

TODAY

Today is Thursday, Feb. 4, the 35th day of 2021. There are 330 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

In 1945, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, British Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Soviet leader Josef Stalin began a wartime conference at Yalta.

In 1783, Britain's King George III proclaimed a formal cessation of hostilities in the American Revolutionary War.

In 1789, electors chose George Washington to be the first president of the United States.

In 1861, delegates from six southern states that had recently seceded from the Union met in Montgomery, Alabama, to form the Confederate States of America.

In 1913, Rosa Parks, a Black woman whose 1955 refusal to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama, city bus to a white man sparked a civil rights revolution, was born Rosa Louise McCauley in Tuskegee.

In 1944, the Bronze Star Medal, honoring "heroic or meritorious achievement or service," was authorized by President Franklin D. Roosevelt.

In 1962, St. Jude Children's Research Hospital was founded in Memphis, Tennessee, by entertainer Danny Thomas.

In 1974, newspaper heiress Patricia Hearst, 19, was kidnapped in Berkeley, California, by the radical Symbionese Liberation Army.

In 1976, more than 23,000 people died when a severe earthquake struck Guatemala with a magnitude of 7.5, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

In 1997, a civil jury in Santa Monica, California, found O.J. Simpson liable for the deaths of his ex-wife, Nicole Brown Simpson, and her friend, Ronald Goldman.

In 1999, Amadou Diallo, an unarmed West African immigrant, was shot and killed in front of his Bronx home by four plainclothes New York City police officers. (The officers were acquitted at trial.)

In 2004, the Massachusetts high court declared that gay couples were entitled to nothing less than marriage, and that Vermont-style civil unions would not suffice.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama appealed to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to focus on his legacy and begin an orderly process to relinquish the power he'd held for 30 years; however, Obama stopped short of calling for Mubarak's immediate resignation. Iraq's prime minister, Nouri al-Maliki, said he would return half of his annual salary to the public treasury in a symbolic gesture that appeared calculated to insulate him against anti-government unrest spreading across the Middle East.

Five years ago: Infuriating members of Congress, a smirking Martin Shkreli took the Fifth at a Capitol Hill hearing on his practice of jacking up drug prices as CEO of Turing Pharmaceuticals.

One year ago: Thousands of medical workers in Hong Kong were on strike for a second day to demand that the country's border with China be completely closed to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus; the territory reported its first death from the virus and the second known fatality outside China. Addressing a nation and a Congress sharply divided over his impeachment, President Donald Trump delivered a State of the Union address in which he hailed a "Great American Comeback" on his watch; Republican legislators chanted "Four More Years," while House Speaker Nancy Pelosi ripped up her copy of Trump's speech as he ended the address.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Jerry Adler is 92. Former Argentinian President Isabel Peron is 90. Rock musician John Steel (The Animals) is 80. Former Vice President Dan Quayle is 74. Rock singer Alice Cooper is 73. Football Hall of Famer Lawrence Taylor is 62. Rock musician Nooies (The Offspring) is 58. Actor Rob Corddry is 50. Actor Michael Gorrjian is 50. TV personality Nicolle Wallace is 49. Olympic gold medal boxer Oscar De La Hoya is 48. Rock musician Rick Burch (Jimmy Eat World) is 46. Rapper Cam'ron is 45. Rock singer Gavin DeGraw is 44. Rock singer Zoe Manville is 37. Actor/musician Bashy, AKA Ashley Thomas, is 36. Actor Charlie Barnett is 33. Olympic gold medal gymnast-turned-singer Carly Patterson is 33. Actor Kyla Kennedy (TV: "Speechless") is 18.

—Associated Press

LOCAL, STATE & REGION

Democrats want investigation into removal of spotted owl protections

U.S. lawmakers allege "potential scientific meddling" by Trump administration Interior secretary

BY SARA CLINE

The Associated Press/Report for America

PORTLAND — Eight Democratic lawmakers called Tuesday for an investigation into "potential scientific meddling" by the Trump administration in its rule to remove critical habitat protections for the imperiled northern spotted owl in the Pacific Northwest.

The group of federal lawmakers, led by Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon, says former Interior Secretary David Bernhardt "appeared to unilaterally act" on his way out of office to remove millions of acres of protected habitat designated for the owl.

"In less than two brief years under David Bernhardt's leadership, the department has been mired in one ethical scandal after another," the lawmakers said in a letter to Interior Department Inspector General Mark Greenblatt seeking a review.

"Bernhardt and his loyalists have demonstrated a willingness to insert themselves into the scientific process in order to achieve preferred policy outcomes, withhold information from the public, and even mislead Congress," the letter said.

In mid-January, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under then-President Donald Trump announced it would remove 3.4 million acres in Oregon, Washington state and Northern California from federal protections.

The lawmakers called that decision "as bewildering as it is damaging." Fish and Wildlife, which is over-



A northern spotted owl flies after an elusive mouse jumping off the end of a stick in the Deschutes National Forest near Camp Sherman in 2003. Eight Democratic lawmakers called Tuesday for an investigation into "potential scientific meddling" by former President Donald Trump's administration in its rule to remove critical habitat protections.

Don Ryan/AP file

seen by the Interior Department, didn't immediately respond to an email seeking comment on the letter.

Environmentalists accused Fish and Wildlife of taking a parting shot at protections designed to help restore the owl in favor of the timber industry. The tiny owl is listed as threatened under the Endangered Species Act and was rejected for an upgrade to endangered status last year by the agency despite losing nearly 4% of its population annually.

Timber groups applauded the decision. Loss of the ability to log in areas protected for the spotted owl has devastated rural communities, experts say.

"While the Biden administration has taken actions to mitigate the effects of this rule, we ask that you

quickly review this decision and to determine whether USFWS contradicted or ignored scientific recommendations made by career staff," lawmakers wrote to the inspector general.

The northern spotted owl, which prefers to nest in old-growth forests, received federal protections in 1990 — a listing that dramatically redrew the economic landscape for the Pacific Northwest timber industry and launched a decadeslong battle between environmentalists and loggers. Old-growth Douglas firs, many 100 to 200 years old, that are preferred by the owl are also of great value to loggers.

After the owl got protections, U.S. officials halted logging on millions of acres of old-growth forests on fed-

eral lands to protect the bird's habitat. But the population kept declining. It faces another threat: competition from the barred owl.

The Fish and Wildlife Service has since said the northern spotted owl warrants the more robust "endangered" status because of continued population declines but refused to grant it last year, saying other species took higher priority.

Joining Wyden in the request for an inspector general's review were U.S. Sens. Dianne Feinstein of California, Jeff Merkley of Oregon, Maria Cantwell of Washington and Patty Murray of Washington as well as U.S. Reps. Raúl Grijalva of Arizona, Earl Blumenauer of Oregon and Jared Huffman of California.

Idaho Senate OK's constitutional ban on legal marijuana

BY KEITH RIDLER

The Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho — A proposed constitutional amendment that would prevent the legalization of pot and other psychoactive drugs cleared the Idaho Senate on Wednesday and is headed to the House.

The Senate mustered the two-thirds needed with a 24-11 vote to approve a joint resolution that bans all psychoactive drugs not already legal in the state.

Backers said it's needed because surrounding states have legalized pot and other drugs, and it could happen in Idaho. Senators argued those states have seen a decline in health and an increase in crime.

Those opposed to the constitutional amendment say, if approved by voters, it would

permanently ban medical marijuana patients with terminal illnesses or chronic pain.

If the House approves the legislation, it would go before voters in 2022 where it would need a simple majority.

Idaho is one of only three states without some sort of policy allowing residents to possess products with even low amounts of THC, the psychoactive chemical in marijuana.

Residents can cross the state border in nearly every direction and find themselves in a place where marijuana can be bought for recreational or medicinal purposes.

Support for Idaho medicinal marijuana use is growing, with legalization activists trying to get an initiative on the ballot in 2022.

State fairgrounds used for homeless shelter as events have dried up

The Associated Press

SALEM — A temporary homeless shelter opened this week at the Oregon State Fairgrounds in Salem.

The Pavilion at the fairgrounds can house 100 people and has been largely unused after the coronavirus pandemic forced the cancellation of events, The Statesman Journal reported.

An undetermined number of people also will be able to use the adjacent parking lot as a safe vehicle camping spot.

The temporary shelter is partly being paid for by the city of Salem, which allocated \$733,000 in November for homeless shelters, and the Mid-Willamette Valley Community Action Agency.

The shelter is being run by Church at the Park, a Salem Leadership Foundation program that also provides homeless services at a city park.

Church at the Park will have five staff members operating the shelter 24/7, and security will be provided.

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