



TODAY 78°/66° Cooler with rain and a t-storm



THURSDAY 90°/66° Partly sunny, a t-storm; warmer

The Gazette

WISCONSIN'S BEST NEWSPAPER

Wednesday, May 30, 2018 • Our 172nd year • \$1

Attorney General Schimel sends final backlogged rape kits to labs for testing; Democratic challenger Kaul says Schimel hasn't acted fast enough

A mother's lament

Woman says bullying led to 12-year-old daughter's suicide

By Frank Schultz
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JANESVILLE

When Elizabeth "Lizzy" Jacobson's father died in 2016 of an overdose, she made her mother a plush blanket to comfort her.

The 12-year-old Janesville girl was a creative person, filling sketchbooks with her drawings and thinking of a career in graphic design, said her mother, Rebecka Coughlin.

Now, Coughlin is holding the blanket in which she and her daughter used to cuddle.

She can no longer hold her daughter. Elizabeth took her own life Saturday.

Coughlin believes bullying by Elizabeth's peers over the past two years played a role in her death.



Jacobson

Her father's death was bad enough, but the bullying started right afterward, Coughlin said.

"Kids would tell her he died because he didn't want to be around her anymore," Coughlin said.

She also was told she needed to die like her father did.

Her father's death "was like

this big open, sore wound, and they were just, like, throwing rocks into it," Coughlin said.

"They all loved her before her dad died, and then she felt like her world just crumbled," Coughlin said. "I don't know if it's easy to teach kids understanding on a subject like that, but they should be more sympathetic to it."

Coughlin said her daughter was loving and could be joyful and also adamant about what she wanted.

Elizabeth had decided she didn't want to continue with counseling she had started after her father's death, for example.

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Doubts on Maria death toll resurface

Harvard study estimates thousands, not just 64, died after hurricane hit

By Karen Kaplan
Los Angeles Times

Officials in Puerto Rico say that 64 people lost their lives after Hurricane Maria slammed into the island in September. A new report says that estimate is off—by about 4,600.

If the analysis is correct, it means that for every hurricane-related death that's currently in the books, another 70 fatalities in the U.S. territory have gone uncounted.

"Our results indicate that the official death count of 64 is a substantial underestimate of the true burden of mortality after Hurricane Maria," researchers concluded in a study published Tuesday in the New England Journal of Medicine.

This isn't the first time people have questioned the official estimate of the number of deaths that ensued after the then-Category 4 hurricane made landfall on Puerto Rico on Sept. 20, 2017. The study authors noted that several "independent investigations" have put the true number "in excess of 1,000."

With sustained winds of up to 155 mph and heavy rains that caused catastrophic flooding, there were many ways for Hurricane Maria to kill, explained the team led by Nishant Kishore of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

During the storm itself, residents might be hit by flying debris or swept away in flash floods. In the aftermath of the storm, deaths could be attributed to lingering safety problems, illnesses brought on by unsanitary conditions or the "loss of necessary medical services," they wrote.

To get a better handle of the storm's true impact, interviewers fanned out across Puerto Rico between mid-January and late February. They knocked on doors and talked to adults from 3,299 households, which represented 9,522 people. Among other things, they asked whether anyone in the household died between the day Maria hit the island and the end of the year.

More than 93 percent of people invited to take the survey agreed to do so, even though they received no payment or other form of assistance from the researchers.

The researchers used these responses to calculate that there were 14.3 deaths per 1,000 Puerto Ricans between Sept. 20 and Dec. 31, 2017. That mortality rate was 62 percent higher than it had been during the same period in 2016.

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Win streak screeches to halt



Associated Press

St. Louis Cardinals catcher Francisco Pena points skyward as he steps on home plate after hitting a home run in the eighth inning of St. Louis' game against the Milwaukee Brewers on Tuesday night. The Cardinals (29-23) snapped the Brewers' (35-21) four-game winning streak with a 6-1 victory behind starting pitcher Michael Wacha, who didn't allow a Brewers hit until the fifth inning. Story on Page 1B

Gazette at a Glance

NATION/WORLD • 6B

Immigration debate rages

President Donald Trump and Democratic critics traded outraged, sometimes plainly false accusations about immigration Tuesday as the debate over "lost" children and the practice of separating families caught crossing the border illegally reached a new boiling point.

SPORTS • 1B-3B

Parker golfers reach state

Janesville Parker boys golf coach Sam Van Galder predicted before the season started that his talented team would take advantage of playing at the Janesville Country Club and win the sectional meet, and the Vikings backed up their first-year coach's premonition Tuesday. Senior Matt Zimmerman fired a 3-over-par 75 to lead the Vikings to the WIAA Division 1 Parker Sectional team title. Runner-up Lake Geneva Badger also qualified for the state meet at University Ridge in Madison.

DEATH NOTICES • 6A

- Carole E. Fleming/Delavan
- Janice Odling/Corsicana, Texas, and Darien

OBITUARIES • 6A-7A

- Donald E. Dye/Beloit
- Dorothy M. Hanson/Beloit
- Elizabeth Sue "Lizzy" Jacobson/Janesville
- Mark S. Larson/Clinton
- Scott Gray Porter/Delavan
- Lorraine Jones Schultz/Stoughton and Albany
- Kathleen "Kathy" Tritz/East Troy
- Linda K. Warn/Darien
- Phyllis Jean Wells/Janesville

COMING THURSDAY

Wally Fest in Milton tweaks its '80s-based formula for its third year. **kicks**



Aqua Jays stay ready despite show cancellations



Anthony Wahl/awahl@gazettextra.com

Chad Larsen and Kylie Robinson work through their routine during a practice for the Rock Aqua Jays on Tuesday evening on Lake Koshkonong. The Aqua Jays have yet to hold a practice or show on the Rock River at Traxler Park because of high water on the river. The show scheduled for tonight was also canceled. You can find out more information and updates on future shows at facebook.com/RockAquaJays. For a gallery of photos from the Aqua Jays' practice on Lake Koshkonong, go to gazettextra.com/multimedia.

More and costlier construction increases city borrowing

\$21.9 million to be used on capital projects

By Jim Dayton

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JANESVILLE

More construction and rising construction costs led the city of Janesville to increase its borrowing for capital projects in 2018 to \$21.9 million, about 38 percent higher than the average amount it borrowed annually from 2013 to 2017, according to city data.

The Janesville City Council agreed to the amount on May 14. It spent Tuesday's meeting discuss-

ing more details about borrowing plans.

The May 14 action set a ceiling for 2018 borrowing, so on Tuesday the council could only reduce the \$21.9 million figure or keep it as is.

Jens Jorgenson was the only council member to vote against borrowing \$21.9 million. There were still ways to save money, and future generations would carry the burden of this debt, he said.

Council President Doug Marklein said the city was close to retiring past debt to ease that burden. He expected this year's borrowing to be paid in full within 10 years.

The \$21.9 million figure is twice the \$10.9 million the council borrowed in 2013. From 2013 to 2017,

Janesville borrowed an average of \$15.9 million annually, peaking in 2016 at \$19.3 million.

City Finance Director Max Gaglin told The Gazette before Tuesday's meeting that the higher borrowing total stemmed in part from an increase in construction across Janesville. Higher costs for building materials and inflation had also contributed, he said.

The city began its budgeting process last fall when it compiled its capital projects list for this year. Engineering staff spent the winter months developing project specifications and budget estimates, Gaglin said.

In addition to the increased borrowing total, Janesville's

per-capita debt also increased to about \$1,500 per person. In 2013, per-capita debt was just under \$1,200, according to Gaglin's presentation Tuesday night.

But Gaglin said Janesville's debt as a percent of its equalized property value had decreased slightly thanks to rising property values in the city. Janesville ranked near the middle of the pack for this measure compared to 14 peer cities in Wisconsin.

The peer city analysis used 2016 data, and Gaglin expected Janesville has since improved its standing because of increased property values.

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