Growing concern

Afghanistan momentum on peace, election slows to crawl

By Pamela Constable
The Washington Post

KABUL — Just 10 days ago, Afghanistan finally seemed to be moving forward. Peace negotiations with the Taliban were gaining traction and the country's neighbors were playing a newly positive role. National polls had been set for April, and President Ashraf Ghani appeared strongly positioned for re-election. The U.N. special representative for Afghanistan, Tadamichi Yamamoto, was so optimistic that he told the U.N. Security Council that the chance of settling the Afghan conflict “has never been more real in the past 17 years than it is now.”

Today, it is a very different story. The forward momentum has all but stopped, the news has all been bad, and the country’s political future seems more uncertain than ever.

Afghan officials, stunned by President Donald Trump’s plan to call back thousands of U.S. troops, have retreated into silence and frantic maneuvering to shore up the government. The election has been thrown into doubt and seems likely to be postponed for months. A brutal, unclaimed terrorist assault on two government ministries in the capital left 43 people dead Monday, and the Taliban’s leverage in future power-sharing seems stronger than ever.

“The state of play in Afghanistan is becoming increasingly volatile,” said Michael Kugelman, an Afghanistan expert at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington. The new uncertainties about peace talks and elections, plus “looming U.S. troop withdrawals and a relentless Taliban insurgency,” have created a “powder keg,” he said in an email Friday.

Several Afghan observers expressed similar concerns, warning that the potential double whammy of a prolonged-but-weakened government and a politically strengthened, still-aggressive insurgency could create a power vacuum filled with violence and political turmoil.

SEE SLOWS ON PAGE 2

Saffron slump challenges company founded by Afghan war veterans

By J.P. Lawrence
Stars and Stripes

HERAT, Afghanistan — About a dozen children clam-bered over a low wall into a field of purple flowers and began plucking buds from their rubbery stems, harvesting the “red gold” that one day might be served at a fancy American eatery.

As they worked, the sounds of

SEE CONCERN ON PAGE 3

Top: A farmer stands in a saffron field on Nov. 13 in Afghanistan's Herat province. Right: A woman inspects red stigmas from a purple crocus flower on Nov. 14 while refining saffron, the world's most expensive spice.

PHOTOS BY J.P. LAWRENCE/Stars and Stripes

A saffron slump challenges company founded by Afghan war veterans

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Slows: Decision to draw down forces changes Afghan calculus

FROM FRONT PAGE

"Unfortunately, the timing of the troop cuts has fallen right when there was an effort to convince the Taliban to accept a settlement, and at a crucial phase in a new political transition," analyst Haroun Mir said. Now, he said, "the Taliban will have no reason to make meaningful concessions," and it will be equally difficult to hold credible elections on time or to extend the current administration's tenure.

Technically, the election has nothing to do with the peace talks, but the imbroglio over its timing, initially due to concerns over security and fraud, became linked to the talks last month, as U.S. officials pushed for speedy negotiations with the insurgents. Some Afghans and foreign donors urged that the presidential polls be delayed, and a variety of Afghans said an interim caretaker government should be set up to oversee the peace process.

Ghani, then widely viewed as the front-runner and adamantly opposed to an interim government, insisted that the polls be held in April as mandated by the constitution. The national elections commission vacillated for weeks, changing its mind several times. Early this week, the panel indicated that the polls might be delayed by three to four months, but no announcement was made.

At the same time, the abrupt White House decision to cut half of the 14,000 U.S. troops, most serving as trainers and advisers to Afghan forces, upended both the pre-electoral political calculus here and the growing sense of momentum in the peace process, especially after a third round of talks in Abu Dhabi to which half a dozen foreign countries extended support and Taliban leaders sent senior delegates.

When news of Trump's plan broke here, it appeared to many Afghans and others that the Taliban, which had been waging an aggressive ground campaign and killing record numbers of Afghan forces for months, was being handed one of its major long-term demands — that foreign forces leave the country — without having to give up anything in return. There were media reports of Taliban fighters celebrating at the news and predicting that victory was close at hand.

"The fundamental challenge is still how to convince the Taliban to stop fighting," Kugelman said in his email Friday. "With the insurgents poised to gain a major battlefield advantage if thousands of U.S. troops start heading for the exits, the Taliban seemingly has more incentive to take up arms than to lay them down."

American military officials here have insisted that no matter how large or small their troop numbers, U.S. support for Afghanistan will remain steadfast. The senior U.S. commander here, Gen. Austin "Scott" Miller, has given several interviews in the past week to emphasize that point. He also made a quick trip to Pakistan, which has strongly supported the peace talks, to deliver the same message to its military chief.

But Afghanistan's military and police forces have struggled with mixed success to overcome long-term morale and institutional problems that foreign advisers can only partly address. Although Ghani has said nothing publicly in the past week to emphasize that point, he also made a quick trip to Pakistan, which has strongly supported the peace talks, to deliver the same message to its military chief.

The beleaguered Afghan president, who took office in 2014 vowing to usher in an era of technocracy, human rights and rule of law, is despised by the Taliban as an American stooge, and the group has refused to negotiate with him. Even before the troop cuts, aides to Ghani expressed concerns that U.S. officials would make too many concessions to the insurgents to win a quick peace.

Now that his government's most important military backer has undercuts him without warning, and it appears that elections may be delayed, analysts said Ghani is scrambling to consolidate his political power at all costs, co-opting critics and potential rivals with job offers, and even unofficially freeing an abusive militia commander with a large tribal following

"The president is going after his political survival," said Najib Mahmoud, a political analyst here, adding that Ghani now hopes he can build a strong enough team to remain in power if elections are delayed and still prevail at the polls next year. “But everything he is doing shows we have no political stability and no rule of law.”
snapping flower heads filled the air — the only sound besides the occasional rumble of U.S. military helicopters overhead.

Nadir Khan Alizai, 55, watched as his son, 3, mimicked his older brothers canvassing the rows of flowers. His daughter, 4, hopped a furrow and wandered off holding a blossom.

The greying village elder once grew opium poppies, but a decade ago switched to crocus, from which saffron is made. The most expensive spice in the world, it can sell for up to $4,000 a pound. His family operates one of 400 farms that sell part of their harvest to Rumi Spice, a million-dollar company founded by U.S. Army combat veterans.

Still, this year, prices for his saffron have fallen due to factors outside his control.

"I'm just a farmer, I don't know why the prices went down, I just know it depends on the government and the mafia," Alizai said.

The Americans see their business as continuing a mission they started in the military, but its rise comes as trafficking from Iran, counterfeiting and other growing pains for Afghan farmers threaten to undo progress in the fledgling saffron trade here.

Made from hand-picked flower stigmas, saffron is coveted as a seasoning in teas and rice dishes, as a dye in textiles, a fragrance in perfume and in medical applications. The legal cash crop is credited with helping Herat kick its opium-growing habit and giving jobs to vulnerable women.

But recent upheavals may force some to return to the poppies that have helped fuel the 17-year Taliban insurgency. And despite the backing of a billionaire and testimonials from award-winning chefs, Rumi Spice's success remains tied to the conditions in a volatile country gripped by insurgency and corruption.

Still, the veterans hope commerce can win entrenched battles that combat couldn't win on its own.

**The rise of Rumi Spice**

While saffron growing has a long history in Afghanistan, it fell out of favor during decades of war, until refugees returned home from Iran after the Taliban fell in 2001 and began cultivating it near Herat. The flower thrived in the dry soil and cultivation was spurred by ample government and international aid.

Keith Alainz got the idea to sell the aromatic red saffron threads to Americans while deployed to the country in 2011 and then again in 2013. He was inspired by a local farmer who struggled to find overseas markets and get their crocus buds in a carefully controlled environment to prevent contamination, for example.

The government has also stepped in to protect the industry by trying to ban all saffron imports, even small amounts previously allowed to be carried from Iran.

Meanwhile, Afghan saffron exports to the U.S. have jumped from one kilogram in 2008 to 845 kilograms last year, United Nations figures show.

Production has shot up in the same period, more than doubling since 2015, according to government data. But farmers have seen prices flatten and then fall off one-third from their peak three years ago.

Opportunities in China have not materialized, said Abdul Saboor Rahmany, Herat province's agricultural chief, and lower prices may be the norm for a while. Growers still earn more than they would from wheat or onions, he said, but "when the price decreases, the benefits decrease."

Some farmers say that for the trouble they face from armed saffron-runners and declining prices, they might as well be in the more lucrative illicit drug trade.

"If the situation doesn't change, I'll go back to cultivating poppies, even if I get killed," said Abdul Reza, a saffron farmer.

"When guns rule the land, only the farmers and the poor suffer."

**Women working for Rumi Spice, a saffron import company founded in 2014 by U.S. military veterans, bring forward saffron they have processed for inspection Nov. 13 in Herat, Afghanistan. Saffron companies often employ women to process the spice, known as the most expensive in the world.**

**Photos by J.P. Lawrence**

Women working for Rumi Spice, a saffron import company founded in 2014 by U.S. military veterans, bring forward saffron they have processed for inspection Nov. 13 in Herat, Afghanistan. Saffron companies often employ women to process the spice, known as the most expensive in the world.

**A rising underdog and a shadowy underworld**

The company's rise parallels Afghanistan's emergence as an underdog to compete with neighboring Iran, the world’s largest supplier of the spice, which has struggled against U.S.-imposed banking and trade restrictions that barred legal exports of its vast supply of saffron to the West.

Those sanctions and a weakened currency have led Iran to flood Afghan markets with its crop to skirt the restrictions and suppress vulnerable competitors across the border, locals and experts said.

"The stagnation of Afghan saffron prices, that’s the perverse effect of blocking the saffron from Iran," said Philippe De Viene, a 30-year veteran spice hunter and CEO of Epices De Cru, a Montreal-based spice company that purchases from Rumi Spice. "That is a shame because good Afghan saffron is a great product."

Smuggled and counterfeited spice is glutting local markets and getting shipped abroad, officials in Herat said, citing data that showed saffron exports exceeded production last year, even with half the crop remaining in the country.

Industry experts say Iran’s interference for a sharp fall in wholesale prices, which hurts farmers who invested heavily in the spice through ethical sourcing, rigorously quality standards and greater transparency. Rumi Spice does not take secondhand saffron and processes its crocus buds in a carefully controlled environment to prevent contamination, for example.

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“‘When guns rule the land, only the farmers and the poor suffer.’”
Coast Guard lands brief pay reprieve

**By Seth Robson and Rose L. Thayer**
Stars and Stripes

Coast Guard servicemembers will receive their paychecks Monday despite an earlier announcement saying they’d miss out due to the federal government shutdown, officials said Friday.

“I am pleased to announce that the Administration, the Department of Homeland Security and the Coast Guard have identified a way to pay our military workforce on 31 December,” Coast Guard Vice Commandant Adm. Charles Ray said in message to servicemembers.

Earlier in the week, a Coast Guard spokesman had indicated that pay would stop during the shutdown, which began Dec. 21 and shows no signs of ending soon.

“I recognize that this changes course from previously provided guidance on military pay, however, this is outstanding news for our military workforce,” Ray said.

Though the other military service branches — Army, Air Force, Navy and Marines — are part of the Department of Defense, which has been unaffected by the shutdown, the Coast Guard falls under the Department of Homeland Security, one of several federal agencies whose budget was not approved beyond Dec. 21.

There are about 42,000 active-duty Coast Guard members. In addition, about 7,400 civilian Coast Guard employees are on furlough and another 1,300 are continuing to work without pay.

The Coast Guard’s one-time action applies to servicemembers who were on active duty in December and reservists who conducted reserve training prior to Dec. 21, 2018, you will then receive the appropriate pay and allowance entitlements on Dec. 31, 2018,” it adds.

However, the website warns that servicemembers’ Jan. 15 paychecks are not guaranteed.

“Meeting active duty and reserve military payroll for January 2019 will require a fiscal year 2019 appropriation, a continuing resolution, or passage of an alternative measure,” the website says.

An agreement to end the shutdown hangs on a standoff between the White House and Democrats on Capitol Hill over funding for a wall along the U.S. border with Mexico. President Donald Trump has said he will not sign a spending resolution without border wall funding. Congressional Democrats say they will not vote to fund the wall, unless Congress first holds a separate fiscal vote on a Senate’s proposed raise, but the House has already agreed to the Senate’s proposal, which would include a freeze in federal employee salary rates at current levels in 2019, although a chance remains that employees will still receive a raise.

Trump’s order was expected since he has advocated a freeze all along, saying it is necessary under the complex law governing federal pay to prevent a larger deficits, which taking effect by default, due to Congress not making a decision regarding a raise.

The order comes as some 800,000 federal employees, out of a workforce of 2.1 million, are in unpaid status due to the partial government shutdown that now has lasted a week and is virtually guaranteed to last at least a number of days more. Of those, about 380,000 have been furloughed while the rest are still on the job, although without pay, due to the new fiscal year.

“This is just pouring salt into the wound,” National Treasury Employees Union President David Reardon said in a statement. “It is shocking that federal employees are taking yet another financial hit as workers, and working without pay were not enough, now they have been told that they don’t even deserve a modest pay increase.”

Trump’s order only applies to civilian workers. Military personnel, which are covered under a separate funding measure, will receive a 2.6 percent raise.

The order is the latest in a long series of developments regarding a raise. After Trump’s original proposal for a freeze on early year budget plan, the House passed a measure that in effectextended, by making no mention of a raise. Then the Senate then passed a counterpart favoring an average 1.9 percent increase, within the House’s range.

Trump followed with a letter to Congress stating his intention to impose a freeze if legislators did not act by the end of the calendar year. For a time it appeared that the House would agree to the Senate’s proposal, but the avoid a bill resolving the issue.
Pelosi taps Florida Dem to lead climate change panel

By Matthew Daly
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi on Friday appointed Florida Rep. Kathy Castor to lead a special committee on climate change that will be reinstated in the new Congress.

Pelosi, the likely House speaker, said Castor brings experience, energy and “urgency to the existential threat of the climate crisis” facing the United States and the world. Castor will begin her seventh term representing the Tampa Bay area and serves on the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

“Congresswoman Castor is a proven champion for public health and green infrastructure, who deeply understands the seriousness of this threat. Her decades of experience in this fight, both in Florida and in the Congress, will be vital,” Pelosi said.

Castor said in a statement that she was honored to lead the panel and pledged to “act with urgency to reduce carbon pollution” and “unleash” American ingenuity to create clean-energy jobs.

“The costs of the changing climate and extreme weather events pose greater risks every day to American families, businesses and our way of life,”Castor said. She added that the new panel “will tackle the crisis head-on. Failure is not an option.”

The membership and exact scope of the panel remains to be determined, but Pelosi said it will play a key role in shaping how Congress responds to the threat, global warming while creating good-paying, “green” jobs.

Democratic Rep.-elect Steny Hoyer, the incoming House majority leader, said last week the climate committee likely would not have legal authority to demand documents under subpoena. But he added that he doesn’t think the panel will need subpoena authority since experts will be “dying to come before them.”

Democratic Rep.-elect Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York and other progressives have pushed for a “green new deal” that includes thousands of jobs in renewable energy such as wind and solar power. She and other leaders say the climate panel is a key platform to advance the green agenda.

Supreme Court lays low after Brett Kavanaugh confirmation

By Mark Sherman
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court began its term with the tumultuous confirmation of Justice Brett Kavanaugh, followed by a studied avoidance of drama on the high court bench — especially anything that would divide the five conservatives and four liberals.

The justices have been unusually solicitous of each other in the courtroom since Kavanaugh’s confirmation, and several have voiced concern that the public perceives the court as merely a political institution. Chief Justice John Roberts seems determined to lead the one Washington institution that stays above the political fray. Even Roberts’ rebuke of President Donald Trump, after the president criticized a federal judge, was in defense of an independent, apolitical judiciary.

The next few weeks will test whether the calm can last.

When they gather again on Jan. 4 to consider new cases for arguments in April and into next term, the justices will confront a raft of high-profile appeals.

Abortion restrictions, workplace discrimination against LGBT people and patent-gammying are on the agenda.

Close behind are appeals from the Trump administration seeking to have the court allow it to end an Obama-era program that shields young immigrants from deporta-

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**WATER RESCUES IN SOUTH, HEAVY SNOW IN MIDWEST**

BY JOHN SEEWER  
**Associated Press**

A powerful winter storm that brought blizzard warnings Friday across the Upper Midwest was blamed for at least three fatal crashes while flash flooding from rains in the South swept away cars and forced dozens of water rescues.

In northern New England, a mix of snow, sleet, freezing rain and rain added up to make for dangerous driving Friday for post-holiday travelers.

Much of the Dakotas and part of Minnesota were under a blizzard warning after many areas got a foot of snow or more Thursday. A collision between a small bus and an SUV in Minnesota killed a 47-year-old woman on the bus and injured nine others Thursday. A second person died in central Minnesota after being struck on a road by a pickup with a plow blade.

In North Dakota, a pickup truck driver was killed Thursday on a snow-covered highway when visibility was reduced by blowing snow from a plow, according to the state highway patrol.

Another storm dumped up to 12 inches of rain in Louisiana and Mississippi, sweeping away cars and forcing some residents to be rescued from their homes before the rains moved into Alabama, Georgia, Tennessee, and western North Carolina on Friday.

The National Weather Service posted flash flood watches and warnings for much of the South from Louisiana into southwest Virginia.

“We had an extreme flash flooding event,” said Glen Moore, the emergency management director in Forrest County, in southwestern Mississippi, which saw 9 inches of rain fall over 12 hours through early Friday.

Authorities had to rescue residents from about 25 area homes in Forrest County, Moore said. They rescued one man whose car was swept away after he went around a barricade on a flooded road.

“He was able to make it outside of the car and latch onto a tree until we could get a boat to him,” Moore said.

Mississippi officials warned that flood levels on some rivers in the state could be high, especially if the forecast for more rain through Tuesday holds up. Some levels could match a 2016 flood that led to a federal disaster declaration, said Greg Flynn, the state’s Emergency Management Agency spokesman.

He said survey teams were still assessing damage from flash flooding in southern Mississippi, where there was at least one death, as many roads and bridges were damaged or how many homes were flooded.

Rain-fed rivers were rising Friday in some New Orleans suburbs north of big Lake Pontchartrain.

The St. Tammany Parish government told residents of neighborhoods along both sides of the Tchefuncte River to consider voluntary evacuation because of the possibility of flooding into Saturday. The parish also declared an emergency to coordinate local, state and federal resources.

North of St. Tammany Parish in Washington Parish, Parish President Richard N. Thomas said in a Facebook message that 10 to 13 inches of rain had caused flash floods in the Bogalusa, Varnado and Angie areas, and some people had to be rescued.

There was one death in Tennessee where a woman fell into a rain-swollen creek near Chattanooga. Authorities who recovered the woman’s body Friday morning said there had been no rescues as three hours after she lost her footing said she had been camping in a cave with friends and they were trying to leave the area when she fell into the water.

Rescue workers in north Georgia used a ladder and ropes to get to a woman and baby stranded in a truck inundated by rising waters Friday. Dramatic video posted to Facebook showed crews working to reach the truck as water reached the vehicle’s windshield.

The storm system was blamed for a death in Louisiana earlier this week when a tree fell on a camper. Forecasters said up to 5 inches of rain was possible in northern Alabama and central and north Georgia.

Water also flooded more than a dozen homes in St. Charles Parish, La., and a Trader Joe’s store north of New Orleans lost power during the storm, prompting it to donate perishable grocery items to a food bank.

Some areas of the Midwest were seeing spring-like conditions. Shorts and T-shirts replaced winter running gear Friday for several joggers in downtown Columbus, Ohio, where temperatures were in the 50s. “It’s weird that there’s no snow,” said Evan Miller, who was about four miles into his run while wearing gray shorts and a short sleeve shirt.

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**2-YEAR-OLD YEMENI BOY WHOS MOM SUED US TO SEE HIM HAS DIED**

Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. — The 2-year-old son of a Yemeni woman who sued the Trump administration to let her into the country to be with the ailing boy has died, the Council on American-Islamic Relations announced.

Abdullah Hassan died in UCSF Benioff Children’s Hospital in Oakland, where his father, Ali Hassan, brought him in the fall to get treatment for a genetric brain disorder. His mother, Shaima Swileh, is not an American citizen and remained in Egypt while fighting for a visa.

“We are heartbroken. We had to say goodbye to our baby, the light of our lives,” Ali Hassan was quoted as saying in the statement published Friday by the council.

A funeral was scheduled for Saturday.

Hassan is a U.S. citizen who lives in Stockton, Calif. Hassan and his wife moved to Egypt after marrying in war-torn Yemen in 2016.

Swileh had been trying to get a visa since 2017, so the family could move to the United States. Citizens from Yemen and four other mostly Muslim countries, along with North Korea and Venezuela, are restricted from coming to the United States under President Donald Trump’s travel ban.

When the boy’s health worsened, Hassan went ahead to California in October to get his son help, and Swileh remained in Egypt hoping for a visa. As the couple fought for a waiver, doctors put Abdullah on life support.

“My wife is calling me every day wanting to kiss and hold her son for the one last time,” Hassan said, choking up at a news conference earlier this month.

He started losing hope and was considering pulling his son off life support to end his suffering. But then a hospital social worker reached out to the Council on American-Islamic Relations, which sued Dec. 16, said Basim Elkarrar, executive director of the group in Sacramento.

The State Department granted Swileh a waiver the next day.

“With their courage, this family has inspired our nation to confront the realities of Donald Trump’s Muslim Ban,” said Saad Swilem, a lawyer with the council who represents the family. “In his short life, Abdullah has been a guiding light for all of us in the fight against xenophobia and family separation.”
Tipping the conversation?

Mormon-dominated Utah adopts nation’s strictest DUI threshold

**By Lindsay Whitehurst**
Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — New Year’s Eve revelers in Utah could find themselves with more than a hangover as 2019 dawns. If they drink and drive, they could end up on the wrong side of the nation’s newest and lowest DUI threshold.

The 0.05 percent limit goes into effect Sunday, driving away visitors. The town don’t set foot in their own cars. In Utah, the state Department of Transportation officials worry that the reputation that the predominantly Mormon state is unfriendly to those who drink alcohol. The state’s old limit was 0.08 percent, the threshold in most states.

For Utah lawmakers, the change is a safety measure aimed at encouraging people not to drive at all if they’ve been drinking. The change was easily approved in 2017 by the Legislature, which is mostly Mormon and mostly Republican, and signed into law by Gov. Gary Herbert, also a Republican and member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The religion teaches its members to abstain from drinking alcohol.

“The vast majority of people nationwide think that if a person has been drinking they shouldn’t be driving,” said Republican Rep. Norm Thurston, who sponsored the measure.

The change means that depending on things such as food intake, a 150-pound man could be over the 0.05 limit after two beers in an hour, while a 120-pound woman could exceed it after a single drink in that time, according to figures from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

The National Transportation Safety Board also backs the change, and many in the hospitality industry worry that other states will follow suit. Utah was among the first to adopt the now-standard 0.08 threshold decades ago, and lawmakers in four states - Washington, Hawaii, Delaware and New York - have passed measures to lower their DUI limit in recent years. None has passed.

“Other states proposing the 0.05 law, don’t just follow blindly in the footsteps of Utah,” said Jackson Sheddower, a spokesman for the American Beverage Institute, a national restaurant group.

In 2017, the group took out newspaper ads in Utah, neighboring states and in USA Today, featuring a fake mugshot under a large headline reading, “Utah: Come for vacation, leave on probation.”

Court: Mother’s drug use isn’t child abuse

By Mark Scolforo
Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. — Pennsylvania’s highest court ruled Friday that mothers who use illegal drugs while pregnant cannot be considered perpetrators of child abuse against their newly born children under the state’s child protection law.

The Supreme Court’s main opinion said the law’s definition of categories of perpetrators does not bring her earlier actions — even if committed within years of the child’s bodily injury — under the CPSL, wrote Justice Christine Donohue.

“The facts in this matter more closely resemble neglect cases where the injury manifests at some point in time after the neglect as in cases of malnourishment from lack of food, or from a severe diaphoresis from failure to routinely change diapers,” wrote Justice Sallie Mundy, joined by Justice Debra Todd.

It’s unfair that smaller people could violate the new threshold after just one or two drinks in quick succession, even though they’re no more impaired than someone talking on a hands-free cellphone, his group argues.

NYSB member Bella Dinh-Zarr said that fears about the law are overblown. Nearly 100 countries have a similar limit, and it hasn’t correlated with less drinking per-capita. Federally funded research indicates the standard could save some 1,500 lives a year if adopted around the U.S., she said.

“The restaurant industry should support this because it keeps their customers alive and drinking,” Dinh-Zarr said.

Utah’s law takes effect as the state basks in the news that the U.S. Olympic Committee chose Salt Lake City over Denver as a future bid city, most likely for the 2030 Winter Olympics. State tourism officials say they’re not concerned about the law driving away visitors.

With the increased use of Uber and other ride-hailing apps, many people going out for a night on the town don’t set foot in their own cars. In Utah, DUI arrests have dropped more than 50 percent over the past seven years despite a booming population, according to state figures.

US probes CenturyLink internet, 911 disruptions

By Keith Ridler
Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho — U.S. officials and at least one state said Friday that they have started investigations into a nationwide CenturyLink internet outage that has disrupted 911 service.

Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai called the outage that began Thursday “completely unacceptable” because people who need help couldn’t use the emergency number.

“It’s breadth and duration are particularly troubling,” he said.

The commission’s Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau was investigating the cause and effect of the outage, he said.

The Monroe, La.-based company offers communications and information technology services in dozens of states. Customers from New York to California reported outages.

CenturyLink spokeswoman Debra Peterson said the outage “is not related to hacking,” but she declined further comment.

The company said on Twitter that it’s working to restore service and appears to be making progress. It hasn’t provided a cause for the problems.

Where CenturyLink is the 911 service provider 911 calls are completing,” the company said in a tweet.

Regulators in Washington state also said they were opening an investigation into an outage of its statewide 911 service.

The state Utilities and Transportation Commission said interruptions began around 8:30 p.m. Thursday. The commission’s regulatory services division director, Mark Vasconi, said the system appeared stable Friday but the agency was monitoring it.

In Idaho, Emergency Office Management Director Brad Richy said he didn’t receive any reports of 911 service failures, but some state agencies, including the state Department of Correction, reported a loss of service on internet-based phones.

Some businesses in Idaho also lost the ability to make credit card payments, some ATMs machines weren’t working in Idaho and Montana.

The nationwide 911 outages in Massachusetts, public safety officials recommended individuals looking for emergency help use the 10-digit telephone number of the fire or police departments they wanted to contact.
Blue collar worker shortage changing US labor market

By Rich Miller
Bloomberg

A surprise shortage of blue collar workers is changing the contours of the U.S. labor market, boosting their pay, narrowing wage inequality and drawing more women into those jobs.

The shortfall is being driven by a shrinking supply of middle-class and low-pay service workers as the labor force becomes more educated and less willing to take on such jobs, according to a new Conference Board study.

“The divergence between blue collar and white collar salary is going to persist and even become bigger through 2030,” Gad Levanon, chief economist for North America at the New York-based research group and one of the authors of the report, said in an interview.

That is likely to keep upward pressure on labor costs in such industries as construction, transportation and accommodation and food services. It also has implications for inflation and for the Federal Reserve as Chairman Jerome Powell and his colleagues try to sustain the 9½-year-old expansion without overheating the economy. Unemployment at 3.7 percent is the lowest since 1969 and running well below Fed estimates for its long-run sustainable rate.

“The acute shortage of talent in the blue collar space is very, very pronounced,” said Peter Quigley, executive vice president at Kelly Services Inc., a staffing company with branches in all 50 states.

Manufacturers and other companies with physically demanding jobs are finding it tough to fill those positions when baby boomers retire. “It’s harder and harder to attract younger people into those jobs, either because they’re pursuing education alternatives or the stigma associated with light industrial work,” Quigley said.

The supply of lower-skilled workers is also being squeezed by growth in the number of Americans who’ve claimed disability benefits and dropped out of the labor force. Exacerbated by the opioid epidemic, that’s much more concentrated in the population without a bachelor’s degree, the Conference Board report says.

Tighter restrictions on immigration are also playing a role and will continue to do so in the future, said Moody’s Analytics’ Chief Economist Mark Zandi. Many of those foreign workers are lower-skilled and in industries such as construction and farming.

Automation and off-shoring were widely expected to devastate demand for industrial workers and depress their pay, especially when compared with their more educated counterparts. But that hasn’t happened, at least so far, according to the Conference Board. Blue collar and low-pay services jobs have grown as rapidly as total employment since the economy began recovering in June 2009.

For much of this expansion, manufacturers and other companies have been slow to ramp up capital spending and step up automation, opting instead to take on more workers to meet rising demand for their products and services.

That’s been reflected in the slow growth of productivity: Output per hour worked has risen at an annual average rate of 1.2 percent since the recession ended in June 2009, well below the 2.2 percent post World War II pace.

The combination of surprising- ly robust demand for blue collar workers and their limited supply is forcing companies to increase pay at the bottom end of the scale. Minimum wage increases have also helped those less well-off.

That’s helping to reverse the decades-long trend toward greater wage inequality, according to Levanon, who co-wrote the report with economist Frank Steevers.

Besides granting bigger wage increases, companies are getting creative in offering other perks to employees, including more breaks, re-jigged work schedules and greater flexibility for working parents, Quigley said.

The improved packages look to be attracting more women into blue collar jobs. “It helps remove some of the inhibitions or reluctance some women may have in taking those positions, Levanon said.

The increase in female participation is particularly evident in the manufacturing sector, where demand for workers has taken off because of the growth of online shopping. “It’s probably ground zero for labor shortages,” Levanon said.

“Lower income workers are doing better,” Moody’s Zandi said. “The balance of power has shifted from employers to employees.”

Some Alaska fishermen target hagfish for winter harvest

By Annie Zark
Anchorage Daily News

ANCHORAGE, Alaska — Consider the hagfish.

Maybe you’ve never heard of these deep ocean creatures, also called “slime eels” for their eel-like appearance and ability to secrete huge amounts of opaque slime. Not for their eel-like appearance and ability to secrete huge amounts of opaque slime. Not for their eel-like appearance and ability to secrete huge amounts of opaque slime. Not for their eel-like appearance and ability to secrete huge amounts of opaque slime.

They have three “accessory hearts,” as Jerome Powell and his colleagues try to sustain the 9½-year-old expansion without overheating the economy. Unemployment at 3.7 percent is the lowest since 1969 and running well below Fed estimates for its long-run sustainable rate.

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Some Alaska fishermen target hagfish for winter harvest


A few southeast Alaska fishermen are targeting hagfish as a species for 2018 winter harvest.

The creatures don’t have a jaw, simply a mouth and a tongue, said Baldwin. They are still classified as vertebrates even though they lack vertebrae, “which is sort of counter-intuitive,” he said.

Other hagfish facts compiled by the University of California Museum of Paleontology: They have three “accessory hearts,” they “may change sex from season to season,” and “will sneeze” when their nostrils clog with their own slime.

“An unusual species for sure,” Bowers said.

The creatures burrow into fish on long- lines or traps and eat the flesh, leaving slime and bone, Baldwin said. Hagfish secrete their slime when threatened, and also use it as a “lubricant” when they burrow into fish or dead mammals. Commercial fishermen even avoid areas where there is known to be a high abundance of hagfish, he said.

This isn’t the first time Alaskans have tried to ignite a hagfish fishery. There was also an effort made in the 1990s, said Anchorage Board member New Olson, the Southeast Alaska groundfish project leader at Fish and Game. Hagfish fisheries in Korea and Japan collapsed in the 1980s and 90s and then the fishery took off along the West Coast, in waters off Washington, Oregon and California, according to Fish and Game.

“In Southeast (Alaska), it just didn’t work out,” Olson said.

Things started up again in 2016.

“A lot of guys down in Southeast, they like to fish whatever they can,” said Olson. “Hagfish is one of those things that hadn’t been revisited and they just wanted to try it out and something ended up sticking this time.”

Fishermen typically catch hagfish using pots baited with fish parts, and the pots are hauled to a longline. The hagfish get into the pots and then can’t get back out.

Korea is the main market for slime eels, Baldwin said. The meat is sold there for food and the skin used for leather. The slime is even used as an egg substitute.

“If you’ve ever seen eel skin products, it’s all hagfish,” Baldwin said. He’s even seen hagfish couches.

The fishing season for the creatures is year-round, which provides a winter fishing opportunity. Up to 120,000 pounds of hagfish can be caught each year in the state, under current quotas.

Baldwin, the Fish and Game biologist, said the slime is being studied for new potential uses including sickness to close wounds and even clothing fibers. Still, people aren’t exactly clamoring for hagfish permits.

“The gross factor, I think, definitely deters people,” Olson said. “We’ve done a lot of outreach stuff ... but we haven’t really had anyone knocking down our door to go fish for it.”
For the troops

Stars and Stripes was a primary source of news for the troops at the Front and behind the lines in World War II. Although it printed only in the European theater during the war, it covered news from all theaters.
Thrift stores grow as bargains are coveted

**By Shannon Prather**
(Minneapolis Star Tribune)

Pam Kaiser browses the shelves of figures at Goodwill in Roseville, Minn., in search of vintage items that speak to her family’s roots. “I love to find Scandinavian things. I’m Swedish and my husband is German,” said Kaiser, who is a thrift store regular. “Fun to find things that are unique.”

She has plenty of places to treasure hunt. The not-for-profit thrift stores in Minnesota are experiencing unprecedented growth to handle both a growing appetite for secondhand bargains and a burgeoning amount of donated items.

Thrift stores viewed a generation ago as places where poor people shop, are now attracting more middle class, environmentally conscious consumers in search of vintage and one-of-a-kind items.

“The temperament and mindset about reuse has changed dramatically, and that’s across the country,” said Michael Wirth-Davis, Goodwill-Easter Seals Minnesota’s president and CEO.

In the past seven years, Goodwill has more than doubled the number of its retail locations to 51, including outlet stores and boutiques. It’s seen online sales soar including outlet stores and boutiques. It’s seen online sales soar.

The Twin Cities Salvation Army's nine thrift stores brought in $15 million last year to support its Adult Rehabilitation Center, where men take counseling and classes on anger management, life and job skills, and Christian values.

“People are much more aware of sustainability and recycling, and it’s the thrill of the hunt.”

- Adele Meyer

executive director of NARTS: The Association of Resale Professionals

“People have a lot of places to spend their money — their children’s education, retirement, vacation homes. Consumer goods is a place they can save.”

Tom Canfield, who as the Salvation Army’s business administrator oversees its thrift stores, said the Great Recession 10 years ago changed how people viewed secondhand shopping. Many part-time customers walked into thrift stores out of necessity and were surprised by the quality and selection they found. Even when financial fortunes improved, people continued thrift-store shopping, he said.

Nonprofits have redesigned their stores to attract and keep this new class of customer. Thrift stores feel more like big box retailers, brightly lit with polished floors and wide aisles to accommodate shopping carts. Merchandise is neatly hung and sorted by size and style, just like standard retailers.

Impact on the environment has become a large part of the nonprofits’ brand to new customers.

“We are seeing the younger generations, the millennials shopping our stores more frequently. One of the aspects of that generation is environmental consciousness,” said Chris Lenzen, Family Pathways’ director of thrift stores.

Goodwill resold or recycled 8,000 tons of goods last year and behind the scenes has focused on recycling donated items that don’t sell in its retail locations, said Chris Simon, Goodwill’s director of facilities and logistics.

Simon and his team have found companies that buy bulk stuffed animals, old record albums and baled plastics and clothing. TSA even buys Goodwill’s leftover suitcases for training.

The Salvation Army does similar bulk recycling and reselling, donating 4.5 million pounds of textiles from the trash each year.

“It’s incredible the amount of product we are diverting out of the waste stream,” Canfield said. “My biggest competition is the landfill.”

One environmental mindset also is influencing retail operations. Many Goodwill stores are outfitted with solar panels on the roof and electric-vehicle charging stations in the parking lots.

“We need to take care of our planet,” Wirth-Davis said.

As thrift stores grow, the nonprofits that run them are trying to better explain how their proceeds support their mission. Most people who donate and shop know they’re supporting a good cause, but they’re often not sure exactly what, nonprofit leaders say.

“That’s been one of our biggest challenges,” Babcock said.

Goodwill offers job training in automotive, banking and finance, construction and medical office work. Sheila Danahy completed Goodwill’s eight-week banking and finance course and landed a job at U.S. Bank.

She was looking for something different, but I didn’t have a financial background or a finance degree,” Danahy said.

The program introduced her to banking, helped her network and gave her job tips.

“I’ve always shopped Goodwill, but now I understand a lot better what they do,” she said.

**Trump’s EPA orders rollback of Obama-era mercury regulations**

**By Ellen Knickmeyer**
Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The Trump administration has proposed reducing an Obama-era regulation credited with helping dramatically reduce toxic mercury pollution from coal-fired power plants, saying the benefits to human health and the environment may not be worth the cost of the regulation.

The 2011 Obama administration rule, called the Mercury and Air Toxics Standards, led to what electric utilities say was an $8 billion reduction in coal-fired power plants’ compliance costs. The Obama rule reduced mercury and other pollutants by 90 percent.

The new proposal Friday from the Environmental Protection Agency challenges the basis for the Obama regulation. It calculates that the crackdown on mercury and other toxins from coal plants produced only a few million dollars a year in measurable health benefits and was not “appropriate and necessary” — a legal benchmark under the country’s landmark Clean Air Act.

The proposal, which now goes up for public comment before any final administration approval, would leave the current mercury regulation in place.

However, the EPA said it will seek comment during a 60-day public review period on whether “we would be obligated to rescind” the Obama-era rule if the agency adopts Friday’s finding that the regulation was not appropriate and necessary. Any such change would trigger new rounds in what have already been years of court battles over regulating mercury pollution from coal plants.

This move is the latest by the Trump administration that changes estimates of the costs and payoffs of regulations as part of an overhaul of Obama-era environmental protections.

It’s also the administration’s latest proposed move on behalf of the U.S. coal industry, which has been struggling in the face of competition from natural gas and other cheaper, cleaner forms of energy. The Trump administration in August proposed an overhaul for another Obama-era regulation that would have prohibited electricity providers from selling power from coal-fired plants.

The Washington Post reported last week that the Trump administration’s proposed rollback of the Obama-era regulation on mercury pollution is part of a plan to dismantle the regulatory framework for the federal government’s environmental protections.
**Study: Potential security threats to smart homes**

By TAMARA DIETRICH The (Newport News, Va.) Daily Press

WILLIAMSBURG, Va. — Say you turn on your laptop at night—lock it, minding your own business, when an acquaintance of yours across the room isn’t minding his. Unbeknownst to you, he’s using the same store Wi-Fi as you to conduct a virtual invasion of your smart home: accessing your light switch app and using it to disable your home’s security camera so real thieves can break in—or walk in, if he’s disabling the smart lock, too.

And you’re none the wiser — until you get home and discover your home’s been hacked. And burgled.

This is just one scenario demonstrating one of many inherent flaws that computer scientists at the College of William and Mary discovered in internet-connected smart home devices during tests they conducted over the summer.

This particular flaw allows hackers to attack a smart home’s low-security devices, such as a light switch or thermostat, for instance — and use that access to attack a high-security device they could not otherwise access. It’s one example of what’s called lateral privilege escalation, and experts warn that such smart home hacks are easier than you might think. They can lead to all kinds of potential mischief, if not outright harm, from switching off your security system to cranking up your smart oven until it over-heats and burns the house down.

“There are many devices in the home that affect your security, and we’re finding they’re all vulnerable,” said Adwait Nadkami, lead investigator and assistant professor of computer science. “There are so many devices in the home that affect your security, and the integration of your home.”

Experts say that in just two years there will be 20 billion smart home products in use. “You can imagine the possible combinations of these kinds of attacks will obviously increase as we’ll have more interconnected devices,” said associate professor Denys Poshyvanyk. “At this point, it’s hard for us to imagine what else people will do.”

Nadkami and Poshyvanyk co-authored a paper on their work that they presented at the 9th annual ACM Conference on Data and Application Security and Privacy in Dallas in March. Student co-authors include Kauhail Kafle and Manas Sharma and post-doctoral fellow Kevin Moran.

In the paper, they lay out the potential misuses of the computer routines or portions of code that control smart home products and offer 10 key findings with “serious security implications.”

“The diversity of these products is staggering,” the paper states, “ranging from small physical devices with embedded computers such as smart locks and lights, bulbs to full-blown platforms such as refrigerators and HVAC systems.”

And the risks, it states, can be rather alarming. “Because many of these products are tied to the user’s security or privacy (e.g., door locks, cameras), it is important to understand the attack surface of such devices and platforms in order to build robust defenses without sacrificing utility.”

For the centralized data store, Nadkami and Poshyvanyk focused on two of the most popular smart home platforms: Google Nest and Philips Hue — that implement home automation “routines.”

Routines are the interactions between smart home devices and the apps that control them. They are becoming the heart of seamless home automation. According to the paper, there are two broad categories of routines: one that allows users to “chain together” a variety of devices using a third-party app platform, and one that uses a “centralized data store” as a sort of switchboard where devices and apps can communicate with each other over the internet.

Both are intended to make smart home automation more seamless for the user, and both were found to be vulnerable, giving hackers the ability to attack all the internet-connected devices in the home.

For the centralized data store platform, for instance, when you use your mobile app to communicate with a low-security device — say, a light switch — the device accesses your smart home using an authorization token. “Anybody can steal that access token,” Nadkami said, and use it to, say, make your smart home think you’re inside and turn off the security camera.

“The scientists insist it’s not that hard. You don’t need any specialized education. Even a high schooler could do that.”

Adwait Nadkami
Science associate professor

“You don’t need any specialized education. Even a high schooler could do that.”

Poshyvanyk said. “You just need to know how to run certain programs. Even a high schooler could do that.”

They blame the vulnerabilities on consumer demand and the headlong rush to meet it. “Manufacturers race to release these systems without having a good understanding of how they will be used in the wild,” Poshyvanyk said.

After the researchers identified the security flaws, they contacted platform vendors Google and Philips and app developer and manufacturer TP-Link to report what they found. TP-Link fixed the flaw in its latest Kasa Switch light dimmer app, which prevents the type of theoretical lateral attack outlined earlier. Philips is expected to roll out a fix to its platform and Google is working to address vulnerabilities.

But the issue is bigger than one company — it’s the industry overall that needs to get smarter.

“We’re basically arguing that we need a systemic effort in terms of properly designing these systems with security in mind,” Poshyvanyk said.

“We see problems will get worse with time. More devices will be added. (If they’re not thinking about designing in security in the first place, we’re going to be having even bigger problems down the road.”

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**Trial date set for retired Army general charged in Virginia rape case**

By DAN LAMOTHE The Washington Post

A retired Army general will face trial in Virginia on charges of rape and incest beginning in April, according to court documents filed in the case.

James J. Grazioplene, a retired two-star officer, was charged by a grand jury in December with three counts of rape and three counts of incest in Prince William General District Court. A Feb. 1 pretrial hearing has been set, with the trial scheduled to begin April 29.

The Army was planning to court-martial Grazioplene, 69, in the spring of 2018, but the charges were dismissed in March after a ruling by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Armed Forces in another case effectively limited the statute of limitations in the case to five years. Army investigators focused on accusations from 1983 to 1989, while authorities in Virginia are focused on a period from 1988 to 1989 when Grazioplene lived in Virginia.

Legislation passed by Congress in 2006 says rape cases have no statute of limitations under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, but cases from before they are subject to the laws at the time of the alleged crime.

Grazioplene’s case was the subject of a Washington Post story in which the general’s daughter, Jennifer M. Elmore, 47, detailed years of abuse accusations against him that spanned numerous military assignments and locations. Five other people, including one of Grazioplene’s sisters, corroborated aspects of her story.

The Post generally does not identify alleged victims of sexual assault but did so in this case after Elmore said she wanted to tell her story. She first reported the allegations to the Army in 2015, prompting a lengthy investigation.

“Sometimes, it’s just easier to shut your mouth,” she said earlier this year. “But if I stay silent and the next person opts for that, and the next person opts for that, and the next person opts for that, where are we?”

A lawyer for Elmore, Ryan Guilds, declined to comment on the status of the case.

Lawyers for Grazioplene did not respond to a request for comment. He has denied the accusations. “I will not comment,” Grazioplene said in a Sept. 6 phone call. “The charges are false and incorrect. Nope.”
**Bomb kills 4 on bus in Egypt**

**By Hamza Hendawi**  
Associated Press

CAIRO — A roadside bomb hit a tour bus Friday near the Giza Pyramids, killing three Vietnamese tourists and their Egyptian guide, officials said.

The bus was traveling in the Marioutiyah area near the pyramids when the crude roadside bomb, concealed by a wall, went off, Egypt’s chief prosecutor Nabil Sadeq said in a statement. The blast wounded 11 other Vietnamese tourists as well as the Egyptian driver.

The bus was carrying a total of 15 Vietnamese tourists, according to Vietnam’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It said that 10 were seriously injured.

Vietnamese Ambassador to Egypt Tran Thanh Cong visited the scene of the attack and Al Haram Hospital, where the victims were being treated, the ministry said.

Egypt has battled Islamic militants for years in the Sinai Peninsula in an insurgency that has occasionally spilled over to the mainland, hitting minority Christians or tourists. However, this is the first attack to target foreign tourists in almost two years.

The attack takes place as Egypt’s vital tourism industry is recovering from years of underperformance because of political instability and the security threat.

Government officials maintain that the Houthi rebels, who are aligned with Iran, have taken advantage of their control of Hodeida to place their fighters in both the navy and the coast guard, something that has been a major source of concern for the government side. The two sides also agreed over the weekend to open “humanitarian corridors” extending from Hodeida to Sanaa to allow relief supplies to peacefully pass through.

**Revellers take part Friday in the festival of Els Enfarinats, in the town of Ibi near Alicante, Spain.**

**Lawyer says Ex-Cardinal groped minor in confession**

**By Nicole Winfield**  
Associated Press

VATICAN CITY — The Vatican, where one-time cardial Theodore McCarrick has expanded significantly after a man testified that the retired American archbishop sexually abused him for years starting when he was 11, including during confession.

James Grein testified Thursday in New York before the judicial vicar for the New York City archdiocese, who was asked by the Holy See to take his statement for the Vatican’s canonical case, said Grein’s attorney Patrick Noaker.

The testimony, which lasted about an hour, was difficult and stressful, but Grein was proud to have done it, Noaker said.

“He wants his church back. He felt that in order to accomplish that end, he had to go in and testify here and tell them what happened, and give the church itself the chance to do the right thing,” Noaker said in a telephone interview Friday.

Grein initially came forward in July after the New York archdiocese announced that a church investigation determined an allegation that McCarrick had groped another teenage altar boy in the 1970s was credible.

Grein’s claims, first reported by The New York Times, are more serious. He has alleged that McCarrick first exposed himself to Grein when he was 11 and then sexually molested him for years thereafter.

Noaker said in the testimony Thursday that Grein also gave “chilling” details about alleged repeated incidents of groping during confession — a serious canonical crime under the papal practice of the original offense of sexually abusing a minor.

Noaker had previously not made public those claims, but Noaker confirmed his testimony to The Associated Press. Grein also allowed McCarrick’s defense lawyers to listen to his testimony by telephone.
The Vietnam War changed America in profound ways still not understood 50 years later.

It reshaped us and our institutions, particularly the military, altering how we fight wars and when and why we choose to fight.

Stars and Stripes is commemorating the Vietnam War at 50 with articles and a special section each year to add context and understanding to the war.

Check it out at: stripes.com/Vietnam50
2 plead guilty to racist graffiti on high school

GLENELG — Two Maryland teenagers pleaded guilty to writing racist and Nazi graffiti on their Glenelg High School over the summer.

The Baltimore Sun reported Joshua Shaffer and Seth Taylor, both 19, pleaded guilty to a hate crime charge Thursday as part of a plea deal.

Prosecutors said Shaffer wrote racist graffiti targeting the Glenelg High School principal, who is black. Shaffer was sentenced to 18 weeks at a detention center followed by supervised probation and community service, among other requirements.

Prosecutors said Taylor spray-painted “KKK” and swastikas around the school and was sentenced to nine weekends at the center.

Man drops stolen TV from getaway scooter

DAVIE — Police said two Florida men stole a flat-screen television from a South Florida Walmart store and dropped it as they fled on a motorized scooter.

Davie police said on Twitter that Michael Patrick Flanagan, 36, was arrested Wednesday.

Video surveillance showed a man taking the 43-inch Vizio flat screen television valued at $348 on Dec. 16. In a tweet, the agency said the “clumsy” pair almost crashed as they made their getaway. They left the TV on the ground.

(from wire reports)

Stolen dog returned home a year later

WALL — A New Jersey man was reunited with his dog more than a year after the pooch was stolen from his car.

The dog-napping occurred in Virginia when the owner was on vacation.

The Yorkie, named Buddha, was recently taken in as a stray by Richmond Animal Care and Control.

NJ.com reported the dog’s microchip showed its owner lived in Wall Township. The owner, only identified as John T., wasn’t able to drive to Virginia, so volunteers from the shelter drove the dog to New Jersey on Thursday.

‘Sniffles,’ dog with no nose, up for adoption

ORLANDO — Sniffles may have no nose but he has a big heart, and an animal rescue organization is looking to find the 12-year-old Florida pooch a permanent home.

Those efforts have gotten the former stray dog in Orlando national news media attention.

While living on the streets in Puerto Rico, Sniffles was attacked by larger dogs and lost his nose in the fight. He was later taken in by an animal rescue group, and his injuries required three surgeries.

Poodle and Pooch Rescue of Florida said they’ve had 200 inquiries and they’re now evaluating which is the best home for Sniffles.

Leaps and bounds

With One World Trade Center seen in the background, a little girl leaps across boulders forming a breakwater along the Brooklyn Bridge Park on Thursday, in the Brooklyn borough, of New York.

Customers draw guns on men stealing tools

MARYSVILLE — Authorities said two men were surrounded by customers with guns while attempting to steal tools from a Washington store.

The Daily Herald reported the men, ages 22 and 23, allegedly took four nail guns, each worth more than $400, from the Coastal Farm & Ranch store in Marysville.

The men walked out of the store and got into a Honda Civic, only to be surrounded by about six customers with guns raised.

Court documents said the driver pulled forward, causing one man confronting him to land on the hood.

Documents said another customer shot at the driver’s side front tire, while a third fired twice at the rear tire.

Marysville police found the theft suspects’ car unoccupied about three blocks away, with two flat tires and the tools inside.

Traffic stop leads to head-butting an officer

NEW YORK — Authorities said a suspected drunken driver head-butted a state trooper and his wife threw her shoes and underwear in protest after they were pulled over on Long Island.

New York State Police said Michael Nelson, 38, struck the trooper several times while being arrested on an intoxicated driving charge last weekend on the Southern State Parkway in Hempstead.

Nelson’s 29-year-old wife was arrested after police said she got out of their 2017 Mercedes-Benz and tried obstructing his arrest.

In addition to throwing objects, troopers said Alexandra Nelson was spitting at them.

Rescue may cost driver who ignored sign

PITTSFORD — A Vermont fire department may bill a woman who drove onto a closed flooded road and had to be rescued.

Pittsford Fire Chief Bill Hemp said the Rutland Herald that crews responded to a driver who was stranded in Pittsford. Hemp said the woman had climbed to her car’s roof. Firefighters backed a utility truck up to the disabled vehicle and rescued the woman.

State law allows rescue agencies to bill people who are rescued after disobeying road closures.

Hemple said he’s still considering whether he’ll fine the motorist. According to Hemple, the fine could exceed $1,000.

From wire reports

$800K

The approximate value of diamond-encased jewelry stolen from an Aspen luxury hotel by three men. The Aspen Daily News reported police said one of the men used a screwdriver to pop open the locked display case in the lobby of The Little Nell hotel in Aspen, Colo. The items belonged to Pranesi, a New York City-based business that has an outlet in Aspen.

The Census

From wire reports
By Mark Kennedy
Associated Press

After a year like this, Netflix shows no signs of chilling.

The dominant online video streamer started 2018 with almost 118 million subscribers, went on to win its first feature-film Oscar, briefly surpassed Disney as the most valuable U.S. media company, lured the likes of superstar showrunners Shonda Rhimes, Kenya Barris and Ryan Murphy — not to mention Barack and Michelle Obama — and is expected to end the year with 146 million subscribers and a likely best picture Oscar nominee in “Roma.”

In a sign of how influential the giant streamer has become, it also got what every celebrity gets — a gentle mocking on “Saturday Night Live.” The sketch comedy show’s season-ending episode this month aired a fake ad highlighting Netflix’s enormous effort to produce as much content as possible.

“Our goal is the endless scroll. By the time you reach the bottom of our menu, there’s new shows at the top,” explained the voiceover.

For a dominating 12 months, Netflix has been named The Associated Press Entertainer of the Year, voted by members of the news cooperative.

“There’s been so much amazing entertainment this year, and we’re proud of the part we’ve played and humbled by this recognition from the AP,” Ted Sarandos, Netflix’s chief content officer, said Dec. 20 after being told of the honor.

“We are thrilled to be working with the best creators who have helped us to entertain the world with shows, films and specials from Hollywood, Mumbai, Madrid, Seoul, Berlin and everywhere in between.”

Netflix topped candidates including Donald Glover, Ariana Grande, Bradley Cooper and Michelle Obama, among others. Previous AP Entertainer of the Year winners have included Lin-Manuel Miranda, Adele, Taylor Swift, Jennifer Lawrence, Lady Gaga, Tina Fey and Betty White. Although Netflix doesn’t release ratings, 2018 was a year when it seemed to really flex its digital muscles, showing off its deep reservoir of titles, from original unscripted shows to those produced in other countries, to even becoming a home for shows canceled elsewhere.

The company that once concentrated on sending DVDs through the mail in little red envelopes scored its first feature-film Oscar in March, with a best documentary trophy going to “Icarus,” Bryan Fogel’s investigation into doping in sports. (Netflix won its first ever Oscar last year with the short doc “The White Helmets.”)

Netflix movies, specials and shows were all over popular culture this year, including “The Kissing Booth,” “Nanette,” “To All the Boys I’ve Loved Before,” “The Kominsky Method,” “The Haunting of Hill House,” “GLOW,” “Lost in Space,” “The Great British Baking Show,” “Salt, Fat, Acid, Heat” and “Queer Eye.” House of Cards” — Netflix’s first original series — debuted just six years ago.

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 Netflix then knocked HBO off its longtime perch — 18 years — as the most nominated Emmy Award platform, eventually earning 112 nods. The streaming behemoth would go on to tie the premium cable network with 23 wins at the Emmy Awards. Netflix also dominated the television categories at the Screen Actors Guild Awards with 15 total nods, nearly double any other network.

Top filmmaking talent like Martin Scorsese, the Coen brothers and Michael Bay are working for Netflix, and the streaming giant convinced Charlie Brooker to bring his “Black Mirror” to its platform. It hired Channing Dungey from ABC Entertainment and Kira Goldberg from 21st Century Fox. It has promised to spend more than $8 billion on content this year alone.

In 2019, Netflix will likely face stiffer challenges from the likes of Amazon, Hulu, Apple, WarnerMedia and Disney, as well as needing to handle its long-term debt. But Netflix is looking for more subscribers in India and South America and the company’s market value is more than $100 billion.

“At Netflix, we’re always working to give our members great choice and a better entertainment experience, and we’re excited about what’s in store for 2019,” Sarandos said.
1. Janelle Monae, ‘Dirty Computer’

When Janelle Monae released the masterfully brilliant “The ArchAndroid” in 2010, it was hard to imagine how this futuristic, already-seasoned artist could grow, and where that growth would take her. Enter “Dirty Computer,” her third full-length album and another work of genius from one of contemporary music’s best entertainers. There are so many ways to describe this stunning album: Honest. Fun. Sexual. Political. Thought-provoking. Empowering. Liberating. And simply put — it’s just damn good. Songs like “Crazy, Classic, Life,” “Take a Byte,” “Screwed,” “I Got the Juice” and “Pynk” inject into your bloodstream and spread a carefree confidence throughout your body, causing you to dance, and dance, and dance some more. It feels like freedom.

2. Kacey Musgraves, ‘Golden Hour’

At its base, Kacey Musgraves’ fourth album is a country record. And woven into it are sounds like dance, pop, R&B and other genres. The result is a piercing, soulful album where Musgraves’ gliding vocals treat each song like a mini masterpiece. The lyrics are strong and sharp throughout the 13-track album, and each song is touching and beautiful. “Golden Hour” will put a smile on your face, and live inside of your heart.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17
YEAR IN REVIEW — MUSIC

3. J. Cole, ‘KOD’
At a time when the entertainment world is questioning the relevance of the Grammys, it’s hard to take the organization seriously when J. Cole’s “KOD” didn’t garner a nomination for best rap album. His fifth release, which he mainly produced on his own, is powerful, striking and remarkable, and easily the year’s best hip-hop album, and we don’t need a Grammy co-sign to confirm that.

6. The Carters, ‘Everything Is Love’
Beyoncé’s debut rap album was an adventure and further shows that there is probably little she can’t do. She shines, alongside Jay-Z, on their first collaborative album that is a mix of Soundcloud rap, alternative R&B and overall amazingness.

9. Christine and the Queens, ‘Chris’
French singer Christine and the Queens’ sophomore album is a pop escapade, with addictive songs like “Comme si,” “Girlfriend,” “Goya Soda” and “Feels so good” worth listening again, again and again.

4. Various artists, ‘Insecure: Music from the HBO Original Series, Season 3’
There’s not much that can hold you over during the months and months of waiting in between seasons of “Insecure,” except for the TV show’s epic soundtrack. This compilation is a breezy effort that plays smoother than most of the albums released this year. Every song is outstanding — no skipping going on here — and the track list will give a chance to discover some artists you may have never heard before.

7. Robyn, ‘Honey’
Robyn’s album is like a tasty dessert, with just the right amount of sweetness.

8. Ariana Grande, ‘Sweetener’
With all her successful singles, Ariana Grande may not come across as an album artist, but that’s not accurate. “Sweetener” is her fourth album and her fourth laudable effort, which is a great blend of upbeat jams and pop-R&B ballads.

5. Chloe x Halle, ‘The Kids Are Alright’
The sister duo Chloe x Halle have beautifully mastered harmonization, and they sound like angels throughout “The Kids Are Alright.” The album intro, “Hello Friend,” brilliantly transitions into the title track and the rest of the next-level songs, from “Fake to Everywhere” to “Happy Without Me,” prove there’s more to come from the talented Beyoncé mentees.


1. “X,” Nicky Jam and J Balvin
Nicky Jam and J Balvin’s “X” is not just the Latin song of the year — it is SIMPLY THE SONG OF THE YEAR. A year after the uber-successful “Despacito,” comes “X” — a fusion of Latin, reggae and dancehall sounds and the perfect song to listen to while getting ready to go out, at a club or even while you’re cleaning or cooking. “X” is addictive and the beat will move your bones, even if you’re not trying to move. Just don’t fight the feeling.

2. “Long As I Live,” Toni Braxton
Toni Braxton’s R&B classics from the ’90s and ’00s still sound iconic today, and her latest single, “Long as I Live,” allows you to feel nostalgic, while not getting stuck in the past. Toni’s still got it.

3. “Ha Ha (I Love You),” Jussie Smollett
This burning R&B number is unforgettable. Jussie Smollett, famous, he sounds even better when he’s singing his own songs.

4. “Slow Dancing in the Dark,” Joji
This bouncy R&B number is unforgettable.

5. “Boo’d Up,” Ella Mai
The song of the summer sounds good in the fall and winter, too.

6. “All the Stars,” Kendrick Lamar and SZA
The star of “All the Stars” might seem to be Kendrick Lamar — and while he shines on the song, it’s really SZA’s singalong hook and killer second verse that makes this “Black Panther” track one of the year’s best.

With all of the Fifth Harmony singers going solo, Normani is the one to look out for. The proof: “Love Lies.”

8. “SAD!,” XXXTentacion
So many rappers died young this year, and it’s sad to see so much talent not live up to its full potential. XXXtentacion’s “SAD!” was already a hit before he died, but after his death, the song, and his music, took on new life.

Don’t front — this is your jam, too! Hey, Keke!

10. “Sex Money Feelings Die,” Lykke Li
Hit play, and dance.

Honorable mention
“The Middle,” Zedd, Maren Morris and Grey...
“I Like It,” Cardi B feat. Bad Bunny & J Balvin
“Blue Lights,” Jojoa Smith
“Tequila,” Dan + Shay
“You Say,” Lauren Daigle
“OTW,” Ty Dolla $ign, Khalid and 6LACK
“New Light,” John Mayer
“Pyrik,” Janet Monae

— Mesfin Fekadu
Books about the current president, one by a former president, a blockbuster by a former first lady made headlines in 2018

By Hillel Italie
Associated Press

The publishing world made headlines in 2018, and not always by design. A wave of best-sellers offered damaging accounts of Donald Trump’s White House, a million-selling memoir by Michelle Obama had readers longing for the previous administration and a political thriller by former President Bill Clinton had some taking a closer look at a White House scandal.

Meanwhile, some of the country’s top writers were called out for sexual harassment, and a dystopian novel written in the 1980s seemed ever more timely.

Here are some highlights:

‘Fire and Fury’
It landed in early January and quickly had the country talking and Trump threatening to sue (a way to boost sales that ranks as one of his facts, but the book included a chapter about a president facing impeachment — an experience the Trump administration wasn’t so much a revelation, as a confirmation of what millions had suspected. Reporters questioned some of his facts, but the book had at least one real consequence: Former senior adviser Steve Bannon, who didn’t deny speaking with the author and Steve Bannon, who didn’t deny backbiting and chaos in the Trump administration wasn’t so much a revelation, as a confirmation of what millions had suspected.

‘A Higher Loyalty’
In a spirit of anger, admiration and curiosity, readers wanted to know why James Comey re-opened the FBI investigation into Hillary Clinton’s emails less than two weeks before Election Day and what he and Trump had to say to each other before Trump fired him in May 2017, just four months into his administration. “This president,” Comey wrote, “is unethical, and unth- thered to truth and institutional values.” Only in the Trump era could a memoir by a former FBI director, one little known to the general public before 2008, sell hundreds of thousands of copies. And only in the Trump era would a sitting president refer to a former FBI director as an “untruthful slimeball.”

‘The President Is Missing’
The million-selling collaboration between Clinton and James Patterson was the novel of the summer, and launched a very different conversation from what the authors had intended. “The President Is Missing,” a near-apocalyptic thriller, is a cautionary tale about preventing cyberattacks. But the book also included a chapter about a president facing impeachment — an experience Clinton is uniquely qualified to draw upon — and Clinton responded defensively to questions about his affair with White House intern Monica Lewinsky.

“This was litigated 20 years ago,” Clinton told NBC’s Craig Melvin. “The most notable thing about his answers, wrote New York magazine’s Rebecca Trais-ter, was that “Clinton seemed to be shocked that he would be asked about his behavior in light of #MeToo.”

‘Becoming’
The initial headlines were about Trump, whom Michelle Obama vowed she would never forgive for promoting the “birther” lie that her husband was born in Kenya. But Obama’s book quickly became among the best-selling political memoirs ever. Reporters cited the qualities which millions had admired her for — the warmth and humor of her courtship with the future president, her candor in describing their marital struggles and efforts to have children and the care and insight into how Michelle LaVaughn Robinson — a self-de-scribed “girl of the South Side” of Chicago — adapted to being the country’s first black first lady.

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‘Fear’
Bob Woodward’s two works on Obama, “The Price of Politics” and “Obama’s Wars,” made little impact compared to such early blockbusters as the Watergate-era “All the President’s Men.” And his only book during Obama’s second term was a return to the Nixon years: “The Last of the President’s Men,” about Alexander Butterfield, the White House aide who revealed to the world that Nixon had a tapping system in the Oval Office. But Trump is a singular muse for political writers and with “Fear” Inside the Trump White House,” Woodward was fully back in the present. “Fear” reads like a more sober account of the Watergate era “All the President’s Men.” And his only book during Obama’s second term was a return to the Nixon years: “The Last of the President’s Men,” about Alexander Butterfield, the White House aide who revealed to the world that Nixon had a tapping system in the Oval Office. But Trump is a singular muse for political writers and with “Fear” Inside the Trump White House,” Woodward was fully back in the present. “Fear” reads like a more sober version of “Fire and Fury,” another tale of an uncontrollable chief executive and a staff that tries both to contain and encour- age him. Trump’s verdict: “The Woodward book is a Joke.”

#MeToo
It began in January with a comments thread on the website of School Library Journal: Stories of widespread harassment by some prominent writers for children and young adults, with the alleged harassers first unnamed, then named. Within weeks, “Maze Runner” author James Dashner had been dropped by his publisher and “13 Reasons Why” novelist Jay Asher by his agent. Sherman Alexie, whom the American Library Association had just awarded a Carne-egie Medal for his memoir “You Don’t Have To Say You Love Me,” declined the prize. And Daniel Handler of “Lemony Snicket” fame withdrew as commencement speaker at Kes-leyan University. His replacement was well known to the #MeToo movement: Anita Hill, the woman who testified in 1991 that Supreme Court nominee Clarence Thomas had repeat-edly harassed her.

‘13 Reasons Why’
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NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

LABOR CONTRACT(ION)S
BY DAVID ALFRED BYWATERS / EDITED BY WILL SHORTZ

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91 Bee, e.g.
92 Interjet's focus
93 Cross inscription
94 Sisette
96 Mat at the MoMA
100 Sea cow
103 Need for a model
105 Flowering herb also known as devil's spittle
106 Woman's name that means "lure"
108 Banisters
109 Not loose, as a diamond
111-12 Across, say
112 Some refugees
113 Like panang curry
115 "Glar!"
116 "I did it!"
120 It fits in a lock
121 Architect Maya
122 Mathematician's 116-Down
123 Lists, before many state names
124 Jesus Christ, with "the"

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Bye bye, BIRDIES

Urban chicken coops, gender reveal parties, flossing among 2018 trends we detested

By Leanne Italie
Associated Press

Keep your backyard chicken coops, dear 2018, and your vampire facials, too. And the stiff-arm Floss dance? Stomp it out in the new year.

Among other things we’re over as we slide into 2019: Bell sleeves that need constant policing, so-called desserts that contain no sugar and Alec Baldwin’s “Saturday Night Live” Donald Trump, because isn’t the real one enough?

Here’s what we’d like to leave behind come Jan. 1.

Floss no more

The arm-flailing, hip-swaying, rapid-fire dance craze is the new Dab, and we owe it to 16-year-old social media dude Russell Horning, aka The Backpack Kid. Horning grew a sizable Instagram following through his dance moves as far back as 2014, and Rihanna reposted a photo of him well before Katy Perry invited him to do his thing with her on “Saturday Night Live” in 2017, launching him to social media superstardom.

Other celebs, moms, dads, athletes and pretty much all of YouTube are flossing their lives away. So are all the little kids in your households, once they outgrow “Baby Shark,” that is. “Fortnite” added a Floss Battle Royale victory emote. The fistied, stiff-armed dance that involves rotating arms from the front to back over and over again isn’t as easy as it looks for some, so it has sprotted instructional videos. It also won Horning a 2018 Shorty Award.

Gender reveal parties

Have we not outgrown blue for boys and pink for girls? And whatever happened to being surprised? Or how about keeping all of this to yourselves?

Gender reveal events, such as the one recently that sparked a massive fire in Arizona, have grown into an industry, with party supplies on sale and DIY tips all over the place.

Celebrate the birth of a human being instead. Oh wait, that’s what baby showers are for, and birthdays.

Vampire facials

Using your own blood with little skin pricks to make you, what, the best skin-deep version of yourself, is on the gross side of the beauty equation.

Let’s shed some light on the bloody facials. First, you need your blood drawn. Then you need your blood to be run through a centrifuge to isolate the platelets. This is all about PRPs, or platelet-rich plasma. Then microdermabrasion or microneedling is done to really get those platelets in there. Vampire facials can hydrate and offer boosts of collagen and elastin, fans say.

Kim Kardashian West famously partook of this to yourselves?

Among other things we’re besides surprised? Or how about keeping all pink for girls? And whatever happened to the rest of us need to go without when we want. Celebrate your health, but do

Keto desserts

Ketogenic, and ketosis, and the ketogenic diet have been around forever. But the masses got all whipped up in 2018.

Here’s how it goes: A high-fat, adequate-protein, low-carb approach to eating may be good for difficult-to-control epilepsy in children, and for weight loss and general health in all. The idea is for you to get more calories from protein and fat and fewer from carbs, in part by cutting back on carbs that are easy to digest. And that, my friends, includes sugar — so many desserts. Of course, eat what you want. Celebrate your health, but do the rest of us need to go without when we come over for dinner?

“Ma’s sister’s cheesecake was basically a fatberg,” notes one unsatisfied enlistee.

Big ol’ sleeves

Runways and stores are full of bell sleeves. But what about the marinara sauce? Nobody needs to police their sleeves quite this much, especially when they’re eating or doing something equally bottom-of-the-sleeve-skimming.

Bell sleeves were once oh-so-boho, but have popped up on all manner of tops and dresses. How hard do you want to work to stuff those things into a jacket or coat? How big the bells have become. How utterly same-same we all look.

And tiered bell sleeves! And those flares that fall at the elbow or way high off the wrist? Prairie-wear and swingy sleeves, take a breather.

Your chicken friends

Organic eggs, pest control, fertilizer! Those are some of the apparent joys of keeping backyard chickens. The idea is they roam around your Brooklyn patio, patch of grass or suburban wood, finding their way home at night. Or something. Some are confined to enclosed runs. And what happens when hipsters can’t cope? According to news reports, the feathered puffs with legs get dumped at animal shelters, sanctuaries or worse, gobbled by some predator.

Just go to a store, sweet faux farmers. After all, how many eggs do you really need?

Beyond, beyond and beyond

When we’re not “obsessed” with everything, we’re “beyond blessed,” “beyond grateful,” “beyond honored,” “beyond exhausted” and “beyond excited.”

No. We’re all right here in this dimension. Is the meaning of the word not enough without the qualifier? Why not allow yourselves to be, simply, blessed, grateful and honored? The same with “truly” happy, sad or angry.

Be thrilled beyond words, but do trust that language has your back. Hopefully, so does the new year.

Flossing. All the kids are doing it. Please stop now.
1. ‘The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel,’ Amazon Prime

From its costumes to the dialogue to the music to the quirky characters, this show is a delight. Watch it to feel good.

2. ‘This Is Us,’ NBC

Some suggest the third season has lagged but this show is still solid, and we can’t discount how invested the public was in just how Milo Ventimiglia’s character, Jack, died. The lead-up and reveal earlier this year launched so many theories, memes, hashtags and jokes about crock-pots. Also, those occasional flash-forwards to show characters in the future keeps us guessing and trying to fill in the blanks between now and then.

3. ‘Killing Eve,’ BBC America

This cat-and-mouse chase between Sandra Oh as an MI5 investigator and Jodie Comer’s assassin is great fun to watch. Oh has received many accolades for her work on the show, which are deserved, but Comer is also a standout and should be recognized. She mastered various accents and has a smile that can light up a room, before she pounces to kill you, of course.

4. ‘Succession,’ HBO

This show about a powerful family that owns a major media conglomerate is disturbing, funny and sad all at once. The characters aren’t likable and don’t even seem to like each other, but to be a voyeur and watch them interact is worth tuning in for.

5. ‘Tom Clancy’s Jack Ryan,’ Amazon Prime

John Krasinski joins Ben Affleck, Alec Baldwin, Harrison Ford and Chris Pine as actors who’ve portrayed the CIA analyst created by Clancy. In Krasinski’s version, he’s got brawn and brains and he quickly proves he’s a leading man worthy of the role. It’s fast-paced, suspenseful, entertaining and season two can’t come soon enough.

6. ‘You,’ Lifetime

This show hasn’t gotten enough attention. Penn Badgley is masterful as a psychopathic stalker named Joe who charms his way into the heart of a young woman living in Manhattan.

7. ‘Escape at Dannemora,’ Showtime

The real prison escape that this series portrays was in 2015 and caught the world’s attention because of the revelation that the two escapees were helped by a female prison employee. The series, directed by Ben Stiller, is just as interesting. Patricia Arquette, Benicio Del Toro, Paul Dano and Eric Lange dissolve into their characters.

8. ‘The Clinton Affair,’ A&E

This six-part documentary series is an extremely compelling deep dive into the events that led up to President Clinton’s impeachment. You may remember the news coverage, but there’s likely information in this series that will be new. Many of the major players including Monica Lewinsky are interviewed extensively and to see her now, as a 40-something-year-old woman, reflect on that period of her life with candor and grace is heartbreaking, inspiring and fitting for this #MeToo era.

9. ‘grown-ish,’ on Freeform

Zoey, the eldest child on “black-ish” (played by Yara Shahidi), went off to college and it’s worth keeping up with this new phase of her life.

10. ‘Queer Eye for the Straight Guy,’ Netflix

No offense to the original “Queer Eye,” which was fun, but the reboot kicks things up in a major way. For one, issues are required for viewing because it gets very emotional. The show doesn’t just find men who need a new look, but the five experts go deep into why these guys are stuck in a rut. It’s positive and heart-warming and feels like a hug.

Honorable mentions

Troops coming home means war was lost

THE WASHINGTON POST

BY ELLIOT ACKERMAN

Special to The Washington Post

J ust before midnight Tuesday, Presi- dent Donald Trump departed the White House for his first visit to U.S. troops in a combat zone. Of course, it wasn’t quite as simple for Frankfurter, the president with his troops at Christmastime — look no further than George Washington crossing the Delaware on the night of Dec. 25, 1776, to understand the sentimental re- sponse this elicits in many Americans. Se- nior administration officials claim the trip again: Trump wants money for his pet bor- be forgiven, however, for concluding that in the wake of the government shutdown, the resignation of Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis and the controversial announce- ment of plans to withdraw troops fully from Syria and partly from Afghanistan, Trump decided that this was an opportune mo- ment to harness the powerful iconography of a commander in chief with his troops at Christmas, particularly one who was there to deliver the message that many of their comrades in arms would soon be returning home, and we welcome them.

However welcome that message might be, it does not offer reassurance that peace is at hand, even if we tend to think so. For returning home doesn’t mean a war is over. On the contrary, a total with- drawal is more likely to mean that a war is only just beginning. And it tells the United States open to a more significant emergen- cy deployment of troops later.

If we look at a history of America’s wars, the Christmas season has been a time of lasting peace have always required some of our troops to stay, from the Civil War and Reconstruction, to Vietnam and subsequent European and Japanese occupations. Troops deployed need not be seen as troops at war — the notion that they are equivalent is harmful to creating an ef- fective national security strategy. We can keep the troops deployed, thus securing our interests, if we do so in a way that is effec- tively secure, as we’ve long done in places like Korea. President Barack Obama couldn’t see this possibility and made a mistake by pulling out the troops from Iraq in 2011, only to have to redeploy thousands before the end of his administration after Islamic State swept through the country. Trump is about to make the same mistake by pull- ing them all out of Syria and dangerously reducing them in Afghanistan.

Binary concepts of war and peace are inequivalent. They can hit the United States in the head fast and so hard ... they really won’t know what the hell happened, adding that he has no plans to remove U.S. troops from Iraq. But without U.S. forces in Syria, the ISIS ISW will have a sanctuary from which to oper- ate. Consider the current challenges along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, or the flawed American strategy in Vietnam, which never dealt with enemy sanctuaries in Cambodia and Laos, to understand how cripplingly a sanctuary in Syria will be to se- curity in neighboring Iraq.

During his Christmas visit to the al- Asad Air Base in Iraq, Trump explained that one of his subsidiaries suggested the “ge- nerals” to get out of Syria, but they had con- tinually asked for six-month extensions. “I said, ‘Nope, I don’t think you can do it anymore. You’ve had enough time. We’ve knocked them out,’” he said, referring to ISIS.

“We’ve knocked them silly.”

But Trump, who has surrounded himself with generals, seemingly unwilling to listen to the ‘any of this issue. Most are now gone from his administration — Michael Flynn, H.R. McMaster, John Kelly and now Mattis. If only one of them could have put the matter into terms he might have understood. Last Christmas, he told the developer-turned-president-named at the Christmas holiday in 1944 when Gen. George S. Patton was fighting a desperate campaign against the German Army in Ardennes, forest known as the Battle of the Bulge. The fighting was about 50 miles west of Ramstein Air Base, where Trump strode forward and held a meeting with troops on his way back from Iraq. When Patton’s exhausted Third Army was confronted with several days’ more fight- ing, he told his commanders to withdraw and regroup. As recounted in the 1970 movie “ Patton,” the general says, “Next time, and I mean next time, I’m going to pay for the same real estate twice.”

Elliot Ackerman is a former Marine who served in Iraq and Afghanistan and was a White House Fellow in the previous administration. Ackerman is author of several books, most recently the novel “Waiting for Eden.”

.Path of shutdown has been obvious for weeks

The Washington Post

The shutdown of roughly 25 percent of the federal government con- tinued into a sixth day Tuesday, with little sign of an end in sight. It is evident that President Donald Trump and his Democratic opponents on Capitol Hill are moving closer to a deal that would break the impasse. Many Democratic leaders were directly affected, about 350,000 sit home on furlough while the rest, deemed “essential,” continue working, non of them can get paid. The hardship for them, and for those ordinary citizens who need access to agencies such as the IRS or the National Park Service, is immense. As the partial government shutdown has continued, even past the start of the new Congress on Jan. 3. This shutdown is perhaps even more serious than any of the previous ones because the way out is, and has been, perfectly obvious for weeks.

We’ve said it before, and we’ll say it again: the shutdown has been taking place for 26 days, with no end in sight. It’s time to end this wall-project so badly that he’s willing to stage a partial government shutdown. Democrats should let him have funding for the wall in return for a permanent fix to the immigration status of the “Dreamers,” people brought to this country as children without authorization but who have been living otherwise lawful and productive American lives for years.

This would be a grand bargain that would give both sides something to brag about, in fact, simply call it on them to do a version of a deal that Democrats and Republicans have at least tentatively em- braced in the past. Trump says he wants to do a version of a deal that Democrats have, in the past, voted for enhanced “bor- der security,” including physical barriers. Democrats need a strategy that does not principle prevent a bipartisan deal, just the politics of base-pleasing polarization. Democrats need to do a version grand bargains with wall-for-Dreamers deals at their core in February and March, but the White House undid them by denying Trump’s attempts to retroactively legalize immigration designed to please the Re- publican base. That dynamic still informs Trump’s approach to the current shut- down, his position hardened after he came under attack from right-wing personalities such as Rush Limbaugh and Ann Coulter, who accused him of contemplating a sell- out. Meanwhile, on the Democratic side, likely next House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., newly beholden to left-wing mem- bers of her soon-to-be-majority caucus in the House, has branded a wall “immoral” and has sworn that she won’t approve a dollar for it under any circumstances.

Neither side may have as much lever- age in this battle as they think. The risks for the GOP are defined by the fact that the border wall remains broadly unpopular outside of Trump’s base. As for the Democrats, the wall continues to be a blight because of a federal court ruling that has protected the Dreamers from deportation. That court ruling moreover, especially now that conservatives enjoy a solid 5-4 majority on the Supreme Court. A prolonged battle with Trump over simply keeping funding for the government alive is going to be a major hurdle to detract from the new House majority’s legislative agenda for 2019 before Demo- crats even have a chance to unveil it.

Both parties are still acting as though a prolonging a shutdown, and avoiding the wall-for-Dreamers deal, is in their politi- cal interest, when in fact it’s the deal that would really benefit them in the long run. It would also be the right thing to do.
US markets flail after week of ups and downs

BY TAYLOR TELFORD
The Washington Post

U.S. markets were jittery but ended mostly negative Friday, capping a turbulent week marked by a brutal losing streak and the best single day of trading in a decade.

Thursday’s wild swings mirrored the volatility that has defined December, with markets sinking nearly 3 percent, then making a last-minute turnaround to close with modest gains. On Friday, the Dow Jones industrial average was down 0.33 percent at close. The Standard & Poor’s 500-stock index was down 0.13 percent, and the tech-heavy Nasdaq composite index was up 0.08 percent. U.S. markets are up 3 percent across the board, looking to break a three-week losing streak.

After Wall Street’s recovery, overseas markets followed suit Friday despite a challenging start. With the exception of Tokyo’s Nikkei 225, which slipped 0.31 percent to 20,014.77, Asian markets logged mild gains. Hong Kong’s Hang Seng was up 0.1 percent at the close; the Shanghai Composite Index was up 0.44 percent. European markets rebounded after a grim Thursday, with the benchmark Stoxx 600 up 2 percent. Germany’s DAX up more than 1.7 percent. France’s CAC 40 was up more than 2 percent, and Britain’s FTSE 100 rose more than 2.3 percent.

December has been brutal for Wall Street, erasing gains throughout the year and putting markets on track for annual losses. While stocks are nearing losses, while stocks are nearing their worst Christmas Eve decline in decades, with the S&P 500 ending in bear territory. As Trump renewed his attacks on major banks in an effort that was lauded by Wall Street, erasing gains in the final hour of trading to close positive across the board.

Friday’s decline, headlined by the possibility of the partial government shutdown extending into the new year, ended the week with losses one day before the last trading day of 2018.

As Wall Street has flirted with bear territory, many analysts have wondered whether this is the beginning of an economic slowdown. The political whirlwind has destabilized the markets, bringing on a volatility that hasn’t been seen for years, said Howard Silverblatt, a senior analyst with S&P Dow Jones Indices.

Lampert’s hedge fund submits bid to save Sears

Associated Press

NEW YORK — Sears Chairman Eddie Lampert’s hedge fund said it submitted a last-minute bid Friday valued at about $4 billion to keep the struggling retailer from being liquidated.

The ESL Investments hedge fund that Lampert heads, it said it hoped to keep 425 stores open. The bid includes $1.3 billion in financing from three institutions, ESL said in a statement.

The iconic retailer, once the nation’s largest department store chain, faced a deadline of Friday for bids for its remaining stores to averting shutting down completely. Earlier on Friday, Sears said it was closing 80 more stores as it teeters on the brink of liquidation.

The retailer that began as a mail order catalog in the 1880s has been in a slow death spiral, hobbled by the Great Recession and then overwhelmed by rivals both down the street and across the internet.

The 80 stores are due to close by March. That’s in addition to 182 stores already slated for closure, including 142 by the end of 2018 and 40 by February. The company filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection in October, saying at the time it would close more than 20 percent of all stores, keeping open only its 500 most profitable locations.

Sears Holdings Corp., which also runs Kmart, joins the list of retail brands taken over by hedge funds that collapsed under the weight of debt forced upon them.

Under hedge fund manager Eddie Lampert, Sears has bought time by spinning off stores and putting on the block the brands that had grown synonymous with the company, such as Craftsman. The company’s chairman and biggest shareholder, Lampert loaned out his own money and put together deals to keep the company afloat and to turn whatever profit he could for the ESL hedge fund.

Lampert and ESL have been trying to keep the rest of Sears, up to $4.6 billion in cash and stock, of not having a “feel for the market,” Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin called executives at major banks in an effort that was meant to be reassuring but that moved more anxiety than faith.

But on Wednesday, the markets soared to life in the best single day of trading in more than a decade, with the Dow logging its biggest point gain in history in a 1,086-point jump. Investors were steadied by assurances from White House economic adviser Kevin Hassett that Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome H. Powell’s job was “100 percent safe.”

Markets surged after the announcement. Thursday brought more turbulence, however, with markets falling as much as 3 percent, then rebounding in the final hours of trading to close positive across the board.

ESL said that should the $4.4 billion bid be accepted, they expect that the company that emerges from bankruptcy would offer employment to up to 50,000 associates.

MARKET WATCH

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WEATHER OUTLOOK

The weather is provided by the American Forces Network Weather Center, 2nd Weather Squadron at Offutt Air Force Base, Neb.
Friday's transactions

BASEBALL

WASHINGTON NATIONALS —签约 Gionatan Quibell from Virginia for $1,000,000 and 3 years.

Manchester United have signed long-serving midfielder Ander Herrera from PSG.

AFC Bournemouth have agreed to sign defender Tyrone Mings from Aston Villa.

The Premier League confirmed that Crystal Palace have signed defender Joel Ward from Chelsea.

Man City have signed midfielder Oleksandr Zinchenko from Shakhtar Donetsk.

Watford have signed defender Craig Cathcart from Burnley.

FLYING TO: — Manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer has confirmed that Manchester United star Anthony Martial is suffering from a foot injury and will return to France for treatment.

Southampton have completed the signing of striker Callum Slone from Reading on a two-year loan deal.

The Premier League confirmed that West Brom have completed the guided signing of defender Phillip Zylstra from Rangers.

Pro football

Free agents

NEW YORK — The 127 remaining free agents (projected $17.9 million qualifying offer).

NATIONAL LEAGUE

ARIZONA (7) — Clayton Chisholm, rhp; Eduardo Escobar, rhp; Jake Lamb, rhp; PHILI Stablepath, lhp; Jon Jay, of; Mike Moustakas, 3b.

BOSTON (2) — Dustin Pedroia, 2b; Craig Kimbrel, rhp.

CINCINNATI (3) — Will Smith, rhp; Mike Moustakas, 3b; Ramon Santiago, rhp.

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DALLAS (4) — Drew Butera, c; Joey Gallo, rhp.; Joe Musgrove, rhp.; Jose Trevino, c.

DENVER (4) — DJ LeMahieu, 2b; Connor Joe, c; Todd Frazier, 1b; Sam Hill, c.

DETROIT (3) — C.J. Cron, 1b; Wil Myers, 2b; Shane Greene, rhp.

FLA (6) — Matt Adams, 1b; Bud Norris, rhp; Andrew Cashner, lhp; Ross Detwiler, lhp; Wil Myers, 2b; Chad Green, rhp.

HOU (6) — Evan Gattis, of; Marwin Gonzalez, ss; Alex Bregman, 3b; Michael Brantley, lhp; Yuli Gurriel, rhp; Jose Altuve, ss.

IND (4) — Brian Dozier, 2b; Jose Iglesias, ss; Franmil Reyes, inf.

MIAMI (4) — Adam Jones, of; Colton 4t.; A.J. Pollock, of; Chris Stewart, rhp.

MILWAUKEE (4) — Mike Moustakas, 3b; Ryan Braun, rhp; Jonathan Lucroy, c; Hernan Perez, rhp.

MINNESOTA (7) — Joe Mauer, 1b; Logan Morrison, 1b; Ervin Santana, rhp; Elvis Andrus, ss; Brian Dozier, 2b; Brian Duensing, rhp; Colby Wedge, rhp.

NEW YORK (4) — Zach Britton, rhp; Adam Warren, rhp; Chase Whitley, rhp; Jordan Montgomery, rhp.

PHILADELPHIA (4) — Trevor Williams, lhp; Eddie Lack, rhp; Ben Revere, c; Nicky Delmonico, c.

SAN DIEGO (4) — Craig Kimbrel, rhp; Derrick Cumberland, rhp; Alex Cobb, lhp; Hank Conger, c.

TAMPA BAY (5) — Tyler Glasnow, rhp; David Price, lhp; Matt Joyce, rhp; Nick Franklin, ss; Javy Guerra, rhp.

TRENTON (3) — Anthony Swarzak, rhp; Daniel Missner, rhp; Jose Martinez, rhp.

TUCSON (3) — Tim Lincecum, lhp; Hunter Strickland, rhp; Nick Tropeano, rhp.

WASHINGTON (3) — Gio Gonzalez, rhp; Matt Albers, lhp; Jesus Luzardo, rhp.

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The Premier League confirmed that Watford have completed the signing of defender Craig Cathcart from Burnley.

The Premier League confirmed that West Brom have completed the guided signing of defender Phillip Zylstra from Rangers.

Pro baseball

NATIONAL LEAGUE

ARIZONA — Clay Buchholz, rhp; Roberto Osuna, rhp; Dan Stratton, rhp.

BOSTON — Jose Iglesias, ss; Franmil Reyes, inf.

CINCINNATI — Tyler Clippard, rhp; Josh Smith, rhp; Greg Holland, rhp; Mark Reynolds, rhp.

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**Briefly**

Shiffrin garners 36th WC slalom

Matthias Mayer of Austria by 0.01 seconds for a record fourth victory on the Stelvio course, eclipsing Austrian great Hermann Maier and Matthew Wilkhofline.

Alessandro Amato of Norway finished third, 0.46 behind.

Farabe has hat trick, US beats Kazakhstan

VICTORIA, British Columbia — Boston University freshman Joel Farabee had a natural hat trick in a 6-5 game of the first period and the United States beat Kazakhstan 8-2 on Friday night to improve to 2-0 in the world junior hockey championships.

Drafted 14th overall by the Philadelphia Flyers this year, Farabee gave the United States a 2-1 lead with a power-play strike at 5:13 and added goals at 8:35 and 12:05.

Boston College's Oliver Wahlstrom, St. Cloud State's Ryan Poehling, Northeastern's Tyler Madden, Michigan's Josh Norris and Sasha Chmelevski of the United States added goals as the US beat Kazakhstan 11-2.

In the last race of 2018, the American added her 36th victory.

Shiffrin garners 36th WC slalom

**Associated Press**

Montreal Canadiens left wing Tomas Tatar, front, celebrates his third-period goal with teammates Jonathan Drouin, center, and Max Domi during Friday's game against the Panthers in Sunrise, Fla. Tatar scored two goals in the Canadians' 5-3 victory.

**NHL scoreboard**

**Eastern Conference**

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**NHL roundup**

**Montreal holds off Florida**

**Associated Press**

Montreal Canadiens beat Florida Panthers 5-3 on Friday night.

The left wing scored on a power-play goal after the first minute and broke a 2-2 tie with a shot that beat goal-keeper Roberto Luongo on the near side from 9 feet away. Tatar had been on a six-game point drought over a nine-day period this month.

"I never really thought (my play) was out. We were winning. It's a team effort every night and it's a real matter of who's going to score, who's going to produce the most," Tatar said.

Jonathan Drouin had a goal and an assist, and Nicolas Deslauriers and Artturi Lehkonen also scored for the Canadiens, who won their third straight.

Islanders 6, Senators 3: Mathew Barzal had two goals and an assist on both Tavares' tallies, which has lost six of eight (2-5-1).

Goalie Robin Lehner, who began his career with Ottawa, came on and stopped all 10 shots he faced to improve to 7-0-3 against his former team.

Mark Stone, Matt Duchene and Cody Ceci scored for Ottawa, which has lost six of eight (2-5-1).

Mike McKenna finished with 33 saves as the Senators fell to 4-13-1 on the road.

**Maple Leafs 4, Blue Jackets 2**

First, Tavares scored an empty-net goal, and Frederik Gauthier also scored to power the Maple Leafs to their fifth straight win, matching the longest streak in the season.

Nick Foligno and Artemi Panarin scored for Columbus, and Sergei Bobrovsky had 25 saves. The Blue Jackets, playing on the second night of a back-to-back, saw their five-game winning streak snapped as they try to stay close to Washington at the top of the Metropolitan Division.

**Maple Leafs games**

- **Jan. 1 — Winter Classic, Boston at Chicago, Notre Dame Stadium, South Bend, Ind.**
- **Jan. 26 — All-Star Game, San Jose, Calif.**
NEW ORLEANS — Anthony Davis hit a go-ahead, fall-away jumper with 43.9 seconds left and scored a season-high 48 points to outduel rookie Luka Doncic and lift the New Orleans Pelicans over the Dallas Mavericks 114-112 on Friday night.

Davis was fouled on the shot and made the free throw for a two-point lead. Dallas got two more possessions, but Doncic had a layup blocked by Jrue Holiday to end the game.

Davis finished with 48 points in the Pelicans' 114-112 win.

The Pelicans outscored the Mavericks in the fourth quarter, 33-21.

Doncic scored 34 points, hitting 8-22 from the field (37.3 percent), 4-11 from three-point range and 6-7 from the free-throw line.

Pacers 125, Pistons 88

Bucks 122, Mavericks 100

Heat 118, Hawks 114

Heat 116, Magic 113

Pacers 125, Pistons 88

Bucks 122, Mavericks 100

Heat 118, Hawks 114

Heat 116, Magic 113

Clippers 114, Lakers 107

Magic 116, Rockets 87

Bulls 101, Wizards 92

Heat 118, Hawks 114

Heat 116, Magic 113

Pacers 125, Pistons 88

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Clippers 114, Lakers 107

Magic 116, Rockets 87

Bulls 101, Wizards 92
No. 7 Gonzaga rolls past North Alabama

Norvell, Clark pace Bulldogs in 13th straight home win

BY NICHOLAS K. GERANIOS
Associated Press

SPokane, Wash. — Gonzaga came out refreshed and focused after a weeklong Christmas break.

Zach Norvell Jr. scored 20 points, and the seventh-ranked Bulldogs started with a 29-1 run against North Alabama in a 96-51 victory on Friday night, Gonzaga’s 13th straight win at home.

Brandon Clarke had 16 points, 12 rebounds, four blocks and three steals for Gonzaga (12-2), which was ranked No. 1 for two weeks earlier this season. Rui Hachimura added 14 points.

Gonzaga won the rebound battle 43-22 and outscored the Lions in the paint 46-26.

Shooting woes: After shooting just 18.5 percent in the first, the Lions shot nearly 66 percent in the second half, cutting Gonzaga’s lead to 53-25, but the Lions could not get closer.

However, the Lions’ shooting dramatically improved in the second half.

“I love the effort our guys put into the second half,” coach Tony Pujol said. “The guys wanted to come out and play.”

“Hats off to Gonzaga. They’re by far one of the elite programs in the country,” he said. “It was a great opportunity for our guys.”

Ouch: North Alabama committed 20 turnovers, and Gonzaga piled up 15 steals and seven blocked shots.

The boards: Gonzaga won the rebound battle 43-22 and outscored the Lions in the paint 46-26.

Roundup

Hokies win 6th straight

Associated Press


Kerry Blackshear Jr. added 15 points and Wabissa Bede scored 14 for the Hokies (11-1), who continued their best start to a season in 100 years.

The Hawks (1-13) were led by Dontae Caldwell with 10 points as they lost their eighth in a row and 30th consecutive game on the road.

The Hokies played without scoring leader Nickel Alexander-Walker (18.3 points per game) because of a sprained right ankle.

No. 11 Texas Tech 71, Texas-Rio Grande Valley 46: Jarrett Culver scored 19 points, first-time starter Deshawn Copnaw had 13 points and 10 rebounds and the host Red Raiders pulled away from the Vaqueros in their final tuneup before Big 12 Conference play.

No. 18 Marquette 84, Southern 41: Markus Howard scored 23 of his 26 points in a hot-shooting first half, and the Golden Eagles overpowered the visiting Jaguars.

No. 20 North Carolina State 97, Loyola-Maryland 64: Torin Dorn scored 17 points and the host Wolfpack wrapped up their nonconference schedule by beating the Greyhounds.

Service academies

Air Force 72, UC Riverside 60: Ryan Swan scored 16 points, Lavelle Scottie added 13 and the host Falcons cruised to a victory over the Highlanders on Friday.

Swan was 5-for-8 from the field and made a pair of three-pointers and Scottie was 4-for-11 shooting for the Falcons (5-7), who shot 25-for-45 (55.6 percent) from the field.

The Falcons snapped a two-game skid and open Mountain West Conference play on Wednesday hosting New Mexico.
Syracuse debuts and the 17th-score three touchdowns in their collegiate career by throwing for 303 yards, Abdul Adams and Trishton Jackson combined to score three touchdowns in their Syracuse debuts and the 17th-ranked Orange got their first 10-win season since 2001 by topping No. 15 West Virginia 34-18 in the Camping World Bowl on Friday.

“The trophy is really, really heavy,” Syracuse coach Dino Babers said. “And I’m glad we got it.”

The Orange ended with a flourish, too: Down 18-17 going into the fourth, they scored 27 points in the final 101 minutes.

“I’ve always been told is to leave a place better than we found it. This place could be really special.”

Minshew, Cougars edge Cyclones in Alamo Bowl

San Antonio — Gardner Minshew II and that glorious mustache conjured up a final bit of magic in a grand finale for Washington State.

The graduate transfer quarterback whose whiskered upper lip was loved and mimicked by Cougars fans all season, threw two touchdown passes and ran for another score in sending No. 12 Washington State to a 28-26 win over No. 25 Iowa State in the Alamo Bowl on Friday night.

Minshew’s passing and scrambling earned the Cougars (11-2) a school record for wins in a season. He threw for 299 yards, none of them bigger than the 10-yard run that set up the winning score.

“It was just another big fourth-quarter moment for the transfer from East Carolina who coach Mike Leach had lured out West with the promise he could lead the nation in passing,” Associated Press.

Washington State quarterback Gardner Minshew threw for 299 yards and two touchdowns.

By Jim Vertuno

Silenced upper lip was loved and mimicked by Cougars fans all season, threw two touchdown passes and ran for another score in sending No. 12 Washington State to a 28-26 win over No. 25 Iowa State in the Alamo Bowl on Friday night.

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“It was just another big fourth-quarter moment for the transfer from East Carolina who coach Mike Leach had lured out West with the promise he could lead the nation in passing,” Associated Press.

Minshew was the nation’s leading passer in yards per game this season and won the Johnny Unitas Award as the nation’s top senior quarterback in a season the Cougars fell one game short of playing for the Pac-12 championship.

Nearly all of his completions this season were more orthodox than the flip to Martin. None were bigger for the season and the legacy it set for the program.

“I want to say thank you to these coaches, this university and these fans for taking me in,” Minshew said.

“So glad to be a part of this,” he said. “One thing I’ve always been told is to leave a place better than we found it. This place could be really special.”

The Cougars did a good job in bottling up Washington State for much of the game. Iowa State’s defense held Washington State 10 points and 135 yards below their season averages and two of the Cougars’ touchdowns came on short drives after turnovers.

But after Minshew found a way to get Washington State in the end zone, the Cougars’ defense made one play it had to at the end.

Iowa State’s last chance came after quarterback Brock Purdy scored from a yard out with 4:02 left.

The Cyclones went for two, but a pass to Montgomery was stopped short of the goal line after a false-start penalty pushed the line of scrimmage back to the 8.

Iowa State had seven false starts on offense and had two players ejected for targeting hits on Minshew.
Rams rule out Gurley against San Francisco

Star running back not expected to miss time in playoffs

By Greg Beacham
Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Rams running back Todd Gurley has been ruled out of Los Angeles’ regular-season finale against San Francisco because of a knee injury.

Safety Lamarcus Joyner also won’t play Sunday at the Coliseum, Rams coach Sean McVay confirmed Friday.

“Those guys are making progress, but we don’t feel like it’s going to be at the point where they’ll be ready to go,” McVay said.

“So we want to continue to be smart with that.”

Los Angeles (12-3) can clinch a first-round postseason bye with a win over the 49ers or a loss by the Chicago Bears, but the Rams will have to do it without the centerpiece of their offense.

Gurley is the NFL’s second-leading rusher with 1,251 yards, and he leads the league with 21 touchdowns. He is fourth with 1,831 total yards from scrimmage after leading the NFL last season when he was the AP’s Offensive Player of the Year.

Gurley will miss the final two games of the regular season after sitting out last week’s win at Arizona, but McVay says he isn’t concerned about the star running back’s availability for the playoffs. While Gurley wasn’t ready to declare himself out for another week when he spoke to media Thursday, the Rams decided to be careful.

“I think he understands his body better than anybody else,” McVay said. “I don’t get the sense that he’s concerned, but we want to be smart about this. If it’s feeling like something where he’s not going to be able to be the Todd Gurley that we’re accustomed to seeing, just based on the way that thing is feeling, the smart thing for him, No. 1, and for our football team is to be able to rest him and get him back as quickly as possible.”

Gurley rushed for just 76 combined yards in his past two games earlier this month, and he appeared to be moving gingerly at times. He couldn’t identify a specific play on which he was injured, saying he just felt “something wasn’t right” during the Rams’ loss to Philadelphia in Week 16.

C.J. Anderson is likely to be Gurley’s primary replacement again this week against the 49ers. The longtime Denver running back joined the Rams last week and immediately thrived, rushing for 167 yards and a touchdown in a 31-9 victory over the Cardinals last Sunday.

Gurley participated in pregame warmups at Arizona. He said he could have played, but wasn’t sure how effective he would have been.

Knee pain has stalled Gurley for months — no surprise given his heavy workload. After sitting out the entire preseason, Gurley also felt pain in his knee after the Rams’ season-opening win at Oakland back in September — and that was worse, he claimed.

“It was bad,” Gurley said with a laugh. “I was contemplating on giving the Rams back their money and everything.”

That win over the Raiders was Gurley’s first game after agreeing to a four-year, $60 million contract extension through 2024 that includes $45 million guaranteed.

The Rams won’t have any concrete idea about Gurley’s playoff availability until next week, but McVay is cautiously optimistic he will be back to full strength.

“I would think so, but if you said a couple weeks ago that we would have to hold him out for the last two weeks, I probably would have been surprised about that,” McVay said. “But based on the information that we’re getting, there isn’t any reason for us to ... think that he won’t be available.”

Joyner has started all 15 games for Los Angeles while playing more than 95 percent of the Rams’ defensive snaps, but he has an ankle injury. He is the Rams’ third-leading tackler with 78, along with one interception.

Backup inside backs Blake Countess and Marqui Christian will play extensively in Joyner’s absence, McVay said.

Los Angeles Rams running back Todd Gurley has been ruled out of Los Angeles’ regular-season finale on Sunday against San Francisco with a knee injury, but head coach Sean McVay says he isn’t concerned about Gurley’s availability for the playoffs.

Brady, Pats expect tough challenge from Jets

By Joe Aronson
Associated Press

FOXBOROUGH, Mass. — Yes, Tom Brady still wants to play next season. And beyond.

But first up is Sunday’s regular-season finale and then the playoffs for the New England Patriots.

The 41-year-old Brady reiterated Friday that he plans to play in 2019, and then quickly tried to return the focus to this weekend’s game against the New York Jets.

“This week’s the one that matters and that’s what we got to do — take care of business this week,” he said.

Brady has long said he plans to play past this season. But a sore left knee and a poor performance in Sunday’s win over the Buffalo Bills brought back questions about the future.

“I think if we play well (at home), the crowd’s into it, but the one positive I see from being here is that we practice in the elements all the time,” Brady said.

“Going out and executing in whatever conditions, hopefully we handle them better than our opponents.”

Brady is 27-7 against the Jets, winning his last five and eight of the last nine — including a 27-13 victory at the Meadowlands on Nov. 25. This week, he faces a 4-11 team that could be playing its final game under coach Todd Bowles and arrives at Gillette with nothing to lose.

“We’ve talked about all those things — we’ve prepared for all those things,” Brady said. “We’ve played this team a lot and they defend us a little differently each time that they play us. They’ve got good players, they’ve got a good scheme, they have a lot of defense, they have a lot of calls. They’re well-coached and they kind of pick what they want to do. I’m sure they’ll be aggressive and we’ve got to be able to counter that.”

Brady was 20-for-31 for 283 yards, two touchdowns and no interceptions in the Nov. 25 game. Rookie Sony Michel rushed for a season-high 133 yards in the victory.
Indianapolis will make postseason if QB continues mastery of Titans

By Teresa M. Walker
Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. — Andrew Luck is a win away from putting the Indianapolis Colts back into the playoffs for the first time since 2014 while doing something no NFL quarterback has managed since at least 1970.

Beat an opponent 11 straight games.

Luck has won his first 10 games against the Tennessee Titans, matching Hall of Famer John Elway, who went 10-0 against the Patriots. Another victory Sunday night would leave Luck all alone in dominating another team with an AFC wild-card berth at worst for the Colts (9-6).

Not that Luck is counting on past success, especially after the Colts needed a late TD to edge the Giants 28-27 for their eighth victory in nine games.

“What happened previously and what happened in previous years, it doesn’t matter,” Luck said. “What happened last weekend does not matter. It’s a new cycle.”

Tennessee safety Kevin Byard refuses to ponder why Luck has tormented the Titans so. The Titans are 2-3 against the Colts in Byard’s three seasons — Luck missed 2017 with a shoulder injury — and four straight wins have Tennessee (9-6) a win away from a second straight postseason berth.

By kickoff, they’ll all know exactly what’s at stake. The AFC South title will be up for grabs if Houston loses to Jacksonville.

Peace: Foles tries to focus on the moment

FROM BACK PAGE

last February.

“Playing in the Super Bowl is really a big stage but I remember staying in the moment, not worrying about the clock, not worrying about the score,” Foles said. “It was peaceful, which it shouldn’t be, but it was.”

He said he hasn’t mastered his “stay-in-the-moment” philosophy but he’s working on it daily.

“I still have to remind myself,” Foles said. “There are times you get overwhelmed, you get excited thinking about all the things you want to accomplish.

I’m still learning. I don’t have it conquered.”

The Eagles were on the verge of playoff elimination when a back injury forced Wentz out of the lineup earlier this month, but Foles came to the rescue again.

He helped the 13½-point underdog Eagles beat the Los Angeles Rams 30-23 on the road, and set a franchise record with 471 yards passing in a 32-30 comeback win over Houston last week.

Teammates have raved about Foles’ leadership skills and confidence.

“He’s extremely calm. He’s always exuding positivity,” tight end Zach Ertz said. “He’s playing at an extremely high level. We love playing for him.”

Foles doesn’t get flustered when things go wrong. He doesn’t call out guys on the sideline or argue with coaches.

“There will be mistakes. I might throw a pick. I might fumble,” he said. “But what are we gonna do? That’s where we need to react and be confident and be positive.”

Staying consistent on and off the field is important to Foles.

“When I step in the huddle, I’m not going to change, when we’re at a restaurant or out in public (I’m not going to change),” he said. “I want to be who I am. I want to be genuine, and I think that’s a powerful thing.”

Foles is 22-7 as a starter for the Eagles over two stints since his rookie season in 2012. He has experienced plenty of highs and lows — he was traded by the Eagles in 2015 and released by the Rams in 2016 — during his seven seasons in the NFL and now faces an uncertain future.

The Eagles are committed to Wentz as their franchise quarterback so they’re expected to decline an option to pay Foles $20 million in 2019, allowing him to become a free agent. Foles became emotional talking about the possibility he has played his last game in Philadelphia.

“This city means a lot to me, this team means a lot to me, wearing that jersey means a lot to me,” he said. “I’m very grateful for every opportunity to play here, to play in front of our fans, to wear that jersey no matter what. No one can ever take that away from me.”

Where Foles goes, fans in Philadelphia will always consider him a hero for winning the franchise’s first Vince Lombardi Trophy.

Indianapolis Colts quarterback Andrew Luck, left, speaks with coach Frank Reich, right, during the team’s game against the Washington Redskins on Sept. 16 in Landover, Md. Luck has beaten the Tennessee Titans, this week’s opponent, 10 straight times.

If the league’s oldest active player — and NFL’s new career scoring leader — simply appears Sunday, he would break a tie with Jeff Feagles (352) for the third-most games played in NFL history and become the fourth player to participate in a game at 46. The others are George Blanda (48), Morten Andersen (47) and John Carney (46).
Jacksonville Jaguars (5-10) at Houston Texans (10-5)
AFN-Sports2
7 p.m. Sunday CET
Notes: Jaguars have won two of past three meetings. ... Texans can clinch AFC South title with win, but will fall back into wild-card berth with a loss. ... Jaguars QB Blake Bortles will start the season finale after coming off the bench in Weeks 16. ... Texans placed four players on AFC Pro Bowl team.

Cincinnati Bengals (6-9) at Pittsburgh Steelers (8-6-1)
AFN-Atlantic
10:25 p.m. Sunday CET
Series: Steelers lead 61-35.
Notes: Steelers have won past six meetings. ... Steelers have to win and hope for Ravens loss in order to make playoffs. ... Bengals QB Jeff Driskel had two TDs and career-high 123.4 rating in Week 16.

Philadelphia Eagles (8-7) at Washington Redskins (7-8)
AFN-Sports2
10:25 p.m. Sunday CET
Series: Redskins lead 85-76-5.
Notes: Eagles have won past three meetings. ... Eagles can clinch playoff berth with victory, but can still lose and make playoffs with an Eagles loss. ... Bears QB Mitch Trubisky completed 25 of 29 passes for 246 yards in Week 16. ... Vikings RB Dalvin Cook had 108 scrimmage yards last week.

Indianapolis Colts (9-6) at Tennessee Titans (9-6)
AFN-Sports, 2 a.m. Monday Central European Time
SERIES RECORD: Colts lead 32-16
LAST MEETING: Colts beat Titans 38-10, Nov. 18.
COFFEE SHOP: Colts beat Giants 28-27, Titans beat Redskins 25-16
COLTS OFFENSE: OVERALL (7), RUSH (21), PASS (29)
TITANS OFFENSE: OVERALL (26), RUSH (5), PASS (17)
STREAKS, STATS AND NOTES: Colts can end three-year playoff drought with win. Titans can earn second straight playoff berth with win. ... Indy has won eight of nine overall and 12 of last 14 in series. ... Andrew Luck has won all 10 starts vs. Titans and could become only player since 1970 with 11-0 mark against one team. ... Luck needs 24 completions to reach 2,000 and 24 pass attempts to set single-season high. ... Colts rookie LB Darius Leonard needs six tackles to break Jeff Herrod's single-season franchise record (160), which has stood since 1991. ... RB Nyheim Hines needs six receptions to pass Bill Brooks for most receptions by Colts rookie since 1970 (65 in 1986). ... Pro Bowl TE Eric Ebron has been in concussion protocol this week but needs 22 yards receiving and 31 scrimmage yards to set single-season bests. ... Titans QB Marcus Mariota recovering from stinger but will fall back into wild-card berth with a loss. ... Jaguars QB Blake Bortles will start the season finale after coming off the bench in Weeks 16. ... Texans placed four players on AFC Pro Bowl team.

Also on AFN:
Dallas Cowboys (9-6) at New York Giants (5-10), AFN-Sports, 7 p.m. Sunday CET
Carolina Panthers (6-9) at New Orleans Saints (13-2), AFN-Atlantic, 7 p.m. Sunday CET

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**NY Giants**

**Dallas at Tennessee**

**Game capsules compiled from nfmmedia.com**

**Marquee match-up**

Indianapolis Colts (9-6) at Tennessee Titans (9-6)
AFN-Sports, 2 a.m. Monday Central European Time

Six tackles to break Jeff Herrod’s single-season franchise record (160), which has stood since 1991. ... RB Nyheim Hines needs six receptions to pass Bill Brooks for most receptions by Colts rookie since 1970 (65 in 1986). ... Pro Bowl TE Eric Ebron has been in concussion protocol this week but needs 22 yards receiving and 31 scrimmage yards to set single-season bests. ... Titans QB Marcus Mariota recovering from stinger but will fall back into wild-card berth with a loss. ... Jaguars QB Blake Bortles will start the season finale after coming off the bench in Weeks 16. ... Texans placed four players on AFC Pro Bowl team.
Eagles’ Foles content with role

BY ROB MAADDI
Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA
Nick Foles plays with a strong sense of inner peace because he doesn’t allow success or failure to define him. Win or lose, he’s the same guy. “My identity is rooted in Christ, not in my accomplishments,” Foles said a few days before he leads the Philadelphia Eagles (8-7) against the Washington Redskins (7-8) in another big game.

The Eagles will earn the NFC’s final wild-card berth if they win Sunday and the Vikings (8-6-1) lose at home against the Bears (11-4).

Foles has performed well at quarterback in high-pressure situations the past two seasons while filling in for Carson Wentz. He’s 5-0 in must-win games and earned Super Bowl MVP honors in a win over New England.

SEE PEACE ON PAGE 30

Inside: Gurley won’t play in Rams’ finale, Page 29