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Radio News Reporting

2021 Subdistrict - Async Round 1

# International

## China Will No Longer Recognize British Hong Kong Travel Document

Two days before Britain is to begin accepting applications from Hong Kong residents for a visa offering a path to residency and citizenship in the U.K. for holders of British National Overseas citizenship, China announced it would no longer recognize the BNO passport. Britain created the path to citizenship for an estimated 5.2 million Hong Kongers last year after China imposed a national security law on the former British colony that was criticized as an infringement on civil rights. But Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said in a briefing Friday that China will no longer recognize BNO passports for travel or identification. "The British side's attempt to turn a large number of Hong Kong people into second-class British citizens has completely changed the nature of the two sides' original understanding of BNO," Zhao said, as reported by The Associated Press from Beijing. "This move seriously infringes on China's sovereignty, grossly interferes in Hong Kong affairs and China's internal affairs, and seriously violates international law and the basic norms of international relations," he said. Zhao said China will cease recognition of BNO passports on Sunday, when the British Consulate in Hong Kong is scheduled to begin accepting applications for BNO visas under the new immigration law. Beginning Feb. 23, to ensure greater privacy, Hong Kong residents will be able to apply for the visa through a cellphone app so they will not have to visit the consulate. BNO citizenship was created as part of the 1997 handover of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty. It only allowed six-month visits to the U.K. without the right to work. Some 350,000 Hong Kongers held BNO passports before Britain offered the new path to citizenship. But British government figures show applications for BNO passports have surged since pro-democracy protests in 2019. It's unclear what impact China's decision will have on Hong Kong residents seeking to leave. The British Foreign Office says a BNO passport is not needed to receive a BNO visa so long as applicants can prove eligibility using other documents. Hong Kong Special Administrative Region passports will be accepted, as will passports of other nations. Nor is it clear how many Hong Kongers will choose to immigrate to the U.K. Out of the millions eligible, the British government estimates between 258,000 and 322,400 BNO citizens will come over five years. U.K. Prime Minister Boris Johnson issued a defiant response to the Chinese announcement. "I am immensely proud that we have brought in this new route for Hong Kong BN(O)s to live, work and make their home in our country," Johnson said in a statement. "In doing so we have [honored] our profound ties of history and friendship with the people of Hong Kong, and we have stood up for freedom and autonomy – values both the UK and Hong Kong hold dear." Britain has maintained that China's imposition of the national security law in Hong Kong violates the handover treaty between the two nations in which China committed to noninterference in the former colony's affairs for 50 years.

## Siemens Energy to shed 7,800 jobs in cost-cutting drive

Energy technology company Siemens Energy said Tuesday that it plans to shed 7,800 jobs worldwide by 2025 as part of a drive to cut costs. The company, which was spun off last year by German industrial conglomerate Siemens AG, currently has more than 90,000 employees around the world. It said that “optimized processes, leaner structures, the reduction of overcapacities and portfolio adjustments” will result in some 7,800 jobs going in its gas and power segment, around three-quarters of them in management, administration and sales. The plans call for 3,000 jobs to be cut in Germany, 1,700 in the United States and 3,100 at other locations worldwide. The cuts are to be completed by the end of the 2025 financial year, with a “large part” by the end of the 2023 financial year, Siemens Energy said.

## Shell Ordered To Compensate Nigerian Farmers Affected By Oil Spills

A Dutch court has delivered a major victory to a group of Nigerian farmers in their 13-year-long effort to hold Shell's Nigerian subsidiary accountable for oil spills on their lands. The Court of Appeal in The Hague sided with farmers and environmentalists on most of their legal claims, ruling that the Nigerian subsidiary owes the farmers financial compensation for the oil spill pollution in two villages. "The court ruled that Shell Nigeria is liable for the damage caused by the spills. Shell Nigeria is sentenced to compensate farmers for damages," Senior Justice Sierd Schaafsma said, as reported by Agence France-Presse. The parent company, Royal Dutch Shell, and its subsidiary must also install a leak detection system to one pipeline to prevent further spills. The court is still considering whether to hold Shell responsible for spillage in a third village, which was caused by sabotage. The spills happened between 2004 and 2007. "Finally, there is some justice for the Nigerian people suffering the consequences of Shell's oil," Eric Dooh, one of the Nigerian plaintiffs, said in a statement after the verdict. His father was also a plaintiff but died before the case wrapped up. "Three of the four Nigerian plaintiffs and their fellow villagers must now be compensated for the damage caused and Shell must ensure that there is a leakage detection system in the pipelines in Nigeria," Friends of the Earth, the environmental organization that sued Shell, said in a statement. "It is the first time that a court has held Dutch transnational corporation accountable for its duty of care abroad." The court has not yet set the amount of compensation the farmers will receive, and the verdict can be appealed to a higher court. The plaintiffs said the spills were caused by the company's negligence. Shell's Nigerian subsidiary, Shell Petroleum Development Company of Nigeria Ltd., maintains that spills were caused by sabotage, which could reduce its liability. But the appeals court ruled that Shell has not proved that claim "beyond reasonable doubt." "We are therefore disappointed that this court has made a different finding on the cause of these spills and in its finding that SPDC is liable," a spokesperson for the company told NPR. "Sabotage, crude oil theft and illegal refining are a major challenge in the Niger Delta." In a previous ruling in 2013, a lower Dutch court took a narrower view of the case. As The Associated Press reported, it said the Nigerian subsidiary should compensate just one of the farmers, and found that the Dutch company could not be held liable. In 2015, after appeals from both sides, judges ruled that Shell could be held liable for the pollution in Dutch courts. Shell is facing another major legal challenge in The Netherlands, in a case also brought by environmentalists including Friends of the Earth Netherlands. The plaintiffs want Shell to be forced to reduce its carbon dioxide emissions. As NPR's Laurel Wamsley reported, the lawsuit "could have implications for future cases and the role of companies in meeting climate targets."

## Australia changed anthem to reflect 60,000 years of Indigenous history

When Australia woke up to a new year it also saw a slightly different national anthem. The anthem, "Advance Australia Fair," has been tweaked to recognize the country's Indigenous history and communities, Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced, hours before 2021. The first line, "Australians all let us rejoice, for we are young and free," will now end with "one and free." "Australia as a modern nation may be relatively young, but our country's story is ancient, as are the stories of the many First Nations peoples whose stewardship we rightly acknowledge and respect," Morrison wrote in an opinion piece in the Sydney Morning Herald. "In the spirit of unity, it is only right that we also now acknowledge this and ensure our national anthem reflects this truth and shared appreciation. Changing 'young and free' to 'one and free' takes nothing away, but I believe it adds much." The government has a history of changing the song to be more inclusive -- when Peter Dodds McCormick's original 1878 composition was declared the official national anthem in 1984, replacing "God Save the Queen," two instances of "sons" were switched with gender-neutral phrasing. The anthem has become controversial in recent years, amid growing conversation about Indigenous representation, systemic inequality, and racial injustice. In particular, many have pushed back against the phrase "for we are young and free" -- a nod to when Britain's First Fleet landed in Australia in 1788 -- given Australia is home to one of the world's oldest known civilizations. In 2018, a 9-year-old girl was attacked by prominent politicians, who called for her to be kicked out of school, because she refused to stand during the anthem out of respect for the Indigenous population. In 2019, athletes made headlines for refusing to sing the anthem at football matches. And in 2020, national rugby union players sang the anthem in the language of the Eora Nation -- the first time it has been sung in an Indigenous language at a major sporting event. Peter Vickery, the founder and chair of the non-profit Representation In Anthem, has been campaigning for a more inclusive anthem since 2016. "Many of our indigenous people found it difficult, if not impossible, to sing the exclusionary words of 'Advance Australia Fair'," Vickery said Friday. "We simply can't have an anthem which causes hurt to its own people." Vickery worked with other Indigenous leaders and singers to create alternate, more inclusive lyrics -- one change being the phrase "one and free" that Morrison adopted. Their campaign gained greater visibility and momentum last year when Gladys Berejiklian, premier of New South Wales state, expressed her support. "Frankly, I'm elated," Vickery said. "It does achieve a major objective of our work, which was to convert words of hurt or exclusion to words of inclusion, and embrace a multicultural society of the 21st century."

Other prominent Indigenous Australian figures, including Minister for Indigenous Australians Ken Wyatt and Olympic gold medal-winning sprinter Cathy Freeman, also celebrated the change. But it was also met with skepticism from some who called it insubstantial, and more symbolic than effecting any real change. "The anthem one word change isn't good enough!" tweeted Indigenous former world boxing champion Anthony Mundine on Friday, adding that the country needed to "scrap the song & start fresh with bit of black history & white history." Vickery openly acknowledged such criticisms, saying the campaign's symbolic power "can never be a substitute for substance." But, he added, the anthem was still "a critically important first step." Other critics argued the message of unity, and the inclusion of "free" in the lyric, is undermined by controversial policies for asylum seekers and refugees detained in Australia's notorious offshore immigration centers, as well as the systemic barriers still facing the Indigenous population.

# National

## ACLU, for first time, elects Black person as its president

Deborah Archer, a professor at New York University School of Law with expertise in civil rights and racial justice, has become the first Black person in the 101-year history of the American Civil Liberties Union to be elected its president. The ACLU announced Monday that Archer was elected over the weekend in a virtual meeting of the organization’s 69-member board of directors. She succeeds Susan Herman, a professor at Brooklyn Law School who had served as president since 2008. As the ACLU’s eighth president since 1920, Archer will act as chair of its board of the directors, overseeing organizational matters and the setting of civil liberties policies. The fight against racial injustice is expected to be a top priority. The ACLU’s day-to-day operations are managed by its executive director — a post currently held by Anthony Romero. During former President Donald Trump’s four years in office, the ACLU filed an unprecedented 413 lawsuits and other legal actions against his administration, challenging policies related to immigrant rights, voting rights, LGBT rights, racial justice and other issues. The campaign against Trump’s administration — promoted in a catchy “See You In Court” ad campaign — fueled huge increases in donations and membership. According to Romero, the ACLU national office and its state affiliates received about $175 million in donations in the three months after Trump’s election, helping to finance a major expansion of staff. “The ACLU has proven itself as an invaluable voice in the fight for civil rights in the last four years of the Trump era, and we are better positioned than ever to face the work ahead,” Archer said. Early in her career, after graduating from Yale Law School, she was a legal fellow at the ACLU in 1997-98. She has been a member of the ACLU’s board since 2009, and a general counsel and member of the board’s executive committee since 2017. At NYU Law School, Archer is a professor of clinical law and director of its Civil Rights Clinic. She has served as chair of the New York City Civilian Complaint Review Board, which investigates alleged police misconduct, and also was assistant counsel at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund. “There is no one better equipped, who best personifies or is more capable to helm the future battles for civil rights, civil liberties, and systemic equality than Deborah Archer,” Romero said. Romero is hopeful that the newly installed administration of President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris will be more attentive to the ACLU’s major concerns than the Trump administration was, but he expects daunting challenges ahead. “President Trump may be gone but his toxic legacy on civil rights and civil liberties is still very much with us,” Romero said. “It will take years to clean up.” “At the top of our agenda is the effort to redouble this nation’s longstanding but frayed commitment to civil rights and racial justice,” he added. “The country needs a president who will be transformational when it comes to these issues.”

## Disney Revamps Ride To Remove Racist Depictions Of Indigenous People

It's 5 p.m. at the Disney Springs shopping complex near Orlando, Fla., and guests are streaming in after a busy day at the theme parks. Among them are Corey Schleining from Indiana, and his 4-year-old grandson Tristan. Over a steaming bowl of poutine from The Daily Poutine, Schleining runs down the list of rides he took Tristan on. "We did Peter Pan and we did some of the important ones like that. Barnstormer and some of the stuff that he could ride for his first time," Schleining said. They had to skip the Jungle Cruise at the Magic Kingdom because it was too crowded even with extra health and safety protocols put in place during the pandemic. On Jan. 25, Disney announced it planned to change the Jungle Cruise ride to address negative depictions of Indigenous people. Schleining has heard about changes to the ride to make it more inclusive for guests, and said it's something he welcomes. "As a culture. We have to change. I mean we have to change. These are things that really probably should have never existed in the first place," Schleining said. The 10-minute ride described as a "scenic and comedic boat tour of exotic rivers" on Disney's website, takes guests on a winding 10,000-mile cruise across Asia, Africa and South America. At the very end is one controversial part: an indigenous man named Trader Sam holding up several shrunken heads. Guides quip about how Sam is the "the head salesman" whose "sales have been shrinking lately." "Either way you slice it or dice it you won't come out ahead," one guide said jokingly. Rollins College English professor Anne Zimmermann says that's not the only part of the ride that's problematic. She studies the stories Disney tells its guests on rides like the Jungle Cruise. The first time the boat encounters Indigenous people guests are told they're entering headhunter territory and that sometimes the natives attack crews. "They had the union Jack flying in the boat and you have these colonizers getting attacked by a tribe of indigenous people in part of the original narrative," Zimmermann said. Updating rides based on evolving cultural norms isn't new and it isn't new for Disney. Ady Milman teaches theme park and attraction management at the University of Central Florida. Milman said technology and a nationwide reckoning around race are speeding these changes. In June Disney announced changes to Splash Mountain after 20,000 people signed an online petition. The ride will get a new "The Princess and the Frog" theme based on the 2009 movie. Visitors will follow Princess Tiana and Louis on a musical journey through New Orleans as they perform in their first Mardi Gras. Music for the ride will come from the film's award-winning score. The original ride is based on the movie, Song of the South which draws on caricatures of enslaved Black people. "And they want to stay contemporary, they want to stay current. And not to offend anybody as you probably know social media is a very quick way to criticize any type of experience," Milman explained. A theme park is not a time capsule, said Rick Munarriz, economic analyst with the Motley Fool. Walt Disney himself embraced progress and built it into his company's business model, Munarriz said, and the new rides and attractions inspire renewed interest in the parks which translates to turnstile clicks and merchandising opportunities. Even if some fans are upset by these changes, he said, they won't be for long. "They succumb to it. They can be angry about the change at the Pirates of the Caribbean ride a couple of years ago, but they're on the ride again they're having fun," Munarriz said. Munarriz said new rides that Disney's planning like the Guardians of the Galaxy, Cosmic Rewind roller coaster at Epcot in Orlando are already built with inclusion in mind. A crew consisting of all varieties of species and all types of people working together on a shared mission is the right kind of message to be sending, he said.

## Puerto Rico to get billions for storm aid, reconstruction

Puerto Rico is slated to receive more than $6 billion in federal funds to help prepare the U.S. territory for future hurricanes and other disasters, officials said Tuesday. The money assigned by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development would be used for infrastructure projects and economic development, among other things, Gov. Pedro Pierluisi said. In addition, Puerto Rico now has access to $3.2 billion to continue rebuilding from hurricanes Irma and Maria, said Pierluisi, who praised the administration of U.S. President Joe Biden for acting quickly. Congress had assigned $67 billion to help with reconstruction efforts after the hurricanes devastated the island in September 2017, but of the $43 billion obligated, Puerto Rico has only received $18 billion amid concerns over how the money would be spent.

## Four Buffalo nurses surprised with tickets to Super Bowl LV

When Buffalo Bills co-owner Kim Pegula surprised four Buffalo-area nurses with tickets to Super Bowl LV, Cellina Ciotoli and Kaitlin Floyd, nurses at ECMC, immediately started crying. "We looked at each other and we burst into tears. We just couldn't believe this was happening," said Ciotoli, an LPN. Ciotoli and Floyd, as well as two nurses from Buffalo General Hospital, were nominated by their peers to get this experience of a lifetime. "For them to nominate us for something like this, you feel appreciated, you feel love, and you feel that all your hard work is paying off," said Floyd, a charge nurse. "People recognize you. I wish every single person could come with us." "Just to be nominated by your coworkers, they took the time to write beautiful letters and think of us in that fashion, it's absolutely amazing," said Ciotoli. The National Football League is making health care workers the stars of Super Bowl LV, inviting 7,500 of them to attend the game for free as a show of gratitude for their hard work during an unbelievably trying year. "It's just such a surreal experience and we're both super excited," said Ciotoli.

# State/Local

## It’s Navy’s badger statue, but Wisconsin has grown attached

The Wisconsin badger statue that has served as a literal touchstone for so many Capitol building visitors that they’ve rubbed the finish off his nose could be headed to another den soon. Navy officials want the statue they loaned to the state more than 30 years ago back. But state historians aren’t letting it go without a fight. The badger is synonymous with Wisconsin. It was selected as the state’s official animal because lead miners in the state’s early days were said to burrow into the ground like badgers. The University of Wisconsin-Madison’s athletic teams are known as the Badgers, the school’s mascot is a sassy badger named Bucky and an image of a badger adorns the state flag (although he looks more like a short-tailed beaver than a badger to the untrained eye). Replicas of badgers can be found throughout the state Capitol. But the Badger and Shield statue holds a special place of honor outside the governor’s office. The statue was crafted around 1899 from melted-down cannons taken from Cuba during the Spanish-American War, according to online travel guide Atlas Obscura. It was affixed to the USS Wisconsin battleship before World War I. It spent more than 60 years in a U.S. Naval Academy garden before the academy museum loaned it to Wisconsin in 1988 for a state historical society exhibition that coincided with the recommissioning of the second USS Wisconsin, which was built in Philadelphia. After the exhibition ended, the statue was put outside the governor’s Capitol office in 1989. It has stood there ever since. The building has been closed to the public for nearly a year because of the coronavirus pandemic, but the statue has been a highlight of tours in recent years, with throngs of adults and children rubbing its nose for good luck. So many people have touched the nose that its bright brassy gleam stands in sharp contrast to the rest of the statue. State Department of Administration officials said the naval academy’s museum contacted them last March about returning the statue so that it could be displayed at the Nauticus Museum in Norfolk, Virginia, where the second USS Wisconsin is now an exhibit. The Nauticus Museum is run by a nonprofit, not the Navy. Messages left at the museum weren’t returned. The naval academy museum extended the loan through mid-September due to COVID-19-related closures. Christian Overland, the head of the Wisconsin Historical Society, wrote a letter to Claude Berube, the naval academy museum’s director, in October asking for a two-year extension on the loan. Overland said the pandemic has driven up shipping costs and that the society uses the statue to help tell Wisconsin children about the state’s ship-making history and its role in Great Lakes commerce. “The children on the tours become very engaged and excited to learn more about the history of the ship industry in our state and in their communities,” Overland wrote. “It would be wonderful to continue telling and sharing stories of the U.S.S. Wisconsin and waterway history of our great state as we keep moving forward.” State Department of Administration spokeswoman Molly Vidal said that as of Monday, the state hadn’t heard back from the museum about extending the loan. Berube said in a phone interview Thursday that he never received the letter, but that the museum has to take back the statue. He noted that the original loan was for five years and has been repeatedly extended to more than 30 years. Berube said permanent loans no longer exist in the museum industry, and though he understands how Wisconsin feels, it’s now another organization’s turn to benefit from displaying the badger. He also noted that the academy museum had to return former President Jimmy Carter’s plebe uniform to his museum in 2019. “Loans are done in good faith,” he said. “I think it’s great that children have been able to see this badger while it was on loan. Now we’re trying to accommodate another facility that has also requested it. There will be a lot of children in the Norfolk area who will be able to enjoy it as well.”

## After Severe COVID-19 Complications, Poynette Mother Finally Home

In a pandemic where much of the focus has been on lives lost, a story where two lives were saved in one family stands out, especially when the survivors are a mother and her child. Seriously ill with COVID-19, Kelsey Townsend was in a medically induced coma when she gave birth Nov. 4 to a baby girl at St. Mary’s Hospital in Madison. Three months later, she’s home in Poynette with her husband Derek Townsend and their four kids, including newborn Lucy. The joyful reunion comes after a lengthy hospital stay where doctors considered giving 32-year old Kelsey new lungs because hers were so badly damaged. Kelsey was diagnosed with COVID-19 in late October when she was 39 weeks pregnant. Her husband and their 8-year-old daughter also tested positive for the disease. They recovered, but Kelsey took a turn for the worse. The morning before the baby was delivered cesarean section, Derek said Kelsey’s color was off and she was having difficulty breathing. When they arrived at St Mary’s, her blood oxygen levels were in the 40 percent range, Derek said. Normal oxygen levels are at least 95 percent. "Having the baby inside her is what kept her going. I’ve been told by doctors we were hours away from a different outcome that day we went in," Derek told WPR. Kelsey was put on a ventilator but her condition worsened, Derek said, so she was transferred to UW Hospital where she was put on life support. At one point, doctors considered a double lung transplant but eventually the organs began healing from the damage left by COVID-19. "We don’t know precisely what allowed her lungs to start recovering after two months of severe disease," said Dr. Dan McCarthy, a cardiothoracic surgeon at UW Health. "Our hope is that we better understand the nuances in each individual patient and identify either treatments for the those who don’t recover early on or at least ways to identify which patients still have hope of recovery and which patients have truly irreversible lung disease." The family doesn’t know how they were infected with the coronavirus. Derek said they had food and other items delivered, wore masks and didn’t visit family and friends. Their children had in-person learning at school, and Kelsey worked as an office manager for a Middleton company but had few contacts. The Townsends are sharing their story in the hope others can avoid what they had to endure. They're encouraging people to take precautions and get vaccinated against what Derek calls a "relentless and an invisible enemy." Kelsey is able to walk with assistance and is getting both physical and occupational therapy, but she’s on continuous oxygen at home.

## UW-Madison Arboretum designated as National Historic Landmark

UW-Madison says its Arboretum is now being recognized as a National Historic Landmark. UW-Madison says the Arboretum earned the designation for a “period of national significance” that stretches from the 1930s to the 1960s in which the first forest plantings were made and experiments were conducted to study the ecosystem. Getting recognized as a National Historic Landmark involves a long nomination process before the nomination is evaluated by the National Park Service’s National Historic Landmark Survey and reviewed by the National Park System Advisory Board. A recommendation is then sent to the Secretary of the Interior, who eventually makes the final decision. The university says the Arboretum was added to the list in January 2021. The Arboretum was created in the 1930s as an outdoor laboratory to study how to repair damaged landscapes. Those early experiments helped create a better understanding of local ecosystems and helped develop restoration and management practices.

## $2 million raised and spent for a $53,000-a-year job

The epicenter of the battle for the Wisconsin State Senate this fall was in La Crosse and the surrounding areas. Incumbent Democrat Senate Minority Leader Jennifer Shilling, who narrowly won in 2016, decided against running in 2020. Money flooded the race for the 32nd District State Senate post, and for good reason: Republicans had to win the seat to secure the two-thirds supermajority needed to override the veto of Democratic Gov. Tony Evers. The state Republican Party gave its candidate, Dan Kapanke, who held the seat a decade ago, more than $160,000. Wisconsin Democrats sent a comparative tsunami of more than $1 million to Brad Pfaff. Full campaign finance records for the 2020 election became publicly available last month. Pfaff, the former acting state Agriculture Secretary, won the seat by a wafer-thin 582 votes in an election with nearly 100,000 cast. Money may have made the difference, said Joe Heim, a professor emeritus of political science at UW-La Crosse. “The Democrats, apparently, were willing to spend almost anything to avoid the loss in this district,” he said. Neither Pfaff nor Kapanke responded to multiple requests for comment. The 32nd District is composed of all of Crawford and La Crosse counties, almost all of Vernon, and part of Monroe County. In total, Pfaff raised and spent more than $1.5 million, according to campaign finance records, while Kapanke raised and spent more than $600,000, according to campaign finance records. All for a job that pays $53,000 a year. In 2012, the race for the seat in the 32nd Senate District, which runs along the Mississippi River from Prairie du Chien past La Crosse, drew a total of about $300,000 in campaign donations. Despite winning, Shilling was outraised by her opponent $170,000 to $128,000. But in 2015, after court cases weakened state campaign finance law, the Republican-controlled state legislature further diluted restrictions on political donations. Those events have left a gaping loophole in Wisconsin campaign finance law. While individuals are limited in what they can donate to a candidate, political parties are now free from campaign finance limits. Rich donors can give unlimited amounts to political parties, which can turn around and give unlimited sums to candidates. That’s how Pfaff was able to receive more than $1 million from his political party. By state law, an individual could only give him a maximum of $2,000. “It’s just astonishing that the price tag for running for office just continues to shatter the ceiling into the stratosphere,” said Matt Rothschild, executive director of the Wisconsin Democracy Campaign, a Madison-based organization that tracks campaign spending in the state. The race between Pfaff and Kapanke likely broke the state record for most money raised by a single candidate for state legislature. The previous record for a general state legislative election was held by state Sen. Howard Marklein (R-Spring Green), who raised more than $900,000 in 2018 to win re-election. In a sign of the times, Pfaff and five other individual candidates likely broke that record in 2020. Whether those candidates definitely shattered campaign spending records is somewhat unclear. The Wisconsin Ethics Commission, which monitors campaign finance in the state, has records dating back to 2008, Administrator Daniel A. Carlton Jr. said. Previous records have either been destroyed or are housed in a state building somewhere. But stricter campaign finance laws before 2015 and more modest spending in state legislative races as a result make it probable that new highs were set last year.

# Sports

## The biggest win: In 2020, NFL found ways to play every game

More than the youth of Patrick Mahomes or the agelessness of Tom Brady, the most compelling story surrounding this year’s Super Bowl was that it was happening at all. It took nearly 1 million COVID-19 tests, thousands of Zoom meetings, a dozen or so rescheduled games and an untold amount of flexibility for the NFL to not miss a single of its 269 regular-season and postseason games in the midst of a worldwide pandemic. Game No. 269, the Super Bowl, is set to be a fascinating matchup of young (Mahomes) vs. old (Brady) — the Kansas City Chiefs against the Tampa Bay Buccaneers. It’s to be played Sunday in a one-third-full and socially distanced stadium and with millions of fingers crossed around the country. T he NFL and society, in general, are hoping America’s biggest sports celebration won’t turn into the mother of superspreader events, either at the stadium or at the inevitable thousands of high-fiving, chip-dipping, hug-it-out Super Bowl parties planned across the land. With the reality that the most important results of the Super Bowl — the spike, or lack of spike, in COVID-19 numbers — wouldn’t be known until well after the final score was posted and most of the $4.3 billion in expected wagers are settled, the NFL still scored points by merely making it to the finish line without any major disruptions. “The fact that every team played the correct number of games. and that most people did not get sick, is a real testament to their perseverance in making it happen,” said Dennis Deninger, who teaches a Super Bowl and Society class for Syracuse’s sports management department. The resiliency of the players and the league stood out as a bright note this winter, as the coronavirus ravaged the United States and the world. The NFL’s ability to keep the show moving — albeit imperfectly — reinforced the sport’s strong footing in American culture. It also generated debate about whether the country and the league have their priorities straight, given that resources devoted to playing football could have conceivably been expended elsewhere. “In some ways, you say, it doesn’t feel right to be talking about sports and thinking about sports in the middle of a pandemic,” said Ketra Armstrong, the director at University of Michigan’s Center for Race and Ethnicity in Sport. “But when you think the role sports can play for the psyche of the country, and you understand the level people are going to to deliver sports, you can appreciate” the effort the NFL made to make the season happen. And, in fact, the NFL’s efforts benefitted more than simply the league’s own interests. Using as a backbone of its research the approximately 957,000 tests it conducted on more than 7,500 players and employees, the NFL collaborated with the Centers for Disease Control to publish a paper describing testing protocols, mitigation strategies and contact-tracing measures that could also be useful in “high-density environments” such as schools and long-term care facilities. A key conclusion from the paper was that “although the protocols implemented by the NFL were resource-intensive” — i.e., the league had plenty of money and manpower to implement a testing program few other organizations would dream of — many of the lessons learned were valuable. “The idea was to test frequently, to identify when you had a positive, and to isolate and trace closely if you did,” commissioner Roger Goodell said, while taking a victory lap of sorts earlier in the week at his annual Super Bowl news conference. “We don’t think there was a safer place to be than at an NFL facility that year. We never doubted that for a second.” The season was far from perfect. Because of rescheduling, there were games played on every day of the week, including Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays. The Titans, Ravens, Browns and Steelers were among those that endured high-profile outbreaks that threatened not only their rosters but the league’s entire operation. In the season’s biggest debacle, the Broncos were forced to play a game with a wide receiver playing quarterback after everyone in the QB group got put under quarantine on late notice. Goodell said all decisions were made in service of prioritizing safety over everything, including the NFL’s longstanding calling-card — competitive balance.

## Daytona 500 to have limited number of fans

The Daytona 500 will have limited spectators for NASCAR's season-opening race on Feb. 14. Daytona International Speedway did not specify Wednesday how many spectators will be admitted into "The Great American Race." Daytona said it will work to accommodate guests who have already purchased tickets to the race. To ensure social distancing between groups who will be in attendance, many fans will be reseated in new locations. The reseating process is expected to be complete by early January. All guests will be screened before entering the facility and will be required to wear face coverings while maintaining 6 feet of social distancing throughout their visit.

# Weather

* Thursday: A 50 percent chance of snow, mainly after 3pm. Partly sunny, with a high near 6. Wind chill values as low as -22. North wind around 7 mph. New snow accumulation of less than a half inch possible.
* Thursday Night: Snow, mainly before 10pm. Low around -7. Wind chill values as low as -20. Northwest wind around 8 mph. Chance of precipitation is 80%. New snow accumulation of less than one inch possible.
* Friday: A 20 percent chance of snow before 7am. Partly sunny and cold, with a high near 3. Wind chill values as low as -23. Northwest wind 7 to 10 mph.
* Friday Night: A 30 percent chance of snow, mainly after 1am. Mostly cloudy, with a low around -6. Northwest wind around 7 mph.
* Saturday: A 30 percent chance of snow before 1pm. Mostly cloudy and cold, with a high near 3. Northwest wind 6 to 10 mph.
* Saturday Night: Partly cloudy, with a low around -16. Northwest wind around 8 mph.
* Sunday: Mostly sunny and cold, with a high near 1. Northwest wind 6 to 10 mph.
* Sunday Night: Mostly cloudy, with a low around -15. Northwest wind 3 to 8 mph.

# Commercials

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## PSA: Immunization - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

ANNOUNCER: When it comes to protecting your baby, you can never do enough.

ANNOUNCER: You bundle them up.

SOUND EFFECTS: ZIPPER ZIPS

ANNOUNCER: And strap them in.

SOUND EFFECTS: SEATBELT CLICK

ANNOUNCER: That’s why most parents choose immunization; Nothing protects babies better from 14 serious childhood diseases; So keep up with the<

SOUND EFFECTS: ZIPPER ZIPS

ANNOUNCER: And then get the recommended immunizations for your baby by age two. For more reasons to vaccinate, go to cdc.gov/vaccines or call 800-CDC-INFO.

ANNOUNCER: A message from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.