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A MUDDY GOOD TIME

PHOTOS BY TAYLOR IRBY/THE NEWS & ADVANCE

A crowd gathers around the mud pit at the "Pit of Dreams" Mud Bog at Rockfish Valley Volunteer Fire and Rescue in Afton on Saturday. At least 100 people braved high temperatures as they watched trucks fly by in a 275-foot mud pit. Drivers competed for the fastest time.

Mud Bog in Afton raises funds for injured, disabled veterans

By Liz Ramos
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AFTON

Greg Ward started working with trucks and helping his dad with mud bog competitions when he was a child.

About four years ago, he decided to start competing with D-Ranged Mud Racing, a racing organization.

"It's something that I guess is in your blood," said Ward, a Beaverdam, Virginia, resident. "My team is three generations. It's just a family atmosphere that we hold in the sport. My dad, myself, my son and basically all of our

kids are involved in the sport to a degree. It's dirty, family fun I guess."

Ward was with his family, girlfriend Latosha Hudson, of Richmond, and at least 100 other people Saturday during the Rockfish Valley Volunteer Fire Department "Pit of Dreams" Mud Bog in Afton, which benefits veterans organizations.

A mud bog is a competition between various types of vehicles, such as big trucks, that drive through a large mud pit while drivers avoid becoming stuck. The competition includes various classes

SEE MUD | B5



Ben Roper, of Roanoke, driver of the truck called "Narrow Minded," hoses his vehicle down after his run at the "Pit of Dreams" Mud Bog at Rockfish Valley Volunteer Fire and Rescue.

"It's just a family atmosphere that we hold in the sport. My dad, myself, my son and basically all of our kids are involved in the sport to a degree. It's dirty, family fun I guess." — Greg Ward

College interns, area nonprofits create symbiotic relationships

By Sarah Honosky
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Abby May graduated from the communications program at University of Lynchburg as part of the Class of 2019.

Ten years ago, that degree might have been enough. But in an increasingly competitive job market, graduates need more than a bachelor's degree to keep their head above water. Internships have become a crucial component of the college experience, providing professional experience and hirability with low

cost to the employer.

While seeking more experience outside of the classroom, last summer May stumbled across the Meals on Wheels of Greater Lynchburg internship.

May said it was a "perfect fit." It gave May hands-on skills she could put on her resume: writing press releases, running social media accounts and working in a professional environment.

"It was one of the best experiences I had in college," May said. "Nonprofits are so thankful, especially in a smaller town like Lynchburg. The one thing that

they need is our help."

Lynchburg is rich with nonprofits — about 500 are registered and active in the Lynchburg area — and the numbers are on the rise.

According to those involved with the organizations, the large pool of college students available to intern is a contributing factor.

"I believe having the resource of college students is an asset to the community and our local nonprofits," said Kris Shabestar, executive director of Meals on

SEE INTERNS | B3

Food pantries coming to E.C. Glass, Heritage

Students will be able to pick up items at start of school year

By Liz Ramos
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Students at both E.C. Glass and Heritage high schools will have access to a food pantry on campus when the new school year starts next month.

As part of Park View Community Mission's Food for Thought program, the nonprofit has decided not only

to provide bags of food for students to take home on the weekends, but also to have a food pantry at each school.

Food for Thought is a backpack feeding program that started last fall and helps Lynchburg City Schools students, particularly in the middle and high schools, on the weekends.

Earl Larkins, Park View spokesperson, said from October to May, the nonprofit delivered almost 12,000 bags to Lynchburg public schools

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SUNDAY POLITICS

A WEEKLY LOOK AT THE PEOPLE, POLLS & POLICIES SHAPING THE POLITICAL LANDSCAPE



LEFT: Former Vice President and Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden is greeted by supporters on Friday in Clear Lake, Iowa. Democratic presidential candidates (top right going clockwise) South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg; former congressman Joe Sestak; Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass.; and Sen. Kamala Harris, D-Calif., speak at the Iowa Democratic Wing Ding. BELOW: All 24 of the Democratic presidential candidates.

How much is too much?

Iowa voters express fatigue at massive democratic field

By Alexandra Jaffe, Hunter Woodall and Michelle L. Price
The Associated Press

WATERLOO, Iowa
Jake Poorman is exhausted. He's been trying to get every Democratic presidential candidate to sign a baseball, a souvenir of the wildest Democratic primary he's seen in his 60 years as an Iowan. He's gathered so many signatures — 16 — he had to get another ball.
That, coupled with the constant controversies out of Washington, has him a bit burnt out on politics.
“It's a lot of work,” he be-moaned. “There's starting to be a bit of fatigue.”
Iowans treasure the na-

tional attention that shines on them every four years when presidential candidates descend on the state, whose caucuses mark the beginning of an election year. But as virtually every Democratic contender swings through Iowa this weekend to participate in the famed state fair, even some die-hard Democratic activists are getting restless.
They're worried the historically massive field isn't shrinking fast enough and the debate stages — plural — are too crowded.
The concern isn't limited to Iowa. Recent interviews with dozens of Democrats in other early-voting states registered a fresh anxiety among the most diligent deciders: If Democrats

don't start to figure things out soon, they could give President Donald Trump the upper hand.
“I think that watching the infighting could have Trump win again,” said Duane Campbell, a 29-year-old custodian in Las Vegas. “That's what he wants. He wants us to infight.”
Beth Doney, a 62-year-old retired librarian in Las Vegas, said she too is worried the hits Democrats are taking at each other could leave the president better-positioned to win reelection.
“I'm just concerned that among Democrats, we're not yet able to rally around a smaller group of people and really focus on beating Trump, which I think is the

number one issue of the election,” Doney said.
A crowded primary field can be a good omen for a party, forcing candidates to endure bloody fights that can prepare them for the general election. In 2016, 17 Republicans battled for the Republican nomination before Trump took on Hillary Clinton, who faced just one serious Democratic challenger.
National polls suggest Democrats are enthusiastic about the array of candidates. But there are plenty of jitters, too.
In a June AP/NORC poll, 79% of Democratic voters said they were very interested in the 2020 election. But 59% also said they were anxious about it. Half of Democratic voters

in that survey said they were frustrated with the campaign, while 31% said they were excited.
And the interviews capture the pit-of-stomach-worry for a party that is desperate to oust Trump: With so much at stake, is it possible to have too much of a good thing? Might this epic primary be a distraction from the main event?
In Iowa, Kim Sleezer, a 48-year-old middle school teacher, said that's her main concern.
“I feel like the longer we're watering things down, the less time we have to kind of get everything together and fight the bigger fight that we have against Trump,” she said.
In New Hampshire,

77-year-old Claire Karibian worried it would be tough to pick the best candidate given so many choices.
“I wish there was less,” she said. “Because if there was less, they would be better financed and they would have a better handle on getting the best.”
Stiffer requirements to qualify for the September debate could force some candidates out of the race in the coming weeks.
But those most at risk of being cut aren't rushing for the exits. Former Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper and Montana Gov. Steve Bullock are so far resisting entreaties to abandon their low-polling White House bids to instead run for the Senate.



ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTOS

McConnell setting himself up as Trump's wingman for 2020

By Lisa Mascaro
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — It's not quite “Trump-McConnell 2020,” but it might as well be.
As he runs for reelection, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell is positioning himself as the president's wingman, his trusted right hand in Congress, transformed from a behind-the-scenes player into a prominent if sometimes reviled Republican like none other besides Donald Trump himself.
“In Washington, President Trump and I are making America great again!” he declared at a rally in Kentucky, his voice rising over protesters.
Other than Democrat Nancy Pelosi — and more recently Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez — no cur-

rent politician so quickly has become such a high-profile object of partisan scorn. McConnell was heckled last weekend at his home state's annual “Fancy Farm” political picnic, and protesters outside his Louisville house hurled so many profanities that Twitter temporarily shut down his account for posting video of them online.
Undaunted, he revels in the nickname he's given himself — the “Grim Reaper,” bragging that he's burying the House Democrats' agenda — though he seems stung by one lobbed by opponents, “Moscow Mitch.”
But the Democrats' agenda includes gun legislation to require background checks that Trump now wants to consider, forcing McConnell to adjust his earlier

refusal to do so. The Senate leader has been here before, pushing ahead with a Trump priority that's unpopular with most Republicans. But this will test both his relationship with the president and his grip on the GOP majority.
All while he's campaigning to keep his job.
McConnell is even more dependent on Trump's popularity in Kentucky than on his own, a different political landscape from the one he faced in 2014, before the president took the White House.
“They need each other,” said Scott Jennings, a longtime adviser to McConnell.
The new McConnell strategy shows just how far Trump has transformed the GOP, turning a banker's-collar-and-cufflinks

conservative into a “Fake News!” shouting senator.
There's not an easy alliance in Trump's first year, and they went a long stretch without talking to each other. But two years on, McConnell has proven a loyal implementer of the president's initiatives, and Trump no longer assails the senator on Twitter.
Perhaps no issue has drawn the unlikely partners together more than the current reckoning over national gun violence. Republicans, long allied with the National Rifle Association, have resisted stricter laws on firearm and ammunition sales. But the frequency of mass shootings and the grave toll are intensifying pressure to act.
Trump on Friday revived his interest in having Congress take

a look at expanding federal background checks and other gun safety laws long pushed by Democrats, insisting he will be able to get Republicans on board. McConnell, in a shift, said he's now willing to consider those ideas “front and center” when Congress returns in the fall.
Said Trump, “I think I have a greater influence now over the Senate.”
But McConnell doesn't call himself the Grim Reaper for nothing. He is well known on Capitol Hill for his legislative blocking skills, having stopped much of the Obama administration's agenda when he first became Senate leader and more recently halting bills coming from the Democratic-controlled House, including one to expand background checks.



ASSOCIATED PRESS PHOTOS

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (right), of California, steps away from a podium after reading a statement announcing a formal impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump on Capitol Hill in Washington on Tuesday. LEFT: Trump listens during a briefing in the Oval Office of the White House on Sept. 4.

By Lisa Mascaro
The Associated Press

A look leading up to when the speaker issued impeachment proceedings, a last resort for her

WASHINGTON
Mr. President, she told him, “Undo it.”
With those two words, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi offered Donald Trump one last chance to avoid becoming only the fourth president in office to face impeachment proceedings.

By then, it was too late. The night before, she already had started handwriting a draft of the speech she would deliver to the nation. This account of the turn of events of recent days is based on interviews with lawmakers and aides. Some spoke on condition of anonymity because they were unauthorized to detail private conversations and events.

Pelosi’s decision to launch an impeachment inquiry Tuesday was set in motion even before that early morning phone call, the inevitable response to an administration that repeatedly defied Congress before refusing to turn over a whistleblower’s complaint against the president.

Trump pleaded innocence when he called Pelosi, D-Calif., shortly after 8 a.m. Tuesday, dashing to deliver his address at the United Nations.

At first he wanted to talk

about gun violence legislation. Then the conversation turned to the fallout from a whistleblower’s complaint he pushed Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to investigate former Vice President Joe Biden, a current Democratic presidential candidate.

“You know, I don’t have anything to do with that,” Trump said about the administration’s refusal to turn over the complaint to Congress.

Pelosi took the call at her apartment in Washington as she was preparing for work. She responded by withholding the complaint, Trump was asking his acting director of national intelligence to break the law. The speaker never tipped her hand the impeachment announcement was coming later that afternoon, when she would stand before American flags and address the nation from her balcony in the Capitol.

But she may have led Trump to believe what was coming. She had been thinking and planning for this moment for some time, and she let Trump know the gravity of the situation before they both hung up. She was

late for her morning meetings.

Pelosi has been the voice of restraint in the House, declining to take up the cause of impeachment as the House pursued its oversight of the administration in the aftermath of former special counsel Robert Mueller’s report.

Her approach always was a bit incongruent for the congresswoman from liberal San Francisco, where so many of her own constituents wanted to see Trump impeached long ago.

But for Pelosi, who wore an American flag pin, rather than her speaker’s mace brooch, on her blue dress Tuesday, impeachment always was a last resort.

She had lived through the impeachment of one president, Bill Clinton, and fended off calls to impeach another, George W. Bush, the last time Democrats had the majority and she was speaker.

She viewed impeachment as too political, too divisive. Behind her calculus was a desire to protect dozens of centrist lawmakers, those who won elections last fall in previously Republican districts where Trump remains

popular.

But her position was becoming untenable.

It wasn’t just the allegation of Trump turning to a foreign leader for election help that turned the tide toward impeachment. Even more alarming to lawmakers was the administration’s refusal to turn over the complaint, as expected by law.

Pelosi, who helped write the whistleblower statutes and create the office of the director of national intelligence after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, understood the stakes as much as anyone.

This is part of “her own DNA,” said Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, D-Texas.

Pelosi had worked the phones all weekend, talking to Democrats in between delivering remarks at memorial services Saturday for journalist Cokie Roberts in Washington and Sunday for Rep. James Clyburn’s wife, Emily, in South Carolina, as news reports unspooled more details of the Ukraine call.

Pelosi started telling some veteran lawmakers who had been withholding their views to go ahead and get out in front of her. She talked with

Chuck Schumer, the Democratic leader in the Senate, and told the New Yorker where she was headed.

At the same time, a group of freshman lawmakers with national security backgrounds started working the phones. They were calling and texting one another over the weekend wanting to make their own statement in support of impeachment proceedings.

By Monday, they reached out to Pelosi and told her, in a 5 p.m. phone call, their opinion article backing an impeachment inquiry was about to be published in The Washington Post. She was not surprised.

Pelosi had been in New York all day and was attending a dinner as part of the U.N. General Assembly session.

On a 9 p.m. flight back to Washington that night, Pelosi started handwriting her own thoughts. It was the speech she would deliver to the American public the next day.

As the House prepared to gavel in Tuesday, more and more members started adding their names to the impeachment calls. Rep. John Lewis, D-Ga., the influential civil rights leader, was about to deliver a speech saying it was time.

And then the president called.

Impeachment a road less traveled for evicting a president

By David Crary
The Associated Press

Donald Trump joins a small group of fellow presidents now that he’s the subject of an official impeachment inquiry in the House of Representatives. Only three of his predecessors underwent similar proceedings: Andrew Johnson and Bill Clinton, who were acquitted after trials in the Senate, and Richard Nixon, who resigned to avoid being impeached in the Watergate scandal.

The rarely used procedure is spelled out in Article II, Section 4 of the Constitution, which stipulates the president and

other officers of government “shall be removed from office on impeachment for, and conviction of, treason, bribery, or other high crimes and misdemeanors.”

A brief look at past presidential impeachment proceedings:

Bill Clinton

The Republican-controlled House voted in October 1998 to begin impeachment proceedings against Clinton after months of controversy over his relationship with White House intern Monica Lewinsky.

That vote was triggered by two rounds of testimony given by Clinton



Clinton

under questioning from independent counsel Kenneth Starr before a federal grand jury, he testified he engaged in an inappropriate relationship with Lewinsky.

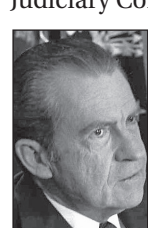
Clinton was impeached Dec. 19, 1998, on the grounds of perjury to a grand jury and obstruction of justice. A Senate trial against Clinton commenced Jan. 7, 1999, and unfolded over four weeks,

earlier in the year. In January, he denied having a sexual relationship with Lewinsky; in August,

with Chief Justice William Rehnquist presiding.

Richard Nixon

The House initiated an impeachment process against Nixon in February 1974, authorizing the Judiciary Committee to



Nixon

investigate whether grounds existed to impeach him of high crimes and misdemeanors. The charges mostly related to Watergate — shorthand for the 1972 break-in at the Democratic National Committee headquarters and the

Nixon administration’s attempts to cover up its involvement.

In July 1974, the Judiciary Committee approved three articles of impeachment against Nixon — for obstruction of justice, abuse of power and contempt of Congress.

Before the full House could vote on the articles of impeachment, a previously undisclosed audio tape was released that made clear Nixon had a role in the cover-up. He resigned from office Aug. 9, 1974.

Andrew Johnson

Johnson’s impeachment in 1868 was the culmination of a bitter dispute

between the president and the Republican-controlled House over Reconstruction following the Civil War.

The specific trigger for impeachment was Johnson’s attempt to fire Secretary of War Edwin Stanton, who favored a tougher approach than Johnson toward the defeated South. Nine of 11 impeachment articles concerned the head of the War Department.

On March 3, 1868, the House voted to impeach Johnson. Three days later, the Senate convened a formal impeachment trial, with Supreme Court Chief Justice Salmon P. Chase presiding.