

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, July 18, 2015 ♦ Vol. 18 - No. 350 ♦ 1 of 22



The Groton Legion team reciting the code of conduct before their first game of the Region 6B Tournament. Groton defeated Northville, 10-0, and will play Redfield at 1 p.m. today at Locke-Karst Field in Groton. (Photo by Tricia Keith)

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Saturday, July 18

1:00 p.m.: Jr. Teener game resumes in Sisseton - Groton vs. Milbank - game stopped after three innings with Milbank leading, 4-1, in the championship game.

Legion Regions in Groton

Anniv: Josh & Merrie Atherton • Joey & Shonna Harry

Birthdays: Kaitlin O'Neil • Irene Belden • Kevin Pray

4:30pm: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church Mass

Sunday, July 19

Jr. Teener Region

Legion Regions in Groton (Championship at 4 p.m., if 2nd game is needed, it will be played at 7 p.m.)

Birthdays: Carol Strom • Arlis Doeden • Alexis Harder • Hunter Monson • Isaiah Cutler

9:00am: Emmanuel Lutheran worship with Communion

Open: Recycling Trailer in Groton
The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave.

The cardboard/paper
recycling trailer at the school is **Closed**

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Hail damage to Michelle Johnson's house as it broke out the windows. (Facebook Photos by Jeff Harry)



Tanner Johnson posted a video on Facebook with the hail coming down near Bristol. It looked like a snowstorm.



Neighbors came over to help put plastic over the windows. (Facebook Photo by Michelle Johnson)

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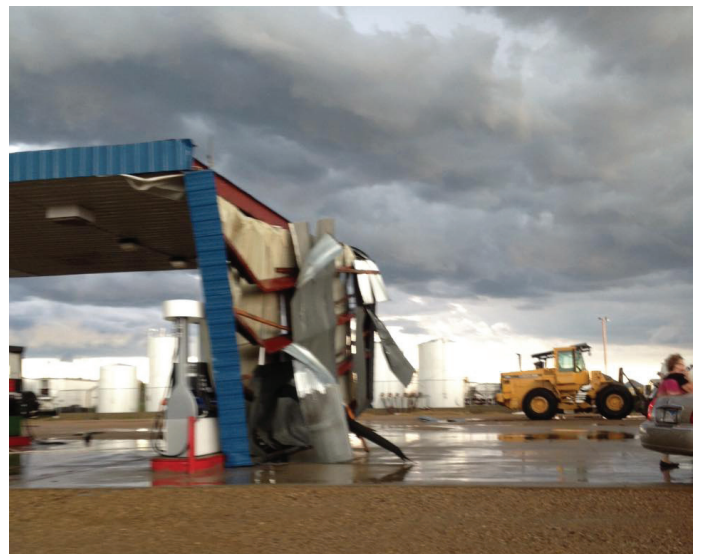
Damage near Bitter Lake in Day County. (Photo courtesy NWS)



Mel Sombke posted on her Facebook page this beautiful image after the storm.



Marie Miller posted on her Facebook page of the damage to the once beautiful corn crop.



Arlys Kluess posted on her Facebook page the damage done to the Hot Spot in Bristol



The Groton Fire Department responded to a downed power line south of Groton. (Facebook photo by Weston Dinger)



Angela Glover posted on her Facebook page this hailstone from Sisseton.

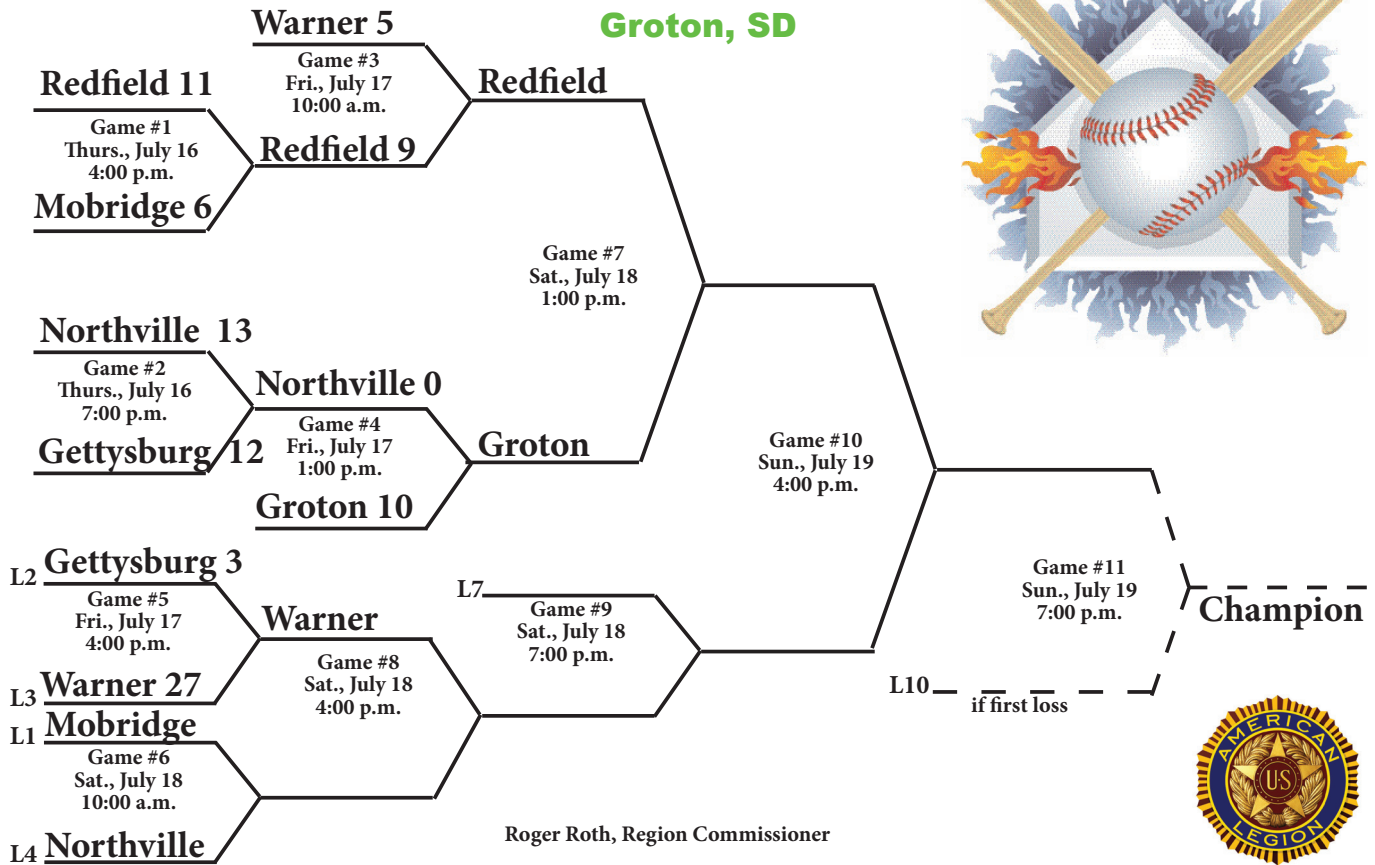
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American Legion Region 6B Tournament

Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday - July 16-19, 2015

**Locke-Karst Field
Groton, SD**



Treeline Tree Service



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**TJ Sperry:
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Tyler Sperry:
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Sperry Stump Removal

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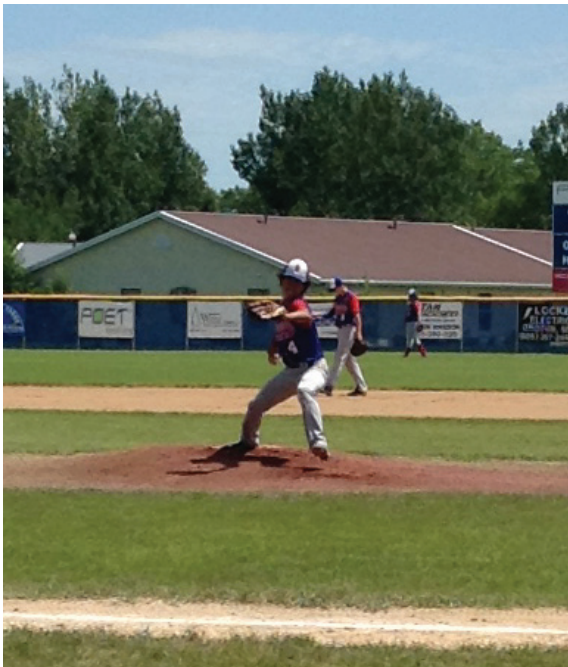


Brady Keith up to bat. He had a double on this hit. Aaron Severson, Drew Planteen, and Bennett Shabazz all had Doubles as well.



The team congratulating Dane Campbell after his Homerun!

Photos by Tricia Keith



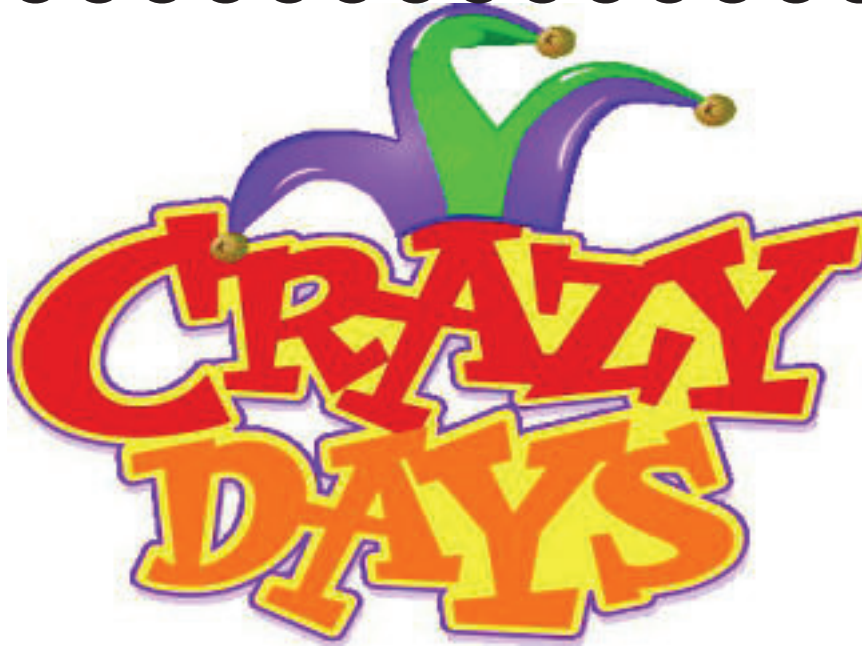
Bennett Shabazz pitched the entire game for Groton in their first game against Northville in the Region 6b Tournament. This tournament is being held at Locke-Karst field in Groton. It started Thursday and goes until Sunday.



Catcher Trevor Pray teamed up with Bennett Shabazz for the win against Northville.

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July 16-17-18

Thursday - 9-7, Friday 9-5, Saturday 10-3

20-50% off All Outdoor Pottery
& select Wrought Iron
50% off All Kids Merchandise

Select Coffee and
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Additional Discounts
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Today in Weather History

July 18, 1883: An estimated F3 tornado moved southeast from 3 miles south of Redfield to north of Hitchcock, to 6 miles southeast of Crandon in Spink County. At least one farm house was destroyed and swept away. Three people were killed on one farm.

July 18, 1986: In the afternoon, an F2 tornado that touched down in the northern suburbs of Minneapolis became one of the most observed and photographed tornadoes ever. The photographic coverage included video from a Minnesota DOT traffic camera and a remarkable aerial video taken from a helicopter by a television camera crew. The tornado began in Brooklyn Park and moved slowly northeast, causing light to moderate damage. It then turned east and slowed as it crossed the Mississippi River. Also on this day, an F2 tornado touched down two mile southeast of Bryant, in Hamlin County. This tornado traveled near Dolph Creek, and moved east along the creek to the Lake Norden area. The tornado damaged many trees and destroyed a barn. A second F2 tornado touched down three miles west of Toronto and moved southeast. The tornado destroyed a barn, silo, and six other buildings and caused extensive damage to farm equipment on a farm one mile south and a half mile west Astoria.

July 18, 2008: Severe thunderstorms developed across parts of central and north central South Dakota bringing large hail up to the size of golf balls and damaging winds to near 80 mph. Some tree, vehicle, and building damage occurred with some of the storms. Eighty mph winds or higher brought down many branches along with some trees in Fort Pierre. Power was cut off for parts of Fort Pierre when branches fell on power lines. Several truck trailers and feed silos were tipped onto their sides by the high winds. Also some buildings were damaged. A loaded train was pushed down the tracks almost a quarter of a mile by the high winds. Seventy mph winds or higher brought down many tree branches along with some trees in Pierre. There were power outages in Pierre along with some buildings receiving damage. Damaging thunderstorm winds also downed six power poles between Sully Buttes and Onida knocking power out to over 800 homes in and around Onida.

1889 - A cloudburst in West Virginia along the small creeks in Wirt County, Jackson County and Wood County claimed twenty lives. Rockport, WV, reported nineteen inches of rain in two hours and ten minutes that Thursday evening. Tygart Creek rose 22 feet in one hour, and villages were swept away on Tygart, Slate, Tucker, and Sandy Creeks. (The Weather Channel)

1942 - A record deluge occurred at Smethport in northern Pennsylvania, with 30.7 inches in just six hours. The downpours and resultant flooding in Pennsylvania were devastating. (David Ludlum)

1986 - One of the most photo-genic tornadoes touched down in the northern suburbs of Minneapolis, MN, during the late afternoon. The very slow moving tornado actually appeared live on the evening news by way of an aerial video taken by the KARE-TV helicopter crew. The tornado, unlike most, was quite the prima donna, staying visible to tens of thousands of persons for thirty minutes. It was moderate in intensity, with winds of 113-157 mph, and caused 650 thousand dollars damage. (Storm Data)








1987 - Cool weather prevailed in the western U.S. Seven cities reported record low temperatures for the date, including Alamosa, CO, with a reading of 38 degrees. The low of 52 degrees at Bakersfield, CA, was a record for July. Up to eight inches of snow covered the Northern Sierra Nevada Range of California from a storm the previous day. During that storm, winds gusting to 52 mph at Slide Mountain, NV, produced a wind chill reading of 20 degrees below zero. Susanville, CA, reached 17 degrees that previous day, Blue Canyon, CA, dipped to a July record of 36 degrees, and the high of 44 degrees at Klamath Falls, OR, smashed their previous record for July by ten degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Sweltering heat continued in California, with record highs of 111 degrees at Redding and 112 degrees at Sacramento. Death Valley, CA, hit 127 degrees. Late afternoon and evening thunderstorms in the Central Plains Region produced baseball size hail at Kimball, NE, wind gusts to 79 mph at Colby, KS, and six inches of rain near Lexington, NE. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in Oklahoma, northern Texas and Arkansas during the afternoon, and into the night. Thunderstorms produced baseball size hail at Stamford, TX, and wind gusts to 92 mph near Throckmorton, TX. Record heat continued in the southwestern U.S. Phoenix AZ reported a record high of 115 degrees, and a 111 degree reading at Midland, TX, was second only to their all-time record high of 112 degrees established sixteen days earlier. (The National Weather Summary)

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Today	Tonight	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
						
Sunny then Sunny and Breezy	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny
High: 80 °F	Low: 57 °F	High: 86 °F	Low: 61 °F	High: 86 °F	Low: 60 °F	High: 83 °F



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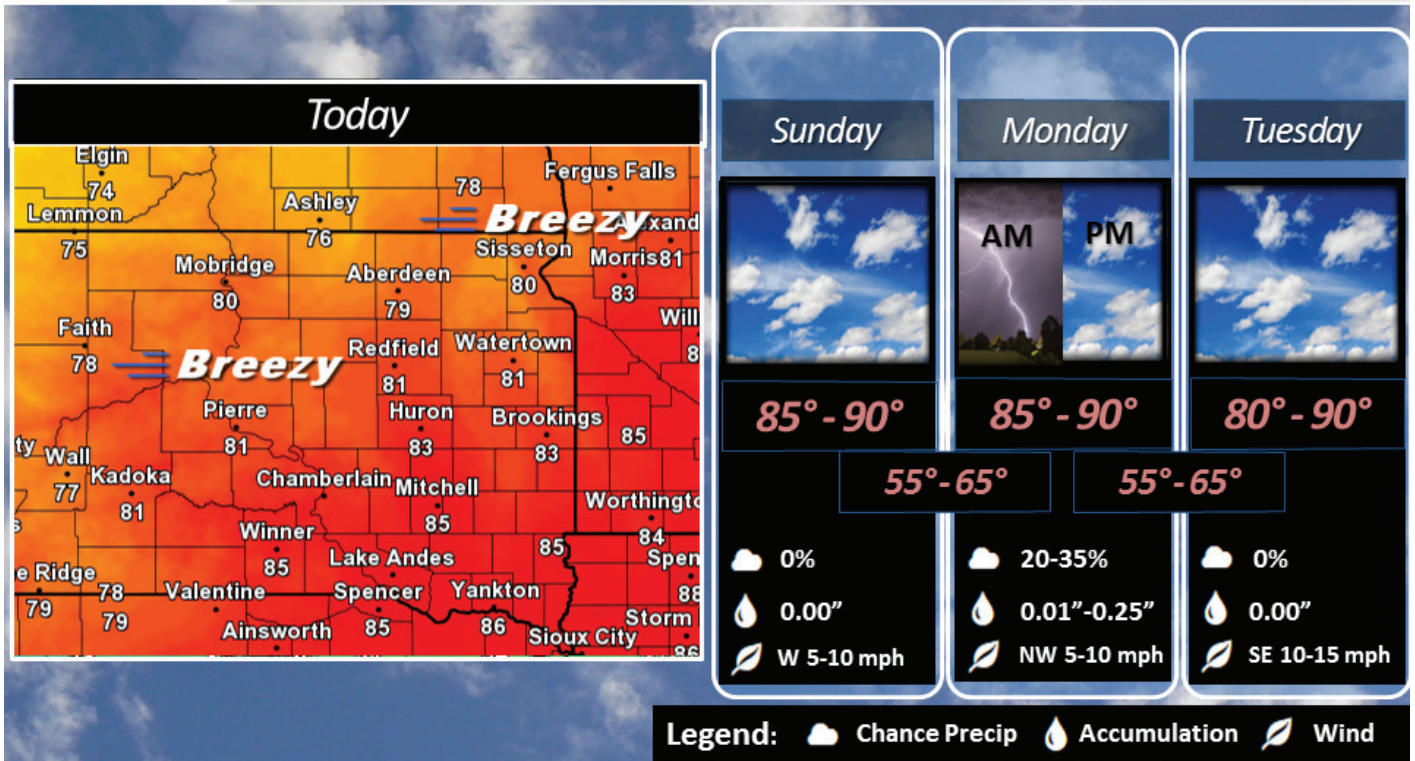
weather.gov/Aberdeen



National Weather Service Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen



Published on: 07/18/2015 at 4:04AM

A relatively cooler and drier air mass will settle over the region today. Northwest winds will be breezy however. Mostly dry conditions are then expected through the weekend and into the start of next week, the only exception is a slight chance for thunderstorms late Sunday night into Monday morning.

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Yesterday's Weather

High: 92.7 at 7:47 PM

Low: 62.4 at 6:27 PM

High Gust: 14 at 11:28 PM

Precip: 0.55

Today's Info

Record High: 106° in 1936

Record Low: 40° in 1915

Average High: 84°F

Average Low: 60°F

Average Precip in July: 1.897

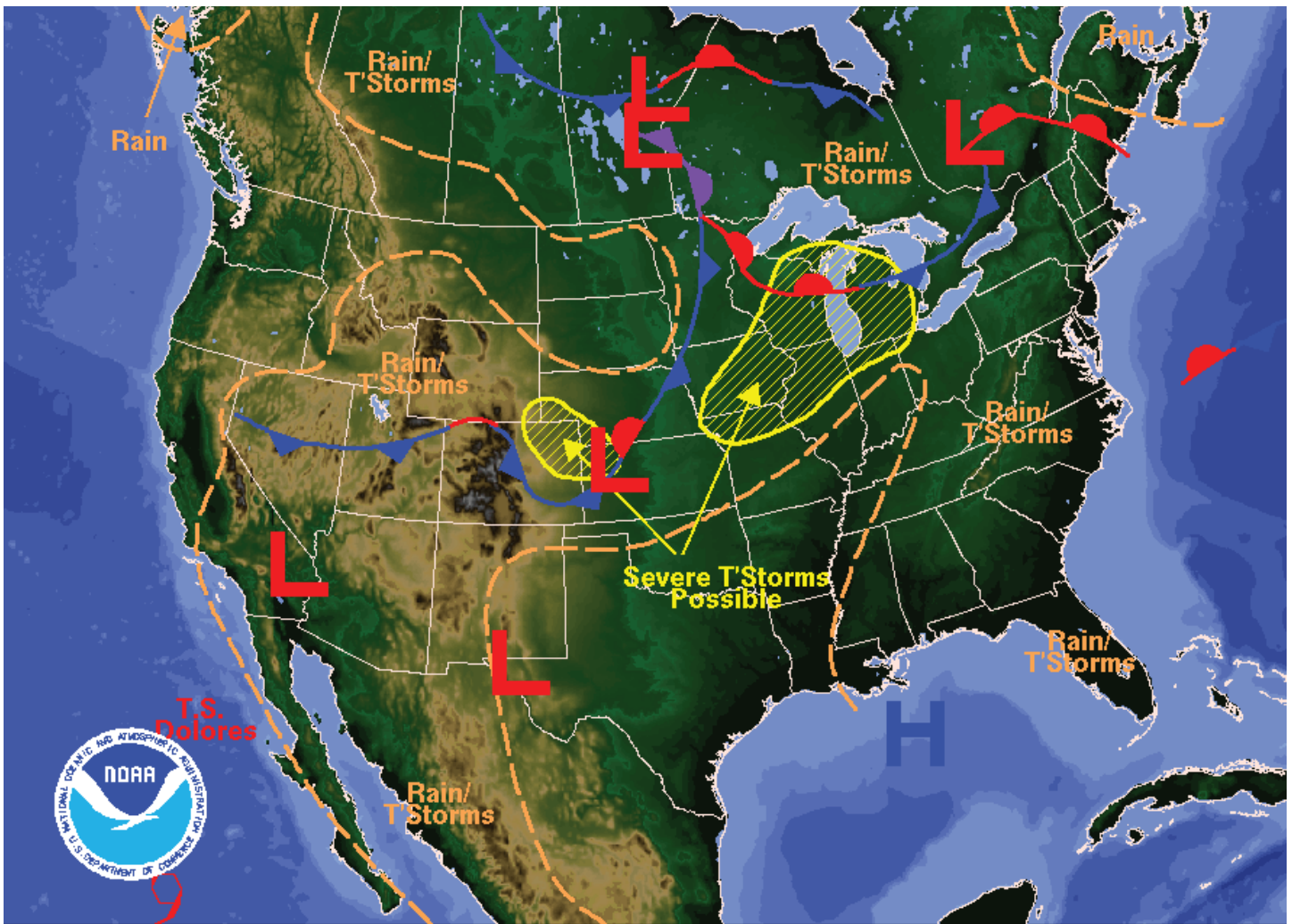
Precip to date in July: 2.45

Average Precip to date: 12.71

Precip Year to Date: 9.87

Sunset Tonight: 9:16 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:03 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Sat, Jul 18, 2015, issued 4:41 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Fanning based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

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NOW OR NEVER!

In 1874 Elisha Gray did something that no one else had ever done. He unveiled a machine that transmitted musical notes over a telegraph wire. The audience was fascinated with the sounds. Proudly he said, "If music, why not words?"

Immediately the New York Times predicted a "Talking Machine," and people expressed a great interest in wanting one.

Gray did nothing with his "machine" for two months. One day he decided to go to the patent office with a drawing. After presenting it to one of the officials he learned that Alexander Graham Bell had presented an identical sketch two hours earlier.

Gray did not fail. He hesitated.

Salvation is God's free gift to everyone who accepts Christ. But like Gray, many put off making a decision about becoming a Christian until it is too late. Everyone seems to believe that there will always be another tomorrow because there was a yesterday.

Prayer: We pray, Father, for the ones we know who need to accept Christ as Savior today! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: 2 Corinthians 6:1-2 Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

News from the Associated Press

Scientist to give update on Black Hill's cave excavation

WIND CAVE NATIONAL PARK, S.D. (AP) — The scientist who led a crew to excavate ice age fossils from the mouth of an unexplored cave in the Black Hills is updating the public on what's been found so far.

Jim Mead and a team of researchers began excavating Persistence Cave in June. During their two-week field camp, the researchers removed sediment from the cave that contains ice age fossils.

The fossils date back potentially 11,000 years. They'll provide clues of past climates and help researchers study how animals have adapted to changing environments.

Mead will be at Wind Cave National Park on July 25 to give the public an update on the fossils found so far. There will also be an update on efforts to expand the small cave that could connect with the larger Wind Cave.

Endangered dragonflies, raised in captivity, being released

REGINA GARCIA CANO, Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Federally endangered dragonflies that have been raised in a laboratory over the past several years are being released at a forest preserve this week in Illinois, where scientists believe they'll be a good match with the small population still there.

The Hine's emerald dragonflies, which for decades were believed to be extinct, were carefully raised at the University of South Dakota over the past four to five years after eggs were collected from a dragonfly in southwestern Wisconsin. Three out of the 20 dragonflies that could be released have already been freed so far this week at a forest preserve near Chicago. No more than 320 of the insects remain in Illinois.

"We are trying to maximize their survivorship in captivity," said Daniel Soluk, a professor at the University of South Dakota and the project leader. In the wild, he said, not very many dragonfly eggs survive to become adults — perhaps 10 of 1,000. Bringing them into the lab can dramatically increase their chances, so that of the same group maybe 100 or even 200 survive "all the way to where they'd be ready to emerge into adulthood."

The Hine's emerald dragonfly was discovered in Ohio, but by the mid-1900s, scientists believed the insect was extinct. That changed when one adult specimen was collected in the Des Plaines River Valley, southwest of Chicago, in 1988. The Hine's emerald was listed as a federally endangered species in 1995, and it can now be found in Illinois, Michigan, Missouri and Wisconsin.

Female dragonflies lay eggs by dropping the tip of their body into shallow water. Immature dragonflies — known as nymphs — typically hatch from the eggs in the spring. Nymphs live in the water for about four years, until they crawl out, shed their skin one last time and emerge as flying adults. The adults live only four to five weeks between June and August.

The eggs for this project were collected from a dragonfly captured in southwestern Wisconsin, Soluk said, because the Hine's emerald dragonflies in that area have the same diverse genetic composition as the ones found in Illinois.

"You may have lots of numbers, but if they're genetically almost identical, that means there's not as much ability to resist something like a disease that comes along or that they just won't have as much flexibility in terms of quick responses to things like change in conditions," Soluk said.

Between 80 and 320 Hine's emerald larvae emerge as flying adults in Illinois every year, said Kristopher Lah, an endangered species coordinator at the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Chicago Ecological Services Field Office.

For years the environmental group Nature Conservancy has worked to preserve the species in Door County, Wisconsin, where coastal springs and wetlands create a rich habitat for the dragonflies, which catch and eat small flying insects, including mosquitoes, gnats and biting flies.

The effort, says the group's ecologist Mike Grimm, goes beyond the dragonfly's role in nature.

"We never hardly ask 'Why is the Mona Lisa important?' We could tear it down, burn it, and would civilization collapse? No," Grimm said. "But it's something that we value because it's beautiful or it has some intrinsic value that we just want to protect. Some species, what is their value? A small butterfly doesn't really have any economic value and probably could go extinct and we'd never even know it. But I think there's an obligation to our future generations of people that we try to preserve the Earth in at least as good a condition as we found it."

Tribes push to end Affordable Care Act coverage requirement

BEN NEARY, Associated Press

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) — Representatives of several Indian tribes say they support legislation introduced by congressional Republicans this week that would exempt tribes nationwide from being classified as large employers under the federal Affordable Care Act — a designation that requires tribes to pay higher insurance costs or face federal penalties.

Supporters say requiring tribes to provide group insurance for tribal employees serves to shift the costs of implementing the Affordable Care Act from the federal government to the tribes. People who register for individual coverage under the act may qualify for federal tax credits, but that option's not available to those who work for designated large employers.

Although Republicans have been struggling unsuccessfully to overturn the entire Affordable Care Act for years, the current effort to address the tribal large-employer requirement is remarkable so far for garnering significant Indian support.

In Montana alone, sponsors say they have the support of Crow, Blackfeet and Fort Peck Reservation's Assiniboine and Sioux tribes. Those supporters say that federal penalties for failure to comply would reduce money available for essential tribal services.

The requirement for tribes that employ more than 50 employees to offer group insurance took effect Jan. 1. Individual Indians aren't subject to tax penalties, as many other citizens are, if they fail to get individual coverage.

The Rosebud Sioux Tribe in Rosebud, South Dakota, also issued a statement this week in support of the bill, saying they, too, can't afford to comply with the federal law.

"It is a United States treaty obligation to provide health care for members of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe," Tribal President William Kindle and Treasurer Byron Wright stated.

Bill sponsor Sen. Steve Daines, R-Montana, issued a statement this week saying such unreasonable fines have the potential to kill reservation jobs and further cripple tribes' economies. "It is critically important that our tribes and tribal employees aren't penalized due to a hastily written law," he said.

Co-sponsors in the Senate include Sen. Mike Crapo, R-Idaho, and Sen. John Thune, R-South Dakota. Rep. Ryan Zinke, R-Montana, is sponsoring the bill in the House, where it's co-sponsored by Rep. Kristi Noem, R-South Dakota.

U.S. District Judge Scott Skavdahl of Casper this month rejected a challenge from the Northern Arapaho Tribe in Wyoming to the large-employer insurance requirement. The judge found that determining the tribe qualifies as a large employer under the federal law doesn't abrogate any rights guaranteed to it by treaty.

"If Congress wished to exempt Indian tribes from this mandate that otherwise might be reasonably construed as applying to them, it needed to do so explicitly," Skavdahl wrote.

The Northern Arapaho Tribe employs roughly 1,000 workers at its casino and other government operations and previously had paid to help them cover individual insurance coverage under the Affordable Care Act. Dean Goggles, chairman of the Northern Arapaho Business Council, said Friday the pending bill offers a good way to cure the problem the tribe identified in its lawsuit.

The National Indian Health Board, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit, represents tribal governments on health care issues and supports the legislation to exempt tribes from the large-employer mandate.

Caitrin McCarron Shuy, director of congressional relations for the Indian Health Board, said Friday that federal law as it stands now presents Indians with a contradiction.

"I think this is a really critical issue for the tribal community to have to provide health insurance for employees," Shuy said. "Under the law, of course as a large employer, tribes are required to provide health insurance. But most of their employees are also their tribal members, are native people who are exempt from the individual mandate. Really the two provisions of this law work at cross purposes from achieving what it was intended."

Hitchhiking robot embarks on coast-to-coast tour across US

COLLIN BINKLEY, Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — With its thumb raised skyward and a grin on its digital face, the robotic creation of two researchers in Canada embarked on a hitchhiking journey across the U.S. on Friday.

The humanoid robot named hitchBOT has already caught rides across Canada and in Europe, relying on the kindness and curiosity of strangers. But this is its first U.S. tour, setting out from Massachusetts with dreams of San Francisco ahead.

Along the way, it hopes to see some quintessential American sites, including Times Square, Mount Rushmore and the Grand Canyon.

To start the journey, its creators set it alongside a road in Marblehead with tape wrapped around its cylindrical head that read "San Francisco or bust." Not long after, a group of German tourists picked it up and strapped it into their SUV with plans to take it to Boston or New York.

The kid-size robot is immobile on its own, so it gets from place to place by being schlepped around by strangers. Travelers can pass it off to others they meet, or leave it at a gas station or shop. They just leave it seated on its kickstand with its thumb raised.

Ideally, the creators hope, drivers won't leave the bot along busy roads and will charge the battery when it runs low. Otherwise, there are no rules.

"We want to see what people do with this kind of technology when we leave it up to them," said Frauke Zeller, one of the creators and an assistant professor in professional communication at Toronto's Ryerson University. "It's an art project in the wild — it invites people to participate."

On the outside, hitchBOT looks like it's built for play rather than performance. It has a bucket for a body and bendy foam limbs capped by yellow gardening gloves and matching rubber boots. The whimsical attire is intentional, its makers said, to make it approachable and to deter potential thieves.

"It has a really low-tech look to it, something we dubbed the 'yard-sale aesthetic,'" said David Harris

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Smith, the other creator and an assistant professor in communication studies at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario. "The head is actually an acrylic cake-saver."

Designed to be a talking travel companion, the robot can toss out factoids and carry limited conversation. It can be charming and cheeky, its makers said.

So far, there are no signs of anything nefarious done to the robot, but there's also no proof. Its creators intentionally cast their gaze aside.

"We want to be very careful to avoid surveillance technologies with this; that's not what we're trying to do here," Smith said.

A GPS in the robot can track its location, and a camera randomly snaps photos about every 20 minutes to document its travels. But the team behind the robot seeks permission from people in the photos before posting them to social media, where hitchBOT has built a devoted fan base.

More than 30,000 people follow the robot on Twitter, and dozens have posted their own selfies with it. Researchers are culling data from social media to study how people interact with a robot that needs their help, unlike traditional robots designed to help them.

Among the chief questions researchers are asking, Zeller said, is whether robots can trust humans.

During past travels, the robot has attended a comic convention and a wedding, and it had its portrait painted in the Netherlands. It once spent a week with a heavy metal band.

The cross-country tour of Canada took 26 days, spanning more than 6,000 miles. As for the U.S. trip, researchers don't know how long it will take or what will happen along the way.

"We want to create something that has a bit of narrative to it, a sense of adventure," Smith said. "We don't really know what's going to happen."

Noem has \$1.2 million on hand for 2016 re-election bid

SIOUX FALL, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota U.S. Rep. Kristi Noem has \$1.2 million in the bank for a 2016 re-election bid.

Federal campaign finance reports released this week show Noem raised nearly \$300,000 in the second fundraising quarter, which ran from April through June.

Noem campaign consultant Justin Brasell says he's "thrilled" with the fundraising pace for the quarter. He says the contributions are reflective of Noem's growing support across the state.

South Dakota Democratic Party chairwoman Ann Tornberg says the Republican congresswoman has a daunting bank account. But Tornberg says the state's Democratic party hopes to run a candidate against Noem.

The seats held by Noem and Republican U.S. Sen. John Thune will be up in the 2016 election.

Thune has \$11 million on hand for 2016 re-election bid

SIOUX FALL, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota U.S. Sen. John Thune's bank account sits at about \$11 million for his bid for a third Senate term in 2016.

Thune's campaign announced this week that the Republican lawmaker's second-quarter haul was more than \$840,000.

Campaign manager Joshua Shields says the contributions show Thune has a lot of support in the state and nationwide. The fundraising period ran between April 1 and June 30.

Shields says to stay tuned for a formal re-election launch from the state's senior U.S. senator.

South Dakota Democratic Party chairwoman Ann Tornberg says \$11 million is a "formidable" amount of money, but she says the party's goal is to field a candidate to run against Thune.

Thune didn't have an opponent in the race for his second term in 2010.

Sioux Falls man shot; woman charged with aggravated assault

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Police say a 39-year-old woman is facing an aggravated assault charge for allegedly shooting her boyfriend.

Kellie Bingen, of Sioux Falls, was taken into custody Thursday night and arrested early Friday on one count of domestic aggravated assault.

Police say Bingen's 39-year-old boyfriend is being treated at a Sioux Falls hospital. The man's condition is not known, though police spokesman Sam Clemens said he was shot in the back with a .22-caliber handgun.

Authorities say the shooting occurred about 9:30 p.m. Thursday.

Bingen is being held in the Minnehaha County jail. Her bond is set at \$5,000.

Moose on the loose drawing attention in Dewey County

TIMBER LAKE, S.D. (AP) — A moose on the loose is drawing attention in north central South Dakota's Dewey County.

Sheriff Les Mayer tells KELO-TV that it's been a couple of years since once of the animals has wandered into the county. He shot a photo of the moose near Timber Lake and put it on the department's Facebook page, where it's drawn the attention of hundreds of people.

Nathan Baker with the state Game, Fish and Parks Department tells the Capital Journal that moose spotted in South Dakota likely come from surrounding states with established populations.

AP News in Brief

Image of heavily armed Tennessee gunman doesn't square with what those who knew him saw

CHATTANOOGA, Tenn. (AP) — Muhammad Youssef Abdulazeez pulled up to his military targets in a rented, silver Mustang convertible, wearing a vest with extra ammunition, wielding at least two long guns — either rifles or shotguns — and a handgun. His once clean-shaven face was covered with a bushy beard.

That image described by investigators doesn't square with the seemingly pedestrian suburban man described by neighbors and classmates: A clean-cut wrestler, the brother of a tennis player, the son of parents who drove no-frills cars. A man who played with the neighborhood kids growing up, gave a lift to a neighbor who became stranded in a snowstorm.

Just days before the shootings, Abdulazeez was seen dribbling a soccer ball in his yard, and he told two longtime friends he was excited and upbeat about his new job at a company that designs and makes wire and cable products.

"Everything seemed fine. He was normal. He was telling me work was going great," said one of the friends, Ahmed Saleen Islam, 26, who knew Abdulazeez through the Islamic Society of Greater Chattanooga and saw him at the mosque two or three nights before the attacks. "We are so shocked and angry," Islam said. "We wish he would have come to us."

Hailey Bureau, 25, recalled sitting next to Abdulazeez in high school because their last names were close alphabetically. She said she broke down Thursday when she learned he was the gunman, saying, "It's so shocking. I imagine him the way I knew him then, laughing and smiling."

Police seek motive in Maine shootings that left 2 dead, 3 wounded; ex-convict faces charges

LEE, Maine (AP) — Authorities are trying to determine the motive of the ex-convict they say shot five people, two of them fatally, during a rampage across northern Maine.

Anthony Lord was arrested at his uncle's home in Houlton on Friday and faces murder and kidnapping charges, State Police Lt. Sean Hashey said. A woman who was being held with him was safe, he said.

Investigators said Lord knew some of the victims, but authorities gave no information about possible relationships. Officers, detectives and evidence technicians will work through the weekend to piece the case together, Hashey said.

"We know a lot, but there's a lot of questions to be answered still," he said.

The shootings left 58-year-old Kevin Tozier and 22-year-old Kyle Hewitt dead. Two other men and one woman were treated for gunshot wounds and were expected to survive, police said.

After gamble by both sides, US and Iran forge path past animosity to a diplomatic breakthrough

WASHINGTON (AP) — The talks themselves were a groundbreaking and risky proposition when U.S. and Iranian officials met secretly in the sleepy Arab kingdom of Oman, archenemies feinting for a diplomatic opening. The opposing sides had barely spoken to one another in three-plus decades.

But after a torturous 2½-year effort full of false starts, backward steps and missed deadlines, world powers and Iran transformed those early overtures into a nuclear accord that may reshape the security landscape of the Mideast for a generation to come.

Tuesday's agreement in Vienna, hashed out among seven nations in all, appeared in jeopardy several times even as the personalities changed and disputes evolved. The Americans and the Iranians, and the French and Russians, all added hiccups to the process. In the most recent round of discussions, negotiators busted past three target dates.

The final push, which encompassed 18 days of talks and seesawed between optimism and pessimism, served as a microcosm of the diplomacy.

The round started with great energy as diplomats raced to wrap up their work within four days. Reality quickly set in; negotiations slogged on for days with no end in sight. Chinese, European and Russian foreign ministers came and went, leaving most of the work to the American delegation under Secretary of State John Kerry and the Iran team under Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif.

As Democrats face-off, Hillary Clinton keeps her focus on the GOP in 2016

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa (AP) — Ignoring her primary challengers, Hillary Rodham Clinton focused instead on the expanding field of Republican contenders as she and her fellow Democrats tried to impress influential party activists in Iowa.

The fundraising face-off for the benefit of the state party came Friday night as the Democratic primary fight — long assumed to be just short of a coronation for Clinton — appeared to be heating up into a slightly more serious contest. In recent weeks, Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders has risen in the polls and packed arenas with voters eager to hear the message of the self-described socialist who's become Clinton's chief rival.

But rather than confront her most immediate political obstacle in a crucial primary state, Clinton took aim at the other party, vowing to never let Republicans “rip away the progress” made during the Obama administration.

“Trickle-down economics has to be one of the worst ideas of the 1980s,” Clinton said, evoking Republican policy from the Reagan era. “It is right up there with New Coke, shoulder pads and big hair.”

Sanders, too, refused to criticize his primary opponent directly. Earlier in the day he edged closer to an attack when he questioned whether Clinton would back the kinds of tough regulations for Wall Street that’s become a rallying call for liberal Democrats.

China rounds up rights lawyers who challenged judges in latest crackdown on civil society

BEIJING (AP) — Four men already had been convicted of murder in southeastern China when a fifth person confessed to the crime. But when lawyers demanded to review case documents to clear the men’s names, the court stonewalled. So the lawyers unfurled banners outside the venue.

They protested for days, alongside social activists who insulted the top judge, and uploaded pictures online.

The incident in the southeastern province of Jiangxi in May appears to have been one of the last straws ahead of a broad crackdown by China’s Public Security Ministry on a category of lawyers who have come to be known as “rights defenders.”

Authorities say these lawyers have strayed far beyond their professional role into illegal activism aimed at sabotaging the country’s legal system. The lawyers maintain their methods are merely to hold authorities to account and ensure that the letter of China’s laws is upheld.

Since late May, police across China have detained and called in at least 215 rights lawyers and social activists, most of them during the past week or so. State propaganda has kicked into high gear to denounce them as rabble-rousers, criminal gangs, profit-seeking opportunists.

Friends say woman found dead in Texas jail was looking forward to next chapter

HEMPSTEAD, Texas (AP) — Friends’ recollections and Sandra Bland’s own words present a picture of a young woman on the cusp of finding her niche in life. She seemed to have landed a perfect job. She had a voice and following on social media for speaking out about racial injustice and police brutality and was active in her community.

Even after one video surfaced showing the 28-year-old talking in March about depression and post-traumatic stress disorder, those who knew her said she would not have killed herself inside a Texas jail cell — not even over the confrontational traffic stop that led to her arrest, which mirrored the ones she railed against online.

“She was in good spirits. She was looking forward to what was next,” said friend and mentor LaVaughn Mosley, 57, adding that he was unaware of any struggles with depression. “She was making plans for the future, so there’s no way she was in a suicidal state.”

On Friday, about 100 protesters marched from the Waller County jail — where authorities say Bland hanged herself with a plastic bag on Monday — to the courthouse in Hempstead.

Bland’s death comes amid increased national scrutiny of police after a series of high-profile cases in which blacks have been killed by officers. Friends and family have questioned authorities’ account of

how she died.

Iraqi officials: Death toll in Diyala market bombing jumps to 115; 170 wounded.

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraqi police officials say the death toll in Friday night's attack on a crowded marketplace has risen to 115 people. At least 170 people were wounded in the attack.

The mostly-Shiite victims were gathered to mark the end of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, which ended Friday for Iraqi Shiites but a day earlier for Iraqi Sunni Muslims.

Police said a small truck detonated in a crowded marketplace in the town of Khan Beni Saad Friday night in what quickly turned celebrations into a scene of horror, with body parts scattered across the market.

Hospital officials corroborated the casualty figures. All officials spoke anonymously as they are not authorized to brief the media.

Greece's Tsipras makes changes to government as bailout pushes ahead

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — Greece's proposed bailout cleared further key hurdles Friday after German lawmakers overwhelmingly gave their backing to another financial rescue and the European Union said it would release a short-term loan to ensure Athens avoids a debt default.

The developments, along with the Greek parliament's approval early Thursday of creditor-demanded austerity measures, contributed to a positive initial assessment from Europe's bailout fund. In a statement, the European Stability Mechanism said it approved a "decision to grant, in principle, stability support to Greece in the form of a loan program."

Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, meanwhile, reshuffled his cabinet after a rebellion earlier this week in his party's ranks over the austerity measures, replacing two ministers who voted against him and changing another eight ministers and deputy ministers.

Though the broad outlines of the Greek bailout were agreed Monday by the eurozone's 19 leaders, the ESM's decision formally kick-starts the process by which Greece begins negotiating the details.

The discussions, which are expected to last four weeks, will include economic targets and reforms deemed necessary in return for an anticipated 85 billion euros (\$93 billion) over three years.

More than 300 people injured as commuter trains collide during rush hour in South Africa

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — A commuter train crashed into another passenger train during rush hour Friday in South Africa's largest city injuring more than 300 people, an emergency services spokeswoman said.

Nana Radebe, spokeswoman for Johannesburg Emergency Services, said 326 people were rushed to nearby hospitals with minor to serious injuries. No fatalities were reported.

"For now we have removed people with minor to serious injuries, but none critical," she said, adding that firefighters searched for commuters who may have been trapped inside the train cars.

The trains were on the same track, Radebe told The Associated Press, and it appeared that a traveling train collided with a stationary train.

"What we do know is that one vehicle rear ended the other," said Russel Meiring, a spokesman for

ER24, a private emergency service.

Verdict means theater gunman will join hundreds of thousands of mentally ill inmates in prison

DENVER (AP) — Whether James Holmes gets life without parole or a death sentence for the Colorado theater shooting, he will spend years behind bars, joining about 6,000 inmates in Colorado and hundreds of thousands of others nationwide who suffer from mental illness.

Experts say prisons are ill-equipped to treat the growing number of inmates with mental illnesses — especially the majority who are not convicted of crimes as violent as Holmes, who was diagnosed with a form of schizophrenia.

A jury on Thursday convicted the 27-year-old former neuroscience graduate student of murder and other charges for his 2012 assault at a midnight screening of a Batman movie that killed 12 and wounded dozens of others.

The same jurors will decide his sentence in the penalty phase of the trial, which starts Wednesday and will take about a month. Even if they decide Holmes should be executed, as prosecutors want, he would spend years in prison as his mandatory appeals play out in court.

Holmes pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity, but jurors rejected the claim after two state-appointed psychiatrists testified he could distinguish right from wrong, Colorado's test for sanity. But the two state psychiatrists and two defense psychiatrists agreed he suffers from mental illness.

AP Poll: Sharp divisions after high court backs gay marriage

DAVID CRARY, Associated Press

EMILY SWANSON, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The Supreme Court's ruling last month legalizing same-sex marriage nationwide has left Americans sharply divided, according to an Associated Press-GfK poll that suggests support for gay unions may be down slightly from earlier this year.

The poll also found a near-even split over whether local officials with religious objections should be required to issue marriage licenses to same-sex couples, with 47 percent saying that should be the case and 49 percent say they should be exempt.

Overall, if there's a conflict, a majority of those questioned think religious liberties should win out over gay rights, according to the poll. While 39 percent said it's more important for the government to protect gay rights, 56 percent said protection of religious liberties should take precedence.

The poll was conducted July 9 to July 13, less than three weeks after the Supreme Court ruled states cannot ban same-sex marriage.

According to the poll, 42 percent support same-sex marriage and 40 percent oppose it. The percentage saying they favor legal same-sex marriage in their state was down slightly from the 48 percent who said so in an April poll. In January, 44 percent were in favor.

Asked specifically about the Supreme Court ruling, 39 percent said they approve and 41 percent said they disapprove.

"What the Supreme Court did is jeopardize our religious freedoms," said Michael Boehm, 61, an industrial controls engineer from the Detroit area who describes himself as a conservative-leaning independent.

"You're going to see a conflict between civil law and people who want to live their lives according to their faiths," Boehm said.

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Boehm was among 59 percent of the poll respondents who said wedding-related businesses with religious objections should be allowed to refuse service to gay and lesbian couples. That compares with 52 percent in April.

Also, 46 percent said businesses more generally should be allowed to refuse service to same-sex couples, while 51 percent said that should not be allowed.

Claudette Girouard, 69, a retiree from Chesterfield Township, Michigan, said she is a moderate independent voter who has gradually become supportive of letting same-sex couples marry.

"I don't see what the big hoopla is," she said. "If they're happy, why not?"

Girouard said local officials should be required to perform same-sex marriages, but does not think that wedding-related businesses should be forced to serve same-sex couples.

"If the official doesn't like what he's being asked to do, then quit," she said. "But businesses are kind of independent, so if they have a strong belief against it, there are enough other businesses out there for someone to use."

The poll found pronounced differences in viewpoints depending on political affiliation.

For example, 65 percent of Democrats but only 22 percent of Republicans favored allowing same-sex couples to legally marry in their state. And 72 percent of Republicans but just 31 percent of Democrats said local officials with religious objections should be exempt from issuing marriage licenses.

By a 64-32 margin, most Democrats said it's more important to protect gay rights than religious liberties when the two are in conflict. Republicans said the opposite, by 82-17.

Clarence Wells, 60, a conservative from Rockwood, Tennessee, said he strongly disapproved of the Supreme Court's ruling. He anticipates friction as gay couples try to exercise their newfound rights and people with religious objections to same-sex marriage balk at accepting them.

"I don't believe it's going to go over smoothly," said Wells. "I think a lot of them will be shunned in church. ... I think there will be businesses that are going to close, because some people are stubborn enough to not want to deal with it."

Andrew Chan, 41, a moderate independent from Seattle, said he has tried to remain neutral on same-sex marriage.

"For me, it's always been about tolerating," said Chan, who works for a nonprofit organization. "I've got friends on both sides."

Chan said he was happy for gays and lesbians who have found someone they want to marry, and he expressed some wariness toward politicians who might try to roll back the Supreme Court ruling.

"That just creates more division," he said. "Are we looking to move the country forward or move it backward?"

The AP-GfK Poll of 1,004 adults was conducted online July 9 to July 13, using a sample drawn from GfK's probability-based KnowledgePanel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 3.4 percentage points. Some questions were asked of half samples of respondents and have smaller margins of error. Respondents were first selected randomly using phone or mail survey methods, and later interviewed online. People selected for KnowledgePanel who didn't otherwise have access to the Internet were provided access at no cost to them.

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Today in History

The Associated Press

Today is Saturday, July 18, the 199th day of 2015. There are 166 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 18, 1947, President Harry S. Truman signed a Presidential Succession Act which placed the speaker of the House and the Senate president pro tempore next in the line of succession after the vice president.

On this date:

In A.D. 64, the Great Fire of Rome began, consuming most of the city for about a week. (Some blamed the fire on Emperor Nero, who in turn blamed Christians.)

In 1792, American naval hero John Paul Jones died in Paris at age 45.

In 1872, Britain enacted voting by secret ballot.

In 1925, Adolf Hitler published the first volume of his autobiographical screed, "Mein Kampf (My Struggle)."

In 1932, the United States and Canada signed a treaty to develop the St. Lawrence Seaway.

In 1944, Hideki Tojo was removed as Japanese premier and war minister because of setbacks suffered by his country in World War II. American forces in France captured the Normandy town of St. Lo.

In 1955, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Soviet Premier Nikolai Bulganin, British Prime Minister Anthony Eden and French Premier Edgar Faure met for a summit in Geneva.

In 1969, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., left a party on Chappaquiddick Island near Martha's Vineyard with Mary Jo Kopechne (koh-PEHK'-nee), 28; some time later, Kennedy's car went off a bridge into the water. (Kennedy was able to escape, but Kopechne drowned.)

In 1976, at the Montreal Olympics, Romanian gymnast Nadia Comaneci received the first-ever perfect score of 10 with her routine on uneven parallel bars. (Comaneci would go on to receive six more 10s at Montreal.)

In 1984, gunman James Huberty opened fire at a McDonald's fast food restaurant in San Ysidro (ee-SEE'-droh), California, killing 21 people before being shot dead by police. Walter F. Mondale won the Democratic presidential nomination in San Francisco.

In 1989, actress Rebecca Schaeffer, 21, was shot to death at her Los Angeles home by obsessed fan Robert Bardo, who was later sentenced to life in prison.

In 1990, Dr. Karl Menninger, the dominant figure in American psychiatry for six decades, died in Topeka, Kansas, four days short of his 97th birthday.

Ten years ago: Hurricane Emily roared across Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula, ripping roofs off luxury hotels, stranding thousands of tourists and leaving hundreds of local residents homeless. An unrepentant Eric Rudolph was sentenced in Birmingham, Alabama, to life in prison for an abortion clinic bombing that killed an off-duty police officer and maimed a nurse. Retired Gen. William Westmoreland died in Charleston, South Carolina, at age 91. Veteran newsman Paul Duke died in Washington D.C. at age 78.

Five years ago: Pakistan and Afghanistan sealed a landmark trade deal in the presence of U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, who pushed the two neighbors to step up civilian cooperation and work together against al-Qaida and the Taliban. A suicide bomber struck anti-al-Qaida Sunni fighters waiting for paychecks southwest of Baghdad, killing 45. Gunmen fired indiscriminately into a crowd of mainly young people in a rented hall in Torreón, Mexico, killing 17 people. Louis Oosthuizen (WUHST'-hy-zen) of South Africa shot a 1-under 71 for a seven-stroke victory at 16-under 272 in the British Open.

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One year ago: The United Nations Security Council held an emergency meeting a day after the downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 with the loss of all 298 people on board, demanding that pro-Russia rebels who controlled the eastern Ukraine crash site give immediate, unfettered access to independent investigators. The Obama administration announced it was reopening the Eastern Seaboard to offshore oil and gas exploration.

Today's Birthdays: Former Sen. John Glenn, D-Ohio, is 94. Conductor Kurt Masur is 88. Skating champion and commentator Dick Button is 86. Olympic gold medal figure skater Tenley Albright, M.D., is 80. Movie director Paul Verhoeven is 77. Musician Brian Auger is 76. Singer Dion DiMucci is 76. Actor James Brolin is 75. Baseball Hall of Famer Joe Torre is 75. Singer Martha Reeves is 74. Blues guitarist Lonnie Mack is 74. Pop-rock musician Wally Bryson (The Raspberries) is 66. Country-rock singer Craig Fuller (Pure Prairie League) is 66. Actress Margo Martindale is 64. Singer Ricky Skaggs is 61. Actress Audrey Landers is 59. Golfer Nick Faldo is 58. Rock musician Nigel Twist (The Alarm) is 57. Actress Anne-Marie Johnson is 55. Actress Elizabeth McGovern is 54. Rock musician John Hermann (Widespread Panic) is 53. Rock musician Jack Irons is 53. Actor Vin Diesel is 48. Actor Grant Bowler is 47. Retired NBA All-Star Penny Hardaway is 44. Alt-country singer Elizabeth Cook is 43. Actor Eddie Matos is 43. MLB All-Star Torii Hunter is 40. Dance music singer-songwriter M.I.A. is 40. Rock musician Daron Malakian (System of a Down; Scars on Broadway) is 40. Rock musician Tony Fagenson (Eve 6) is 37. Movie director Jared Hess is 36. Actor Jason Weaver is 36. Actress Kristen Bell is 35. Actor Michiel Huisman (MIHK'-heel HOWS'-man) is 34. Rock singer Ryan Cabrera is 33. Christian-rock musician Aaron Gillespie (Underoath) is 32. Actor Chace Crawford is 30. Musician Paul Kowert (Punch Brothers) is 29. Actor Travis Milne is 29. Bluegrass musician Joe Dean Jr. (Dailey & Vincent) is 26.

Thought for Today: "Kindnesses are easily forgotten; but injuries! what worthy man does not keep those in mind?" - William Makepeace Thackeray, English author (born this date in 1811, died 1863).