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Bus Driver Needed

The Groton Area School District has an opening for a morning bus route driver for the 2016-17 school year. Interested persons should contact Superintendent Joe Schwan at 397-2351.

Manager Wanted

Part Time Apartment Manager wanted. Responsible for showing apartments, handing out applications, overseeing maintenance and other duties as needed. Up to \$25 per hour. Previous sale experience a plus. Send email of interest to Grotnmnger@gmail.com

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

The cardboard/paper

recycling trailer at the school is **Open**

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Thursday, July 14

Senior Menu: Swiss steak with mushroom gravy, mashed potatoes, mixed vegetable, rice and raisins, whole wheat bread.

Birthdays: Christine Nyberg • Ava Kramer
1:30pm: Noem staff to hold mobile office hours in Groton. Call 878-2868 to schedule an appointment
5:30pm: U8 Softball at Redfield
6:00pm: NESD U10 Groton Blue at Webster
6:00pm: NESD U10 Groton Red at Milbank Blue
6:00pm: NESD U12 Groton Blue vs. Sisseton at Britton
6:00pm: T-ball Practice
6:30pm: U10 Softball at Redfield
7:15pm: NESD U10 Groton Blue at Webster
7:15pm: NESD U10 Groton Red at Milbank Blue
7:30pm: NESD U12 Groton Blue vs. Sisseton at Britton
7:30pm: U12 Softball at Redfield

Friday, July 15

Senior Menu: Breaded codfish, parsley buttered potatoes, creamy coleslaw, sherbet, whole wheat bread.

Anniv: Carroll & Helen Nehls • Lorin & Julie Flihs
Birthdays: Sharon Young • Bob Pray
6:00pm: Amateurs at Northville (DH)

Saturday, July 16

Birthdays: Linda Thurston • Richard Voss • June Ackman • Linda Stearns
10:00am: Emmanuel Lutheran pastor at Rosewood Court

Apts for Rent

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The Life of Stanley Stearns



The funeral service for Stanley Stearns, 88, of Hecla, SD, was held Thursday, June 30, 2016 at St. John's Lutheran Church, Hecla, with Pastor Craig Grams and Pastor Jay Haaland officiating. Burial was at the Hecla City Cemetery. Stanley fell asleep Friday, June 24, 2016, at Avera Mother Joseph Manor, Aberdeen.

Stanley Scott Stearns was born on August 6, 1927 to Lester and Marion (Stowe) Stearns in Hecla. He grew up helping on the family farm and attended Wilmsen Country School. Stanley graduated from Hecla High School in 1945. He attended SDSU and was in ROTC, until returning home to take over the farm when his father died.

Stanley and Irma Bretsch were married December 9, 1953 at Peace Lutheran Church, rural Hecla. They made their home on the Stearns homestead farm, where they raised their boys, and took in Irma's family when they immigrated from Germany. Irma passed away in 2010. Stan continued working on the farm through 2014, and lived there until February of 2015 when he moved to the nursing home due to his health.

Stan was active in the community. He served on the Liberty Township Board for over 50 years, was secretary of the Hecla Bowling Association, and held various offices at Peace Lutheran Church. Stan was known for his willingness to help others. He welded for many area

farmers and hired many farm hands who became like family. Stan enjoyed hunting, fishing, and playing cards. He was also an avid race fan. Family meant everything to Stan and he was proud of everyone's accomplishments, especially when grandson Mike won the WISSOTA National Championship in 2013.

Grateful for having shared Stanley's life are his two sons: James Stearns of Groton and Rollin (Donna) Stearns of Hecla; nine grandchildren: Lester Stearns, Stephanie (Mike) Ewalt, Lauren (Jennifer) Stearns, Samantha (Andy) Jondahl, Celeste (Joe) Saylor, Michael (Katie Beck) Stearns, Susan (Nik) Zuhlsdorf, Scott (Kayla Inman) Stearns, and Trisha Stearns; 14 great-grandchildren: Lyndsie Stearns, Amelia and Zoey Ewalt, Abigail and Gabriel Stearns, Lane, Levi, Lawson and Lexton Jondahl, Kendra and Katarina Saylor, and Logan, Hayden and Hadley Zuhlsdorf; sisters-in-law: Hannelore Quandt, Edda Levine, Renate Hastings, and Kay Bretsch; cousin: Gerald Bretsch; and close friends: Karen and Orland Lunzman and Nancy and Ron Frohling.

Stanley was preceded in death by his wife, Irma Stearns; parents, Lester and Marion Stearns; mother-in-law, Elsbeth Bretsch; grandson, Jordan Stearns; granddaughter, Annette Stearns; daughter-in-law, Linda Glover Stearns; sister-in-law, Brunhilde Petermann; and brothers-in-law: Fred Quandt and Karl Bretsch.

The Life of Donald Walter

Services for Donald Walter will be 11 a.m., Saturday, July 16, 2016 at the United Methodist Church, Groton. Rev. Thomas Carlson will officiate. Burial will follow in Union Cemetery.

Visitation will be held at Paetznick-Garness Fuenral Chapel, Groton, Friday from 5-7 p.m. with a prayer service at 7 p.m.

Donald Merle Walter was born March 22, 1928 and fell asleep Sunday, July 10, 2016 at Golden Living Center, Groton, at the age of 88. He was born on the family farm in Riverside Township north of Groton, SD to Merle R. Walter and Ethel (Hendershott) Walter. He attended the Happy Hour Grade School with his 3 brothers in Riverside Township for 8 years and completed high school in Groton during the era of WWII, graduating in 1946. He was always a hard worker and got his first paycheck while still in grade school, working for his uncle doing spring planting in the field. He was sometimes allowed to skip school to help with the farm work, but he always managed to make it to football practice. He lettered 3 years in football and basketball. His basketball team even played a game against the original Harlem Globetrotters, losing of course. One of his prized possessions was his "To Donnie, From Babe Ruth" autographed baseball.



Don's mother fell asleep on Easter Sunday in 1941 when he was 13 years old. His father later married Alice Shearn and they raised the four boys on the farm. After high school, Don continued farming with his father, who had become ill.

In 1952, Don married Joy Simon of Zeona, SD. That same year he and Roy Richards partnered to farm Roy's land northeast of Groton, with Don eventually buying him out. Don and Joy lived in Groton for a short time before moving to their new house on the farm. Son Allen was born in 1953 followed by daughter Donna in 1954.

Don was very active in the community, serving on the Groton Township Board, the Groton School Board, the Farmers Union, the Masons, and the Methodist Church, serving in many offices over the years. He liked to play cards, snowmobile, and golf, taking up the game at age 50. Don and Joy spent many winters in Mesa, Arizona beginning in 1983, where they eventually bought a home in a golf resort. They were also able to travel quite a bit, often with their close friends Rob and Lois Clemensen. In 1991, Don "retired" from farming and the couple moved into town in Groton. Their son, Allen, and his family, moved from Atlanta to run the farm, although Don could often be found there helping out. He helped develop the Olive Grove golf course in Groton, including plowing the land.

After Joy fell asleep in 2010, Don continued living in their home until he moved to the Golden Living Center in Groton in 2015, after a battle with cancer.

Survivors include his son Allen (Joyce), Groton; daughter Donna (Mario) DeLudos, Sturgis, SD; three granddaughters, Michelle Walter (Matt Schwer), St. Paul, MN; Jessica Marshall, Kula, HI; Holly Walter, Minneapolis, MN; brother Jack, Groton; and three sisters-in-law.

Donald was preceded in death by his parents, wife Joy, and brothers Vernon and David.

Casket bearers will be Marc Hanson, Alan Strom, Jeff Howard, Roger Rix, Hal Clemensen and Connor Hanson.

The Life of Betty Beck



Mass of Christian Burial for Betty Beck, 94, of Claremont will be 10:30 a.m., Friday, July 15, 2016, at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church. Father Mike Kelly will officiate. Burial will follow in Huffton Cemetery.

Visitation will be held at Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton, from 5-7 p.m. on Thursday.

Betty fell asleep July 12, 2016 at her home in Claremont.

Betty Jean Beck was born July 28, 1921 to Frank and Cora (Holtlander) Cain in Brown County. As a youngster, she lived on a farm near Huffton. Betty graduated from Claremont High School in 1940. After attending Northern Normal College, she taught in several area rural schools for eight years in the Claremont area. On January 26, 1946, she married Lowell J. Beck shortly after his four years of military service. They made their home in Claremont in the same house where Lowell was born. She continued to live in this home until the time of her passing.

Betty was a life long member of St. John's the Baptist Catholic Church, now named St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church, Groton.

She was a charter member of the American Legion Auxiliary since 1947.

She is survived by four daughters: Rebecca (David) Traylor of Claremont, Cynthia (Robert) Weibel of Rhinelander, Wisconsin, Bonnie (Nick) Jenniges of Rapid City and Brenda Beck of Claremont. Betty is also survived by 5 grandchildren, 16 great-grandchildren and one sister, Peggy Pierson of Forman, North Dakota.

Preceding her in death were her husband, Lowell in 1991, one son, six sisters, two brothers and two grandchildren.

Honorary Casketbearers will be Leon Vickers and David Traylor.

Casketbearers will be nephews, Mike Hemen and Mark Pierson, son-in-laws, Robert Weibel and Nick Jenniges.



OPEN HOUSE

July 17 1:00-3:00

805 N 3rd St

Groton

More info on

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For Sale

Gov. Daugaard Issues Emergency Fire Declaration

PIERRE, S.D. – Gov. Dennis Daugaard has issued an emergency fire declaration for 13 central and western South Dakota counties that have been impacted by drought conditions.

The counties are: Butte, Custer, Fall River, Haakon, Harding, Hughes, Jackson, Jones, Lawrence, Meade, Pennington, Perkins and Stanley.

Gov. Daugaard said the declaration allows state government services to be used as necessary to help the counties that are part of the declaration. The declaration was recommended by the state Drought Task Force which was activated by the Governor this week.

“Widespread drought, low humidity and high temperatures have led to a serious fire hazard in those 13 counties,” said Gov. Daugaard. “Persistent prairie fires could diminish the feed and water supplies needed for livestock; or create hardships for individuals, businesses and governments by destroying public, private and agricultural property.” (Audio)

The declaration allows one single engine air tanker (SEAT) plane to be stationed in Pierre and be managed by the South Dakota Department of Agriculture’s Division of Wildland Fire. The plane will respond as needed to fires in the declared counties. If used, the state would cover 90 percent of the cost while the counties would pay the other 10 percent. Additionally, the SEAT will be available to use on prairie fires affecting federal and tribal lands through existing agreements.

“It has been a dry year in parts of South Dakota. Sixty percent of the land in our state is abnormally dry and counties primarily west of the river are experiencing moderate to extreme drought,” Gov. Daugaard said. “By declaring an emergency the state will be prepared to assist counties when and if fires break out.”

The Black Hills Forest Fire Protection District is not included in the declaration. The declaration period begins Friday, July 16, 2016 and will last no longer than Dec. 31, 2016.

Junior Teener Region Tournament

Groton defeated Mobridge, 16-14, and then defeated Milbank to advance in the loser’s bracket of the Junior Teener Region Tournament being played at Locke-Karst Field in Groton.

Today, Groton plays Sisseton at noon with the winner advancing to the championship game at 3 p.m. today against Warner/Ipswich/Northville.

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The house of Robert and Lois Krueger at 21 N 4th St., Groton, was demolished Wednesday afternoon by Hanlon Brothers. The house is shown below before it was demolished. They will be building a new home on the same lot. (Above photo by Tina Kosel. Below photo by Paul Kosel)



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South Dakota Ends Fiscal Year With Another Surplus

PIERRE, S.D. – South Dakota state government closed the 2016 budget year on June 30 marking the fifth consecutive year with a surplus, Gov. Dennis Daugaard announced today. The state general fund budget for Fiscal Year 2016 ended with both lower expenditures and higher revenues than budgeted.

The majority of the surplus was a result of state agencies demonstrating fiscal restraint. State agencies spent \$10.4 million, or 0.74 percent, less than appropriated. Additionally, revenue for Fiscal Year 2016 exceeded estimates adopted by the Legislature last March by \$3.6 million, or 0.24 percent. In total, the state's budget for Fiscal Year 2016 ended with a \$14.1 million surplus.

"This marks the fifth year in a row that we have maintained structural balance in our budget. This was my number one priority when I took office," Gov. Daugaard said. "Even with our revenue stream being soft the past few months, all areas of state government were able to spend fewer tax dollars than appropriated to contribute to the budget surplus. Finishing Fiscal Year 2016 in the black puts South Dakota's budget in a positive position as we begin the 2017 fiscal year." (Audio)

State agencies again remained within their appropriated budgets in FY2016. Collectively, the three branches of state government spent \$10,427,398 less than appropriated. This reversion includes \$2.4 million across all state government due to a decrease in the state paid health insurance rate; \$2 million from the Board of Regents due to lower utility expenditures; \$1.3 million from the Department of Human Services related to lower than anticipated operating expenditures and vacancies at the South Dakota Developmental Center; and \$1 million from the Department of Social Services due to nominal variances in the utilization of services.

South Dakota's sales and use tax receipts, the state's largest revenue source, finished the fiscal year 0.71 percent below budgeted levels, but grew 2.91 percent compared to the prior year. Collections from the sales and use tax accounted for 58 percent of total general fund receipts in fiscal year 2016.

Sources of revenue with notable increases came from the bank franchise tax, severance taxes and insurance company tax, which grew 22.4 percent, 13.6 percent and 6 percent, respectively, over FY2015. Ongoing receipts to the general fund totaled \$1,438,386,820 which grew 4.1 percent compared to the previous year. Total state general fund receipts were \$1,496,940,642 for the recently ended fiscal year.

South Dakota state government ended FY2016 by transferring \$14.1 million to the Budget Reserve Fund, as required by law. The state's Budget Reserve Fund now has a \$113,379,805 balance and the General Revenue Replacement Fund has a \$44,000,048 balance.

The combination of those two funds, totaling \$157,379,853, represents a combined reserve of 10.8 percent of total general fund spending for FY2016.

Special School Board Meeting in Columbia

GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #06-6
School Board Meeting July 21, 2016 – 7:00 PM
Columbia American Legion

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order with members present. Approve agenda as proposed.

OLD/CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. Public presentation and discussion of proposed building improvement measures.

ADJOURN

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Today in Weather History

1936 - Extreme heat prevailed across the central U.S. as severe drought raged from Texas to the Dakotas. Record high temperatures were established in sixteen states that summer, including readings as high as 120 degrees in the Great Plains Region. On this particular date, afternoon highs for 113 stations across the state of Iowa averaged 108.7 degrees. (David Ludlum)

1957 - Hail, with some stones up to an inch in diameter, covered the ground to a depth of three inches ruining crops in the Bath area of New Hampshire. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Severe thunderstorms in Iowa produced eight inches of golf ball size hail near Grafton, IA, completely stripping corn stalks in the area. Hail caused more than a million dollars damage to crops in Worth County and Mitchell County, and another million dollars damage in Ada County and Crawford County. Unseasonably cool weather prevailed in the Great Plains Region. Eight cities reported record low temperatures for the date, including Duluth, MN, with a reading of 37 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)


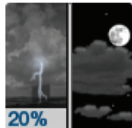




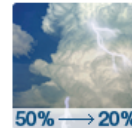

1988 - Severe thunderstorms produced large hail and damaging winds in the Northern Atlantic Coast Region during the afternoon and evening hours. Thunderstorms also spawned a rather strong tornado near Westtown, NY, and drenched Agawam, MA, with four inches of rain. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Afternoon and evening thunderstorms produced severe weather from eastern New Mexico to central Nebraska. One hundred soldiers were injured by flying debris and collapsing tents during a thunderstorm near Trinidad, CO. Thunderstorms in Colorado produced wind gusts to 77 mph at La Junta. Early morning thunderstorms produced torrential rains over parts of Louisiana, with 7.50 inches at Carencro, and 5.85 inches at Morgan City. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

2005 - Death Valley had 7 consecutive days (July 14-20) with high temperatures equal to or above 125 degrees.

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Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night
							
Partly Sunny then Slight Chance T-storms	Slight Chance T-storms then Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny then Slight Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms then Slight Chance T-storms	Slight Chance T-storms then Mostly Clear
High: 75 °F	Low: 51 °F	High: 80 °F	Low: 59 °F	High: 83 °F	Low: 63 °F	High: 82 °F	Low: 61 °F

Scattered Thunderstorms North-Central/West River Scattered Showers Northeast SD/Western MN

Today

Highs: Low 70s East - Low 80s West
5 to 15 degrees cooler than average




Tonight

Lows: 50s



National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD

 weather.gov/Aberdeen

 NWS Aberdeen  @NWSAberdeen

Updated: 7/14/2016 4:33 AM Central

Published on: 07/14/2016 at 4:36AM

Cooler than average temperatures are expected today with some limited moisture across the area. We may see scattered showers moving down the Red River valley this afternoon, while north central SD and west river could get some weak/short lived thunderstorms. More widespread moisture is expected Saturday/Saturday night.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 81.0 F at 5:33 PM

Low Outside Temp: 54.9 F at 4:42 AM

High Gust: 25.0 Mph at 12:09 PM

Precip:

Today's Info

Record High: 106° in 1931

Record Low: 42 in 1967

Average High: 84°F

Average Low: 59°F

Average Precip in July: 1.49

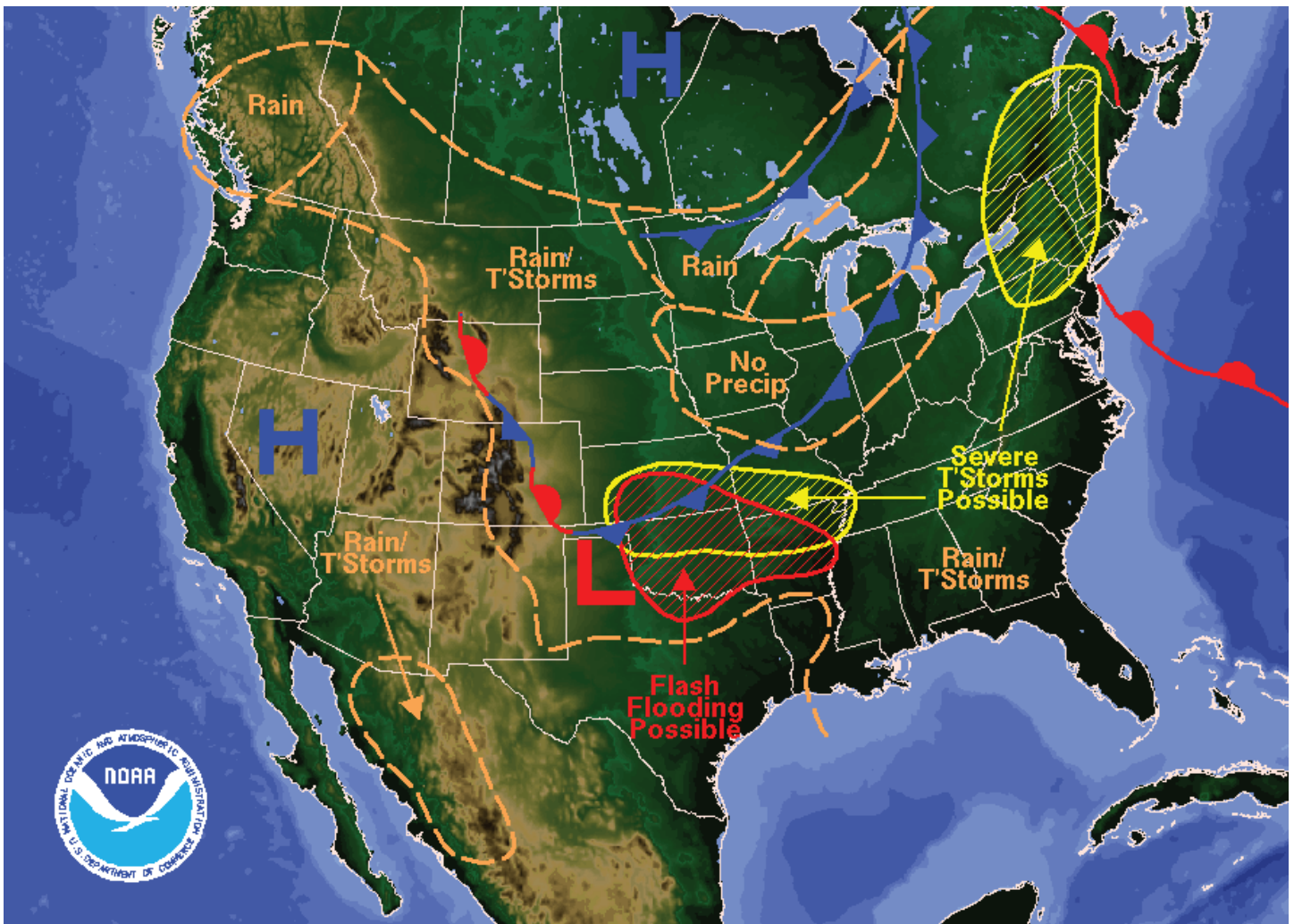
Precip to date in July: 2.74

Average Precip to date: 12.33

Precip Year to Date: 9.40

Sunset Tonight: 9:19 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:00 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Thu, Jul 14, 2016, issued 4:33 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McReynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

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HOW CAN I KNOW FOR CERTAIN?

A television producer in Great Britain was in the process of developing a series on Heaven and Hell. He wanted to make certain that his facts were right so he decided to call the office of the Archbishop.

"How can I be certain that the position of the Roman Catholic Church on Heaven and Hell is correct and that what you are teaching is true?"

Back came the answer, "Die."

Perhaps the best, shortest, simplest and most complete summary of the Good News comes from Paul and Silas while in prison. When the jailer asked them what he needed to do to be saved they answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved." There is nothing more and certainly nothing less for anyone to do to be born again and be assured of life everlasting.

But they did not stop with a message that was for the jailer only. They wanted him to know that his family was also included in the invitation. So they said, "Along with your entire family!" - which also included the jailer's servants. We must always remember that it was not the jailer's faith that brought salvation to his household. Each of them had to come to Jesus in faith believing that He alone was the One who brought them eternal life.

It is indeed a wonderful example of what God can do within a family when the father honors Christ.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we pray that every father everywhere will come to know You as their Savior and by the way they live bring their family to Christ. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved – you and your household." Acts 16:31

News from the Associated Press

Wildfire in Rapid City shuts down popular hiking spot

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A wildfire in Rapid City has shut down a popular hiking spot.

The fire on what is known as M Hill covered about 15 acres late Wednesday and was not contained. No structures were threatened.

Fire Department spokesman Jim Bussell says about 100 city, county, state and federal fire personnel responded to the blaze. It was being fought on the ground and from the air.

There was no immediate word on the cause.

Forest Service hosting guided Elk Creek Canyon 'moon walk'

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The U.S. Forest Service is hosting a moonlit, guided hike this weekend at one of the caves found in the Black Hills.

The 1.5-mile "moon walk" at Elk Creek Canyon is scheduled for 7 p.m. Saturday. The Forest Service calls it an easy to moderate hike.

Visitors will walk to the rim of Elk Creek Canyon near Bethlehem Cave. Black Hills National Forest geologist Karl Emanuel will discuss the geology of the caves in the area and the importance of safeguarding them.

The Forest Service says interested attendees should be ready to hike on uneven terrain. Participants are asked to bring flashlights, water and bug repellent. Long pants and sturdy footwear are recommended for comfort and safety.

Thune meets with Delta after plane lands at wrong airport

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. Sen. John Thune has met with officials from Delta Air Lines to talk about a jetliner with 130 passengers on board that landed at the wrong airport in South Dakota last week.

The Republican senator said Wednesday that the discussion is the first step in making sure the event isn't repeated. Thune says it's important that Delta and government officials take precautions to avoid unnecessary future errors.

The Airbus A320 landed at Ellsworth Air Force Base when its destination was an airport in Rapid City. Ellsworth is about 10 miles due north of Rapid City Regional Airport.

The National Transportation Safety Board is investigating the incident. Thune is chairman of the Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee, which has jurisdiction over the board.

Daugaard: State ends 2016 budget year with \$14M surplus

JAMES NORD, Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota ended the 2016 budget year with money to spare, sending \$14.1 million to budget reserves and marking the fifth consecutive year of surplus, Gov. Dennis Daugaard said Wednesday.

Revenues grew by an unexpected \$3.6 million over economic estimates lawmakers approved in March, and state agencies spent \$10.4 million less than budgeted for the fiscal year that ended June 30. Overall general fund receipts totaled roughly \$1.5 billion for the budget year, and South Dakota has nearly \$160 million in reserves.

"This marks the fifth year in a row that we have maintained structural balance in our budget. This

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was my number one priority when I took office," Daugaard said in a statement. "Even with our revenue stream being soft the past few months, all areas of state government were able to spend fewer tax dollars than appropriated to contribute to the budget surplus."

Areas of lower spending included \$2.4 million in lower-than-expected state employee health insurance costs; \$2 million in lower utility spending from the Board of Regents; \$1.3 million from the state Department of Human Services because of vacancies at the South Dakota Developmental Center and lower-than-expected operating spending; and \$1 million in lower Department of Social Services program expenditures.

South Dakota saw notable growth in the bank franchise tax, insurance company tax and severance taxes.

The state's goal is to be in good shape to propose a balanced fiscal year 2018 budget and have one-time money available to spend in the current budget year, Bureau of Finance and Management Commissioner Jason Dilges said.

Sales tax collections, the biggest state revenue source, accounted for 58 percent of general fund receipts in fiscal year 2016. Collections were about 0.7 percent below target, but grew nearly 3 percent over the previous fiscal year.

Sales tax receipts grew about 1.6 percent in fiscal year 2015.

South Dakota governor issues fire declaration in 13 counties

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Dennis Daugaard has issued an emergency fire declaration for 13 counties.

The governor says the declaration allows state government services to be used as necessary to help the designated counties. It also calls for an air tanker plane to be stationed in Pierre.

The declaration is for Butte, Custer, Fall River, Haakon, Harding, Hughes, Jackson, Jones, Lawrence, Meade, Pennington, Perkins and Stanley counties.

Daugaard says widespread drought, low humidity and high temperatures have led to a serious fire hazard in those counties.

Searchers locate body of man who drowned in Pactola Lake

SILVER CITY, S.D. (AP) — Authorities in western South Dakota have recovered the body of a man who drowned in Pactola Lake, thanks to some help from first responders from North Dakota.

The Pennington County Sheriff's Office says the body of 64-year-old Dana Caswell, of Deadwood, was recovered shortly after noon on Wednesday.

Authorities say Caswell jumped out of a boat to swim on Sunday and wasn't able to make it back to the watercraft. The drowning occurred where the water is 130 feet deep.

Searchers were aided by a remotely operated vehicle from the Burleigh County Sheriff's Office in North Dakota. The vehicle uses sonar to locate objects in deep water and areas where visibility is low.

A dive team from Stutsman County in North Dakota also helped with the recovery effort.

May filling more government posts; euroskeptics in key roles

DANICA KIRKA, Associated Press

JILL LAWLESS, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British Prime Minister Theresa May filled out her Cabinet posts Thursday, assembling a government that sweeps away many of her predecessor's supporters and places strongly anti-EU

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figures in key international roles.

After filling half a dozen of the top jobs Wednesday — including surprise choice Boris Johnson as foreign Secretary — May made new appointments Thursday, including Justice Secretary Liz Truss and Education Secretary Justine Greening.

She also cleared out rivals, firing stalwarts of David Cameron's outgoing government including Culture Secretary John Whittingdale, Education Secretary Nicky Morgan and — most significantly — Justice Secretary Michael Gove, her onetime competitor for the job of Conservative leader.

Gove led the "leave" side in Britain's EU referendum battle alongside former London Mayor Boris Johnson, then betrayed him by making a bid for Conservative leadership — a job Johnson had long sought.

May won the leadership battle and quickly sacked Gove, who is now seen as treacherous by many Conservatives. She rewarded Johnson with the plum job of foreign secretary.

He is a surprising choice to be Britain's top diplomat. The former mayor of London is internationally famous — but for rumpled eccentricity and distinctly undiplomatic gaffes, rather than statesmanlike behavior.

In April, Johnson suggested that U.S. President Barack Obama had an "ancestral dislike" of Britain because he is part-Kenyan.

Johnson said he was "very excited" to be part of the government. Asked whom he would apologize to first, he said "the United States of America will be at the front of the queue."

New Treasury chief Philip Hammond reassured a startled world that Johnson — whose responsibilities include oversight of the MI6 spy agency — would be a team player

"The Cabinet works collectively and we have got a range of different characters and a range of different styles and a range of different talent," he told BBC radio. "The lead and the tone will be set by the prime minister."

Lesser-known than Johnson but at least as important to Britain's future is David Davis, the cumber-somely titled Secretary of State for Exiting the European Union. Davis, a veteran lawmaker who has twice run for the Conservative leadership, is one of the staunchest euroskeptics in British politics.

He is also a formidable battler, as May knows. For years the libertarian Davis has sparred with May over the powers of Britain's spy agencies. He is currently suing the British government in the European courts against surveillance laws May introduced as home secretary.

Davis has previously said that Britain should take a "brisk but measured" approach to exit talks with the EU. He has said that Article 50 of the EU constitution — the formal trigger for two years of negotiations — should be invoked by the start of 2017.

Other EU leaders are already pressuring Britain to open formal talks — and warning that the U.K. cannot have access to the single European market without accepting free movement of EU citizens, a sticking point for many pro-Brexit Britons.

The foreign policy spokesman for German Chancellor Angela Merkel's party in Parliament said Thursday that many British suggestions on the country's future relationship with the European Union are "unworkable."

Juergen Hardt said that "free access to the common market means, among other things, accepting other fundamental freedoms such as the freedom of movement."

New British Treasury chief Hammond tried to sound a reassuring note Thursday, pledging that he would not introduce an emergency national budget — even though there are question marks hanging over the economy following the country's decision to leave the EU.

Hammond offered calming tones to the markets and the public in a series of interviews the morning after taking office.

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"The number one challenge is to stabilize the economy, send signals of confidence about the future, the plans we have for the future, to the markets, to businesses, to international investors," Hammond told Sky News. "Britain is open for business. We are not turning our back on the world."

Hammond will meet with the head of the Bank of England, Mark Carney, on Thursday to "assess where we are."

The comments came before the central bank's Monetary Policy Committee voted not to cut interest rates in a bid to stimulate the economy.

In a surprise move, it kept the bank's benchmark interest rate at the current record low of 0.5 percent, where it has stood since the depths of the financial crisis in March 2009. It also decided against a new bout of quantitative easing, under which it effectively pumps money into the economy through the purchase of government bonds from financial institutions.

But the committee hinted it would loosen policy in August, when it will have fresh forecasts about the state of the British economy.

Carney has indicated that some sort of stimulus will be offered over the summer as his pre-vote warnings about the impact on the economy had begun to crystallize.

Hammond acknowledged that investment in Britain had been shaken since the referendum result.

"There has been a chilling effect," he told the BBC. "We have seen an effect in markets, we have seen business investment decisions being paused because businesses now want to take stock, want to understand how we will take forward our renegotiation with the EU, what our aspirations are for the future trading relationship between Britain and the European Union."

Speakers List: Trump's convention has pols and celebs

STEVE PEOPLES, Associated Press

JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

CLEVELAND (AP) — There are war heroes, a casino mogul and even an underwear model, yet Donald Trump is relying heavily on his party's establishment to fill the speaking program for next week's Republican National Convention.

The presumptive presidential nominee has approved a convention program that features at least 20 current or former elected officials, including Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, House Speaker Paul Ryan and Texas Sen. Ted Cruz. Noticeably absent from a speaker list obtained by The Associated Press early Thursday are many athletes or A-List celebrities that Trump's team long suggested would help make his presidential nominating convention unlike any other.

Yet there is no shortage of political outsiders.

Speakers will include four of Trump's children, Las Vegas casino owner Phil Ruffin, and actor and former underwear model Antonio Sabato Jr. College football star Tim Tebow will also appear on stage, the campaign confirmed Thursday morning. And in a slap at Democratic contender Hillary Clinton, Mark Geist and John Tiegen will also address the convention, both survivors of the deadly 2012 attack on the American diplomatic consulate in Benghazi, Libya.

"This impressive lineup of veterans, political outsiders, faith leaders and those who know Donald Trump the best — his family and longtime friends — represent a cross-section of real people facing the same challenges as every American household," said Trump spokesman Jason Miller.

Despite the list of familiar politicos, the convention program is a reminder that the Republican Party remains deeply divided over Trump's candidacy.

Some of the GOP's biggest names were not on the list because they refused to participate in four-day convention, which begins on Monday.

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The GOP's two living presidents, George H.W. Bush and George W. Bush, and its two most recent presidential nominees, John McCain and Mitt Romney, all plan to avoid the Cleveland affair — as does Ohio's Republican Gov. John Kasich. Shrugging off the high-profile absences, Trump's team suggested the convention lineup would help highlight Trump's outsider appeal.

"We are totally over-booked. We have great speakers, we have winners, we have people that aren't only political people," Trump told Fox News Channel on Tuesday. "We have a lot of people that are just champions and winners."

The New York billionaire acknowledged in recent days that he'd be hewing a little closer to tradition. "Look, I have great respect for the institution of the conventions. I mean to me, it's very important. So we're not going to change the wheel," he said on Fox.

New England Patriots star quarterback Tom Brady, a Trump friend, was initially teased as a possible speaker, but will not appear next week in Cleveland. Neither will former Indiana University basketball coach Bobby Knight or legendary boxing promoter Don King, a Cleveland resident and passionate Trump supporter.

The program will instead feature people like pro golfer Natalie Gulbis, retired astronaut Eileen Collins, and Ultimate Fighting Championship president Dana White. In addition to the Benghazi survivors, former Navy SEAL Marcus Luttrell, author of the book, "Lone Survivor," will make an appearance, along with Wisconsin Sheriff David Clarke, a vocal critic of the Black Lives Matter movement.

The convention will also highlight religious leaders such as Jerry Falwell Jr., son of the famed televangelist, and Haskel Lookstein, the New York rabbi who converted Trump's daughter, Ivanka to Judaism.

Trump does not forget his business relationships, giving speaking slots to real estate investor Tom Barrack, PayPal co-founder Peter Thiel and even the general manager for Virginia's Trump Winery, Kerry Woolard.

And in a nod toward party unity, Trump will feature several former presidential competitors, including Cruz, Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, Ben Carson and Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee.

Two finalists in Trump's search for a running mate made the list as well: New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie and Newt Gingrich. The other finalist, Indiana Gov. Mike Pence, was not included in the program obtained by the AP.

Trump had already announced that his children would be speaking, along with his wife Melania, whom he said was already working on remarks.

Ivanka Trump, who along with Trump's other adult children, has been playing an increasingly central role in the campaign, predicted in a recent radio interview the GOP convention would be "a convention unlike any we've ever seen."

"It will be substantive. It will be interesting. It will be different. It's not going to be a ho-hum lineup of, you know, the typical politicians," she said.

What may happen next if Japan's emperor decides to abdicate

MARI YAMAGUCHI, Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Japan's royal palace has denied reports that Emperor Akihito intends to relinquish his title in the next few years and retire, but the news still raised questions about the possibility of a succession while the 82-year-old emperor is alive. Some key points about the monarchy and what could happen:

A MONARCHY TRANSFORMED: Akihito is the 125th emperor in a line believed to date to the fifth century, making it the world's oldest hereditary monarchy. In the past, the emperor was worshipped as a deity, though that changed after World War II, and Akihito remains a head priest of Japan's indigenous

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Shinto religion. The emperor is a purely symbolic figure with no political power today, and Akihito has brought the imperial family closer to the public. In addition to performing ceremonies and greeting foreign dignitaries, he has visited towns to comfort residents following deadly earthquakes. He was the first emperor to marry a commoner, Empress Michiko, and has decided to be cremated upon his death, a plan that will break a centuries-old burial custom.

NEXT IN LINE: Crown Prince Naruhito, 56, is the elder of Akihito's two sons and first in the line of succession. An expert of medieval-era water transport systems, Naruhito is an avid hiker and skier and plays the viola. His marriage to former diplomat Masako Owada raised expectations of adding a modern face to imperial institutions, but Masako is still recovering from stress-induced mental conditions she developed after giving birth to their daughter. The succession law only allows male emperors, so Naruhito's only child, Aiko, 14, cannot inherit. Instead, Naruhito's younger brother Akishino is second in line and his son Hisahito, 7, is third. Discussions on changing the law to allow female succession ended with the boy's birth.

THE PROCEDURE TO ABDICATE: The Imperial House Law stipulates imperial matters including succession but lacks a provision regarding an abdication by a reigning emperor. That omission virtually allows only posthumous succession. Experts say if Akihito does wish to retire, changing the law and taking other steps to allow it would take a few years. The law, enacted in 1947 along with the Constitution, does allow for a regency to be established if an emperor is seriously ill, physically or mentally, and is incapable of performing state duties. The reports that Akihito was considering retiring cited his wish to not keep the title if he could not fully perform his duties.

OTHER ABDICATIONS: In Japan, the last abdication was about 200 years ago during the feudal Edo period, when Emperor Kokaku abdicated to son Ninko, while he ascended to a superior title. Abroad, Spain's former King Juan Carlos abdicated at age 76 to King Felipe in 2014 amid scandals, and the succession laws to allow it were changed in just two weeks. In the Netherlands, Queen Beatrix in 2013 at age 75, citing old age, abdicated to her son Alexander, who became the country's first male successor in more than a century. In Belgium, the former King Albert, then 79, abdicated to his son Philippe in 2013 due to health reasons.

Fear Factor: Americans scared of their presidential options

LISA LERER, Associated Press

EMILY SWANSON, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The vast majority of Americans say they are afraid of at least one of the two major candidates — Hillary Clinton or Donald Trump — winning the White House, a remarkable finding that reflects an unsettled nation unhappy with its choice.

Eighty-one percent of Americans say they would feel afraid following the election of one of the two polarizing politicians, according to a new Associated Press-GfK poll. That includes a quarter who say it doesn't matter who wins: they're scared of both.

Three-quarters of voters say their pick for president is motivated by a desire to cast their Election Day ballot against Clinton or Trump, more than those who say they're voting for the candidate who shares their positions on the issues or is the most qualified to hold the office.

Said Dennis Fernandez, 67, of Florence, Arizona: "If Hillary Clinton won, I'd probably consider suicide. I'm definitely not a fan."

And Lawrence James, 55, of Durham, North Carolina, said: "If Trump wins, well, we've already checked out Malta and New Zealand. I'm just not comfortable that he's not going to make rushed, uninformed decisions."

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On the eve of the summer's political conventions, at which the general election campaign officially begins, the latest AP-GfK findings underscore the deep sense of unease that is sharpening the political divide in America and shaping an already nasty race for president.

So much so that notable numbers of Americans even hold negative views about the candidate they want to win: 14 percent of both Trump's and Clinton's supporters say they're backing a candidate they don't like.

The survey was conducted after the fatal police shootings of two black men by police officers last week in Louisiana and Minnesota, and mostly after a sniper seeking revenge for those slayings killed five police officers in Dallas during a peaceful protest march.

The poll found Americans hold resoundingly negative opinions of both candidates. Fifty-seven percent have an unfavorable view of Clinton, compared to 37 percent who have a favorable view. Sixty-three percent have a negative view of Trump, compared to the 31 percent who think well of him.

"I really don't love either of the candidates. What do they say? It's a choice between hot and hell," said Annette Scott, 70, of Monmouth County, New Jersey.

Scott, a retiree, said she's seeking answers to the country's problems — and failing to find them from either candidate.

"Please give me solutions. Whether they are workable or not workable, at least propose them so everybody can talk about it," she said.

Fifty-six percent of Americans said they would feel afraid and 48 percent say they'd feel regret if Trump wins the White House. Just 22 percent said they'd be proud and 26 percent excited should America pick Trump on Election Day.

Clinton doesn't fare much better: If she's elected president, 48 percent say they would be afraid and 46 percent say they would feel regretful. Only 27 percent of Americans would be proud of that choice, and 26 percent would be excited at her election.

Half of Clinton's own supporters consider her only slightly or not at all honest, and more than a third say she's only slightly or not at all likable. Overall, only a quarter of Americans think Clinton is at least somewhat honest. The poll was conducted after the FBI recommended she not face criminal charges for her use of a private email account and servers as secretary of state.

In recent weeks, Clinton has started to acknowledge that many voters simply do not trust her.

"I personally know that I have work to do on this front," she said in Chicago last month. "You can't just talk someone into trusting you. You've got to earn it."

Still, for Clinton, there was some good news in the poll: nearly two-thirds of Americans think she'll win the election.

Forty-seven percent of Trump's supporters consider him only slightly or not at all civil, 39 percent say he's slightly or not at all likable and 31 percent say he's only slightly or not at all qualified. Of those backing him, 14 percent consider him at least somewhat racist.

But even while they voice concerns about their own candidate, vast majorities of voters see the alternative as far worse. Eighty percent of Trump supporters and three-quarters of Clinton backers say a major reason for their support is opposition to the other candidate.

The coalitions backing the candidates have remained largely unchanged from the primary race, with Clinton doing better among women and minority voters.

Women are more likely than men to have a favorable opinion of Clinton, 40 percent to 33 percent. Sixty-eight percent of blacks, 52 percent of Hispanics and 28 percent of whites have a favorable view of Clinton.

Men are more likely than women to have a favorable opinion of Trump, 34 percent to 28 percent. Forty

percent of whites, 13 percent of Hispanics and 7 percent of blacks have a favorable opinion of Trump.

Vietnam protests China's activities in South China Sea

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — Vietnam on Thursday protested China's recent activities in the disputed South China Sea, saying they seriously violate Vietnamese sovereignty.

Chinese state media reported that two Chinese civilian aircraft on Wednesday landed successfully on two newly built airstrips on Mischief and Subi reefs. China also said it had completed four lighthouses on disputed reefs and was launching a fifth.

The latest developments came as a U.N. arbitration tribunal this week ruled that China's vast territorial claims are violating international maritime law. The Hague-based Permanent Court of Arbitration ruled in favor of the Philippines, which challenged Beijing's expansive claims to virtually the entire South China Sea. Beijing says it does not recognize the decision.

Vietnam Foreign Ministry spokesman Le Hai Binh demanded Beijing cease actions that complicate the situation.

"Despite the opposition of Vietnam and concerns by the international community, those actions conducted by China have seriously violated Vietnam's sovereignty and are unlawful and cannot change the fact about Vietnam's sovereignty over the Hoang Sa and Truong Sa archipelagoes," Binh told reporters, referring to the Paracel and Spratly islands in the South China Sea.

Binh reiterated that Vietnam has all "legal basis and historical evidences" to affirm its sovereignty over the two island chains.

Six regional governments have overlapping claims in the South China Sea, waters that are rich in fishing stocks and potential energy resources and where an estimated \$5 trillion in global trade passes each year.

In Beijing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said Thursday that "if anyone challenges China's rights and interests by taking provocative actions" based on the ruling, "China will surely make a resolute response."

Vice Foreign Minister Liu Zhenmin on Wednesday said that said Beijing could declare an air defense identification zone over the waters if it felt threatened, a move that would sharply escalate tensions.

Although it claims some of the same land features as the Philippines, Vietnam welcomed the arbitration process initiated by Manila and took a strong position against Beijing in the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations. The government said it will study the ruling before commenting on it.

Large number of GOP senators skipping Trump's convention

ERICA WERNER, Associated Press

MARY CLARE JALONICK, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Sen. Steve Daines of Montana will be fly-fishing with his wife.

Sen. Jeff Flake of Arizona said he has to mow his lawn (yes, he has one even in Arizona).

Sen. Lisa Murkowski of Alaska will be traveling her state by bush plane.

And Sen. John McCain of Arizona will be visiting the Grand Canyon, and joked that his friend Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina would be coming along and might even fall in (just kidding, an aide later clarified).

All are among the GOP senators who will be skipping next week's convention in Cleveland where Donald Trump will claim the Republican Party presidential nomination.

A majority of Republican senators do plan to attend, and it's not unusual for lawmakers to skip their

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party's convention, especially if they're up for re-election and need to spend time campaigning.

But the level of rank-and-file congressional defections from this year's Republican convention is unusually high. Perhaps that's unsurprising, given the GOP establishment's well-documented discomfort with the man who stands on the cusp of becoming their presidential standard-bearer. But in the halls of the Capitol this week, some senators seemed to visibly squirm when asked about their convention plans.

Sen. John Thune of South Dakota, a member of the party leadership, gave a lengthy series of responses to questions earlier this week that ultimately left his plans unclear.

"I think it's going to be a different and unique convention experience. You know I've been to a number of them in the past, and this year is different, and we'll see how it goes," Thune said. "For most people they go because it's the Republican convention, and it's our party's effort in a presidential election year to talk about what we're for and what we're about. So that will go on."

The next day, Thune said he was still "firming up" his plans.

Confronted for months with uncomfortable questions about Trump, some senators can still seem agrieved to get asked about the presumptive nominee, and uncomfortable giving an answer. But at this late date, just days from when the convention will start on Monday, nearly all have at least decided whether or not they're going to Cleveland.

Nearly all, but not quite all.

"I'm not sure yet," Idaho Sen. Jim Risch said Wednesday, adding there are "other things going on and I've got to weigh where I can do the most good."

Of the Senate also-rans in the White House chase, only Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas will attend the convention and deliver a speech. Sens. Marco Rubio of Florida, Rand Paul of Kentucky and Graham are skipping the event.

For the nearly two dozen GOP senators up for re-election this year, the considerations are particularly sensitive, and that's especially true for the handful of vulnerable Republican senators in swing states. They must weigh sharing a convention hall with a nominee whose comments have offended women, minorities and others who can decide general elections. There are also concerns that given the "Never Trump" sentiments still nursed by some delegates, the convention could go off the rails and turn into a chaotic spectacle.

But few senators were interested in wading into such considerations on the record.

"No," Sen. Roy Blunt of Missouri said tersely when asked if he was staying away from the convention out of a desire to distance himself from Trump.

Murkowski said she had only a month to visit the remotest areas of Alaska by plane before her Aug. 16 primary.

"For me this was an easy choice" and "nothing to do" with Trump, Murkowski said.

Sen. Ron Johnson of Wisconsin, one of the most vulnerable members, said he could not go to Cleveland because "I've got to spend as much time in Wisconsin as possible."

As for his views on Trump, Johnson said: "I support all of the areas of agreement ... I'm supporting him. Let's put it this way, I will not vote for Hillary Clinton."

Even Sen. Rob Portman of Ohio, a vulnerable senator whose state is playing host to the convention, said he will only be dropping into the convention hall from time to time, but not delivering a speech or staying to watch speeches from others.

Instead he'll be spending his time on his own campaign events in and around Cleveland, including building a Habitat for Humanity home and holding a kayaking charity fundraiser, "Paddling with Patriots on the Cuyahoga River."

"I'm not going to have much time to listen to 'em because I'll be out and about," Portman said of the convention speakers.

10 Things to Know for Today The Associated Press

Your daily look at late-breaking news, upcoming events and the stories that will be talked about today:

1. ON STATEN ISLAND, GROUP WORKS TO KEEP PEACE WITH POLICE

The "Cure Violence" team walks the neighborhoods in the NYC borough, looking to head off violence and defuse arguments that can lead to police shootings two years after Eric Garner died in a confrontation there with police officers.

2. WHO'S SKIPPING GOP CONVENTION

Some Republican senators — including John McCain, Lisa Murkowski and Steve Daines — will steer clear of the convention amid the GOP establishment's discomfort with presumptive nominee Donald Trump.

3. BANK OF ENGLAND MULLS CUTTING RATES TO RECORD LOWS

The move could come as a means of giving stability to the U.K. economy, rattled by the country's vote to leave the European Union.

4. WHAT POLICE MAY EMPLOY AGAIN TO KILL VIOLENT SUSPECTS

Dallas officers were the first in the nation to use a robot to deliver and detonate a bomb to kill suspect in the sniper shootings, but other law enforcement agencies are willing and able to follow suit.

5. ISLAMIC STATE MILITANTS POSE RISING THREAT IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

But so far, ineffectual attacks by the militant group's followers in the region have shown them to be fragmented and lacking in expertise.

6. 8 OF 10 US DRIVERS ADMIT SOME LEVEL OF 'ROAD RAGE'

The most aggressive and aggrieved drivers are young men ages 19 to 39, a new AAA survey shows.

7. HAITIAN WOMEN PURSUE PATERNITY CLAIMS AGAINST UN PEACEKEEPERS

Mothers with children fathered by peacekeepers say they will now pursue claims for child support against the absentee fathers and the U.N.

8. MEDICAL EXAMINER FACES HIS TRAUMA, WEEKS AFTER PULSE RAMPAGE

Joshua Stephany experiences flashbacks of the carnage from the June 12 shootings that killed 49 at a Florida gay nightclub.

9. HOW WILDLY POPULAR SMARTPHONE GAME IS PLAYING OUT

The "Pokemon Go" craze across the U.S. has people wandering into yards, driveways and cemeteries in search of cartoon monsters.

10. 'GAME OF THRONES,' 'VEEP' VIE FOR EMMY NODS

"Black-ish" star Anthony Anderson and Lauren Graham of "Gilmore Girls" will reveal the top Emmy nominations Thursday morning.

Possible glitch sends Pokemon Go players to S. Korean city

YOUKYUNG LEE, AP Technology Writer

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — The seaside South Korean city of Sokcho is enjoying a surge of visitors who are wandering the streets at all hours as they look at their smartphones. Why? It appears to be

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the only place in the country where Pokemon Go players can chase the mobile game's virtual monsters.

Local restaurants, hotels and businesses are trying to capitalize on the sudden craze by luring tourists with photos of Pikachu and other monsters in their backyard and promising free gifts to the Pokemon "trainers." The mayor pledged to increase free Wi-Fi hotspots and battery charging stations, and travel agencies have launched Pokemon-themed tour packages to Sokcho. Hotels in the east coast city near the North Korean border reportedly saw a surge in reservations.

The mobile game has become a blockbuster hit in the U.S. within less than a week of its launch, but it has not been officially launched in South Korea and might never be. The country is likely to be excluded from the Pokemon Go's Asia launch because South Korea's government restricts Google Maps service for security reasons.

Niantic Inc., a San Francisco spinoff of Google parent Alphabet Inc., relies on Google Maps to overlay cute Nintendo characters onto the physical world. Gamers have to find spots in the real world to capture and train Psyduck, Meowth and other virtual monsters.

Media reports attributed the monsters' appearance in Sokcho to map glitches. By the way Niantic organizes the region, Sokcho and its neighboring area bordering North Korea were reportedly categorized as North Korea. Neither Google nor Niantic immediately responded to emails seeking comment Thursday.

Whatever the reason, South Korean Pokemon Go players have been going to great lengths to take advantage.

It was after midnight when college student Han Kyeol and three friends drove out of Seoul, and 4 a.m. when they arrived at a Sokcho beach.

"As soon as we got out of the car, four of us turned on our smartphones and began playing Pokemon Go," the 24-year-old said by phone from Seoul. "It was very dark but what was amazing was that there were a lot of men roaming around the beaches with smartphones in their hands at 4 a.m."

Han hadn't visited Sokcho in more than a decade, and hadn't considered a return trip before Pokemon Go came around. He enjoyed his overnight trip so much that he plans to return with his girlfriend. "We went to a 24-hour raw fish place, saw the sun rise and stopped by the main tourist attractions," he said.

Lee Jung-hwan, a 26-year-old video producer, has been traveling to Sokcho and other towns in Gangwon province to find and capture monsters since Wednesday. When he finds Pokestop, a key location where trainers can find items such as eggs that can hatch into a full monster, he shares the location on the Facebook group for Pokemon Go players in South Korea.

"I met people who took a day off to come to Sokcho, people who worked in the morning and left their job in the afternoon and people who took a vacation," he said by phone from Sokcho.

The city of 80,000 is a popular summer destination for mountain hikers and beachgoers. Local businesses are keen on adding Pokemon Go players who call the place "Pallet Town," the hometown of Pokemon's main protagonist.

The city had four times more hotel-room bookings Tuesday and Wednesday than it did on those days the previous week, the Yonhap news agency reported, citing Interpark Tour, a hotel booking website.

On Auction, the South Korean unit of eBay, tour agencies began selling round-trip bus tours to Sokcho, calling the destination Pallet Town. A local restaurant hung a banner outside welcoming the trainers to a glass of cold water and free smartphone charging. Ramada Hotel in Sokcho promised three free hotel stay packages to those who capture three monsters in Sokcho.

The city, however, is hesitant to fully embrace the game, given the central government's restrictions on Google Maps.

"For the city, it is not easy to promote what the government restricts," said Lee Se-moon, an official at Sokcho city's tourism department. "But it is a great help for the city's tourism because media continues

to report about Sokcho and game manias are promoting Sokcho.”

South Korea restricts the use of mapping data by foreign companies that do not operate its servers in the domestic market, citing concerns over disclosing military locations amid tensions with North Korea. It is not clear how the Pokemon Go phenomenon would play out ahead of a government decision expected next month on whether to allow Google to use South Korean mapping data.

Some express regrets over what the country is missing due to tensions with North Korea.

“We can’t play the game because we are a divided country, but this is what the global trend is,” said Lee, the Pokemon Go trainer in Sokcho. “I wish people could play the game here so it could stimulate the regional economy. I got to go to new places and found a beautiful cliff as I was looking for the spots.”

European markets, US futures rise ahead of BoE meeting

TERESA CERAJANO, Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — European markets and U.S. futures made early gains after a mixed performance in Asia following calming words from Britain’s new Treasury chief and ahead of a decision by the Bank of England’s Monetary Policy Committee on whether to stimulate the economy.

KEEPING SCORE: Britain’s FTSE 100 rose 0.7 percent to 6,714.49. Germany’s DAX jumped 1.3 percent to 10,060.73. France’s CAC 40 gained 0.9 percent at 4,373.63. U.S. futures indicate higher opening on Wall Street, with the Dow futures up 0.6 percent at 2,159.25 and the S&P futures higher by 0.6 percent to 18,400.00.

ASIA’S DAY: Japan’s Nikkei closed nearly 1 percent higher at 16,385.89 as the yen weakened against the dollar. Hong Kong’s Hang Seng index rose 1.1 percent at 21,561.06. China’s Shanghai Composite index fell 0.2 percent to 3,054.02. Australia’s S&P ASX 200 was up 0.4 percent at 5,411.60. South Korea’s KOSPI was up 0.2 percent at 2,008.77. In Southeast Asia, the Philippine index rose, while those of Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia were lower.

BRITAIN-POLITICS: Britain’s new Treasury chief pledged Thursday there will be no emergency national budget — even though there are question marks hanging over the economy following the country’s decision to leave the European Union. Philip Hammond, one of Prime Minister Theresa May’s first appointments, offered calming tones of reassurance to the markets and the general public in a series of interviews after taking office. The media blitz suggests that one of the new government’s first priorities is to counter worries that the economy will slip into recession amid a softening of consumer and business confidence. Hammond will meet with the head of the Bank of England, Mark Carney, on Thursday to “assess where we are.” The comments come ahead of a decision by the central bank’s Monetary Policy Committee on whether to stimulate the economy. Carney has already indicated that some sort of stimulus will be offered during the summer months as his pre-vote warnings about the impact on the economy had begun to crystallize.

ANALYST’S TAKE: “There is a general expectation among economists that the BoE and the ECB will introduce more stimulus in the coming weeks and months and this is likely to support the recent bounce,” said Alex Furber of CMC Markets, referring to the Bank of England and the European Central Bank.

CURRENCIES: The dollar rose to 105.49 yen after closing at 104.12 on Wednesday. The euro edged up to \$1.1108 after closing at \$1.1098 the previous day.

ENERGY: Benchmark U.S. crude rose 62 cents to \$45.37 a barrel after closing at \$44.75 a barrel in New York on Wednesday. Brent crude, a standard for international oil prices, added 55 cents to \$46.81

a barrel. On Wednesday, it closed at \$46.26 a barrel.

How Castile told officer about gun key part of final moments

AMY FORLITI, Associated Press

KYLE POTTER, Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The final moments before Philando Castile was killed by a police officer during a traffic stop in suburban St. Paul revolved around a gun he was licensed to carry, trained to use safely and instructed to tell authorities about when stopped.

But just how he informed the officer — and whether the officer followed his own training — gets to the heart of the investigation into Castile's death last week.

Castile, who was black, was fatally shot July 6 after he was pulled over by St. Anthony police officer Jeronimo Yanez, who is Latino. Castile's girlfriend streamed the aftermath live on Facebook and said Castile was shot while reaching for his ID after telling the officer he had a gun permit and was armed.

Yanez's attorney has said the officer reacted after seeing a gun, and that one of the reasons he pulled Castile over was because he thought he looked like a "possible match" for an armed robbery suspect. Castile's family says he was profiled because of his race. Now they're preparing for a noon funeral Thursday at The Cathedral of Saint Paul, the cathedral said on its website.

A letter from the Hennepin County Sheriff's Office confirms Castile, 32, got his permit last year. The letter, dated June 4, 2015, says Castile's permit is enclosed. It also says that he must have his permit card and photo identification when carrying a pistol, and must display those items "upon lawful demand by a peace officer."

Allysza Castile said she and her brother took a required gun safety class together last year.

Dan Wellman, owner of Total Defense in Ramsey, confirmed the Castiles came to class in May 2015. Wellman doesn't remember the pair. He said he wasn't teaching the class that day.

But each class is told repeatedly how to handle a traffic stop or any encounter with law enforcement, he said. Students are taught to comply with every demand, hand over their permits to carry with their driver's licenses and calmly answer follow-up questions about licensed firearms, including where they are.

"We make several jokes about it during class: 'I have a gun' is not the way to say you have a gun on you," Wellman said.

Race never comes up as course participants are told how to handle traffic stops, Wellman said.

Castile's girlfriend, Diamond Reynolds, who was a passenger in the car along with her 4-year-old daughter, stressed in her video that Castile complied with Yanez's requests before the encounter turned fatal. But when talking to reporters the day after his death, she shed light on possible confusion stemming from Castile's final words to the officer.

"As he's reaching for his back pocket wallet, he lets the officer know: 'Officer, I have a firearm on me,'" she said. "I begin to yell, 'But he's licensed to carry.' After that, (the officer) began to take off shots."

St. Anthony police training documents outline how an officer should respond to traffic stops. According to the documents, if an officer believes it's a high-risk stop — as one involving an armed robbery suspect would likely be — he should have the driver and others exit the car before approaching the vehicle, while officers take cover and draw their weapons.

Albert Goins, an attorney who assisted the Castile family after the shooting but is not representing anyone in the case, has said if Yanez and the other officer involved, Joseph Kauser, believed they could be stopping the robbery suspect, they should have done a "felony stop." He described a procedure similar to what is outlined in the police training documents.

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Yanez's attorney and the St. Anthony police chief did not return messages for comment Wednesday. Court and driver records show Castile was pulled over or ticketed at least 52 times in Minnesota since 2002, with 86 total misdemeanor or petty misdemeanor counts. More than half of the 86 violations were dismissed, court records show. He had no serious criminal record.

He was stopped at least two times since he received his permit to carry. Records do not indicate whether he had his gun with him on those stops.

Allysza Castile said she usually leaves her gun at home. But if she does have it with her while driving, she said she puts it in her glove compartment in a holster with the safety on.

"Most of the time, he did the same," the 23-year-old woman said of her brother. "There's never a time I saw him driving in the car with his weapon on his person."

She said when she is pulled over and has her gun, she tells officers she has a firearm and gun permit, which is a wallet-size card that she shows with her license and registration.

"That's usually how it's supposed to go, but they didn't give him a chance," she said of the fatal stop.

Valerie Castile stressed that her son got his permit because he had a right to carry a weapon — not because he felt his life was in danger.

"My son was profiled and he was executed. There's just no two ways around that," she said.

Georgia set to execute man for 1982 killing of a friend

KATE BRUMBACK, Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Georgia plans to execute a man convicted of killing a friend after a night of partying more than three decades ago.

John Wayne Conner is scheduled to be put to death Thursday evening by injection of the barbiturate pentobarbital at the state prison in Jackson. The inmate, who is now 60, was convicted of fatally beating his friend J.T. White during an argument after a night of drinking and marijuana use in January 1982.

If carried out, the execution would be the sixth in Georgia this year and the most in a calendar year in the state since the death penalty was reinstated nationwide in 1976. Georgia executed five inmates last year and in 1987.

Conner's lawyers have argued that the inmate is intellectually disabled and, therefore, shouldn't be executed.

Experts: Use of robot to kill suspect opens door for others

DON BABWIN, Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Police in Dallas were the first in the nation to use a robot to deliver and detonate a bomb to kill a suspect, but other law enforcement agencies are willing and able to follow suit, including some that even have trained for the day when they'd have to do so.

The killing of Micah Johnson using a robot-delivered bomb ended a night of terror in which he shot 14 officers, killing five of them, and also wounded two civilians. Dallas' police chief, David Brown, said the decision was made to kill the 25-year-old Army veteran with a robot because talks with police negotiators had failed and he didn't want to put any other officers in harm's way.

With law enforcement's rapidly expanding access to robots that can roll into and fly over hostage situations, gunfights, chases and standoffs, experts say it's just a matter of time before they'll be used again to kill.

"Nobody wanted to be the first but, yeah, there is no question that it proved effective and the door is now open," said Sid Heal, president of the California Association of Tactical Officers and a retired Los

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Angeles Sheriff's Department commander.

Today, dozens of the largest U.S. law enforcement agencies have at least one robot, according to experts. And many smaller departments are just a phone call away from having access to a nearby agency's device.

Under a federal government program that supplies excess military equipment to civil agencies, the number of agencies that have acquired a robot has climbed dramatically this year. According to a study by the Center for the Study of the Drone at Bard College, there have been 201 such transfers in the first six months of this year, which is dozens more than in any full year since 2003 and 120 more than in all of 2015.

These robots are routinely used to get a closer look at suspicious devices in a way that doesn't endanger officers and to begin communications with armed suspects.

"They've been used to carry phones, note pads, and pizzas to suspects," said Mark Lomax, executive director of the National Tactical Officers Association. One was used to help search the Orlando nightclub where a man's shooting spree left 49 people dead and 53 others injured last month. Another was used in the manhunt for one of the Boston Marathon bombing suspects and lifted the tarp on the boat where he was found hiding.

Plenty of thought has been given to additional uses.

"You are seeing at trade shows robotic systems that are mounted with things like tear gas launchers," said Peter Singer, who has studied and written extensively on the technology and warfare, and the author of "Wired for War: The Robotics Revolution and Conflict in the 21st Century."

In Illinois, the Cook County Sheriff's Police Department has two robots equipped to disable and even kill suspects.

"Our robots can fire less lethal projectors like bean bags, they can fire a Taser if need be or a lethal 12-gauge shotgun round," said Brian White, the department's first deputy chief of police. White said he wouldn't hesitate to order the robots to fire at suspects if a situation merited.

"I thought that was a quick way to mitigate the public safety threat to Dallas residents and the other officers who were there," he said.

Others said they considered the approach for the same reason Brown used one in Dallas: to save lives.

Heal, for example, said there was discussion within the L.A. sheriff's department about using robots to kill suspects more than a decade ago.

Michael Bouchard, the sheriff of Oakland County, Michigan, said he considered doing so during a 2012 standoff in which a man killed a police officer before barricading himself inside a building. He said the man shot three robots that were sent in and that he ultimately decided to use heavy equipment to tear down part of the building, allowing officers to fire tear gas into it before the man killed himself.

He stressed that he acted as he did for safety reasons and not because of any reluctance to using a robot as a bomb-delivery device.

"He'd already killed a cop and he was hitting homes with automatic gunfire so, yes, we decided that as a last resort we would have done that," Bouchard said.

While Brown was widely praised for his decision in Dallas, some have expressed misgivings.

"If lethally equipped robots can be used in this situation, when else can they be used?" said Elizabeth Joh, a University of California at Davis law professor who has followed U.S. law enforcement's use of technology. "Extreme emergencies shouldn't define the scope of more ordinary situations where police may want to use robots that are capable of harm."

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Police: Woman arrested after skipping more than 500 tolls

JERSEY CITY, N.J. (AP) — A New Jersey woman has been arrested for allegedly skipping tolls, something authorities say she's done more than 500 times.

The Jersey Journal reports (<http://bit.ly/29Ru3pn>) police attempted to stop 55-year-old Denise Simien near the Holland Tunnel after learning she owed more than \$16,000 in unpaid tolls and fees. Port Authority of New York and New Jersey spokesman Joe Pentangelo says the Verona woman didn't stop and passed through the toll plaza again without paying before she was stopped on the other side of the plaza.

Simien was charged Wednesday with theft of services and obstruction of justice.

She's one of several people who've recently been charged with evading the Holland Tunnel's \$15 toll. It's unclear if she has an attorney who can comment on the charges.

'Game of Thrones,' 'Veep' vie for hotly contested Emmy nods

LYNN ELBER, AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — "Black-ish" star Anthony Anderson may want to practice looking surprised and humble before helping to announce this year's Emmy contenders on Thursday morning.

He and the critically acclaimed comedy series could be getting a lot of TV academy love if voters keep pace with the medium's increasing diversity.

The Emmy Awards have done a better job than their big-screen counterpart, the Oscars, at embracing more of the varied people, programs and platforms that make up the small-screen universe. Although the Emmys can't claim the steroid effect that an Oscar can have on a film's box-office performance, the premiere TV award draws attention to shows trying to stand out in a packed media world.

A statuette also can bestow credibility on emerging outlets. Such was the case in 2002, when FX became the first basic cable channel to win a top Emmy Award — Michael Chiklis' best drama actor trophy for "The Shield" — and earned unprecedented cachet. Streaming service Netflix got its 21st-century Emmy glow on with recognition for "House of Cards" and "Orange is the New Black," with "Transparent" the breakthrough for Amazon. Hulu, still looking for its first Emmy, is pinning its comedy hopes on the freshman season of "Casual."

On Thursday morning, Anderson will be joined by Lauren Graham to reveal the top 68th Primetime Emmy nominations for the Sept. 18 awards show. The complete field will be posted on the TV academy's website, Emmys.org, and livestreamed beginning at 11:30 a.m. EDT.

The "black-ish" star received the sitcom's sole 2015 nod, for best comedy actor, and is expected to get another. This time, Tracee Ellis Ross, who stars as wife, mom and doctor in the sitcom about an African-American family trying to keep its ethnic heritage alive, may get her own leading actress bid.

The Kenya Barris-created show should get a shot at the best comedy trophy for its sophomore season, with its competitors likely to include last year's winner, the political satire "Veep," five-time champ "Modern Family," transgender-themed "Transparent" and Aziz Ansari's "Master of None."

Randall Park and Constance Wu, the stars of the Asian-American family comedy "Fresh Off the Boat," are contenders for lead acting bids. Their respective competition is likely to include last year's winners, Jeffrey Tambor for "Transparent" and Julia Louis-Dreyfus for the political satire "Veep."

On the drama side, history-making Viola Davis, who last year became the first minority to win a best drama series Emmy, for "How to Get Away with Murder," should get the opportunity to double down on her achievement.

"The only thing that separates women of color from anyone else is opportunity," Davis said in accept-

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ing her award last fall.

When it comes to empire-building, "Game of Thrones" is the one to watch. After long thrilling fans with its plot twists and blood-soaked action, the fantasy saga based on George R.R. Martin's novels finally captured the best drama series prize for its fifth season.

Besides fending off likely competitors "Better Call Saul," "House of Cards" and "Orange is the New Black" (which was switched last year from the comedy to drama category) "GOT" may face a cyber threat: "Mr. Robot," the freshman series about a hacker turned activist that won a Golden Globe last January for best drama series.

"'Mr. Robot' is the coolest new show on TV up against the coolest cult hit, 'Game of Thrones,'" said Tom O'Neil, editor of the Gold Derby awards handicapping website. "Sometimes the Emmys do go for new shows if they have momentum, buzz and suspense, as with 'Homeland' and 'Lost'."

In the limited series field, "The People v. O.J. Simpson: American Crime Story" stands to reap nods for its multiethnic cast that includes Courtney B. Vance as Johnnie Cochran; Cuba Gooding Jr. as Simpson; Sarah Paulson playing Marcia Clark and Kenneth Choi as Judge Lance Ito.

The Sept. 18 Emmy show will be broadcast live on ABC from 8-11 p.m. EDT, hosted by Jimmy Kimmel.

DIVIDED AMERICA: Bridging the gap between police, policed

ADAM GELLER, AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — On an unusually cool night for summer, Mike Perry and his crew thread the sidewalks running through the Stapleton Houses, tracked by police cameras bolted to the apartment blocks and positioned atop poles.

Perry's group, five black men and one Latino, all acknowledge past crimes or prison time. Perry, himself, used to deal drugs around another low-income housing complex, two miles away. Now, though, their Cure Violence team works to defuse arguments that can lead to shootings. Their goals are not so different from those of the police.

While Perry gives cops their due, he keeps his distance. Two years ago, within walking distance of this spot, a black man named Eric Garner died in a confrontation with police officers. Garner was suspected of selling loose cigarettes; an officer wrestled him to the ground by his neck. His last words — "I can't breathe" — were captured on cellphone video that rocketed across the internet.

EDITOR'S NOTE — This story is part of Divided America, AP's ongoing exploration of the economic, social and political divisions in American society.

"I know those officers did not mean to kill Eric," says Perry, a 37-year-old father of two who knew Garner.

But, "you need to look an officer in the eye who doesn't understand and go, 'Brother, I want to get home, too.' They're defending these communities that they don't know."

As Americans struggle with the deaths of black men in encounters with police across the country, and now the killing of five Dallas officers, Perry and his fellow Staten Islanders have the dubious distinction of being a step ahead. Since Garner's death in July 2014, they have confronted a measure of the anger and pain the nation now shares.

A nationwide poll last summer by the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs found that 81 percent of black Americans said police are too quick to use deadly force, compared with 33 percent of whites. But the voices of Staten Islanders speak to attitudes and experiences that are often more complicated than poll numbers.

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About 3,000 police officers live there, many in the heavily white neighborhoods on the southern two-thirds of the Island. In those neighborhoods, protests that followed Garner's death in July 2014 were met with "God Bless the NYPD" yard signs and pro-police rallies. The tensions intensified after a grand jury decided not to indict the officer for Garner's death. Two weeks later, a man claiming vengeance killed two officers in Brooklyn.

On an island of 475,000 that is 75 percent white and mostly suburban, the North Shore's comparatively dense neighborhoods are home to nearly all of the borough's African-Americans.

Leroy Downs, 41, has lived on Staten Island since he was 5 and works as a drug treatment counselor. But tonight he talks about, just maybe, becoming a cop, though as a black man he has been stopped repeatedly by police — without cause, he says.

Downs testified against the NYPD when a legal advocacy group sued and won a 2013 ruling that sweeping stop-and-frisks violate the constitutional rights of minority New Yorkers.

He sees little change in the relationship between cops and minorities despite the verdict. But he hasn't given up hoping.

"I can't imagine the world without police," he says. "It'd be anarchy."

The city says it has made some progress. Last year, it began assigning pairs of officers to specific neighborhoods, rather than having them rush from call to call across precincts. They are mandated to spend a third of their shift "off-radio," talking with residents to forge relationships.

Jessi D'Ambrosio, 32, and Mary Gillespie, 28, are the new "neighborhood coordinating officers" for the six-building Richmond Terrace project where Garner once lived. When the two officers, both white and longtime Staten Islanders, walk through the grounds, residents readily return their greetings.

"They're such homeboy, homegirl," tenants association president Eunice Love says of the two officers. "They know how to get along with people and relate and we love that."

D'Ambrosio measures progress in everyday experience. When one resident called to report a teen wanted for breaking into nearby houses, he took it as a sign of trust.

"It's small steps," he says. "You know you can't just wake up tomorrow and think the world is going to change. But they seem, still, to have accepted us."

Gwen Carr, Eric Garner's mother, wants more. She stands in the small park across the street from the spot where he fell and cringes as a man who appears to be homeless sprawls across a bench, asleep though it's not yet 1 p.m. And a young woman — "Alcohol Gives You Wings," tattooed down her left arm — sits on the edge of a dry fountain, trying to sell used shoes.

"How much good did they do?" Carr says of police. "Where are they when you need them?"

If her son's death means something, Carr says, officials can clean up this block where regulars say drinking and drugs have increased since Garner's death. She wants New York to turn the park into a playground, reserved for children and guardians.

Doug Brinson, who sells T-shirts from sidewalk tables, rails against police for Garner's death. But fighting and drinking on this block makes clear the need for police, he said.

"You've got to coexist with the guys on the beat. You've got to," he says. "It's only fair."

Ex-admiral: US should defend reef off Philippines

MATTHEW PENNINGTON, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States should be willing to use military force to oppose Chinese aggression at a disputed reef off the coast of the Philippines, a former commander of U.S. forces in the Pacific told a congressional hearing on Wednesday.

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Dennis Blair made the recommendation to a Senate panel, a day after an international tribunal invalidated Beijing's expansive claims in the South China Sea.

The objective was not to pick a fight with China at the disputed Scarborough Shoal, but to set a limit on its military coercion, Blair said.

"I think we need to have some specific lines and then encourage China to compromise on some of its objectives," he told the hearing.

The Philippines is a U.S. ally, but their treaty is ambiguous about whether the U.S. would come to its defense in disputed territory.

A 2012 standoff at Scarborough Shoal between Chinese and the Philippine vessels prompted Manila to launch the arbitration case.

China has rejected the tribunal's ruling, and on Wednesday warned other countries against threatening its security in the South China Sea. Vice Foreign Minister Liu Zhenmin said Beijing could declare an air defense identification zone over the waters if it felt threatened. China, however, also extended an olive branch to the new Philippine government, saying the Southeast Asian nation would benefit from cooperating with China.

Blair, also a former director of national intelligence, said China has alienated its neighbors through its aggressive actions in the South China Sea, including its reclamation of land and construction of airstrips and ports in the Spratly Islands.

He advised a careful U.S. approach following the tribunal ruling to give Beijing opportunity to change course.

Kurt Campbell, former top U.S. diplomat for East Asia and now an adviser on Asia policy for the presidential campaign of Hillary Clinton, said, "I think over time China will start to adjust its position, because they will realize it's not in their best strategic interests."

New Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte wants to revive relations with China that soured after his predecessor launched the arbitration case in 2013. But he also wants to be seen at home as defending the legal victory.

President Barack Obama's nominee to be the next U.S. ambassador to the Philippines, Sung Kim, said the U.S. would support China-Philippines negotiations that were free from "coercion and undue pressure." Kim was speaking at his confirmation hearing Wednesday before the same Senate subcommittee on Asia.

U.S. officials have said occupation or militarization of Scarborough Shoal by China would be very dangerous and destabilizing. But they have declined to say whether it would invoke the U.S.-Philippines treaty, which calls for the allies to help defend each other if there is an armed attack on their armed forces, public vessels, aircraft or island territories under their jurisdiction in the Pacific

Trump and family meet with VP finalists

BY BRIAN SLODYSKO, Associated Press

JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

STEVE PEOPLES, Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Republican Donald Trump on Wednesday entered the final phase of his high-profile search for a running mate, arranging last-minute meetings with his finalists and family members as his staff prepares for a Friday announcement.

Trump posted on Twitter Wednesday evening that he would reveal his choice at 11 a.m. Friday in Manhattan.

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The presumptive GOP presidential nominee, his adult children and key staffers huddled with prospects earlier in the day.

He began Wednesday with breakfast at the residence of one, Indiana Gov. Mike Pence, Wednesday morning, a day after the pair campaigned together in the state. They were joined by Trump's three adult children, along with his son-and-law and campaign chair Paul Manafort, who were seen leaving the residence.

Hours later, Newt Gingrich, another finalist, was seen with Trump's entourage at a downtown Indianapolis hotel. Alabama Sen. Jeff Sessions, who has been advising Trump, was spotted arriving at the same hotel not long after Gingrich left.

Trump's family, including Ivanka Trump and her husband, Jared Kushner, also met privately with New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie Tuesday. The meeting was confirmed by a source with direct knowledge of the meeting, but was not authorized to discuss it publicly.

The meetings have been designed to let Trump's family get to know the candidates better before the presumptive nominee formalizes his decision.

Trump had originally planned to fly back from Indiana with Pence following a rally Tuesday night, but his plane was grounded by mechanical issues, so Trump's kids flew to join them in Indiana, another person familiar with his movements but not authorized to discuss them said.

"It was a late plan," Pence told reporters later Wednesday. "I was hauling dishes from the cupboard at midnight. (Pence's wife) Karen laid out a nice spread."

Indiana is a state with particular significance for the presumptive GOP nominee: It's where he effectively locked up the GOP nomination with a commanding primary win that drove former rival Ted Cruz from the race.

Pence, Christie and Gingrich were said to be the final contenders for vice presidential candidate on the Republican ticket less than a week before the GOP meets in Cleveland for the formal nomination. That's according to a person familiar with Trump's thinking, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the person was not authorized to discuss the vetting process. Trump said in a Tuesday interview with The Wall Street Journal that Sessions, Trump's top Senate advocate, is also still in the mix.

Pence is a steady, staunch conservative who would help calm nervous Republican wary of Trump's impulsive style. Gingrich is a boisterous rabble-rouser who has spent decades in Washington, including as House speaker. Christie, a one-time rival, has become one of Trump's most trusted advisers.

Trump has spent weeks consulting with friends and family as he weighs the most important decision of his campaign to date. He's also brought his finalists on tour, having them opening for him at speeches and rallies to test their receptions before his crowds.

Gingrich said Wednesday night he believes it's down to two contenders: him and Pence.

"I suspect sometime tomorrow that Mike and I will both get phone calls and one of us will be packing our bags to go to New York and the other one will be going to watch it on TV," Gingrich said on Fox News Channel's "Hannity."

Trump appeared reluctant to commit Wednesday. "I'm narrowing it down. I mean I'm at three, potentially four. But in my own mind, I probably am thinking about two," he told Fox's Bret Baier.

Introducing Trump at a rally in Westfield, Indiana, on Tuesday evening, Pence received an enthusiastic reception as he compared Trump to Republican icon Ronald Reagan and dug into Trump's likely Democrat rival, Hillary Clinton.

Trump told The Wall Street Journal on Tuesday he is looking for a "fighter skilled in hand-to-hand combat" as his second-in-command, but hadn't seen enough of Pence to measure his fight.

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While Trump kept his cards close, he spoke playfully of Pence at the rally: "I don't know whether he's going to be your governor or your vice president."

Pence told reporters Wednesday he was "honored by the attention" and the "opportunity to get to know this good man and his family."

"There's a number of other and noteworthy Americans that they're considering and I'm just honored to be on that list," he said.

Gingrich framed the choice for Trump as a decision between a stabilizing force who would help unify the party and a fellow outsider who clicks personally with the billionaire businessman.

"One of the really hard questions he's got to weigh ... is do you really want a two-pirate ticket?" Gingrich said of himself and Trump.

Today in History The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Thursday, July 14, the 196th day of 2016. There are 170 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 14, 1966, the city of Chicago awoke to the shocking news that eight student nurses had been brutally slain during the night in a South Side dormitory. The victims, ranging in age from 20 to 24, were Pamela Wilkening; Suzanne Farris; Mary Ann Jordan; Nina Jo Schmale; Valentina Pasion; Merlita Gargullo; Patricia Matusek; and Gloria Jean Davy. (One woman, Corazon Amurao, survived by hiding under a bed.) Drifter Richard Speck was convicted of the mass killing and condemned to death, but had his sentence reduced to life in prison, where he died in 1991.

On this date:

In 1789, in an event symbolizing the start of the French Revolution, citizens of Paris stormed the Bastille prison and released the seven prisoners inside.

In 1865, the Matterhorn, straddling Italy and Switzerland, was summited as a seven-member rope party led by British climber Edward Whymper reached the peak. (Four members of the party fell to their deaths during their descent; Whymper and two guides survived.)

In 1881, outlaw William H. Bonney Jr., alias "Billy the Kid," was shot and killed by Sheriff Pat Garrett in Fort Sumner in present-day New Mexico.

In 1913, Gerald Rudolph Ford Jr., the 38th president of the United States, was born Leslie Lynch King Jr. in Omaha, Nebraska.

In 1921, Italian-born anarchists Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were convicted in Dedham, Massachusetts, of murdering a shoe company paymaster and his guard. (Sacco and Vanzetti were executed six years later.)

In 1933, all German political parties, except the Nazi Party, were outlawed. Cartoon character Popeye the Sailor made his movie debut in the Fleischer Studios animated short, "Popeye the Sailor."

In 1945, Italy formally declared war on Japan, its former Axis partner during World War II.

In 1958, the army of Iraq overthrew the monarchy.

In 1965, the American space probe Mariner 4 flew by Mars, sending back photographs of the red planet. United Nations Ambassador Adlai E. Stevenson II died in London at age 65.

In 1976, Jimmy Carter won the Democratic presidential nomination at the party's convention in New York.

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In 1980, the Republican national convention opened in Detroit, where nominee-apparent Ronald Reagan told a welcoming rally he and his supporters were determined to "make America great again."

In 1999, race-based school busing in Boston came to an end after 25 years.

Ten years ago: Israel destroyed the home and office of Hezbollah's leader, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah (HAS'-ahn NAS'-ruh-lah), and tightened its seal on Lebanon, blasting its air and road links to the outside world. Spurred by Mideast fighting, oil prices rose to an intraday record \$78.40 a barrel. Actress Carrie Nye died in New York at age 69.

Five years ago: A federal judge in Washington, D.C. declared a mistrial in baseball star Roger Clemens' perjury trial over inadmissible evidence shown to jurors. (Clemens, who was accused of lying under oath to Congress when he denied ever using performance-enhancing drugs during his career, was acquitted in a retrial.)

One year ago: World powers and Iran struck a deal to curb Iran's nuclear program in exchange for relief from international sanctions. President Barack Obama laid out an expansive vision for fixing America's criminal justice system in a speech to the NAACP's annual convention in Philadelphia. NASA's New Horizons spacecraft got humanity's first up-close look at Pluto, sending word of its triumphant flyby across 3 billion miles to scientists waiting breathlessly back home. Mike Trout became the first player in 38 years to lead off the All-Star Game with a home run, and the American League beat the National League 6-3. Veteran television journalist Marlene Sanders, 84, died in New York.

(Stations: "taboo," lower case, is correct)

Today's Birthdays: Actor Harry Dean Stanton is 90. Actress Nancy Olson is 88. Former football player and actor Rosey Grier is 84. Actor Vincent Pastore is 70. Music company executive Tommy Mottola (muh-TOH'-luh) is 68. Rock musician Chris Cross (Ultravox) is 64. Actor Jerry Houser is 64. Actor-director Eric Laneuville is 64. Actor Stan Shaw is 64. Movie producer Scott Rudin is 58. Singer-guitarist Kyle Gass is 56. Country musician Ray Herndon (McBride and the Ride) is 56. Actress Jane Lynch is 56. Actor Jackie Earle Haley is 55. Actor Matthew Fox is 50. Rock musician Ellen Reid (Crash Test Dummies) is 50. Rock singer-musician Tanya Donnelly is 50. Actress Missy Gold is 46. Olympic gold medal snowboarder Ross Rebagliati is 45. Rhythm-and-blues singer Tameka Cottle (Xscape) is 41. Country singer Jamey Johnson is 41. Hip-hop musician taboo (Black Eyed Peas) is 41. Actor Scott Porter is 37. Rock singer Dan Smith (Bastille) is 30. Rock singer Dan Reynolds (Imagine Dragons) is 29.

Thought for Today: "Life has got a habit of not standing hitched. You got to ride it like you find it. You got to change with it. If a day goes by that don't change some of your old notions for new ones, that is just about like trying to milk a dead cow." — Woody Guthrie, American folk singer-songwriter (born this date in 1912, died in 1967).