572	522	25	547
Hyde*	99	99	0	99
Jackson*	49	49	0	49
Jerauld	76	62	7	69
Jones*	95	91	2	93
Kingsbury	345	267	39	306
Lake	679	365	157	522
Lawrence	692	664	14	678
Lincoln	6983	2,727	2,128	4,855
Lyman*	67	65	1	66
Marshall*	225	219	3	222
McCook	371	249	61	310
McPherson	21	21	0	21
Meade*	771	593	89	682
Mellette*	6	6	0	6
Miner	143	115	14	129
Minnehaha	17361	7,503	4,929	12,432
Moody*	273	227	23	250
Oglala Lakota*	22	14	4	18
Pennington*	5714	4,030	842	4,872
Perkins*	52	52	0	52
Potter	125	121	2	123
Roberts*	542	530	6	536
Sanborn	111	101	5	106
Spink	516	498	9	507
Stanley*	146	140	3	143
Sully	33	27	3	30
Todd*	29	25	2	27
Tripp*	273	271	1	272
Turner	671	487	92	579
Union	258	226	16	242
Walworth*	325	163	81	244
Yankton	1757	1,723	17	1,740
Ziebach*	15	15	0	15
Other	1636	994	321	1,315

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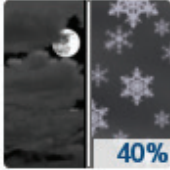



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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs






Broton Daily Independent

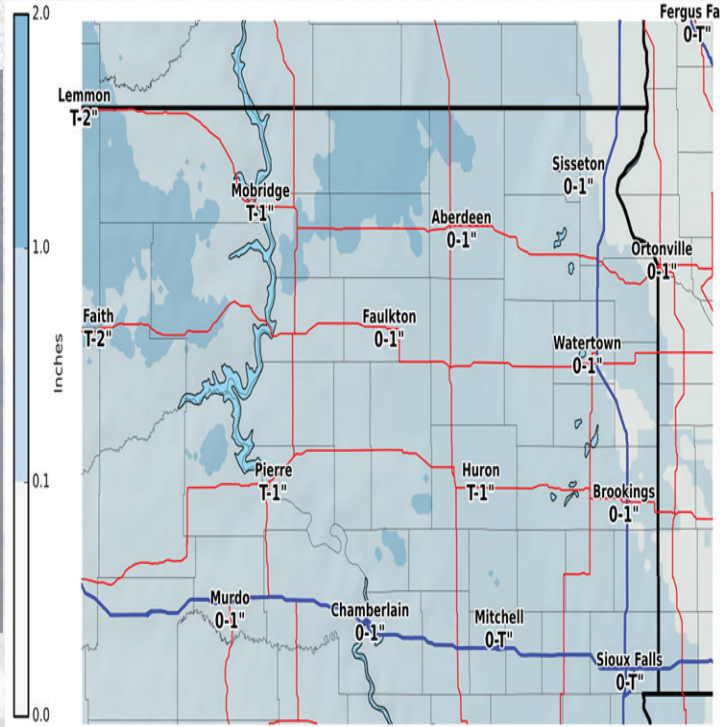
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Today	Tonight	M.L.King Day	Monday Night	Tuesday
				
Becoming Cloudy	Mostly Cloudy then Chance Snow	Snow Likely	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Sunny
High: 33 °F	Low: 18 °F	High: 26 °F	Low: 13 °F	High: 31 °F



Continued Mild With Light Snow Early Monday

Today	Tonight	Monday
		
Mix of Sun & Clouds	Light Snow	Light Snow w/ Partial Clearing Late
HIGHS: Low 40s West to Low 30s Far East	LOWS: 20s West to Teens East	HIGHS: Mid 30s West to Low 20s East



Visit www.weather.gov/abr for a detailed local forecast

Updated: 1/17/2021 2:59 AM CT

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

A mix of sun and clouds is expected today with more clouds in eastern South Dakota compared to west river. A system will move in late today and bring light snow to the region tonight before tapering Monday. Only an inch or two accumulations expected with this system.

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Today in Weather History

January 17, 1996: Two to as much as fifteen inches of snow, high winds from 40 to 60 mph, and cold arctic air resulted in blizzard conditions and extreme wind chills from 40 below to 70 below from the middle morning of the 17th to the early evening of the 18th. Most schools, federal, state, and county offices were closed. Various activities also canceled. Travel was tough due to the near zero visibility with some vehicles stranded. Highway 12 from Webster to the Minnesota border and Interstate-29 closed on the 18th. Hundreds of people were stranded with some people stranded in their vehicles. Some pheasants and wildlife were lost due to the snow packed so hard they could not dig out. Some snowfall amounts include; 2 inches at Highmore, 3 inches at Pierre and 9NE Reliance, 5 inches at Mobridge, Presho, Roscoe, 10SE Stephan, and Ree Heights, 6 inches at Tulare, 7 inches 12W Tulare and 5E 3S Faulkton, 8 inches 11E 2S Hosmer and at Doland, 9 inches at Mellette, Aberdeen, and Redfield, and 10 inches at Eureka and Britton, and 12 inches at Wilmot, Rosholt, and Ortonville, Minnesota. Fifteen inches occurred at Wheaton, Clinton, and Graceville. The extreme wind chills along with some blowing snow continued across central and north central South Dakota into the early evening of the 18th.

January 17, 2012: Below are some very rare lake effect waterspouts. Chris Westcott took these pictures in the vicinity of Lower Brule. The waterspouts form from the instability created when the air associated with the relatively warm open waters of the Missouri River interacts with the frigid air located just above the surface. These types of waterspouts have a very short lifespan and dissipate just as quickly as they form. Chris saw six of them at one time.

1490: On the night of January 17 through the 18th, a "certain fine rain, which froze whilst it fell, and make icicles upon trees" occurred in Florence, Italy. "There was such a quantity of it, that the weight bowed the trees down to the ground and broke the branches." The above is from "A Florentine Diary from 1450 to 1516" by Landucci, Luca.

1817 - A luminous snowstorm occurred in Vermont and New Hampshire. Saint Elmo's fire appeared as static discharges on roof peaks, fence posts, and the hats and fingers of people. Thunderstorms prevailed over central New England. (David Ludlum)

1893 - The mercury dipped to 17 degrees below zero at Millsboro, DE, to establish a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1837: The green flash was apparently first documented by Captain Back of the H. M. S. Terror while in the Arctic during its expedition of 1836-1837. He wrote: "In the morning however, at a quarter before ten o'clock while standing on an ice hummock about 17 feet high, and looking toward the east, I had observed the upper limb of the sun, as it filled a triangular cleft on the ridge of the headland, of the most brilliant emerald color, a phenomenon which I had not witnessed before in these regions."

1972 - A single storm unloaded 77.5 inches of snow at Summit, MT, to establish a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1982 - Strong chinook winds caused severe wind damage in Boulder, CO. Wind gusts to 118 mph was recorded on the roof of the Environmental Research Laboratories (ERL), and a wind gust to 137 mph was measured atop the roof of the NCAR building (in the southwest part of the city, 600 feet above ground level). The high winds uprooted trees and damage roofs. (Storm Data)

1987 - A winter storm spread snow from the Southern Rockies into the Middle Mississippi Valley and southwestern sections of the Great Lakes Region, and freezing rain across Texas and Oklahoma. Snowfall totals ranged up to 16 inches at Tulia TX, with 12 inches at Wellington KS. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A Pacific storm battered the southern coast of California. Winds gusting to 65 mph uprooted trees in San Diego. Los Angeles reported an all-time record low barometric pressure reading of 29.25 inches. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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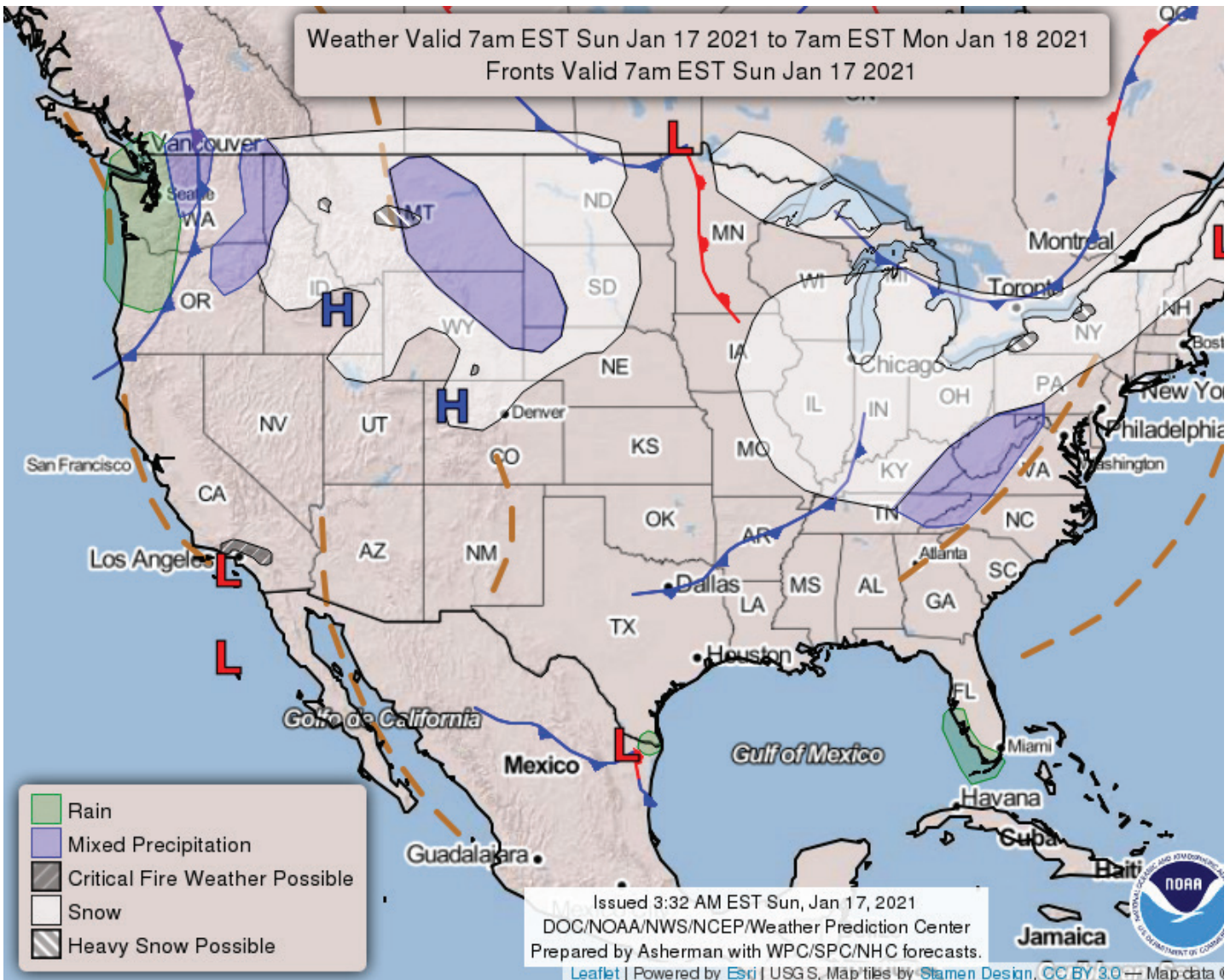
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 30 °F at 11:59 PM
Low Temp: 22 °F at 5:09 AM
Wind: 18 mph at 3:27 AM
Precip:

Today's Info

Record High: 48° in 1947
Record Low: -32 in 1997
Average High: 22°F
Average Low: 1°F
Average Precip in Jan.: 0.27
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.14
Average Precip to date: 0.27
Precip Year to Date: 0.14
Sunset Tonight: 5:20 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:08 a.m.



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LIFE'S BOOMERANGS

The aborigines are given credit for being the first tribe to develop boomerangs. Although there are many different types and varieties of boomerangs, most of us are familiar with what is called the "returning boomerang." Shaped like a bent arm, when properly thrown, it will return to the one who threw it. Initially, they were used for hunting and war. Now, for many, they have become a recreational object.

David made an interesting observation about life's boomerangs: "The trouble he causes recoils on himself, his violence comes down on his own head." Not a pleasant thought for the one who wanted or intended to harm another person.

Remember Haman? He was a conceited and corrupt prime minister. He is a great example of how life can "boomerang."

Haman was determined to destroy every Jew in Persia, especially Mordecai. But when Mordecai and his people heard of this diabolical plot, they called upon the Lord for His help. Esther, the queen, decided to give a party and invited Haman to join her and the king. He was elated! His heart swelled with pride! He thought he had it made!

While enjoying the festivities, Queen Esther stood before the king and exposed Haman and his plot. What he had planned for Mordecai "boomeranged." By nightfall, Haman was hanging on the seventy-five-foot gallows that he had built for Mordecai. No one came to his funeral. In fact, no one liked Haman, except Haman.

Paul said: "The man who sows to please his sinful nature will reap destruction."

Prayer: Help us, Father, to understand and accept the simple fact that whatever we sow, we will certainly reap. Give us pure thoughts and helpful motives. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: The trouble they make for others backfires on them. The violence they plan falls on their own heads. Psalm 7:16

News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Dakota Cash

04-15-18-22-34

(four, fifteen, eighteen, twenty-two, thirty-four)

Estimated jackpot: \$91,000

Lotto America

06-16-21-30-36, Star Ball: 3, ASB: 3

(six, sixteen, twenty-one, thirty, thirty-six; Star Ball: three; ASB: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$2.55 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$850 million

Powerball

14-20-39-65-67, Powerball: 2, Power Play: 3

(fourteen, twenty, thirty-nine, sixty-five, sixty-seven; Powerball: two; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$640 million

South Dakota sees fast vaccine delivery, faces rural test

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota is looking to build on one of the nation's fastest COVID-19 vaccinations rollouts so far by making vaccines available to a much larger group of people, though some health care providers are cautioning that vulnerable people in rural areas could be left behind in the rush.

South Dakota has vaccinated 6.5% of the population, one of the highest rates in the country, and distributed over 60% of the vaccine doses it has received from the federal government.

Secretary of Health Kim Malsam-Rysdon announced that the state will begin vaccinating people age 80 and over, as well as people with high-risk medical conditions, on Monday. It is almost done vaccinating medical workers and residents of long-term care facilities, which have been hard-hit by the virus.

While other states have seen clunky roll-outs and jammed lines for vaccine appointments, the distribution program in South Dakota has been relatively smooth. That's thanks to a partnership between the Department of Health and the major hospital systems, which have handled the distribution and administration of shots.

The Department of Health and hospital systems have been preparing for months for the arrival of vaccines. They pored over a map of the state and divided it between the hospital systems, marking each county for which hospital system would handle vaccine distribution, said Dr. Jeremy Caulwels, the chief physician at Sanford Health.

Caulwels described the move to vaccinate patients who live in the community as one of the most exciting developments in the battle against the coronavirus.

"Hopefully this represents the beginning of the end," he said.

Sanford has purchased ultra-cold freezers and set them up at strategic locations across the region so that vaccines can be stored and rapidly deployed where they are needed. At one site in Sioux Falls, freezers keep vaccines ready for use at a distribution site across the street that can administer up to 2,000 shots in a day, Caulwels said.

He acknowledged that the next phase of administering vaccines could be a challenge, as roughly 300,000 become eligible for shots. He said they are tackling that by breaking the group into "bite-size" pieces and utilizing an electronics records system and hospital network that is designed to follow patients as they

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receive medical care across the mostly rural state.

But as vaccines become available to communities across the state, some health care providers in rural areas are worried their patients will be left behind by the reliance on large hospital systems, according to Lori Dumke, the director of clinical and quality services at Community HealthCare Association of the Dakotas, which represents medical clinics in rural areas.

"What if you have 75 miles to drive to your closest Sanford or Avera clinic?" Dumke said.

She said that the physicians who tend to the people in rural communities are used to overcoming barriers like a lack of access to the internet or concerns over the safety of vaccines, but so far, they have been mostly kept out of the vaccination plans.

Dumke compared the plan in South Dakota to North Dakota, where shots have also been given at one of the highest rates in the nation. In that state, local health care providers and county health departments are providing vaccines that are distributed based on population.

"We need to focus on getting as many high-risk patients as possible distributed to stop COVID," she said. "To have equal distribution across the state is imperative for that to happen."

Health officials reported four deaths Saturday which brought South Dakota's COVID-19 deaths to 145 in January and 1,633 overall. The four deaths two people over age 80, one was in his 70s and one in his 60s. There were two deaths reported in Minnehaha County with one in Hutchinson and Lincoln counties.

The daily report from the Department of Health included 341 positive tests, raising the total to 105,278 with 4,837 of the cases still considered active. That's up 105 cases from Friday.

Johnson: Intensity of threats increased since Capitol breach

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — U.S. Rep. Dusty Johnson says general threats against personal safety are part of being a politician. But, Johnson says since the riot at the U.S. Capitol last week the degree of anger and specificity of the threats have increased.

Johnson says in some cases he and his staff have turned over information to law enforcement to investigate.

The Republican congressman says the threats won't deter him from attending President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration next week. Johnson and Sen. John Thune will attend the ceremony.

Staff for Sen. Mike Rounds say he's unlikely to attend the event because of "logistical challenges," which they did not explain.

Johnson tells the Argus Leader that the Capitol campus will likely be "be one of the "safest places on the planet" Jan. 20.

"We're most at risk when we're not prepared," Johnson said. "In that way, it's often the unexpected that catches us unaware and catches us in a vulnerable position."

He said officials and law enforcement weren't ready when rioters breached the Capitol Jan. 6 to stop the formal confirmation of Electoral College votes. The violence took the lives of five people.

Johnson said he was thankful for the Federal Air Marshal Service for providing security during travel and for the police department in Mitchell where he and his family reside. The local police department has gone above and beyond to keep his home and family safe, he said.

UK seeks to give 1st COVID shot to all adults by September

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The U.K. government plans to offer a first dose of COVID-19 vaccine to every adult by September as the nation's health service battles the worst crisis in its 72-year-history.

Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said Sunday that the government is still opening new vaccination sites and will soon begin trials that will give round-the-clock injections at some locations to help increase the pace of delivery.

"Our target is by September to have offered all the adult population a first dose," he told Sky News. "If we can do it faster than that, great, but that's the roadmap."

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Britain has more than 51 million adults in its population of 67.5 million people.

The ambitious vaccination program comes amid crushing pressures on the National Health Service. Already beleaguered hospitals are admitting another COVID-19 patient every 30 seconds, putting the service in its most precarious situation ever, said Simon Stevens, chief executive of NHS England.

"The facts are very clear and I'm not going to sugarcoat them, hospitals are under extreme pressure and staff are under extreme pressure," he told the BBC. "Since Christmas Day we've seen another 15,000 increase in the in-patients in hospitals across England. That's the equivalent of filling 30 hospitals full of coronavirus patients."

Britain's health care system is staggering as doctors and nurses battle a more contagious variant of the coronavirus coupled with cold, wet winter weather that drives people inside, where infections spread more easily.

The surge in infections has pushed the number of people hospitalized with COVID-19 to a record 37,475, more than 73% higher than during the first peak of the pandemic in April. Britain has reported 88,747 coronavirus-related deaths, more than any other country in Europe and the fifth-highest number worldwide.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Jan. 2 ordered England into its third national lockdown in an effort to slow the spread of the virus and protect the NHS, which Stevens said now has some 50,000 employees off work due to COVID-19 infections and exposure quarantines.

The government says it won't review the lockdown measures until mid-February, by which time it plans to offer at least one dose of vaccine to everyone over 70, as well as to frontline health care workers and others who are especially vulnerable to COVID-19.

Once that goal has been reached, the U.K. will offer the vaccine to everyone over 50 before finally moving on to everyone over 18.

Unlike other nations, Britain has chosen to stretch out the time between vaccine doses from 21 days to up to 12 weeks — a decision that means more people will get at least one dose more quickly.

Britain has approved three vaccines — ones by Pfizer-BioNTech, Oxford-AstraZeneca and Moderna. The first two are already being used, while the Moderna doses are not expected until spring.

Follow AP coverage of the coronavirus pandemic at:

<https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic>

<https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-vaccine>

<https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

Vice President-elect Harris to resign her Senate seat Monday

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — Vice President-elect Kamala Harris will resign her Senate seat on Monday, two days before she and President-elect Joe Biden are inaugurated.

Aides to the California Democrat confirmed the timing and said Gov. Gavin Newsom was aware of her decision, clearing the way for him to appoint fellow Democrat Alex Padilla, now California's secretary of state, to serve the final two years of Harris' term.

Padilla will be the first Latino senator from California, where about 40% of residents are Hispanic. Newsom announced his choice in December, following intense lobbying for the rare Senate vacancy from the nation's most populous state.

Harris will give no farewell Senate floor speech. The Senate is not scheduled to reconvene until Tuesday, the eve of Inauguration Day.

Padilla's arrival, along with Harris becoming the Senate's presiding officer when she's sworn-in as vice president, is part of Democrats' upcoming Senate majority. But the party still needs Sens.-elect Jon Ossoff and Raphael Warnock of Georgia to be certified as victors in their Jan. 5 elections and then be sworn in.

Harris will be the first Black woman and first woman of South Asian descent to serve as vice president, but her Senate departure leaves the chamber's roster without a Black woman. Harris was just the sec-

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and Black woman senator, winning her California election 17 years after Democrat Carol Moseley Braun finished a single term representing Illinois.

Among many potential successors to Harris, Newsom passed over at least two prominent Black women, U.S. Reps. Karen Bass and Barbara Lee. Bass also was among Biden's finalists for running mate.

Democrats were in the minority during Harris' four years on Capitol Hill. Perhaps her biggest mark came as a fierce questioner of judicial nominees and other witnesses as a member of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Harris was viewed as a future presidential candidate almost immediately upon joining the Senate in 2017. She announced her White House bid in January 2019 but dropped out the subsequent December after a lackluster campaign and before the ballots were cast in Iowa's first-in-the-nation caucuses. Biden, himself a former senator, invited her to join the national ticket in August.

The wins by Ossoff and Warnock in Georgia ensured a 50-50 Senate, positioning Harris as the tie-breaking vote for Democratic control. But Ossoff and Warnock cannot join the chamber until Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger certifies the final vote tally. Raffensperger, a Republican, has said he could act as soon as Tuesday, conceivably allowing Padilla, Ossoff and Warnock to join the Senate together as early as that afternoon's session.

But Republicans will maintain a narrow majority until all three take office and Harris sits in the presiding officer's chair.

Harris' early departure from the Senate has multiple precedents.

Biden was the last sitting senator to be elected vice president. He resigned his Delaware post on Jan. 15, 2009, five days before he and Barack Obama were inaugurated. Obama, a senator at the time of his election, had resigned his Illinois seat two months before Biden.

Players in lockdown after positive virus cases in Australia

By JOHN PYE AP Sports Writer

Grand Slam champions are among the elite players in hard lockdown after four positive tests for COVID-19 emerged from two of the charter flights bringing players, staff, officials and media to Australia for the first tennis major of the season.

Some players were angry at being classified as close contacts merely for being on board those flights with people who later tested positive and, therefore, forced into a harsher quarantine than the broader group of players who'll be allowed out of their rooms to practice for up to five hours per day.

But local health authorities have said all players were warned of the risks in advance. And any players considering bending the rules have been warned. Breach quarantine regulations and there's the prospect of heavy fines or being moved to a more secure quarantine complex with police stationed at their doors.

Three cases were announced Saturday and Victoria state's COVID-19 quarantine commissioner Emma Cassar told a news conference on Sunday that there'd been a fourth positive test involving a person flying in for the Australian Open. So far, none has involved a player.

The Australian Broadcasting Corp. reported later Sunday there could be a fifth case from a different charter flight — from Doha to Melbourne — following a tweet from French player Alexandre Muller.

Muller, who lost in the third round of the qualifying tournament held in Doha, Qatar last week, posted a screen shot that appeared to be a notification of a zoom call with the Australian Open chief health officer for passengers on the flight from Doha. The tournament didn't release any details. It could mean even more players in hard lockdown.

Three cases emerged from the flight from Los Angeles to Melbourne, officials said, including a member of the air crew, a coach and the latest being a member of the TV broadcasting team. The other case was a coach who took the charter flight from Abu Dhabi to Melbourne.

All four had tested negative before boarding their flights to Australia. All four have now been transferred to a health hotel.

Sylvain Bruneau, who coaches 2019 U.S. Open champion Bianca Andreescu, posted on social media to

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say he was on the flight from Abu Dhabi and had tested positive.

Two-time Open champion Victoria Azarenka and the 2014 U.S. Open runner-up Kei Nishikori were reported to be on the flight from Los Angeles. All passengers from both of those flights are in hard lockdown.

Cassar, who is also in charge of the state's prisons, said there'd been cases of people "testing" the quarantine procedures, triggering a warning and a conversation with the state's police, but no attempts to escape quarantine.

"There'll be zero tolerance for that behavior," Cassar said. "This is designed to make people safe. We make no apologies for that."

Several players in quarantine, including Sorana Cirstea of Romania, Belinda Bencic of Switzerland and Yulia Putintseva of Kazakhstan complained in social media posts that the rules seemed to have changed between what they saw before traveling to Australia and what was being imposed in Melbourne.

Cirstea posted on Twitter: "If they would have told us this rule before I would not play Australia ... I would have stayed home. They told us we would fly at 20% capacity, in sections and we would be a close contact ONLY if my team or cohort tests positive."

But government officials have rejected those claims.

"There's no other way you can consider this. If you're on a plane 16-24 hours, with air that circulates throughout the plane, you are a close contact," Cassar said. "This was made very clear and nothing has changed."

Tennis Australia confirmed there were 24 players on the flight from Los Angeles and 23 on the flight from Abu Dhabi. Those were among 17 charter flights from seven international destinations bringing up to 1,200 players, coaches, staff and officials into Australia for the tournament.

Australian Open tournament director Craig Tiley told Australia's Nine Network that organizers and players were forewarned there'd be a "significant risk" of restrictions being imposed on players if there were positive COVID-19 cases.

"We did make it very clear in the beginning," Tiley said. "Now we have to manage an environment over the next 14 days for those who won't be able to practice."

"It's a tough situation. We've got to do whatever we can to make it as fair as possible for those players that are in lockdown."

British player Heather Watson said on Twitter that she and others who arrived from Abu Dhabi "are NOT allowed out (of) our rooms." She posted the notification that she and others who were on the flight received informing them of the quarantine.

Being unable to leave their room would mean the only workouts they'd be able to have would be on exercise equipment left in the rooms of all of the players.

Other players will be allowed to train under strict conditions and with supervision, although those practice sessions in Melbourne had been delayed while health authorities waited to receive all the coronavirus tests.

Five-time Australian Open finalist Andy Murray and American Madison Keys haven't traveled to Australia after testing positive in mandatory pre-flight checks.

Tiley said there were no plans to delay the Australian Open any further — it's already starting three weeks later than usual — although organizers were reviewing the schedule for the warmup tournaments starting Feb. 1 to find ways to make it easier for those players in strict quarantine to prepare.

Tickets are on sale for the tournament, although the crowd capacity at Melbourne Park will be limited.

Australia's international borders are basically closed to travelers, although there are exemptions in special circumstances. Each of Australia's states and territories has its own border and quarantine rules, and those can change on very short notice.

Victoria state, which has as its capital Melbourne, accounted for 810 of Australia's 909 deaths from COVID-19, most of those during a deadly second wave three months ago which resulted in curfews and lockdowns for the city.

Novak Djokovic, Rafael Nadal and Serena Williams are among a group of players involved in an exhibition event in Adelaide, South Australia state, on Jan. 29. Those players flew straight to Adelaide to begin their

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hotel quarantine period. So far, there's been no COVID-19 cases reported from the quarantine in Adelaide.
___ AP Sports Writer Dennis Passa contributed from Brisbane, Australia.

More AP tennis: <https://apnews.com/apf-Tennis> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Gen. Milley key to military continuity as Biden takes office

By ROBERT BURNS AP National Security Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — In taking charge of a Pentagon battered by leadership churn, the Biden administration will look to one holdover as a source of military continuity: Gen. Mark Milley, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

President-elect Joe Biden will inherit Milley as his senior military adviser, and although Biden could replace Milley, he likely won't.

A Princeton-educated history buff with the gift of gab, Milley has been a staunch defender of the military's apolitical tradition even as President Donald Trump packed the Pentagon with political loyalists. Milley reassured Congress that the military would stay out of the elections and, in no uncertain terms, told troops that the Capitol riot was an act of sedition. Last summer, he put his own job on the line by apologizing for being part of the entourage that accompanied Trump to a photo-op outside a church near the White House after peaceful protesters were forcibly removed from the area.

Military leaders always have critical roles in ensuring stability from one administration to the next. But Milley will be especially important for continuity after a delayed, rocky postelection transition and uncertainty about when the Senate will confirm top Pentagon nominees.

Milley, 62, is early in the second year of a four-year term as the military's top officer. His predecessor, Marine Gen. Joseph Dunford, now retired, was a similarly transitional figure, appointed by President Barack Obama and continuing for nearly three years with Trump.

The chairman of the Joint Chiefs does not command troops but advises a president and a secretary of defense on approaches to major military problems.

Biden will have many problems on his plate from the get-go, including Iran and North Korea. In addition to dealing with potential military crises, Biden would look to Milley, along with his prospective secretary of defense, Lloyd Austin, for advice on broader strategic goals, including pursuing arms control with Russia, countering terrorism in the Mideast and competing with China.

Milley already is being singled out as a go-to official at a beleaguered Pentagon.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., called him two days after the Jan. 6 insurrection at the Capitol to ask what might be done to check Trump's authority to order a nuclear attack in his final days in office. The Joint Chiefs chairman is not in the nuclear chain of command, but Pelosi's call reflected a view that, with no Senate-confirmed secretary of defense in place, stability starts with Milley.

Milley is not shy about taking charge.

He loves to talk, often relying on his deep knowledge of military history, occasionally personalizing his point, never reluctant to assert his view. Milley speaks reverently of his late father, a veteran of combat in the Pacific theater of World War II, and worriedly of America's vulnerability to space-based warfare, which he says could bring on the next Pearl Harbor.

A Massachusetts native, Milley was commissioned as an armor officer in 1980 and rose to become Army chief of staff 35 years later. When Trump announced him as his choice to be Joint Chiefs chairman nearly a year before Dunford's term expired, he called Milley a "great gentleman" and outstanding soldier.

By June 2020, however, Milley seemed at risk of being fired; he privately opposed Trump's talk of invoking the Insurrection Act to put active-duty troops in the streets of the nation's capital to counter protests sparked by the killing by Minneapolis police of a Black man, George Floyd.

Milley also expressed public regret at being part of a Trump entourage that strolled across Lafayette Square on June 1 to be positioned near a church where Trump held up a Bible for photographers. Critics hit Milley for appearing to be a political pawn. Days later, Milley said he had made a big mistake. Through

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the months that followed, he seemed at risk of being sacked by Trump.

Michael O'Hanlon, a defense analyst at the Brookings Institution, said Biden should not see Milley as tainted by Trump.

"If Biden wants to send some messages about reconciliation and bipartisan cooperation, working closely with Milley ... wouldn't be a bad place to start," O'Hanlon said.

It appears unlikely that Austin, Biden's defense secretary nominee, will win Senate confirmation by Inauguration Day, Wednesday. Anticipating that bump, Biden has persuaded a Trump administration official, Deputy Defense Secretary David Norquist, to stay on temporarily as acting secretary. That makes Milley's presence even more significant.

Once confirmed, Austin would enter a Pentagon reeling from an extraordinary period of leadership instability. Trump went through the most defense secretaries of any one-term president in history — two who had been confirmed by the Senate and three others who served only in an acting, placeholder capacity.

The Austin nomination adds a further twist in Milley's path, given Austin's background as a recently retired Army general. Questions are being raised in Congress and elsewhere about how having a former career military officer lead the Pentagon will affect relations between civilian and military officials.

Roger Zakheim, Washington director of the Ronald Reagan Presidential Foundation and Institute, says the extra effort required to win a congressional waiver of the prohibition against recently retired military officers serving as defense secretary would appear to give Biden less reason to remove Milley.

"You don't want to create more turbulence here beyond what they're already going to have to deal with getting Gen. Austin through the nomination process," Zakheim said.

Biden would look to Milley not just for advice on current problems but also for guidance on future adjustments to military structure and strategy, including changes to the U.S. military footprint abroad. Milley seems amenable to the prospect of Biden seeking to find savings in defense budgets.

"We in the Pentagon, civilian and military alike, have got to do a quick reality check on the national budget and what is likely to happen in the not-too-distant future," Milley said recently. "I suspect that at best the Pentagon's budgets will start flattening out. There is a reasonable prospect that they could actually decline."

Navalny plans to return to Russia after recovery in Germany

By MSTYSLAV CHERNOV Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — Leading Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny plans to fly home to Russia on Sunday after recovering in Germany from his poisoning in August with a nerve agent.

Navalny announced Wednesday that he would return, despite Russian authorities' threats to put him behind bars again. He is expected to fly from Berlin to Moscow. On Thursday, Russia's prison service said that he faces immediate arrest once he returns.

Navalny, who has blamed his poisoning on the Kremlin, charged that Russian President Vladimir Putin was now trying to deter him from coming home with new legal motions. The Kremlin has repeatedly denied a role in the opposition leader's poisoning.

At the end of December, the Federal Penitentiary Service, or FSIN, warned Navalny that he faced time in prison if he fails to immediately report to its office in line with the terms of a suspended sentence and probation he received for a 2014 conviction on charges of embezzlement and money laundering that he rejected as politically motivated. The European Court for Human Rights had ruled that his conviction was unlawful.

The FSIN said Thursday it issued an arrest warrant for Navalny after he failed to report to its office. The prison service, which has asked a Moscow court to turn Navalny's 3 1/2-year suspended sentence into a real one, said it's "obliged to take all the necessary action to detain Navalny pending the court's ruling."

Moscow's Vnukovo Airport, where Navalny's flight is due to land, last week said it is banning journalists from its terminal, citing epidemiological concerns. Many of his supporters were expected to try to gather in the terminal to welcome Navalny, if he is able to get through passport control without being arrested.

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Security measures at the airport were heightened on Sunday, with several prisoner-transport trucks parked outside.

The independent newspaper Novaya Gazeta and opposition social media reported Sunday that several Navalny supporters in St. Petersburg had been removed from Moscow-bound trains or been prevented from boarding flights late Saturday and early Sunday, including the coordinator of his staff for the region of Russia's second-largest city.

Navalny fell into a coma while aboard a domestic flight from Siberia to Moscow on Aug. 20. He was transferred from a hospital in Siberia to a Berlin hospital two days later.

Labs in Germany, France and Sweden, and tests by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, established that he was exposed to a Soviet-era Novichok nerve agent.

Russian authorities insisted that the doctors who treated Navalny in Siberia before he was airlifted to Germany found no traces of poison and have challenged German officials to provide proof of his poisoning. They refused to open a full-fledged criminal inquiry, citing a lack of evidence that Navalny was poisoned.

Last month, Navalny released the recording of a phone call he said he made to a man he described as an alleged member of a group of officers of the Federal Security Service, or FSB, who purportedly poisoned him in August and then tried to cover it up. The FSB dismissed the recording as fake.

Geir Moulson in Berlin and Jim Heintz in Moscow contributed to this report.

Report: Images show latest 'attack' on Ethiopia refugee camp

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — New satellite images of a refugee camp in Ethiopia's embattled Tigray region show more than 400 structures have been badly damaged in what a research group believes is the latest "intentional attack" by fighters.

The report by the U.K.-based DX Open Network nonprofit, shared with The Associated Press, says "it is likely that the fire events of 16 January are yet another episode in a series of military incursions on the camp as reported by (the United Nations refugee agency)."

The Shimelba camp is one of four that hosted 96,000 refugees from nearby Eritrea when fighting erupted in early November between Ethiopian forces and those of the defiant Tigray region. The fighting has swept through the camps and two of them, including Shimelba, remain inaccessible to aid workers. Many refugees have fled.

On Thursday, U.N. refugee chief Filippo Grandi cited recent satellite imagery of fires and other destruction at the two inaccessible camps as "concrete indications of major violations of international law."

On Sunday the U.N. refugee agency urged that it be given access to the camps.

"Until November, 8,700 refugees were registered in Shimelba. We have no information on how many refugees were still in the camp last week," U.N. refugee agency spokesman Chris Melzer said in an email. "We still have no access to the two northern camps, Shimelba and Hitsats (25,248 refugees registered in November). We demand access since the refugees are without supplies for two and a half months now and we are extremely concerned. We also saw satellite pictures and heard frightening reports. But since we don't have access we cannot confirm them."

The new report says the satellite images show "smoldering ruins, blackening of structures and collapsed roofs." The structures, it said, "match the profile of mud-brick dwellings constructed by the refugees themselves. The attackers likely split into multiple groups going door to door to set fires inside buildings," consistent with previous attacks on the Hitsats camp, which also is inaccessible.

Neither the U.N. nor DX Open Network has blamed anyone for the attacks, but the presence of troops from Eritrea, a bitter enemy of the Tigray region's now-fugitive leaders, has caused alarm. Grandi noted "many reliable reports and firsthand accounts" of abuses including the forced return of refugees to Eritrea.

The day after Grandi's statement, Eritrean Information Minister Yemane Gebremeskel tweeted that "UN-HCR seems to indulge, yet again, in another bout of gratuitous & irresponsible smear campaigns against

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Eritrea." He said Eritrea rejects the "forced repatriation of `refugees.'"

Eritrea has been described by human rights groups as one of the world's most repressive countries. Thousands of people have fled the country over the years to avoid a system of military conscription.

Fighting continues in parts of the Tigray region. Thousands of people have been killed and more than 2 million displaced.

The Latest: Austria tightens lockdown, extends it to Feb. 7

By The Associated Press undefined

BERLIN — Austria is extending its lockdown until Feb. 7 in an attempt to bring down still-high infection figures, as authorities worry about the possible impact of more infectious variants of the coronavirus.

Chancellor Sebastian Kurz said Sunday that distancing rules will be toughened, with people asked to stay 2 meters apart instead of 1 meter. They will also be told to wear full protective masks in public transport and shops, rather than just fabric face coverings.

Austria's current lockdown, its third, started on Dec. 26 and had been due to end on Jan. 24.

Kurz said Austria needs to get as close as it can to an infection level of 50 new cases per 100,000 residents over 7 days. The figure now stands at 131.

He said the plan is to reopen shops, schools and other services such as hairdressers on Feb. 8. But he said it won't be possible to reopen restaurants and hotels in February.

THE VIRUS OUTBREAK:

- Widespread vaccine skepticism hurts coronavirus vaccination efforts in Eastern Europe
- India starts world's largest COVID-19 vaccination drive
- Restaurants, bars in the United States scramble for propane amid pandemic winter
- China has finished building a 1,500-room hospital for COVID-19 patients to fight a surge in infections the government has blamed on infected people or goods from abroad.
- Brazil hasn't approved a single vaccine yet and health experts say its immunization plan is still incomplete, at best
- Italy faces a political crisis amid the pandemic as it anticipates European Union pandemic funds

Follow AP's coverage at <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-pandemic>, <https://apnews.com/hub/coronavirus-vaccine> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

MADRID — Spain on Sunday started to administer the second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine at nursing homes.

Spain has administered 768,000 doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, according to the health ministry. Spain is also rolling out the Moderna vaccine, with less than 500 doses administered as of Friday. The government has pledged to vaccinate 70% of Spain's 47 million inhabitants by summer.

Also on Sunday, Spain's government appealed to a court to overturn a decision by the regional authorities in Castilla y León to start its nightly curfew at 8:00 p.m., outside the range of 10 p.m.-12 p.m. established by the nation's state of emergency.

Health Minister Salvador Illa tells the El País newspaper that regional authorities "already have at their disposal the legal tools necessary to bend the curve" of infections. He left open the possibility of adjusting those tools, yet discarded the option of another at-home lockdown order like the one used in March and April.

Illa blamed family gatherings during the Christmas holidays for a sharp rise in infections. On Friday, Spain reported 49,197 new infections, its highest daily figure yet.

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BELGRADE, Serbia — Vaccines from the West, Russia or China? Or none at all? That dilemma faces nations in southeastern Europe, where coronavirus vaccination campaigns are off to a slow start — overshadowed by heated political debates and conspiracy theories.

In countries like the Czech Republic, Serbia, Bosnia, Romania and Bulgaria, vaccine skeptics have included former presidents and even some doctors. Serbian tennis champion Novak Djokovic was among those who said he did not want to be forced to get inoculated.

False beliefs that the coronavirus is a hoax or that vaccines would inject microchips into people have spread in the countries that were formerly under harsh Communist rule. Those who once routinely underwent mass inoculations are deeply split over whether to get the vaccines at all.

Only about 200,000 people applied for the vaccine in Serbia, a country of 7 million, in the days after authorities opened the procedure. By contrast, 1 million Serbians signed up for 100 euros (\$120) on the first day the government offered the pandemic aid.

Hoping to encourage vaccinations, Serbian officials have gotten their shots on TV. Yet they themselves have been split over whether to get the Western-made Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine or Russia's Sputnik V. Doses of vaccine from China's Sinopharm arrived Saturday.

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan's planning minister says the country's drug regulatory authority has approved the use of Oxford-AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine and the government is trying to make it available by the first quarter of the year.

Asad Umar, who is also the head of the national agency for COVID-19, told Geo TV that the vaccine in the first phase will be administered to health workers and those aged 65 and above.

Umar said the Chinese company CanSino is also holding clinical trials in Pakistan and hoped its vaccine would also be registered next month.

He said Pakistan will get the vaccines through the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization, or GAVI, and other alternative international sources. The AstraZeneca vaccine is being prepared in India, which has strained relations with rival Pakistan and says it will prioritize its own population.

Pakistan reported 2,521 new cases and 43 deaths in the last 24 hours.

BEIJING — China on Sunday reported 109 new confirmed COVID-19 cases, two-thirds of them in a northern province that abuts Beijing, and no deaths.

There were 72 new cases in Hebei province, where the government is building isolation hospitals with a total of 9,500 rooms to combat an upsurge in infections, according to the National Health Commission.

China had largely contained the virus that first was detected in the central city of Wuhan in late 2019 but has reported hundreds of new infections since December. The Health Commission on Saturday blamed them on travelers and imported goods it said brought the virus from abroad.

China's death toll stands at 4,653 out of 88,227 total cases.

MEXICO CITY — Mexico posted its second straight day of more than 20,000 coronavirus cases Saturday, suggesting a surge in a country already struggling in many areas with overflowing hospitals.

There were 20,523 newly confirmed cases Saturday after 21,366 infections were reported Friday. That was about double the daily rate of increase just a week ago. Reporting normally declines on weekends, suggesting next week may bring even higher numbers.

The country also recorded 1,219 more deaths, a near-record. The country has now seen almost 1.63 million total infections and has registered over 140,000 deaths so far in the pandemic.

In Mexico City, the current center of the pandemic in Mexico, 88% percent of hospital beds are full.

BATON ROUGE, La. — Louisiana has identified the state's first case of a coronavirus variant believed to be more transmissible than the original.

The governor's office said Saturday the case was detected in a person in the New Orleans area.

The variant, first detected in Britain, has alarmed officials in many nations because studies indicate it

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may spread more easily than other viral strains. Gov. John Bel Edwards issued a statement saying it is urgent "that everyone double down on the mitigation measures that we know are effective in reducing the spread of the virus."

Edwards noted that the variant has been detected in at least 15 other states.

CARSON CITY, Nev. — Nevada on Saturday reported a daily record high of 63 COVID-19 deaths along with 2,040 additional confirmed cases as the coronavirus surge continued.

The state's pandemic totals increased to 260,090 cases and 3,761 deaths, according to Department of Health and Human Services data.

Nevada's previous high number of deaths reported on a single day was 62 on Thursday.

The 311 deaths reported in the week since Jan. 10 were a pandemic one-week high for Nevada, surpassing the 299 deaths reported the previous week, the Las Vegas Review-Journal reported.

WILMINGTON, Del. — President-elect Joe Biden introduced his team of scientific advisers on Saturday, saying they will lead with "science and truth. We believe in both."

Biden is elevating the position of science adviser to Cabinet level, a White House first. He called Eric Lander, a pioneer in mapping the human genome is in line to be director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, "one of the most brilliant guys I know."

Lander is the founding director of the Broad Institute of MIT and Harvard and was the lead author of the first paper announcing the details of the human genome.

Lander says Biden has tasked his advisers and "the whole scientific community and the American public" to "rise to this moment."

Vice President-elect Kamala Harris recalled her late mother Shyamala Gopalan Harris, a cancer researcher, who she credited with teaching her to think critically.

"The science behind climate change is not a hoax. The science behind the virus is not partisan," Harris said. "The same laws apply, the same evidence holds true regardless of whether or not you accept them."

As the rollout of coronavirus vaccines begins, the U.S. leads the world with 23.6 million cases and more than 393,000 confirmed deaths.

HONOLULU — Health officials in Hawaii have partnered with local pharmacies to offer drive-thru and in-home coronavirus vaccinations for residents.

The Honolulu Star-Advertiser reports the Department of Health started scheduling licensed care homes in Oahu for vaccinations this week. Neighboring islands have already started drive-thru clinics, county hubs and other mobile services.

The health department is working with employers to identify front-line workers for the vaccination. The department is planning to launch an online portal where workers can register for the vaccine. Officials say more than 56,000 people have received at least one dose of the vaccine.

Health officials reported 150 newly confirmed coronavirus cases and no new deaths on Friday. The state has more than 24,000 confirmed cases and more than 300 deaths since the start of the pandemic.

PIERRE, S.D. — South Dakota is looking to build its coronavirus rollout by making shots available to a larger group of people.

Secretary of Health Kim Malsam-Rysdon says the state will begin vaccinating people 80 and over and those with high-risk medical conditions. Some rural health care providers worry their patients will be missed by large hospital systems.

South Dakota has vaccinated 6.5% of the population, one of the highest rates in the country. Last fall, the state had one of the highest positivity rates in the nation.

The Department of Health reported 341 positive tests, raising the confirmed total to 105,278.

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OKLAHOMA CITY — The Oklahoma City school district is set to resume some in-person classes for the district's youngest students and those in alternative education.

The district's pre-kindergarten through 4th grade students and those in alternative education will begin returning Tuesday for alternating in-person and in-person classes. Students in grades 5-12 are scheduled to return on Feb. 1.

Oklahoma ranked fourth in the nation Saturday in the rate of new cases per capita with 1,448 per 100,000, according to data from Johns Hopkins University.

The seven-day rolling average of new cases in the state has increased from 2,626 per day on Jan. 1 to 3,922 on Friday. The rolling average of deaths rose from 23 deaths per day to 31 according to the data.

The state health department on Saturday reported 3,621 coronavirus cases and 27 deaths.

Iran asks watchdog not to publish 'unnecessary' nuke details

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iran urged the United Nations' nuclear watchdog to avoid publishing "unnecessary" details on Tehran's nuclear program, state TV reported Sunday, a day after Germany, France and Britain said Tehran has "no credible civilian use" for its development of uranium metal.

The report quoted a statement from Iran's nuclear department that asked the International Atomic Energy Agency to avoid publishing details on Iran's nuclear program that may cause confusion.

"It is expected the international atomic energy agency avoid providing unnecessary details and prevent paving ground for misunderstanding" in the international community, the statement said. It did not elaborate.

On Saturday, Germany, France and Britain pressed Iran to back off its plan to develop uranium metal, calling it "the latest planned violation" of its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers. The goal of the deal is to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear bomb, something Iran insists it does not want to do.

"Iran has no credible civilian use for uranium metal," they said in a joint statement. "The production of uranium metal has potentially grave military implications."

On Thursday, the IAEA said Iran had informed it that it had begun installing equipment for the production of uranium metal. It said Tehran maintains its plans to conduct research and development on uranium metal production are part of its "declared aim to design an improved type of fuel."

Iran reacted to the European statement Sunday saying Iran informed the U.N. nuclear watchdog nearly two decades ago of its plans for the "peaceful and conventional" production of uranium metal. It also said it provided updated information to the agency two years ago about its plans to produce silicide advanced fuel.

The statement said uranium metal is an "intermediate product" in the manufacture of uranium silicide, a fuel used in nuclear reactors that is safer and has more power capability than uranium oxide-based fuel, which Iran currently produces.

The three European nations alongside the U.S., Russia and China signed the 2015 nuclear deal with Iran that prohibited research and production of uranium metal.

President Donald Trump in 2018 unilaterally withdrew the U.S. from Iran's nuclear deal, in which Tehran had agreed to limit its uranium enrichment in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions. After the U.S. then ramped up sanctions, Iran gradually and publicly abandoned the deal's limits on its nuclear development.

President-elect Joe Biden, who was vice president when the deal was signed during the Obama administration, has said he hopes to return the U.S. to the deal.

'Extreme urgent need': Starvation haunts Ethiopia's Tigray

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

NAIROBI, Kenya (AP) — From "emaciated" refugees to crops burned on the brink of harvest, starvation threatens the survivors of more than two months of fighting in Ethiopia's Tigray region.

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The first humanitarian workers to arrive after pleading with the Ethiopian government for access describe weakened children dying from diarrhea after drinking from rivers. Shops were looted or depleted weeks ago. A local official told a Jan. 1 crisis meeting of government and aid workers that hungry people had asked for "a single biscuit."

More than 4.5 million people, nearly the region's entire population, need emergency food, participants say. At their next meeting on Jan. 8, a Tigray administrator warned that without aid, "hundreds of thousands might starve to death" and some already had, according to minutes obtained by The Associated Press.

"There is an extreme urgent need — I don't know what more words in English to use — to rapidly scale up the humanitarian response because the population is dying every day as we speak," Mari Carmen Vinales, head of the emergency unit for Doctors Without Borders, told the AP.

But pockets of fighting, resistance from some officials and sheer destruction stand in the way of a massive food delivery effort. To send 15-kilogram (33-pound) rations to 4.5 million people would require more than 2,000 trucks, the meeting's minutes said, while some local responders are reduced to getting around on foot.

The specter of hunger is sensitive in Ethiopia, which transformed into one of the world's fastest-growing economies in the decades since images of starvation there in the 1980s led to a global outcry. Drought, conflict and government denial contributed to the famine, which swept through Tigray and killed an estimated 1 million people.

The largely agricultural Tigray region of about 5 million people already had a food security problem amid a locust outbreak when Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed on Nov. 4 announced fighting between his forces and those of the defiant regional government. Tigray leaders dominated Ethiopia for almost three decades but were sidelined after Abiy introduced reforms that won him the Nobel Peace Prize in 2019.

Thousands of people have been killed in the conflict. More than 50,000 have fled into Sudan, where one doctor has said newer arrivals show signs of starvation. Others shelter in rugged terrain. A woman who recently left Tigray described sleeping in caves with people who brought cattle, goats and the grain they had managed to harvest.

"It is a daily reality to hear people dying with the fighting consequences, lack of food," a letter by the Catholic bishop of Adigrat said this month.

Hospitals and other health centers, crucial in treating malnutrition, have been destroyed. In markets, food is "not available or extremely limited," the United Nations says.

Though Ethiopia's prime minister declared victory in late November, its military and allied fighters remain active amid the presence of troops from neighboring Eritrea, a bitter enemy of the now-fugitive officials who once led the region.

Fear keeps many people from venturing out. Others flee. Tigray's new officials say more than 2 million people have been displaced, a number the U.S. government's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance calls "staggering." The U.N. says the number of people reached with aid is "extremely low."

A senior Ethiopian government official, Redwan Hussein, did not respond to a request for comment on Tigray colleagues warning of starvation.

In the northern Shire area near Eritrea, which has seen some of the worst fighting, up to 10% of the children whose arms were measured met the diagnostic criteria for severe acute malnutrition, with scores of children affected, a U.N. source said. Sharing the concern of many humanitarian workers about jeopardizing access, the source spoke on condition of anonymity.

Near Shire town are camps housing nearly 100,000 refugees who have fled over the years from Eritrea. Some who have walked into town "are emaciated, begging for aid that is not available," U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi said Thursday.

Food has been a target. Analyzing satellite imagery of the Shire area, a U.K.-based research group found two warehouse-style structures in the U.N. World Food Program compound at one refugee camp had been "very specifically destroyed." The DX Open Network could not tell by whom. It reported a new attack Saturday.

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It's challenging to verify events in Tigray as communications links remain poor and almost no journalists are allowed.

In the towns of Adigrat, Adwa and Axum, "the level of civilian casualties is extremely high in the places we have been able to access," the Doctors Without Borders emergency official Vinales said. She cited the fighting and lack of health care.

Hunger is "very concerning," she said, and even water is scarce: Just two of 21 wells still work in Adigrat, a city of more than 140,000, forcing many people to drink from the river. With sanitation suffering, disease follows.

"You go 10 kilometers (6 miles) from the city and it's a complete disaster," with no food, Vinales said.

Humanitarian workers struggle to gauge the extent of need.

"Not being able to travel off main highways, it always poses the question of what's happening with people still off-limits," said Panos Navrozidis, Action Against Hunger's director in Ethiopia.

Before the conflict, Ethiopia's national disaster management body classified some Tigray woredas, or administrative areas, as priority one hotspots for food insecurity. If some already had high malnutrition numbers, "two-and-a-half months into the crisis, it's a safe assumption that thousands of children and mothers are in immediate need," Navrozidis said.

The Famine Early Warning Systems Network, funded and managed by the U.S., says parts of central and eastern Tigray are likely in Emergency Phase 4, a step below famine.

The next few months are critical, John Shumlansky, the Catholic Relief Services representative in Ethiopia, said. His group so far has given up to 70,000 people in Tigray a three-month food supply, he said.

Asked whether combatants use hunger as a weapon, one concern among aid workers, Shumlansky dismissed it by Ethiopian defense forces and police. With others, he didn't know.

"I don't think they have food either, though," he said.

EXPLAINER: Italy faces a political crisis amid a pandemic

By COLLEEN BARRY Associated Press

MILAN (AP) — Former Italian Premier Matteo Renzi is testing his already low popularity by provoking a political crisis that could bring down Italy's coalition government at a critical juncture in the coronavirus pandemic.

Renzi orchestrated the resignations of two ministers from his tiny but key Italia Viva party. The outcome of his power play will become clearer this week, when Premier Giuseppe Conte addresses both houses of Parliament. If Conte makes a successful bid for support, he could go on to form what would be his third coalition government since Italy's 2018 election.

RENZI'S POWER PLAY

This is not Renzi's first foray as an iconoclast shaking up Italian politics. He became premier in 2014 by out-maneuvering and unceremoniously deposing then-fellow Democratic Party member Enrico Letta as Italy's leader. Renzi himself fell from power nearly three years later after gambling his popularity on a constitutional referendum that failed.

Now, the 46-year-old former Florence mayor might bring down Conte. He broadly accuses the premier of not properly managing the coronavirus crisis. Renzi says he is only following his conscience, at great political cost.

"Italia Viva did not start the crisis. It has been going on for months," he asserted during a press conference last week.

Renzi, a senator for the Italia Viva party, supported Conte during an earlier, failed power grab by Matteo Salvini, the leader of the right-wing League party that was part of Conte's first government.

New polls show junior coalition partner Italia Viva has the support of just 2.4% of survey respondents, down from a high of 6.2% at the party's inception. Italia Viva was created in September 2019 when Renzi bolted the Democratic Party he once ran. He brought with him two Cabinet members, giving himself the kind of leverage he employed last week.

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CONTE'S NEXT MOVE

With the resignation of the Italia Viva ministers, Conte is working to shore up support in parliament among independent lawmakers. He still has the backing of the Democratic Party and the 5-Star Movement, which have criticized Renzi's move as irresponsible.

Conte will make his case in the lower house on Monday and to the Senate on Tuesday. A voice vote will take place after each appearance, tantamount to a vote of confidence.

If he fails to secure enough backing, Conte would likely submit his resignation to Italian President Sergio Mattarella. In that case, a technical government could be put in place. Analysts believe an early election is the least likely outcome, due to the difficulty of holding a political campaign and election during the pandemic. There are also concerns that the right-wing opposition would gain strength, and possibly lead a new government. The current majority would like to hold on at least until January 2022, when a new president must be chosen.

Conte may survive to lead what would be his third government by cobbling together enough support in both houses. And it is still possible that Italia Viva will restore its backing.

WHAT'S AT STAKE

Italy expects to have 222 billion euros (\$268 billion) in European Union economic recovery funds to manage, money that is crucial to modernizing the country and its limping economy.

While Conte had wide support during Italy's devastating go-round with the coronavirus in the first half of 2020, cracks in his popularity have appeared during the even more deadly fall resurgence. Four months into the government's system of tiered restrictions, new confirmed daily infections remain stubbornly high, and Italy's pandemic death toll of 81,800 is the second-highest in Europe after Britain.

Conte's government also is under fire for not keeping high schools open during the pandemic, a decision mostly tied to inadequate transportation to allow for social distancing. And there are concerns that Italy does not have enough medical personnel to carry out the country's vaccination campaign.

But the crisis was ultimately spurred when Conte presented a plan that would have put himself in charge of managing the EU recovery funds. Political analyst Wolfgang Piccoli called it "the ultimate mistake," setting up Renzi's move to reassert his own "prominence."

Italians are showing little patience for the political infighting when the nation's priority is getting the coronavirus pandemic under control and rolling out the vaccines that many hope will end the nation's long coronavirus nightmare. In a new poll, 42% of Italians said they didn't understand what provoked the latest government divisions.

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Statehouses, US capital brace for potentially violent week

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

The threat of extremist groups descending on state capitals in a series of demonstrations Sunday prompted governors to roll out a massive show of force and implement tight security measures at statehouses across the country.

Fencing, boarded-up windows and lines of police and National Guard troops have transformed statehouse grounds ahead of expected demonstrations leading up to President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration on Wednesday.

The stepped-up security measures were intended to safeguard seats of government from the type of violence that occurred at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, when a mob supporting President Donald Trump overran the building while Congress was certifying the Electoral College vote.

The FBI has warned of the potential for armed protests at the nation's Capitol and all 50 state capitol buildings beginning this weekend. Some social media messages had targeted Sunday for demonstrations, though it remained unclear how many people might show up.

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Security in Washington, D.C., has intensified ahead of the inauguration. Tall fencing surrounds the U.S. Capitol, the National Mall is closed to the general public, and the District of Columbia's mayor asked people not to visit. Some 25,000 National Guard troops from around the country were due in the city by early in the week.

In the states, some authorities said they had no specific indication that demonstrations would occur, much less turn violent. Yet many state officials vowed to be prepared, just in case. They said they did not want a repeat of the mob's assault on the Capitol, which left a Capitol Police officer and four others dead. Dozens of other officers were injured.

More than a third of governors had called out the National Guard to help protect their state capitols and aid local law enforcement officers. Several governors issued states of emergency, and others closed their capitols to the public until after Biden's inauguration day.

Some state legislatures also canceled sessions or pared back their work for the coming week, citing security precautions. Texas is among the states closing their capitol grounds through the inauguration.

"The Texas Department of Public Safety is aware of armed protests planned at the Texas State Capitol this week and violent extremists who may seek to exploit constitutionally protected events to conduct criminal acts," said Steve McCraw, the agency's director.

More than 100 troopers in riot gear were stationed outside the Capitol in Austin earlier this week as lawmakers began a new legislative session.

Even before the violence at the U.S. Capitol, some statehouses had been the target of vandals and angry protesters during the past year.

Last spring, armed protesters entered the Michigan Capitol to object to coronavirus-related lockdowns and were confronted by police. People angered over the death of George Floyd, who died after a Minneapolis police officer pressed a knee into his neck for several minutes, vandalized capitols in several states, including Colorado, Ohio, Texas and Wisconsin.

And just last month, crowds in Oregon forced their way into the state Capitol in Salem to protest its closure to the public during a special legislative session on coronavirus measures.

Anticipating the potential for violence in the coming week, the building's first floor windows were boarded up and the National Guard has been deployed. The Legislature was scheduled to begin its 2021 session on Tuesday, but much of its initial work has been delayed for at least two days because of warnings about potential violence.

"The state Capitol has become a fortress," said Oregon Senate President Peter Courtney, a Democrat. "I never thought I'd see that; it breaks my heart."

Associated Press writers Sara Cline in Salem, Oregon, and Paul Weber in Austin, Texas, contributed to this report.

Vaccine skepticism hurts East European anti-virus efforts

By DUSAN STOJANOVIC and JOVANA GEC Associated Press

BELGRADE, Serbia (AP) — Vaccines from the West, Russia or China? Or none at all? That dilemma faces nations in southeastern Europe, where coronavirus vaccination campaigns are off to a slow start — overshadowed by heated political debates and conspiracy theories.

In countries like the Czech Republic, Serbia, Bosnia, Romania and Bulgaria, vaccine skeptics have included former presidents and even some doctors. Serbian tennis champion Novak Djokovic was among those who said he did not want to be forced to get inoculated.

False beliefs that the coronavirus is a hoax or that vaccines would inject microchips into people have spread in the countries that were formerly under harsh Communist rule. Those who once routinely underwent mass inoculations are deeply split over whether to get the vaccines at all.

"There is a direct link between support for conspiracy theories and skepticism toward vaccination," a recent Balkan study warned. "A majority across the region does not plan to take the vaccine, a ratio

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considerably lower than elsewhere in Europe, where a majority favors taking the vaccine.”

Only about 200,000 people applied for the vaccine in Serbia, a country of 7 million, in the days after authorities opened the procedure. By contrast, 1 million Serbians signed up for 100 euros (\$120) on the first day the government offered the pandemic aid.

Hoping to encourage vaccinations, Serbian officials have gotten their shots on TV. Yet they themselves have been split over whether to get the Western-made Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine or Russia’s Sputnik V, more divisions in a country that is formally seeking European Union membership but where many favor closer ties with Moscow.

Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic on Saturday greeted a shipment of 1 million doses of the Chinese Sinopharm vaccine, saying he will receive a shot to show that it is safe.

“Serbs prefer the Russian vaccine,” read a recent headline of the Informer, a pro-government tabloid, as officials announced that 38% of those who have applied to take the shots favor the Russian vaccine, while 31% want the Pfizer-BioNTech version — a rough division among pro-Russians and pro-Westerners in Serbia.

In neighboring Bosnia, a war-torn country that remains ethnically divided among Serbs, Bosniaks and Croats, politics also are a factor, as the Serb-run half appeared set to opt for the Russian vaccine, while the Bosniak-Croat part likely will turn to the Western ones.

Sasa Milovanovic, a 57-year-old real estate agent from Belgrade, sees all vaccines as part of the “global manipulation” of the pandemic.

“People are locked up, they have no lives any longer and live in a state of hysteria and fear,” he said.

Djokovic has said he was against being forced to take a coronavirus vaccine in order to travel and compete but was keeping his mind open. The top-ranked tennis player and his wife tested positive in June after a series of exhibition matches with zero social distancing that he organized in the Balkans. They and their foundation have donated 1 million euros (\$1.1 million) to buy ventilators and other medical equipment for hospitals in Serbia.

Serbian Health Ministry official Mirsad Djerlek has described the vaccine response as “satisfactory,” but cautioned on the state-run RTS broadcaster that “people in rural areas usually believe in conspiracy theories, and that is why we should talk to them and explain that the vaccine is the only way out in this situation.”

A study by the Balkans in Europe Policy Advisory Group, published before the regional vaccination campaign started in December, concluded that virus conspiracy theories are believed by nearly 80% of citizens of the Western Balkan countries striving to join the EU. About half of them will refuse to get vaccinated, it said.

Baseless theories allege the virus isn’t real or that it’s a bioweapon created by the U.S. or its adversaries. Another popular falsehood holds that Microsoft founder Bill Gates is using COVID-19 vaccines to implant microchips in the planet’s 7 billion people.

A low level of information about the virus and vaccines, distrust in governments and repeated assertions by authorities that their countries are besieged by foreigners help explain the high prevalence of such beliefs, according to the Balkans think tank.

Similar trends have been seen even in some eastern European Union countries.

In Bulgaria, widespread conspiracy theories hampered past efforts to deal with a measles outbreak. Surveys there suggested distrust of vaccines remains high even as coronavirus cases keep rising. A recent Gallup International poll found that 30% of respondents want to get vaccinated, 46% will refuse and 24% are undecided.

Bulgarian doctors have tried to change attitudes. Dr. Stefan Konstantinov, a former health minister, joked that people should be told neighboring Greece would close resorts to tourists who don’t get vaccinated, because “this would guarantee that some 70% of the population would rush to get a jab.”

In the Czech Republic, where surveys show some 40% reject vaccination, protesters at a big rally against government virus restrictions in Prague demanded that vaccinations not be mandatory. Former President Vaclav Klaus, a fierce critic of the government’s pandemic response, told the crowd that vac-

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cines are not a solution.

"They say that everything will be solved by a miracle vaccine," said the 79-year-old Klaus, who insists that people should get exposed to the virus to gain immunity, which experts reject. "We have to say loud and clear that there's no such a thing. ... I am not going to get vaccinated."

Populist authorities in Hungary have taken a hard line against virus misinformation, but rejection of vaccines is still projected at about 30%. Parliament passed emergency powers in March that allows authorities to prosecute anyone deemed to be "inhibiting the successful defense" against the virus, including "fearmongering" or spreading false news. At least two people who criticized the government's response to the pandemic on social media were arrested, but neither was formally charged.

Romanian Health Minister Vlad Voiculescu said he is relying on family doctors to "inform, schedule and monitor people after the vaccine" and that his ministry will offer bonuses to medical workers based on the number of people they get onboard. Asked if such incentives would fuel anti-vaccination propaganda, Voiculescu said: "I am interested more by the doctors' view on the matter than I am about the anti-vaxxers."

Dr. Ivica Jeremic, who has worked with virus patients in Serbia since March and tested positive himself in November, hopes vaccination programs will gain speed once people overcome their fear of the unknown. "People will realize the vaccine is the only way to return to normal life," he said.

Associated Press writers Veselin Toshkov in Sofia, Bulgaria; Karel Janicek in Prague, Czech Republic; Justin Spike in Budapest, Hungary; and Vadim Ghirda in Bucharest, Romania, contributed.

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Harris to be sworn in by Justice Sotomayor at inauguration

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President-elect Kamala Harris will be sworn in by Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor on Wednesday, a history-making event in which the first Black, South Asian and female vice president will take her oath of office from the first Latina justice.

Harris chose Sotomayor for the task, according to a person familiar with the decision. She'll also use two Bibles for the swearing-in, one of which belonged to Thurgood Marshall, the first Black Supreme Court justice.

ABC News first reported the latest details of Harris' inauguration plans.

Harris has expressed admiration for both Sotomayor and Marshall. She and Sotomayor share experience as prosecutors, and she once called Marshall — like Harris, a graduate of Howard University — one of her "greatest heroes."

The vice president-elect said in a video posted to Twitter that she viewed Marshall as "one of the main reasons I wanted to be a lawyer," calling him "a fighter" in the courtroom.

And this will be the second time Sotomayor takes part in an inauguration. She swore in President-elect Joe Biden as vice president in 2013.

Deaths, self-immolation draw scrutiny on China tech giants

By ZEN SOO AP Technology Writer

HONG KONG (AP) — E-commerce workers who kept China fed during the coronavirus pandemic, making their billionaire bosses even richer, are so unhappy with their pay and treatment that one just set himself on fire in protest.

China's internet industries already were known for long, demanding days. With millions of families confined at home, demand surged and employees delivered tons of vegetables, rice, meat, diapers and other

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supplies, often aboard scooters that exposed them to sub-freezing winter cold.

For white-collar workers in the technology industry, pay is better than in some industries but employees are often expected to work 12 hours a day or more.

The human cost caught public attention after the deaths of two employees from e-commerce platform Pinduoduo, known for selling fresh produce at low prices. Their deaths prompted suggestions they were overworked. In an indication of high-level concern, the official Xinhua News Agency called for shorter work hours, describing long hours of overtime at the expense of employees' health as an "illegal" operation.

Renewed concerns over dire working conditions for delivery drivers also came to the forefront when a video circulated on Chinese social media showing what it said was a driver for Ele.me, part of e-commerce giant Alibaba Group, setting himself on fire to protest unpaid wages.

The controversy is a blow to the image of internet industries that are transforming China's economy and generating new jobs. They have made some of the founders among the world's wealthiest entrepreneurs. During the heights of the pandemic, the fortunes of the biggest, including Alibaba founder Jack Ma and Pinduoduo founder Colin Huang, swelled as online consumer spending boomed.

In a video widely circulated on Chinese social media, 45-year-old delivery driver Liu Jin poured gasoline and set himself on fire outside a distribution station for Eleme in the eastern city of Taizhou, shouting that he wanted his money. Others snuffed the flames and rushed him to a hospital, where he is being treated for third-degree burns on his body.

Details of Liu's complaint could not be verified and Eleme did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Separately, a 43-year-old delivery driver collapsed on the job and died last week while delivering food for Eleme.

The company said in a statement that it will give 600,000 yuan (\$92,700) to the driver's family and raised its insurance coverage for drivers to that level. Its statement said Eleme "had not done enough in terms of accidental death insurance, and needs to do more."

The issue was highlighted again after a Pinduoduo employee surnamed Tan committed suicide after taking leave from the firm to return to his hometown, less than two weeks after a 22-year-old employee surnamed Zhang in Urumqi collapsed while walking home from work with colleagues, and later passed away.

Pinduoduo, China's third-largest e-commerce firm, released statements saying it was providing assistance and support to the families of the two employees who died. Shanghai authorities also are reviewing working hours, contracts and other conditions at the company.

The deaths raised an outcry on social media, with many people suspecting that they were a result of overwork. Chinese social media users blasted the country's technology sector, criticizing not just Pinduoduo for a culture of long hours but pointing out that this was an industry-wide problem, with similar company cultures seen at most of China's large technology companies.

They also revived a national debate over the tech sector's so-called "996" working culture, in which employees often work from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. six days a week. Companies sometimes pay huge bonuses to some employees, enticing them to work more overtime.

"We must strive to succeed in pursuit of dreams, but the legitimate rights and interests of workers cannot be ignored or even violated," said state-owned Xinhua News Agency in a post on microblogging site Weibo.

The issue has also cast a spotlight on the working conditions of delivery drivers, who are under heavy pressure to get orders to customers quickly and at times make less than 10 yuan (\$1.55) per delivery. If they fail to meet deadlines, fines imposed can range from as little as 1 yuan (\$0.15) to as much as 500 yuan (\$77.30) if a customer lodges a complaint.

As part of the gig economy, such delivery workers often do not get the benefits provided to full-time employees, such as social or medical insurance.

Since there are many people willing to work under those conditions, it is hard for employees to negoti-

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ate better pay and conditions.

Last August, the All-China Federation of Trade Unions (ACFTU) — the only trade union allowed to legally exist in communist-ruled China — said that 6.5 million delivery workers had joined it since 2018. However, the worker rights group China Labor Bulletin, which tracks labor relations in China, says little has been done to improve workers' ability to win better treatment from companies. The union provides only skills training, legal assistance and some medical benefits.

"Labor unions need to become more effective, otherwise labor laws cannot be enforced," said Li Qiang, founder of China Labor Watch, another organization that monitors labor rights.

Under China's labor laws, workers and laborers should work no longer than eight hours a day, or more than 44 hours a week on average. Total amount of overtime should not exceed more than 36 hours in a month, and should only be done "after consultation with the trade union and laborers".

However, even though the labor laws exist, they are rarely enforced as employees become mired in a culture of overwork while striving for bonuses or in cases of delivery drivers, to eke out a living.

Delivery workers are part of a corporate culture where even white-collar employees in the technology sector work excessively long hours, Li noted.

"Employees who do not work overtime cannot survive in technology or white-collar jobs. Everyone is working overtime. If they do not work overtime, they will be terminated," Li said.

Putting workers at an even bigger disadvantage, indemnity clauses are at times written into workers' contracts in some industries, absolving a company from responsibility for death on the job and other such events, said Li of China Labor Watch. Although such clauses may violate China's labor laws, the legal system in China is opaque and laws can be difficult to enforce.

"In Western countries, if an employee dies because of working overtime, then the legal and economic costs will be greater, and they are generally more restrained as the country's laws will intervene," said Li. "But in China, there is no bottom line when it comes to working overtime, and companies are generally not held liable in the event of death."

Associated Press researcher Chen Si in Shanghai contributed to this report.

Biden to prioritize legal status for millions of immigrants

By ELLIOT SPAGAT Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — President-elect Joe Biden's decision to immediately ask Congress to offer legal status to an estimated 11 million people in the country has surprised advocates given how the issue has long divided Democrats and Republicans, even within their own parties.

Biden will announce legislation his first day in office to provide a path to citizenship for millions of immigrants in the United States illegally, according to four people briefed on his plans.

The president-elect campaigned on a path to citizenship for the roughly 11 million people in the U.S. illegally, but it was unclear how quickly he would move while wrestling with the coronavirus pandemic, the economy and other priorities. For advocates, memories were fresh of presidential candidate Barack Obama pledging an immigration bill his first year in office, in 2009, but not tackling the issue until his second term.

Biden's plan is the polar opposite of Donald Trump, whose successful 2016 presidential campaign rested in part on curbing or stopping illegal immigration.

"This really does represent a historic shift from Trump's anti-immigrant agenda that recognizes that all of the undocumented immigrants that are currently in the United States should be placed on a path to citizenship," said Marielena Hincapie, executive director of the National Immigration Law Center, who was briefed on the bill.

If successful, the legislation would be the biggest move toward granting status to people in the country illegally since President Ronald Reagan bestowed amnesty on nearly 3 million people in 1986. Legislative efforts to overhaul immigration policy failed in 2007 and 2013.

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Ron Klain, Biden's incoming chief of staff, said Saturday that Biden will send an immigration bill to Congress "on his first day in office." He didn't elaborate and Biden's office declined to comment on specifics.

Advocates were briefed in recent days on the bill's broad outlines by Esther Olivaria, deputy director for immigration on the White House Domestic Policy Council.

Domingo Garcia, former president of the League of Latin American Citizens, said Biden told advocates on a call Thursday that Trump's impeachment trial in the Senate may delay consideration of the bill and that they shouldn't count on passage within 100 days.

"I was pleasantly surprised that they were going to take quick action because we got the same promises from Obama, who got elected in '08, and he totally failed," Garcia said.

Ali Noorani, president of the National Immigration Forum and among those briefed Thursday night, said immigrants would be put on an eight-year path to citizenship. There would be a faster track for those in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, which shields people from deportation who came to the country as young children, and Temporary Protected Status, which gives temporary status to hundreds of thousands of people from strife-torn countries, many from El Salvador.

Vice President-elect Kamala Harris offered similar remarks in an interview with Univision that aired Tuesday, saying DACA and TPS recipients will "automatically get green cards" while others would be on an eight-year path to citizenship.

More favorable attitudes toward immigration — especially among Democrats — may weigh in Biden's favor this time. A Gallup survey last year found that 34% of those polled favored more immigration, up from 21% in 2016 and higher than any time since it began asking the question in 1965. The survey found 77% felt immigration was good for the country on the whole, up slightly from 72% in 2016.

Noorani said the separation of more than 5,000 children from the parents at the border, which peaked in 2018, alienated voters from Trump's policies, particularly conservatives and evangelicals. He believes a constantly shifting outlook for DACA recipients also hurt Trump among people who felt he was using them as "political pawns."

"What was seared in their mind was family separation. They took it out on the Republican Party in 2018 and they took it out on Trump in 2020," Noorani said. "To put a really fine point on it, they want to end the cruelty of the Trump administration."

It is impossible to know precisely how many people are in the country illegally. Pew Research Center estimates there were 10.5 million in 2017, down from an all-time high of 12.2 million in 2007.

The Homeland Security Department estimates there were 12 million people in the country illegally in 2015, nearly 80% of them for more than 10 years. More than half were Mexican.

Associated Press writer Zeke Miller in Washington contributed to this report.

Will Trump's mishandling of records leave a hole in history?

By DEB RIECHMANN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The public won't see President Donald Trump's White House records for years, but there's growing concern the collection won't be complete, leaving a hole in the history of one of America's most tumultuous presidencies.

Trump has been cavalier about the law requiring that records be preserved. He has a habit of ripping up documents before tossing them out, forcing White House records workers to spend hours taping them back together.

"They told him to stop doing it. He didn't want to stop," said Solomon Lartey, a former White House records analyst. He said the first document he taped back together was a letter from Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., about a government shutdown.

The president also confiscated an interpreter's notes after Trump had a chat with Russian leader Vladimir Putin. Trump scolded his White House counsel for taking notes at a meeting during the Russia investigation by former special counsel Robert Mueller. Top executive branch officials had to be reminded more

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than once not to conduct official business on private email or text messaging systems and to preserve it if they did.

And now, Trump's baseless claim of widespread voter fraud, which postponed for weeks an acknowledgement of President-elect Joe Biden's victory, is delaying the transfer of documents to the National Archives and Records Administration, further heightening concern about the integrity of the records.

"Historians are likely to suffer from far more holes than has been the norm," said Richard Immerman at the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations. In the Trump White House, "not only has record-keeping not been a priority, but we have multiple examples of it seeking to conceal or destroy that record."

Lack of a complete record might also hinder any ongoing investigations of Trump, from his impeachment trial and other prospective federal inquiries to investigations in the state of New York.

But even with requests by lawmakers and lawsuits by government transparency groups, there is an acknowledgment that noncompliance with the Presidential Records Act carries little consequence for Trump.

In tossing out one suit last year, U.S. Circuit Judge David Tatel wrote that courts cannot "micromanage the president's day-to-day compliance."

The Presidential Records Act states that a president cannot destroy records until he seeks the advice of the national archivist and notifies Congress. But the law doesn't require him to heed the archivist's advice. It doesn't prevent the president from going ahead and destroying records.

Most presidential records today are electronic. Records experts estimate that automatic backup computer systems capture a vast majority of the records, but cannot capture records that a White House chooses not to create or log into those systems.

THE MOVE

Moving a president's trail of paper and electronic records is a laborious task. President Barack Obama left about 30 million pages of paper documents and some 250 terabytes of electronic records, including the equivalent of about 1.5 billion pages of emails.

The records of past presidents are important because they can help a current president craft new policies and prevent mistakes from being repeated.

"Presidential records tell our nation's story from a unique perspective and are essential to an incoming administration in making informed decisions," said Lee White, director of the National Coalition for History. "They are equally vital to historians."

When Trump lost the November election, records staffers were in position to transfer electronic records, pack up the paper ones and move them to the National Archives by Jan. 20, as required by law. But Trump's reluctance to concede has meant they will miss the deadline.

"Necessary funding from the (White House) Office of Management and Budget was delayed for many weeks after the election, which has caused delays in arranging for the transfer of the Trump presidential records into the National Archives' custody," the National Archives said in a statement to The Associated Press. "Even though the transfer of these records will not be completed until after Jan. 20, the National Archives will assume legal custody of them on Jan. 20 in accordance with the Presidential Records Act."

White House spokesman Judd Deere said Saturday that contesting the election did not cause the delay in getting the president's records transferred to the archives and that guidance was available to staffers on how to pack up their materials.

One person familiar with the transition said guidance typically emailed to executive branch employees explaining how to turn in equipment and pack up their offices was sent out in December, but quickly rescinded because Trump insisted on contesting the election.

With little guidance, some staffers in the White House started quietly calling records workers to find out what to do.

Departing employees are instructed to create a list of folders in each box and make a spreadsheet to give the National Archives a way to track and retrieve the information for the incoming Biden team. The process gets more complex with classified material.

The Biden administration can request to see Trump records immediately, but the law says the public

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must wait five years before submitting Freedom of Information Act requests. Even then, Trump — like other presidents before him — is invoking specific restrictions to public access of his records for up to 12 years. Six restrictions outlined in the law include national security, confidential business information, confidential communications between the president and his advisers or among his advisers and personal information.

RECORD-KEEPING PRACTICES

Around Trump's first impeachment and on other sensitive issues, some normal workflow practices were bypassed, a second person familiar with the process said. Apparently worried about leaks, higher-ups and White House lawyers became more involved in deciding which materials were catalogued and scanned into White House computer networks where they are automatically saved, this person said.

The individuals, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss inner workings at the White House, said that if uncatalogued materials ended up in an office safe, for instance, they would at least be temporarily preserved. But if they were never catalogued in the first place, staffers would not know they existed, making such materials untraceable.

White House staff quickly learned about Trump's disregard for documents as they witnessed him tearing them up and discarding them.

"My director came up to me and said, 'You have to tape these together,'" said Lartey, the former records analyst.

Lartey said someone in the White House chief of staff's office told the president that the documents were considered presidential records and needed to be preserved by law. Lartey said about 10 records staffers ended up on Scotch tape duty at different times, starting with Trump's first days in the White House through at least mid-2018.

Trump's staff also engaged in questionable practices by using private emails and messaging apps. Former White House counsel Don McGahn in February 2017 sent a memo that instructed employees not to use nonofficial text messaging apps or private email accounts. If they did, he said, they had to take screenshots of the material and copy it into official email accounts, which are preserved. He sent the memo back out in September 2017.

"It's an open question to me about how serious or conscientious any of those people have been about moving them over," said Tom Blanton, who directs the National Security Archive at George Washington University, which was founded in 1985 to combat government secrecy.

Trump was criticized for confiscating the notes of an interpreter who was with him in 2017 when the president talked with Putin in Hamburg, Germany. Lawmakers tried unsuccessfully to obtain the notes of another interpreter who was with Trump in 2018 when he met with Putin in Helsinki, Finland. It's unclear whether the two presidents talked about Russia's interference in the 2016 election. Many people suspected the subject did come up because at a news conference afterward, Trump said he believed Putin when Putin denied Russian interference despite U.S. intelligence agencies finding the opposite.

Several weeks ago, the National Security Archive, two historical associations and Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington sued to prevent the Trump White House from destroying any electronic communications or records sent or received on nonofficial accounts, such as personal email or WhatsApp.

They also alleged that the White House has already likely destroyed presidential materials.

The court refused to issue a temporary restraining order after government lawyers told the judge that they had instructed the White House to notify all employees to preserve all electronic communications in their original format until the suit was settled.

"I believe we will find that there's going to be a huge hole in the historical record of this president because I think there's probably been serious noncompliance of the Presidential Records Act," said Anne Weismann, one of the lawyers representing the groups in their suit. "I don't think President Trump cares about his record and what it says. I think he probably cares, though, about what it might say about his criminal culpability."

Trump faces several legal challenges when he leaves the White House. There are two New York state

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inquiries into whether he misled tax authorities, banks or business partners. Also, two women alleging he sexually assaulted them are suing him.

DESTROYING OR SAVING HISTORY

Presidential records were considered a president's personal property until the Watergate scandal under President Richard Nixon prompted Congress in 1978 to pass the Presidential Records Act over worry that Nixon would destroy White House tape recordings that led to his resignation.

After that, presidential records were no longer considered personal property but the property of the American people — if they are preserved. Lawmakers have introduced legislation to require audits of White House record-keeping and compliance with the law.

"The American public should not have to wait until a president has left office to learn of problems with that president's record-keeping practices," Weismann said.

State capitols boarded up, fenced off, patrolled by troops

By The Associated Press undefined

A double row of chain-link fencing circles the Arizona State Capitol. Windows on the Illinois and Ohio statehouses have been boarded up. National Guard troops in camouflage and flak jackets and heavily armed state troopers were stationed at state capitols across the U.S. in advance of protests planned for Sunday.

With the FBI warning of potential for violence at all state capitols, the ornate halls of government and symbols of democracy looked more like heavily guarded U.S. embassies in war-torn countries.

Governors have declared states of emergency, closed capitols to the public and called up troops ahead of President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration next week.

They are trying to avoid a repeat of the mob rioting that occurred Jan. 6, when supporters of outgoing President Donald Trump stormed the U.S. Capitol, leaving a Capitol Police officer and four others dead.

Details were vague, but demonstrations were expected at state capitols beginning Sunday and leading up to Biden taking the oath of the office Wednesday.

Signs of ramped-up security were in abundance from Atlanta to Sacramento, California, throughout the week.

SWAT officers stood guard at the Georgia State Capitol. A bomb-detecting dog sniffed its way through the capitol in Jackson, Mississippi. State troopers were poised on the roof of the Ohio Statehouse in Columbus. Sections of temporary fencing that encircled many state capitols were locked together in Sacramento with handcuffs.

National Guard troops patrolled the California Capitol and streets of downtown Sacramento on Saturday.

Betty White marks 99th birthday Sunday; up late as she wants

By LYNN ELBER AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — True to form, Betty White has something impish to say about her birthday Sunday. "Since I am turning 99, I can stay up as late as I want without asking permission!" she told The Associated Press in an email.

White's low-key plans include feeding a pair of ducks that regularly visit her Los Angeles-area home. Her birthday meal will be a hot dog and French fries brought in — along with a bouquet of roses — by her longtime friend and agent, Jeff Witjas.

The actor's TV credits stretch from 1949's "Hollywood on Television" to a 2019 voice role in "Forky Asks a Question," with "The Golden Girls" and "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" among the enduring highlights.

In January alone, White is on screen in reruns including "The Golden Girls" and "Hot in Cleveland"; the 2009 Sandra Bullock movie "The Proposal," and the 2018 documentary "Betty White: First Lady of Television," about her life and career.

White's devotion to animals will be on display next month with the DVD and digital release of "Betty White's Pet Set," a 1970s series in which she visited with celebrity guests and their pets as well as wild

animals.

Her work, always marked by top-drawer comedic timing, has earned her five Emmy Awards, including a 2010 trophy for a guest-host appearance on "Saturday Night Live."

A native of Oak Park, Illinois, White was married to game show host and producer Allen Ludden from 1963 until his death in 1981.

Bus driver in dramatic bridge plunge says it 'just took off'

By JIM MUSTIAN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The driver of a New York City bus that plunged off a bridge blamed the dramatic crash on mechanical failure, saying Saturday that the tandem vehicle "just took off" as he slowed into a turn.

Everton Beccan, 55, disputed the Metropolitan Transportation Authority's assertion a day earlier that he had refused to submit to a drug and alcohol test at the hospital.

"There's no reason for me to refuse a drug test," Beccan, who broke his jaw in late Thursday's crash, said at a news conference following his release from the hospital. "I'm just thankful that no one lost their life."

The MTA on Saturday released an internal document that says Beccan refused three times to submit a urine sample to the transit agency. The test Beccan ultimately took was done by the hospital and wasn't conducted until several hours after the crash, the agency said.

Transit officials said Friday they had been concerned by Beccan's failure to submit to the test even after he passed an alcohol breath test. The MTA said the driver has been "withheld from service without pay" amid the investigation.

"This is obviously troubling," said Patrick Warren, the MTA's chief safety and security officer.

Beccan said the results of his drug test are pending.

He offered a harrowing account of the articulated bus plunging 50 feet (15 meters) onto a highway ramp near an interchange of the Cross Bronx and Major Deegan expressways.

The crash happened at a turn he has made "hundreds of times" along his regular route, he said, adding he lost control of the bus after easing up on the gas pedal. "The bus just accelerated," he said. "The bus just took off on its own."

As the crash unfolded, Beccan said, he was thinking of the passengers' safety and his own. He said he "helped who I could help" and called 911.

"Everybody was just screaming," Beccan said. "Everybody was in a panic."

Seven passengers suffered minor injuries after one part of the bus plunged onto the access road. The other half remained on the bridge. No other vehicles were involved.

The MTA said Saturday that Beccan was driving "almost five times the allowable speed for a bus making the turn being attempted." The agency said investigators "have thus far identified no mechanical cause for the failure to remain on the road and to travel at allowable speed for the conditions," citing the bus' on-board event recorder.

Beccan has more than 11 years of service and a good safety record, the MTA said.

Banking heir Benjamin de Rothschild dies at 57

By JOSEPH PISANI AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Benjamin de Rothschild, who oversaw the banking empire started by his father in 1953, has died. He was 57.

The Edmond de Rothschild Group, the company he was chairman of, said that de Rothschild died of a heart attack Friday afternoon at his home in Pregny, Switzerland.

Since 1997, Benjamin de Rothschild headed the banking group, which was named after his father. Today, Edmond de Rothschild Group says it manages assets worth 160 billion euros, or \$190 billion.

Forbes magazine estimates de Rothschild's net worth at \$1.5 billion. He is a descendent of the Rothschild family, which has a nearly 300-year history running European banks.

In a press release announcing his death, the Edmond de Rothschild Group said de Rothschild was pas-

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sionate about finance, sailing, cars and wine. He was also a philanthropist, involved in the Adolphe de Rothschild Foundation Hospital, the company said.

He is survived by his wife, Ariane de Rothschild, and their four adult daughters.

Guard troops pour into Washington as states answer the call

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — By the busload and planeload, National Guard troops were pouring into the nation's capital on Saturday, as governors answered the urgent pleas of U.S. defense officials for more troops to help safeguard Washington even as they keep anxious eyes on possible violent protests in their own states.

Military leaders spent chunks of Thursday evening and Friday calling states in an unprecedented appeal for more National Guard troops to help lock down much of the city in the days before President-elect Joe Biden's inauguration. In dribs and drabs, governors responded, some agreeing to send an extra dozen, 100 or even 1,000, while others said no.

The calls reflect fears that violent extremist groups are targeting the city in the wake of the deadly insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6. The threats range from armed insurgents to possible attempts to plant explosive devices at so-called soft targets. But as Washington begins to resemble an armed camp, with more than 25,000 Guard due in the city by early next week, concerns about violence at state capitals has grown.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown said she turned down the federal request to send at least 100 more National Guard troops to D.C. "I didn't think that we could safely fill that commitment," Brown said. Oregon has already agreed to send 30 to Washington, but state leaders are worried about violence at the state capitol in Salem.

Others agreed, setting off a dizzying torrent of military flights and convoys into the region.

"The peaceful transfer of power is a central tenet of American democracy, and Connecticut stands ready to aid in the protection of our country," said Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont, who had initially approved sending 100 Guard and on Friday agreed to send 200 more.

All told, more than 130 U.S. Air Guard flights in the past 72 hours have carried at least 7,000 Guard troops to Joint Base Andrews in Maryland, according to U.S. officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss internal numbers. Thousands more are in buses and military trucks, thundering up highways toward Washington.

Army Gen. Dan Hokanson, chief of the National Guard Bureau, called adjutants general around the country, and others, such as Army Secretary Ryan McCarthy, called governors to seek help. McCarthy praised the states, saying defense and military officials are keenly aware of the threats they also are facing.

"The governors and the TAGs have been great. They helped us a lot," McCarthy told The Associated Press. "That's the thing — that in the midst of a really horrible situation you're seeing the greatness of this country, everybody coming together and help each other get through this."

What began in early January as a routine deployment of about 350 members of the D.C. National Guard to help with expected protests exploded over the past two weeks into a vastly greater operation to protect the inauguration and the U.S. Capitol, and to shut down access to the city and many of its historical monuments.

As protesters stampeded their way into the Capitol on Jan. 6, only a bit more than 100 National Guard were scattered around the city, guarding checkpoints and Metro entrances. Hours later, five people were dead, the Capitol was in shambles and all 1,100 of D.C.'s Guard had been activated.

By the next day, as information came in about more violence being planned, requests went out for 6,200 Guard members from the surrounding states.

By Thursday night, as law enforcement and defense officials poured over maps and staged security drills, they concluded they would need at least 25,000 to adequately lock down the Capitol grounds and a wide swath of D.C., including the National Mall. And they agreed that the bulk of those Guard will be armed.

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At that point, the new round of calls to the state governors and military leaders began.

Many governors were willing to help, but they made it clear that their own state capitals were their priority. Some agreed to send more, while others couldn't. And the numbers varied widely.

Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf doubled his initial commitment of 1,000 to 2,000. Other states were able to scrape up an additional dozen.

After reviewing the threats to its own state, Minnesota decided it could significantly increase its contribution and will send 850 Guard rather than the 130 initially tapped to go, according to the state's adjutant general, Maj. Gen. Shawn Manke.

Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine had already agreed to send 700. On Friday, he announced he'd be sending 300 more — even as he ordered nearly 600 to secure the Ohio statehouse in Columbus. Similarly, North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper initially agreed to send 200 Guard, and on Friday spokesman Ford Porter said the state will send 100 more. Iowa first said it was sending 250 and now the number is 265.

The vast military response comes as Congress and law enforcement authorities are trying to figure out how the U.S. Capitol was overrun so dramatically on Jan. 6. Leaders of four committees in the Democratic-controlled House sent a letter Saturday requesting briefings and documents from the FBI and other federal agencies as part of their review of the insurrection.

The appeals for more of America's citizen soldiers also underscore the Pentagon's limits on the use of active-duty troops. Under the law, they can't be used for law enforcement, and officials are intent on avoiding the appearance of armed active-duty forces being used against U.S. citizens on American soil.

Active-duty forces are routinely prepared to respond to emergencies in Washington, such as flight violations in restricted airspace over D.C., and a quick reaction force is always on standby. Other active-duty units will take part in various inaugural ceremonies.

Associated Press writers Andrew Selsky in Salem, Oregon; Susan Haigh in Hartford, Connecticut; Farnoush Amiri in Columbus, Ohio; Gary Robertson in Raleigh, North Carolina; Steve Karnowski in Minneapolis; David Pitt in Des Moines, Iowa, and Mark Scolforo in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, contributed to this report.

Boy reported dead at sea in attempt to reach Canary Islands

GRAN CANARIA, Spain (AP) — Spanish rescuers reached a boat carrying over 30 migrants and brought them safely to the Canary Islands, but not in time to save one child who reportedly died at sea.

Rescuers said the small boat was discovered late Friday some 160 kilometers (99 miles) south of Gran Canaria island. On board there were 11 men, 20 women and three children travelling in very poor conditions.

The survivors said a 9-year-old boy had died during the journey and they had tossed his body overboard.

Some 23,000 migrants arrived in the Canary Islands in 2020, up from some 3,000 in 2019, according to Spain's Interior Ministry. More than 500 died in the attempt.

The people taking the boats are understood to be fleeing poverty, violence or other circumstances, including the COVID-19 pandemic, in African countries and elsewhere.

Wind, rain, heavy snow batter New England, eastern Canada

BURLINGTON, Vt. (AP) — A storm lashed parts of New England and eastern Canada on Saturday with heavy rain, snow and wind, leading to power outages and slick roads.

About 15,000 homes and businesses were without electricity at the height of the storm in Vermont, the hardest-hit U.S. state, and thousands of outages were reported elsewhere across the region, officials said.

"The snow is wet, heavy and slippery, which makes travel and restoration conditions tough," said Mike Burke, chief of field operations at Green Mountain Power in Vermont.

A foot or more of snow was possible across higher elevations of northern New England, and wind gusts as high as 50 to 60 mph (80 to 96 kph) were expected along the Maine coast, said Michael Clair, of the National Weather Service in Maine.

Gusts of 70 mph (112 kph) were recorded at the Isle of Shoals, about 2 miles off New Hampshire, and

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New Hampshire's Mount Washington recorded a gust of 118 mph (190 kph) at the summit, the weather service said.

Much of eastern Canada was pounded with steady snowfall.

Locations that didn't get snow could see 1 1/2 to 2 inches (4 to 5 centimeters) of rain, Clair said.

March for Life asks its supporters to stay home this year

By DAVID CRARY AP National Writer

Organizers of the March for Life, the anti-abortion movement's preeminent annual event, are asking their supporters nationwide not to gather in Washington this year because of the COVID-19 pandemic and political unrest.

Instead, a small group of invited anti-abortion leaders will march Jan. 29, and the event will be livestreamed, March for Life's president, Jeanne Mancini, announced Friday.

"Since we are in the midst of a pandemic which may be peaking, and in view of the heightened pressures that law enforcement officers and others are currently facing in and around the Capitol, this year's March for Life will look different," she said. "The annual rally will take place virtually and we are asking all participants to stay home and to join the March virtually."

Tim Tebow, the football star, is still scheduled to make a keynote speech at a virtual gala taking place after the downsized march, Mancini said.

Mancini said she looks forward to holding the event in person next year.

The march has been held annually since 1974, one year after the Supreme Court's Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortion across in the United States. Even blizzards in 1987 and 2016 did not force cancellation, although turnouts were smaller than usual.

Local March for Life events also have been affected this year. State marches in Arkansas and Oregon have been indefinitely postponed, while a march planned in Tucson, Arizona, was converted into a car caravan dubbed the Road Rally for Life.

The annual National Prayer Vigil for Life, usually held the night before the national march at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in Washington, will instead be a livestreamed event, with bishops participating virtually from across the U.S.

A year ago, President Donald Trump became the first sitting U.S. president to address the March for Life. Trump became a hero to many anti-abortion activists for appointing Supreme Court justices and other federal judges viewed as open to the possibility of repealing or weakening the Roe v. Wade ruling.

This year's event will take place nine days after the presidential inauguration of Democrat Joe Biden, who is a staunch supporter of abortion rights.

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Trump trial pending, McConnell calls it 'vote of conscience'

By LISA MASCARO and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's impeachment trial is likely to start after Joe Biden's inauguration, and the Republican leader, Mitch McConnell, is telling senators their decision on whether to convict the outgoing president over the Capitol riot will be a "vote of conscience."

The timing for the trial, the first of a president no longer in office, has not yet been set. But House Speaker Nancy Pelosi made it clear Friday that Democrats intend to move swiftly on Biden's \$1.9 trillion COVID aid and economic recovery package to speed up vaccinations and send Americans relief. Biden is set to take the oath of office Wednesday.

Pelosi called the recovery package a "matter of complete urgency."

The uncertainty of the scheduling, despite the House's swift impeachment of Trump just a week after the deadly Jan. 6 siege, reflects the fact that Democrats do not want the Senate trial to dominate the

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opening days of the Biden administration.

With security forces on alert over the threat of more potential violence heading into the inauguration, the Senate is also moving quickly to prepare for confirming Biden's nominee for national intelligence director, Avril Haines. A committee hearing is set for the day before the inauguration, signaling a confirmation vote could come swiftly once the new president is in office.

Many Democrats have pushed for an immediate impeachment trial to hold Trump accountable and prevent him from holding future office, and the proceedings could still begin by Inauguration Day. But others have urged a slower pace as the Senate considers Biden's Cabinet nominees and the newly Democratic-led Congress considers priorities like the coronavirus plan.

Biden's incoming White House press secretary, Jen Psaki, said Friday the Senate can do both.

"The Senate can do its constitutional duty while continuing to conduct the business of the people," she said.

Psaki noted that during Trump's first impeachment trial last year, the Senate continued to hold hearings each day. "There is some precedent," she said.

Trump is the only president to be twice impeached, and the first to be prosecuted as he leaves the White House, an ever-more-extraordinary end to the defeated president's tenure. He was first impeached by the House in 2019 over his dealings with Ukraine, but the Senate voted in 2020 to acquit.

When his second trial does begin, House impeachment managers say they will be making the case that Trump's incendiary rhetoric hours before the bloody attack on the Capitol was not isolated, but rather part of an escalating campaign to overturn the November election. It culminated, they will argue, in the Republican president's rally cry to "fight like hell" as Congress was tallying the Electoral College votes to confirm he'd lost to Biden.

For Republican senators, the trial will be a perhaps final test of their loyalty to the defeated president and his legions of supporters in their states back home. It will force a further re-evaluation of their relationship with Trump, who lost not only the White House but majority control of the Senate, as they recall their own experiences sheltering at the Capitol as a pro-Trump mob ransacked the building.

"These men weren't drunks who got rowdy — they were terrorists attacking this country's constitutionally-mandated transfer of power," said Sen. Ben Sasse, R-Neb., in a statement Friday.

"They failed, but they came dangerously close to starting a bloody constitutional crisis. They must be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law."

McConnell, who has spent the past days talking to senators and donors, is telling them the decision on whether or not to convict Trump is theirs alone. His stance, first reported by Business Insider, means the GOP leadership team will not work to hold senators in line one way or the other.

Last week's assault angered lawmakers, stunned the nation and flashed unsettling imagery around the globe, the most serious breach of the Capitol since the War of 1812, and the worst by home-grown intruders.

Pelosi told reporters on Friday that the nine House impeachment managers, who act as the prosecutors for the House, are working on taking the case to trial.

"The only path to any reunification of this broken and divided country is by shining a light on the truth," said Rep. Madeleine Dean, D-Pa., who will serve as an impeachment manager.

Trump was impeached Wednesday by the House on the single charge, incitement of insurrection, in lightning-quick proceedings. Ten Republicans joined all Democrats in the 232-197 vote, the most bipartisan modern presidential impeachment.

It's unclear who will make up the legal team representing the outgoing president at the trial. Democrats are tapping lawyer Barry Berke among others who worked on Trump's first impeachment.

McConnell is open to considering impeachment, having told associates he is done with Trump, but he has not signaled how he would vote. McConnell continues to hold great sway in his party, even though convening the trial next week could be among his last acts as majority leader as Democrats prepare to take control of the Senate with the seating of two new Democratic senators from Georgia.

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No president has ever been convicted in the Senate, and it would take a two-thirds vote against Trump, an extremely high hurdle. But conviction is not out of the realm of possibility, especially as corporations and wealthy political donors distance themselves from his brand of politics and the Republicans who stood by his attempt to overturn the election.

Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, said Thursday, "Such unlawful actions cannot go without consequence." She said in a statement that the House responded "appropriately" with impeachment and she will consider the trial arguments.

At least four Republican senators have publicly expressed concerns about Trump's actions, but others have signaled their preference to move on. Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., issued a statement saying he opposes impeachment against a president who has left office. Trump ally Lindsey Graham of South Carolina is building support for creating a commission to investigate the siege as an alternative to conviction.

The riot delayed the tally of Electoral College votes, the last step in finalizing Biden's victory, as lawmakers fled for shelter and police, guns drawn, barricaded the doors to the House chamber.

A Capitol Police officer died from injuries suffered in the attack, and police shot and killed a woman. Three other people died in what authorities said were medical emergencies.

Associated Press writers Will Weissert, Kevin Freking, Andrew Taylor, Alan Fram, Zeke Miller and Jonathan Lemire contributed to this report.

India starts world's largest COVID-19 vaccination drive

By ANIRUDDHA GHOSAL and SHEIKH SAALIQ Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — India started inoculating health workers Saturday in what is likely the world's largest COVID-19 vaccination campaign, joining the ranks of wealthier nations where the effort is already well underway.

India is home to the world's largest vaccine makers and has one of the biggest immunization programs. But there is no playbook for the enormity of the current challenge.

Indian authorities hope to give shots to 300 million people, roughly the population of the U.S and several times more than its existing program, which targets 26 million infants. The recipients include 30 million doctors, nurses and other front-line workers, to be followed by 270 million people who are either over 50 or have illnesses that make them vulnerable to COVID-19.

For workers who have pulled India's battered health care system through the pandemic, the vaccinations offered confidence that life can start returning to normal. Many burst with pride.

"I am happy to get an India-made vaccine and that we do not have to depend on others for it," said Gita Devi, a nurse who was one of the first to get a shot. Devi has treated patients throughout the pandemic in a hospital in Lucknow, the capital of Uttar Pradesh state in India's heartland.

The first dose was administered to a sanitation worker at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in the capital, New Delhi, after Prime Minister Narendra Modi kick-started the campaign with a nationally televised speech.

"We are launching the world's biggest vaccination drive and it shows the world our capability," Modi said. He implored citizens to keep their guard up and not to believe any "rumors about the safety of the vaccines."

It was not clear whether Modi, 70, had received the vaccine himself as other world leaders have in an effort to demonstrate the shot's safety. His government has said politicians will not be considered a priority group in the first phase of the rollout.

Health officials haven't specified what percentage of India's nearly 1.4 billion people will be targeted by the campaign. But experts say it will almost certainly be the largest such drive globally.

The sheer scale has its obstacles and some early snags were identified. For instance, there were delays in uploading the details of health care workers receiving the shots to a digital platform that India is using to track vaccines, the Health Ministry said.

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Shots were given to at least 165,714 people on Saturday, Dr. Manohar Agnani, a Health Ministry official, said at an evening briefing. The ministry had said that it was aiming to inoculate 100 people in each of the 3,006 vaccination centers across the country.

News cameras captured the injections in hundreds of hospitals, underscoring the hope that getting people vaccinated is the first step to recovering from the pandemic that has devastated the lives of so many Indians and bruised the country's economy. India is second only to the U.S. in the number of confirmed cases, with more than 10.5 million. The country ranks third in the number of deaths, behind the U.S. and Brazil, with over 152,000.

India on Jan. 4 approved emergency use of two vaccines, one developed by Oxford University and U.K.-based drugmaker AstraZeneca, and another by Indian company Bharat Biotech. Cargo planes flew 16.5 million shots to different Indian cities last week.

But doubts over the effectiveness of the homegrown vaccine have created a hurdle for the ambitious plan. Health experts worry that the government's approval of the Bharat Biotech vaccine — without concrete data showing its efficacy — could amplify vaccine hesitancy. At least one state health minister has opposed its use.

"In a hurry to be populist, the government (is) taking decisions that might not be in the best interest of the common man," said Dr. S.P. Kalantri, the director of a rural hospital in Maharashtra, India's worst-hit state. Kalantri said the regulatory approval was hasty and not backed by science.

In New Delhi, doctors at Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, one of the largest in the city, demanded they be administered the AstraZeneca vaccine instead of the one developed by Bharat Biotech. A doctors union at the hospital said many of its members were a "bit apprehensive about the lack of complete trial" for the native vaccine.

"Right now, we don't have the option to choose between the vaccines," said Dr. Nirmalaya Mohapatra, vice president of the hospital's Resident Doctors Association.

The Health Ministry has bristled at the criticism. It says the vaccines are safe and that health workers will have no choice in deciding which vaccine they get.

Against the backdrop of the rising global COVID-19 death toll — it topped 2 million on Friday — the clock is ticking to vaccinate as many people as possible. But the campaign has been uneven.

In wealthy countries including the United States, Britain, Israel, Canada and Germany, millions of citizens have already been given some measure of protection by vaccines developed with revolutionary speed and quickly authorized for use.

But elsewhere, immunization drives have barely gotten off the ground. Many experts are predicting another year of loss and hardship in places like Iran, India, Mexico and Brazil, which together account for about a quarter of the world's COVID-19 deaths.

More than 35 million doses of various COVID-19 vaccines have been administered around the world, according to the University of Oxford.

While the majority of the COVID-19 vaccine doses have already been snapped up by wealthy countries, COVAX, a U.N.-backed project to supply shots to developing parts of the world, has found itself short of vaccines, money and logistical help.

As a result, the World Health Organization's chief scientist, Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, warned this week that it is highly unlikely that herd immunity — which would require at least 70% of the globe to be vaccinated — will be achieved this year.

"Even if it happens in a couple of pockets, in a few countries, it's not going to protect people across the world," she said.

Associated Press writer Biswajeet Banerjee in Lucknow, India, contributed to this report.

Some in the GOP parrot far-right talk of a coming civil war

By JAY REEVES and JULIE CARR SMYTH Associated Press

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BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (AP) — War-like imagery has begun spreading in Republican circles after the attack on the U.S. Capitol by a mob of President Donald Trump's supporters, with some elected officials and party leaders rejecting pleas to tone down rhetoric calling for a second civil war.

In northwestern Wisconsin, the chairman of the St. Croix County Republican Party was forced to resign Friday after refusing for a week after the siege to remove an online post urging followers to "prepare for war." The incoming chairwoman of the Michigan GOP and her husband, a state lawmaker, have joined a conservative social media site created after the Capitol riot where the possibility of civil war is a topic.

Phil Reynolds, a member of the GOP central committee in California's Santa Clara County, appeared to urge on insurrectionists on social media during the Jan. 6 attack, declaring on Facebook: "The war has begun. Citizens take arms! Drumroll please..... Civil War or No Civil War?"

The heightened rhetoric mimics language far-right extremists and white supremacists have used for years, and it follows a year of civil unrest over the killing of George Floyd, a Black man, by a white police officer and its links to systemic racism. Some leftists have used similar language, which Republicans have likened to advocating a new civil war.

The post-Floyd demonstrations prompted governments and corporations alike to reevaluate, leading to the removal of Confederate symbols across the South and the retirement of racially insensitive brands.

Then on Jan. 6, demonstrators stoked by Trump's false claims that he won the 2020 election brought symbols of the Old South to the siege of the Capitol, carrying Confederate flags inside and even erecting a wooden gallows with a noose outside the building.

Democrats say the uptick in war talk isn't accidental. Rep. Maxine Waters, D-Calif., said Trump began putting his supporters in the frame of mind to make the opening charge years ago and is "capable of starting a civil war."

"Since his first day in office, this president has spent four years abusing his power, lying, embracing authoritarianism (and) radicalizing his supporters against democracy," she said in arguing for impeachment. "This corruption poisoned the minds of his supporters, inciting them to willingly join with white supremacists, neo-Nazis and paramilitary extremists in a siege of the United State Capitol building, the very seat of American democracy."

There are parallels between now and the run-up to the Civil War, including a fractious national election that ended with presidents — Abraham Lincoln in 1860 and Joe Biden in 2020 — who millions rejected as illegitimate victors, said Nina Silber, co-president of the Society of Civil War Historians.

Lincoln won the Electoral College but came away with only a plurality of the popular vote in a four-way race. Biden won the popular vote by 7 million over Trump and defeated him decisively in the Electoral College, 306 to 232. Dozens of lawsuits by Trump and his allies seeking to overturn the results failed, some of them turned away by federal judges Trump himself nominated. Then-Attorney General William Barr said the Justice Department could find no evidence of widespread fraud that would have changed the election's outcome.

While the same geographic split doesn't exist today as when the Civil War started in 1861 and there is no mass preparation for all-out conflict, Silber said white anger and resentment fueled both eras.

"At the time of the Civil War, this took the form of Southern white men angry at the idea that the federal government would interfere with their right to own Black slaves. Today, I think this takes the form of white people who believe that Black and brown people are making gains, or getting special treatment, at their expense," Silber, who teaches at Boston University, said in an email interview.

Just as happened generations ago, partisans are using strident words and images to define the other side — not just for policies with which they disagree but as evil, said George Rable, a retired historian at the University of Alabama.

"I think both then and now, we need to worry about the unanticipated consequences of overheated rhetoric and emotions," he said. "Secessionists then hardly anticipated such a bloody civil war, and their opponents often underestimated the depth of secessionist sentiment in a number of states."

State Rep. Tim Butler, a Springfield Republican who represents the same area as Lincoln did in the state

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legislature, condemned the attack on the Capitol during a speech on the Illinois House floor and urged more Republicans to speak up.

"If you're not stepping up and denouncing this, no matter where you fall on the political spectrum, I don't have a place for you ...," Butler said. "The favorite son of this city was murdered because of a civil war as he was president. I'm not going to see a civil war on my watch, I can tell you that."

The question is whether those stoking the war talk can be controlled by the more moderate elements within the party, or whether they will become the dominant voice.

Randy Voepel, a state Assemblyman in California, backtracked after referencing an earlier war — the American Revolution — in a Jan. 9 San Diego Union-Tribune article: "This is Lexington and Concord. First shots fired against tyranny. Tyranny will follow in the aftermath of the Biden swear in on January 20th."

More than three dozen veterans and officials have called for Voepel to be expelled from office. He has since revised his war-like rhetoric with a condemnation of the "violence and lawlessness" at the Capitol and a call for healing.

The other California Republican, Reynolds, said he has no plans to step down from his local party position. He told the San Francisco Chronicle that he wasn't trying to incite violence with his "war has begun" rhetoric, but simply reporting what he saw on television: "My statement was that this can't happen. I was condemning it with my words. It was taken out of context," he said.

Democratic state Assemblyman Evan Low isn't buying it. He called for Reynolds' resignation, telling the Chronicle that the man he has known for two decades was "a genuine and warm human being" but was radicalized by Trump's "poison and lies."

In Missouri, state GOP Chairwoman Jean Evans had enough of the war talk. She resigned after she was barraged by calls from Trump supporters, some of whom demanded a military coup to keep Trump in office "no matter what it takes."

"There's a lot of good Republicans right now who totally disagree with what's going on," she told KMOX. "It's been very scary and frightening and un-American from my perspective, and definitely not part of the conservative party I embrace."

Andrew Hitt, the Republican chairman in Wisconsin, faced off against the St. Croix County party without initial success, describing the call to war as an "ill chosen phrase" and urging its removal.

Despite his plea and those of Democrats and a Republican sheriff, the post remained defiantly in place until a week after the Capitol attack. The website went dark Wednesday without explanation, and the county GOP chairman, John Kraft, resigned on Friday. He did not return a call seeking comment.

Silber, the Civil War historian, said she is worried the attack on the Capitol wasn't the last stand for enraged Trump supporters.

"I think we can see how well-organized right-wing militia groups have become and how well armed they are, and that makes for an extremely explosive situation," she said. "I don't know if that would be 'war' in the technical sense, but there could be an extended period of violent attacks."

Carr Smyth reported from Columbus, Ohio. Associated Press writers Scott Bauer in Madison, Wis.; David Eggert in Lansing, Mich.; John O'Connor in Springfield, Ill.; and Don Thompson in Sacramento, Calif., contributed to this report.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Jan. 17, the 17th day of 2021. There are 348 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 17, 1996, Sheik Omar Abdel-Rahman and nine followers were handed long prison sentences for plotting to blow up New York-area landmarks.

On this date:

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In 1806, Thomas Jefferson's daughter, Martha, gave birth to James Madison Randolph, the first child born in the White House.

In 1916, the Professional Golfers' Association of America had its beginnings as department store magnate Rodman Wanamaker hosted a luncheon of pro and amateur golfers in New York City. (The PGA of America was formally established on April 10, 1916.)

In 1944, during World War II, Allied forces launched the first of four battles for Monte Cassino in Italy; the Allies were ultimately successful.

In 1953, a prototype of the Chevrolet Corvette was unveiled during the General Motors Motorama at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel in New York.

In 1955, the submarine USS Nautilus made its first nuclear-powered test run from its berth in Groton (GRAH'-tuhn), Connecticut.

In 1961, President Dwight D. Eisenhower delivered his farewell address in which he warned against "the acquisition of unwarranted influence, whether sought or unsought, by the military-industrial complex."

In 1977, convicted murderer Gary Gilmore, 36, was shot by a firing squad at Utah State Prison in the first U.S. execution in a decade.

In 1984, the U.S. Supreme Court, in Sony Corp. of America v. Universal City Studios, Inc., ruled 5-4 that the use of home video cassette recorders to tape television programs for private viewing did not violate federal copyright laws.

In 1994, the 6.7 magnitude Northridge earthquake struck Southern California, killing at least 60 people, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

In 1995, more than 6,000 people were killed when an earthquake with a magnitude of 7.2 devastated the city of Kobe (koh-bay), Japan.

In 1997, a court in Ireland granted the first divorce in the Roman Catholic country's history.

In 2008, Bobby Fischer, the chess grandmaster who became a Cold War icon when he dethroned the Soviet Union's Boris Spassky as world champion in 1972, died in Reykjavik, Iceland, at age 64.

Ten years ago: Apple Inc. announced that its CEO, Steve Jobs, was taking his second medical leave of absence in two years. (Jobs died nine months later.) Rock promoter Don Kirshner, 76, died in Boca Raton, Florida.

Five years ago: Ahead of the Iowa caucuses, Democrats Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders engaged in their most contentious debate to date, tangling repeatedly in Charleston, South Carolina, over who was tougher on gun control and Wall Street and how to shape the future of health care in America. Iran released three Americans, former U.S. Marine Amir Hekmati, Washington Post reporter Jason Rezaian and pastor Saeed Abedini, as part of a prisoner swap that also netted Tehran some \$100 billion in sanctions relief.

One year ago: U.S. health officials announced that they would begin screening airline passengers from central China for the new coronavirus; people traveling from Wuhan, China, would have their temperature checked and be asked about symptoms. With the Lunar New Year approaching, Chinese travelers flocked to train stations and airports to take part in the annual Spring Festival travel rush; officials estimated that some 3 billion trips would be made in the world's biggest annual human migration. President Donald Trump added to his legal team for his impeachment trial retired law professor Alan Dershowitz and Ken Starr, the independent counsel who investigated President Bill Clinton.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Betty White is 99. Former FCC chairman Newton N. Minow is 95. Actor James Earl Jones is 90. Talk show host Maury Povich is 82. Pop singer Chris Montez is 79. R&B singer William Hart (The Delfonics) is 76. Actor Joanna David is 74. Actor Jane Elliot is 74. Rock musician Mick Taylor is 73. R&B singer Sheila Hutchinson (The Emotions) is 68. Singer Steve Earle is 66. Singer Paul Young is 65. Actor-comedian Steve Harvey is 64. Singer Susanna Hoffs (The Bangles) is 62. Movie director-screenwriter Brian Helgeland is 60. Actor-comedian Jim Carrey is 59. Actor Denis O'Hare is 59. Former first lady Michelle Obama is 57. Actor Joshua Malina is 55. Singer Shabba Ranks is 55. Actor Naveen Andrews is 52. Electronic music DJ Tiesto is 52. Rapper Kid Rock is 50. Actor Freddy Rodriguez is 46. Actor-writer Leigh Whannel is 44. Actor-singer Zooey Deschanel is 41. Dancer Maksim Chmerkovskiy (TV: "Dancing with the Stars") is 41. Singer Ray J is 40. Actor Diogo Morgado is 40. Country singer Amanda Wilkinson is 39.

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Former NBA player Dwyane Wade is 39. Actor Ryan Gage is 38. DJ-singer Calvin Harris is 37. Folk-rock musician Jeremiah Fraites is 35. Actor Jonathan Keltz is 33. Actor Kelly Marie Tran (Film: "Star Wars: The Last Jedi") is 32. Actor Kathrine Herzer is 24.