



## INTERNATIONAL

### Snake On A Plane: Unsuspecting Woman Traveling From Australia Brings A Passenger

A woman who had returned to Scotland after vacationing in Australia didn't know she had hauled home a serpentine stowaway, until she reached into her suitcase to unpack and encountered a snake coiled within a shoe, according to her family. The Scottish SPCA, an animal welfare charity, confirmed to NPR in an email that one of its rescue officers recovered the snake at a property in Bridge of Allan, a town located about 30 miles northeast of Glasgow. "When I arrived, the snake had been contained by the caller, so I safely removed the snake from the property," animal rescue officer Taylor Johnstone said in an emailed statement. Upon examination, Johnstone said the snake was determined to be a spotted python, which is not venomous. But how is it that the python wound up some 9,000 miles from its home down under? Australia's ABC News spoke to the woman's son-in-law, Paul Airlie, who said she thought she had seen a snake slithering in her room in the middle of the night during a family visit in Mackay, a city on the east coast in Queensland, but a subsequent check yielded nothing. A few days later, Airlie said, his wife, Sarah, helped her mother pack up, but little did they know the shoe placed in the suitcase contained an occupant to surprise the woman when she got home on Friday. "She actually thought that Sarah and I had put a fake snake in her shoe to wind her up, so at first she thought it was a joke until she touched it and it moved," Airlie told the news outlet. ABC News says the woman brought the shoe outside and covered it with a box until help showed up.

### U.N. Court Says U.K. Must Give Up Control Of Chagos Islands

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, the U.K. forcibly removed the entire population of the Chagos Archipelago, an area that had been part of Mauritius. And on the largest island, Diego Garcia, it allowed the U.S. to build a large and strategically important military base. Now the U.N.'s court says the way the U.K. expelled the people of the Chagos Islands was against international law, and that the U.K. must "bring an end to its administration of the Chagos Archipelago as rapidly as possible." Thirteen of the court's judges agreed with those findings; just one, who is from the U.S., voted against them. The International Court of Justice's advisory opinion, issued on Monday, is nonbinding. But it is seen as significant. As The Guardian put it, "the unambiguous clarity of the judges' pronouncement is a humiliating blow to Britain's prestige on the world stage." In a statement, the U.K. Foreign Office stressed, "This is an advisory opinion, not a judgment." Unlike an advisory opinion, the ICJ says its judgments are final and binding. As the BBC reported, the U.K. said it would look "carefully" at the court's opinion. The Foreign Office also emphasized the strategic importance of the Chagos Islands: "The defence facilities on the British Indian Ocean Territory help to protect people here in Britain and around the world from terrorist threats, organised crime and piracy." In 1964, the U.S. approached the U.K. and "expressed an interest in establishing military facilities on the island of Diego Garcia," the opinion states. They reached a deal to remove all the people from the islands, Ari Shapiro reported. "There will be no indigenous population except seagulls," says one declassified message from 1966. "Unfortunately, along with those birds go some few Tarzans," another said, as Shapiro reported.



### Univision Journalist Jorge Ramos Free After Being Reported Detained In Venezuela

Univision says journalist Jorge Ramos and a TV crew have been released after being "arbitrarily detained" in Caracas, Venezuela. The TV network says they were interviewing Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro, but he didn't like their questions. The U.S. State Department had tweeted, "We insist on their immediate release; the world is watching."

### Pence On Venezuela: 'We Will Keep Standing With You Until ... Libertad Is Restored'

Vice President Pence traveled to Bogotá, Colombia, on Monday and urged regional leaders to support Juan Guaidó, the self-proclaimed interim president of Venezuela, vowing that the U.S. will stand with the opposition leader "until your *libertad* is restored." Pence also announced U.S. sanctions against several border-state governors aligned with embattled Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro who are said to be involved in blocking shipments of humanitarian aid from reaching Venezuelans. Military forces have prevented most of the food and medicine from crossing the country's borders with Brazil and Colombia. Clashes with protesters and volunteers trying to unload truckloads of aid resulted in the deaths of at least four people this weekend. Hundreds more were wounded. Trucks carrying items were torched, amid tear gas fired by the military and attacks waged by paramilitary groups, as NPR has reported. "Just days ago, as the world watched, the tyrant in Caracas danced as his henchmen burned truckloads of food and medicine, and murdered civilians," Pence said in remarks to members of the Lima Group, a coalition of nations formed to address the Venezuela turmoil. "Saturday was a tragic day for the families of those who lost their lives and we mourn for those who mourn," Pence said. "It was also a tragic day for the suffering people of Venezuela, but it was also just one more day in Venezuela's long and inevitable journey from tyranny to freedom."

## NATIONAL

### SEC Says Tesla Chief Elon Musk's Tweets Violated Court Settlement

The Securities and Exchange Commission asked a federal judge to hold Tesla Inc. CEO Elon Musk in contempt for violating a court settlement that restricted what he could publish about his company's performance. In a court filing Monday, the SEC argued that Musk had violated a settlement reached last year which required him to get approval from company officials before making any public statements that might impact Tesla's stock price. On Feb. 19, Musk tweeted that "Tesla made 0 cars in 2011, but will make around 500k in 2019." But that claim ran contrary to previous guidance from Tesla about the upstart car company's productivity projections. In another tweet about four hours later, Musk said, "Meant to say annualized production rate at end of 2019 probably around 500k, ie 10k cars/week. Deliveries for year still estimated to be about 400k." In its court filing, the SEC argued that Musk had failed to have the first tweet checked and approved before sending it. U.S. District Judge Alison Nathan on Tuesday gave Musk until March 11 to show why he should not be held in contempt of court, The Associated Press reports. "He once again published inaccurate and material information about Tesla to his over 24 million Twitter followers, including members of the press, and made this inaccurate information available to anyone with Internet access," said the SEC.



### Oregon Set To Pass The First Statewide Rent Control Bill

Oregon is about to become the first state in the nation to impose rent control on landlords, after lawmakers passed an extensive measure on Tuesday. [Senate Bill 608](#) sailed through the state's House in a 35-25 vote. It now heads for a signature from Gov. Kate Brown, who has voiced support for the cause. The bill would limit rent increases to 7 percent each year, in addition to inflation. Subsidized rent would be exempted, as would new construction for 15 years. If tenants leave their residences of their own volition, landlords would be able to increase the rent without a cap. The measure would also require landlords to give a reason for evicting renters — from renovation plans to the landlord's intent to move into the dwelling. Depending on the cause of the eviction, tenants would receive at least 90 days' notice and one month of paid rent. Tuesday's vote was split largely along partisan lines. Most Democrats favored the measure, saying it stands to protect renters from exploitation amid a housing crisis. "This groundbreaking tenant protection bill will make a real difference for Oregon renters," state House Speaker Tina Kotek said. "Today was one big step forward," she added. Republicans said the bill would affect investment and availability in the housing market. "I am deeply concerned about the rent control bill that passed out of the house today," Rep. Jack Zika said. "Studies have shown that rent control policies will reduce the quantity and quality of housing available." Critics of the bill, such as Doug Bibby, president of the National Multifamily Housing Council, fear the measure would diminish housing options. "While the intent of rent control laws is to assist lower-income populations, history has shown that rent control exacerbates shortages, makes it harder for apartment owners to make upgrades and disproportionately benefits higher-income households," he said in a statement.

### Double-Booked Surgeons: Study Raises Safety Questions For High-Risk Patients

Surgeons are known for their busy schedules — so busy that they don't just book surgeries back to back. Sometimes they'll double-book, so one operation overlaps the next. A lead surgeon will perform the key elements, then move to the next room — leaving other, often junior, surgeons to finish up the first procedure. A large study published Tuesday in *JAMA* suggests that this practice of overlapping surgeries is safe for most patients, with those undergoing overlapping surgeries faring the same as those who are the sole object of their surgeon's attention. But the study also identified a subset of vulnerable patients who might be bad candidates. The practice of double-booking the lead surgeon's time seemed to put these patients at significantly higher risk of post-op complications, such as infections, pneumonia, heart attack or death. Researchers say Tuesday's study by a multidisciplinary research team from several universities is the most comprehensive analysis of the practice to date, delving into the outcomes of more than 60,000 knee, hip, spine, brain or heart surgeries among patients ages 18 to 90 at eight medical centers. The study compared the outcomes of procedures done in isolation with those that were scheduled to overlap by an hour or more. Dr. Anupam Jena, a physician and health economist on the faculty of Harvard Medical School and senior author of the study, says his research team found overlapping surgeries to be "generally safe." Overlapping surgeries were not significantly associated with difference in rates of death or post-op complications. These findings, says Jena, are in line with all but one of several such studies conducted since 2015, when an investigative team at the *Boston Globe* first turned searing attention on Harvard's Massachusetts General Hospital.



## STATE

### **Oversupply Of Milk Continues To Erode Farmers' Bottom Line**

Increased trucking costs for Wisconsin dairy farmers is the latest symptom of an oversupply of milk. The Upper Midwest Federal Milk Marketing Order recently released a report on milk hauling charges paid by farmers in 2018. The report found the average charge per hundredweight, or 100 pounds of milk, in Wisconsin was \$0.24, a 40 percent increase from 2017. Corey Freije is an agricultural economist who compiles the report for the Upper Midwest Order. He said hauling charges typically increase by 1 or 2 cents every year, so last year's 7 cent jump is unusual. "That is partially a result of an increase in the diesel fuel costs," Freije said. "But it also seems to be an indication that the dairy farmers, with the supply that's out there, have kind of lost their market power." With plenty of milk to go around, Freije said dairy processors don't have to subsidize the cost of hauling milk as a way to attract farmers. "The handler, particularly a co-op, would subsidize that hauling (charge)," Freije said. "I've heard over time that the handlers and some of the co-ops want to reflect more fully the cost of the hauling to those deductions for dairy farmers." Mark Stephenson is director of dairy policy analysis at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He said the 7 cent jump in the average hauling charges likely had a big impact on farms, especially given the continued low price for milk. "You can't influence price very much," Stephenson said. "What you really can do is make sure that you're a low-cost producer and so farmers, dairy farmers, corn growers, spend a lot of time trying to be sure that they are shaving costs. And for them, costs get down to pennies per hundredweight." As consolidation continues within the dairy industry, Stephenson said farmers will likely have to take on more production costs like trucking to stay competitive.

### **Wisconsin Food Stamp Recipients Still Feel Impact Of Federal Government Shutdown**

Wisconsin residents getting federal food assistance are still being affected by the government shutdown that ended Jan. 25. Due to changes in when payments to recipients are made, some could have to wait longer than law allows to get their benefits in April. Low-income families getting federal assistance in Wisconsin, known as FoodShare, usually receive benefits between the second and 15th day of each month depending on a recipient's Social Security number. The funds are deposited in to an account connected to a QUEST card. But confusion and changes to payment schedules due to the shutdown are causing longer periods in between benefit dispersals. For example, federal regulations related to lapses in funding caused February FoodShare benefits for all recipients to be paid on Jan. 20. Sherrie Tussler, the executive director of the Milwaukee Hunger Task Force in Milwaukee, which operates emergency food pantries in the metro area, said when the February payments were made at the end of January, there were rumors spread on social media that unless people spent their allotment by the end of that month, they would lose their benefits. "But what happened is that people went out and bought food using their debit card for FoodShare and what the state reports is a 200 percent increase in expenditures in the month of January," said Tussler. Since February payments went out between two and three weeks early for some, there will be a longer wait for the next round of FoodShare payments in March. The state Department of Health Services (DHS) responded on Friday with an



announcement that March payments will be moved up to the first of the month, which again is two weeks early for some recipients. A press release from the agency said the action was prompted by the government shutdown. "DHS is adjusting the March benefit schedule to minimize the length of time between February and March benefit issuance dates," the release said.

### **Report: Replacing Aging Prison Near Green Bay May Cost \$500M**

Consultants say replacing a century-old prison near Green Bay would cost taxpayers up to \$500 million. The Green Bay Press-Gazette reports a draft report from two consulting firms found almost 30 percent of the Green Bay Correctional Institution in Allouez is in need of replacement. Some cells at the maximum-security prison house two inmates within 56 square feet and the kitchen struggles to feed nearly 300 more inmates than it was designed for. Gov. Tony Evers has been facing pressure over Wisconsin's overcrowded prisons, but he announced last week he won't set aside funding in the budget to replace the Green Bay facility. Republican Rep. David Steffen proposed a replacement prison in 2017, saying it would cost about \$150 million less than the report's estimate.

### **Evers To Propose Nonpartisan Redistricting Process In State Budget**

Gov. Tony Evers will use his state budget to propose a nonpartisan redistricting process that would reduce the power of lawmakers to draw their own district lines. The move comes two years before Wisconsin's next round of redistricting, and at a time when the current legislative map, drawn in 2011, is still being challenged in federal court. "The people should get to choose their elected officials, not the other way around," Evers said in a statement. "By creating a nonpartisan redistricting commission in Wisconsin, we're making sure that when we're redrawing district maps in 2021, we're putting people before politics." States redraw their political boundaries every 10 years after the U.S. Census to ensure that every district is roughly equal in population. Because of the high political stakes, it's rare for lawmakers and governors from different parties to agree on the same map, which often leads to lengthy — and costly — legal battles. It's a different story when there's single-party control, as there was when Republicans ran state government in 2011. Under those circumstances, GOP lawmakers passed, and then-Gov. Scott Walker signed maps that helped Republicans retain control of the Legislature and Wisconsin's congressional delegation for the better part of a decade. Under the proposal Evers announced Tuesday, the nonpartisan Legislative Reference Bureau (LRB) would be responsible for drawing legislative and congressional maps. The LRB would take its direction from a newly formed "Redistricting Advisory Commission." The speaker and minority leader in the Assembly would each pick members of the commission and so would the majority and minority leaders of the state Senate. Those four commissioners would then pick a fifth member to serve as their chairperson.



## SPORTS

### WIAA state wrestling: Youth not an issue for Oconto Falls champion Clayton Whiting

Oconto Falls freshman Clayton Whiting just made it look that way at the WIAA Division 2 state individual wrestling tournament Saturday at the Kohl Center. As one of five freshmen to advance to a championship match — he also was the heaviest one — Whiting had little problem in his 152-pound 9-0 major decision win over Amery senior Mike Smith. Whiting finished his rookie season 48-3 and became the first Oconto Falls freshman to win a state championship. It's the program's 12th title in the last 10 years. He was well prepared for what Smith does well and executed his game plan perfectly. "He loved upper body and all that, so I knew I could use that to my advantage because that's my favorite side on the mat," he said. "So, I used that against him, countered all his offense and turned out on the side for me." Whiting's had some tense matches this season, but this wasn't one of them. The big stage looked pretty small on this night. On day 3 of the WIAA state individual wrestling center at the Kohl Center, high school wrestlers reached the ultimate goal of a state championship. "We didn't expect it to go quite that smooth," Oconto Falls co-coach Marc Kinziger said. "But the kid missed a slide by and gave us that early two. From there on, Clay takes control of the match. "Now, you're looking at he's in unprecedented territory for anything we've ever been at. It's amazing. It's unbelievable."

### College Basketball: Duke basketball: Zion Williamson injury looms large in Virginia Tech loss

For the second time in less than a week, all Zion Williamson could do was sit back and watch from the bench as his team struggled to find an identity without him. Mike Krzyzewski's squads aren't exactly immortal in Blacksburg to begin with. Just ask the No. 1 Duke team that fell in front of a raucous Virginia Tech crowd on Feb. 26, 2011 in one of the Hokies' biggest wins in program history, or last year's team that arrived at Cassell Coliseum at No. 5 before getting upset 64–63, once again on Feb. 26. So when No. 20 Virginia Tech hosted No. 3 Duke without Williamson—who sustained a Grade 1 sprain in his right knee in the early moments of the Blue Devils' blowout loss to then-No. 8 North Carolina—in another hectic atmosphere in Blacksburg on Tuesday night, the result was another Feb. 26 upset, 77–72. The loss drops Duke a half-game back of No. 2 Virginia and a game back of No. 5 North Carolina in the ACC with only three games remaining, including a season-ending return date with the Tar Heels in Chapel Hill. As important as positioning in the ACC tournament might be, nothing seems to take priority over the health of Williamson or the number of games he is expected to be watching from the sideline. As the projected No. 1 overall draft pick proceeds through Duke's four-step recovery process, there still doesn't appear to be any real rush for his return. Whether the superstar sits out for the remainder of the regular season, through the ACC tournament or beyond is yet to be determined. But that means this Williamson-less Duke squad has to figure a few things out, and there's not much time to do it



## WEATHER

- **This Evening:** A 20 percent chance of snow. Cloudy, with a high near 29. Wind chill values between 20 and 25. Southeast wind around 7 mph.
- **Overnight:** A 50 percent chance of snow, mainly before 4am. Cloudy, with a steady temperature around 30. Wind chill values between 20 and 25. East wind 5 to 7 mph becoming north after midnight.
- **Tomorrow:** Mostly sunny, with a high near 39. Wind chill values between 25 and 30. North wind 8 to 11 mph.
- **Tomorrow Night:** Mostly cloudy, with a low around 30. Northeast wind 6 to 8 mph.
- \_\_\_\_\_: A slight chance of snow before noon, then a slight chance of rain. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 40. East wind 6 to 8 mph. Chance of precipitation is 20%.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **Night:** A 30 percent chance of rain after midnight. Mostly cloudy, with a low around 33.

## COMMERCIALS

[SNEEZE]

Sniffles got you down? What you think is a winter cold could actually be allergies from things in your home or work environment you may not even be aware of. And now, with advanced al-aware technology, *The Allergy Specialists* can help you build resistance to factors in your environment! Go to [The Allergy Specialists dot com](http://TheAllergySpecialists.com) to learn more. That's [The Allergy Specialists dot com](http://TheAllergySpecialists.com). Or, call 1 – 888 – ALLERGY today. That's 1 – 888 – ALLERGY.

The Red Cross is coming to Stevens Point Area Regional Hospital to have their Blood Drive for the month of March. Come Safe a life and Donate Blood. Visit [red cross blood dot org](http://redcrossblood.org) to learn more. That's [red cross blood dot org](http://redcrossblood.org).