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Monday

HOMEcomings WEEK!

Johnny Appleseed Day

Dress Up Day: Pajama Day at MS/HS, Neon Day at Elementary School

School Breakfast: Pancake on stick, fruit, juice or milk.

School Lunch: Chicken nuggets, sweet tots, bread sticks, romaine salad, fruit.

Senior Menu: Spaghetti with meat sauce, broccoli or carrots, garlic toast, orange sherbet.

Birthdays: • Alan Strom • Heidi Krueger

6:30am: Emmanuel Lutheran Bible Study

10:00am: Boys Golf Regions at Madison Golf Course

4:00pm: Cross Country in Groton

4:30pm: JV FB hosts Roncalli

7:00pm: School Board Meeting

7:30pm: Homecoming Coronation

Tuesday

Crush a Can Day

Dress Up Day: Jersey Day at MS/HS, Pajama Day at Elementary School

1st Round of Soccer Playoffs: Girls soccer team at St. Thomas More

School Breakfast: Cheese omelet, fruit, juice or milk.

School Lunch: Cheese sticks, broccoli and dip, tater tots, fruit.

Senior Menu: Oven fried chicken, mashed potatoes, vegetables, buttermilk biscuits, banana pudding with bananas.

Birthdays: • Ellie Howard • Landal Leonhardt • Greg Kjellsen • Lori Bahr • Jesse Kurtenbach • Andy Ries

10:00am: United Methodist Women's Bible Study

4:00pm: 8th gr FB hosts Aberdeen Central



GDILIVE.COM
livestream
Many Groton
Area activities are
Livestreamed by the
Groton Daily
INDEPENDENT
Your Main Source for Community News, Sports and Important Announcements

605/397-NEWS
(6397)

Apts for Rent

1 bedroom and HUGE 2 bedroom, 2 bath apartments available NOW! All utilities included except A/C, 1 bedroom \$504 and HUGE 2 bedroom 2 bath \$674 Please call or text 239-849-7674

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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Oven Fresh Sandwiches Hot Desserts Snack Melts **DQ** BAKES! OVEN-HOT
DQ Grill & Chill
Orange Julius

11 E Hwy 12, Groton ~ 397-8627

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GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #06-6

School Board Meeting September 27, 2016 – 7:00 PM – GHS Conference Room

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order with members present. Approve agenda as proposed or amended.
- POTENTIAL CONFLICTS DISCLOSURE PURSUANT SDCL 23-3
- OLD/CONTINUING BUSINESS:
 1. Open Forum for Public Participation...in accordance with Board Policy & Guidelines.
 2. Program Overview Presentations
Computer Education/Technology...C. Dennert, A. Helvig
 3. School Board Committee Reports:
 - a. Building, Grounds, & Transportation: Clint Fjelstad, Merle Harder, Marty Weismantel
 - b. Personnel, Policy, & Curriculum: Deb Gengerke, Grant Rix
 - c. Negotiations: Kelly Kjelden, Steve Smith
 4. Elementary Building Project financing discussion [Tom Grimmond].
 5. Adoption of resolution to finance Groton Elementary Project.
 6. Appoint Elementary Building Project Steering Committee
 7. Second reading and approval of recommended policy changes: BBE Unexpired Term Fulfillment (amendment); BD School Board Meetings (amendment); BDA Electronic Communication by Board Members (new policy); GBAA Veteran's Preference (amendment); ILB State Required Assessments (new policy); JEAA Students Alternative Instruction (amendment); JEC School admissions (amendment); JECAC Admission of New Residents and Students from Unaccredited Schools (amendment); JECAC Transfer from an Accredited School (new policy); JHCA Physical Examinations and Inoculations of Students/Inoculations of Students (amendment)
 8. Administrative Reports: (a) Superintendent's Report; (b) Principal's Reports; (c) Business Manager Report
- NEW BUSINESS:
 1. Approve FY2017 district budgets with amendments and authorize business manager to file tax request with county auditor.
 2. Review District and School Report Cards for 2016.
 3. Approve hiring Darin Zoellner as Head Wrestling Coach at 12% of base salary (\$4,140).
 4. Approve hiring Kayde Wiedrick as student custodian at \$9.00/hour up to 17.5 hours/week.
 5. Amend auxiliary staff work agreement for Joann Donley.
 6. Acknowledge Public School Exemptions:
 - a. #17-07: Grades K, 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10
 7. Approve Open Enrollment Applications:
 - a. #17-23: Grade K from Aberdeen School District
 - b. #17-24: Grade 5 from Aberdeen School District
 8. Change date of October board meeting from 10/10/16 to 10/11/16.

The Groton Area School District has openings for a part time (morning) bus route and for a full-time bus route driver. Assistance in obtaining the proper licensure is available. Please contact Transportation Supervisor, Loren Bahr, at 397-8117 for more details.



Don't Wait

Mary Ellen Dirksen grew up in what most people would consider a pretty typical Midwest family. Her close-knit family of four looked picture perfect from the outside – and for the most part, it looked just as perfect from the inside. But a little more than a decade ago, Mary Ellen's big brother – a handsome, intelligent guy who loved basketball and hot fudge sundaes – died by suicide.

South Dakota has one of the nation's highest suicide rates, and in recent years, the state has seen the number of attempted suicides increase considerably. As one of the state's leading causes of death, most families or communities, to one extent or another, have felt the blow of suicide.

Despite knowing how far reaching suicide is, we too often lean heavily on narrow stereotypes to determine the type of people most likely to be impacted by mental illnesses. But mental illness and suicidal thoughts can afflict anyone, which is one of the reasons I sponsored legislation designating September as National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month.

In her book, "The Swing Set," which describes the grief and healing she experienced after her brother's death, Mary Ellen explains: "I had known [my brother] wasn't dressing well, that he looked unshaven, that he was irritable and that this was causing turmoil in our family. I had known he wasn't leaving the house, that he didn't take interest in life like he used to, and that his worldview had become pessimistic. But I had never really known anyone who suffered from depression, actual depression, especially not someone handsome and capable like my brother."

The National Alliance on Mental Illness adds to the list of characteristics Mary Ellen saw in her brother, pointing to increased alcohol and drug use; talking, writing, or thinking about death; and impulsive or reckless behavior as other warning signs.

While anyone can be impacted, I also recognize that in recent years some communities have been affected more than others. I'll never forget sitting across the table last fall as a young tribal member told me they had lost all hope. Suicide had taken their sibling as well as more than one of their friends – all before their high school graduation. This individual too had thought about it. Within weeks of that meeting, we had new provisions in a mental health bill that's now passed the House directing more resources into tribal suicide prevention programs. It's an epidemic that needs to end.

The same is true within veteran communities. Nearly two dozen Americans lose their life to suicide daily. More resources have been dedicated in this area as well and we continue to invest in learning more about the relationship between military service, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injuries, and suicide. But none of it is being done fast enough.

"I wish I had known how difficult it is to live with depression and that a person can't simply 'snap out of it,'" wrote Mary Ellen, who now helps other families struggling with depression and grief in Sioux Falls and beyond. While we can't walk someone else's journey, we can help each other navigate through – and that's all a person can ask.

If you or a loved one is experiencing any of the warning signs, please use this as your motivation to get help. If it is an emergency, dial 911 immediately. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – at 1-800-273-TALK (8255) – is also open around the clock for help. Don't wait to call.

2016 SDHSAA State Soccer Championships Class 'A' Girls' Bracket

First & Second Round Matches played at higher seed



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The advent of GDILIVE.COM

The next generation of publishing seems to have arrived. With the advent of the internet, the Groton Daily Independent was launched 23 years ago and GDILIVE.COM was launched last year. A platform has finally been developed where the small town community newspaper can compete directly with the large radio stations.

Never, in my wildest dreams, would I have ever believed that GDILIVE.COM would have taken off as much as it has. Last year, we were excited when we had 150 viewers for basketball and 300 for football. We have smashed records this year in football, competing head-to-head with the Aberdeen American News and the Aberdeen radio stations. I really thought that the Aberdeen radio station would beat us handily in viewership with the Aberdeen Roncalli game, just because of the size of the city of Aberdeen. When I got home and looked at the viewership, we were over 1,175, under 100 less than the Aberdeen radio station. To our many viewers and advertisers, thank you. I even heard of someone having like a football party with several people watching the game on GDILIVE.COM on their big 60 inch TV.

There is a big investment in our GDILIVE.COM. We simply do not use an iPad (like we used to), to livestream the video feed. We use a higher end camera with a device that we hook up to the camera that connects our site for the game. No longer do we use the CUBE because its quality is not as good and is jittery much of the time. We subscribe to a service where our videos are livestreamed and archived. We livestream in HD which means we use more data. We are now using up to 50 Gigs of data per month for our livestreaming. No longer do we just do sports, but many other events such as school board and city council meetings, we did an interview with Terry Kenny and his wagon last week, we'll be doing homecoming coronation, the parade, volleyball match and football game this week. We plan to do an interview about the upcoming Pumpkin Fest in Groton.

This year, we added music to our ads and have them pre-recorded so they sound more professional. We pre-record the beginning, middle and closing audio for the football games. We also added Justin Olson for doing play-by-play for the football and basketball games.

GDILIVE.COM is more than a projection onto your television screen, computer or phone, it's a full fledged production. We have audio equipment to set up. We have video equipment to set up. We have a portable table that we now carry along. And until I get the final connection to our livestream, the stress level remains high as we want the best possible quality and production as possible for you to enjoy.

I know there have been comments about GDILIVE.COM taking away people who would stay home to watch the game instead of going to the game. I have received a number of comments from people who thank us for this service. Many of the comments come from people who don't come to games or are unable to attend due to physical restrictions. My wife, because of the hours of her job, is unable to come to the games, but she has watched every sporting event that we have produced.

There has been resistance, at first, of us doing city council and school board meetings. But I have heard comments from the public who thank us for doing this service. For many people, they cannot attend the meetings, but still want to know what is going on at the meetings. For them, it is easier to watch the meetings from the comfort of their home than it is to sit in a chair in a room. I believe because of this service, more people are actually taking an interest in their community government.

There is so much that we can do with GDILIVE.COM. It's like Groton's own television station. Make sure that when you go to GDILIVE.COM, that you click the "Follow Us" button. That way, you will be notified when a new video has been posted or scheduled.

On October 1st, it will mark the 30th year that I have been publishing the local paper. Back then, we had the motto of "Catching You In the Action!" with lots of still photos. We can use the same motto today, except it is now real action. GDILIVE.COM - Catching You In The Action!

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Worrel Pumpkin Patch



Hours are
Saturdays and Sundays
10am-4pm thru Oct. 23rd.
Group appointments call
605-377-8133
Address is 13606 429th
Ave - Webster, SD
22 Miles East of Groton

We have a large variety of Pumpkins
(white, orange, blue, green)
Gourds, Straw Bales and Melons.
Check us out on Facebook at worrelpumpkinpatch



2017 GROTON DOG LICENSES AVAILABLE NOW!

Licenses due by Dec. 30, 2016
Fines start after Dec. 30, 2016

Must bring proof of rabies shot information for each dog to City Hall. Spayed or neutered dogs are \$5 per dog, otherwise \$10 per dog. If you no longer have any dogs, please let City Hall know ASAP.



2016 Custer State Park Buffalo Roundup

On Friday morning, Sept. 30, a few dozen cowboys will put on their boots and saddle up their horses. Custer State Park employees will arise before dawn. And thousands from across the state, country and world will gather, all to continue a 51-year tradition.

The Buffalo Roundup is an experience unlike any other. You can feel the ground shake as over 1,000 half-ton creatures stampede across the prairie. Watching the few brave riders drive the beasts to their destination is quite incredible. Witnessing the buffalo's power and speed from such a short distance creates a feeling of being back in the Old West.

At one time, there were about 60 million buffalo roaming North America, but that number decreased to less than 2,000 in the early twentieth century. Although population levels are nowhere near the historical peak, South Dakota buffalo have made a comeback from their near extinction, thanks in part to Custer State Park.

Riders will round up a herd of 1,300 buffalo on Sept. 30, and it will take about four days to work the herd. Volunteers will vaccinate and brand the calves, check the cows for pregnancy and then identify 200 buffalo for sale in November.

After the Friday morning Roundup, visitors can stay for lunch and watch the volunteers work the herd. There will be plenty of things to do for those who decide to stay for the weekend. The Arts Festival will continue through Saturday, the Chili Cook Off is scheduled for Saturday, and Crazy Horse Memorial visitors will be permitted to hike to the arm of the mountain carving during an organized Volksmarch on Sunday.

The Roundup is something every South Dakotan should see at least once. People from all over the world come for this one-of-a-kind experience because there's nothing like it anywhere else. Consider making this worthwhile journey. I hope to see you there!

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Today in Weather History

September 25, 1981: A late September tornado touched down briefly 14 miles west of Pierre during the early evening hours with no damage occurring.

September 25, 1996: An early fall storm over the Black Hills of northeast Wyoming and western South Dakota re-acquainted area residents with their winter driving techniques. Snow totals ranged from 4 to 8 inches. U.S. Highway 385, south of Deadwood South Dakota, was temporarily closed after a semi-truck jack-knifed on Strawberry Hill. Numerous minor accidents were reported in the Black Hills due to slick roads. Heavy wet snow closed the Needles Highway and Iron Mountain Road in the central/southern Black Hills until snowplows could clear the roads.

1848: The Great Gale of 1848 was the most severe hurricane to affect Tampa Bay and is one of two major hurricanes to make landfall in the area. This storm produced the highest storm tide ever experienced in Tampa Bay when the water rose 15 feet in six to eight hours.

1939 - A west coast hurricane moved onshore south of Los Angeles bringing unprecedented rains along the southern coast of California. Nearly five and a half inches of rain drenched Los Angeles during a 24 hour period. The hurricane caused two million dollars damage, mostly to structures along the coast and to crops, and claimed 45 lives at sea. "El Cordonazo" produced 5.66 inches of rain at Los Angeles and 11.6 inches of rain at Mount Wilson, both records for the month of September. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Hurricane Emily crossed the island of Bermuda during the early morning. Emily, moving north-east at 45 mph, produced wind gusts to 115 mph at Kindley Field. The thirty-five million dollars damage inflicted by Emily made it the worst hurricane to strike Bermuda since 1948. Parts of Michigan and Wisconsin experienced their first freeze of the autumn. Snow and sleet were reported in the Sheffield and Sutton areas of northeastern Vermont at midday. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)








1988 - Low pressure off the Northern Pacific Coast brought rain and gale force winds to the coast of Washington State. Fair weather prevailed across most of the rest of the nation. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Twenty-three cities in the south central U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date, including Topeka KS with a reading of 33 degrees, and Binghamton NY with a low of 25 degrees. Showers and thunderstorms in the southeastern U.S. drenched Atlanta GA with 4.87 inches of rain, their sixth highest total of record for any given day. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

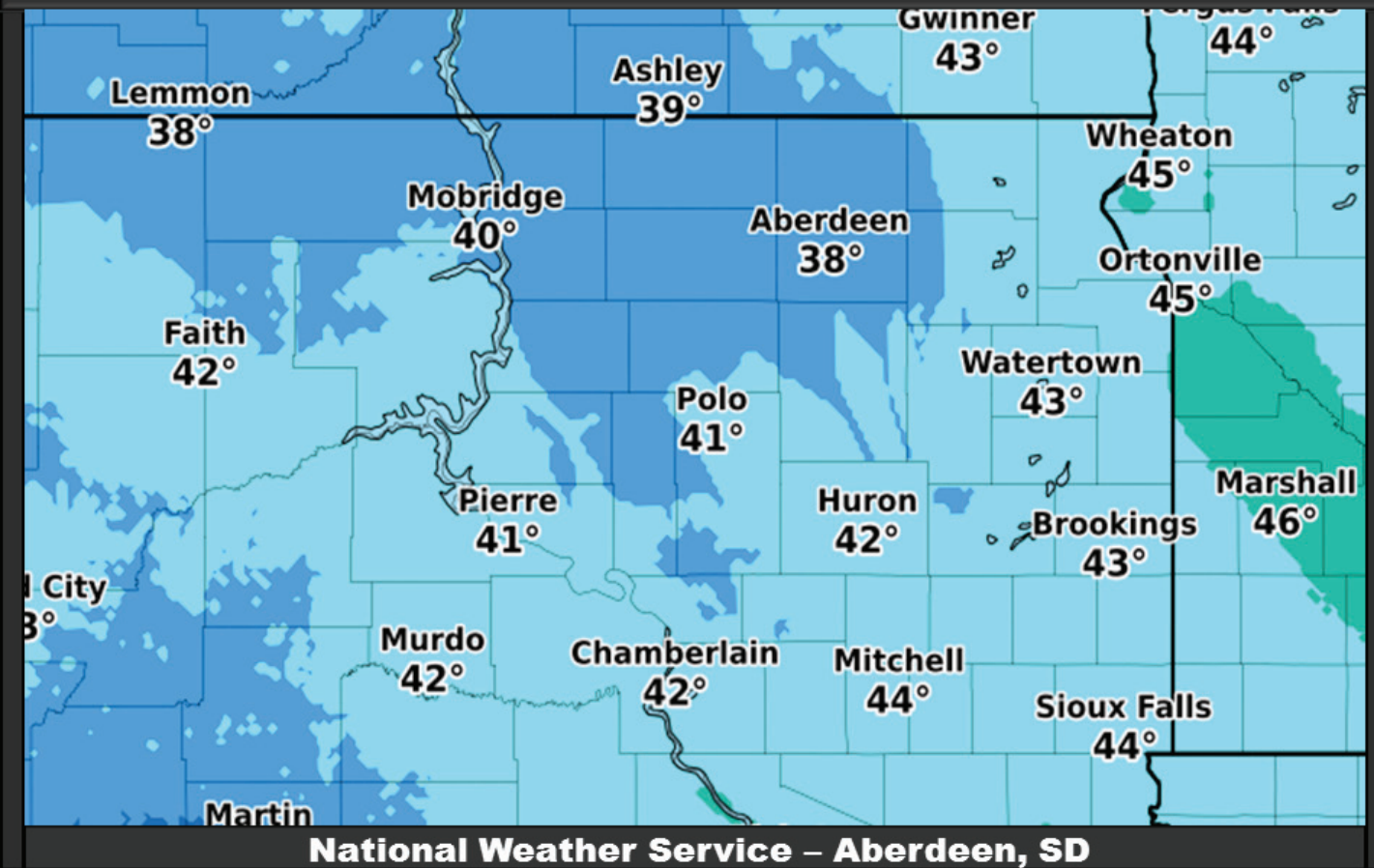
1998: Four hurricanes were spinning simultaneously in the Atlantic basin: Georges, Ivan, Jeanne, and Karl. That was the first time this had happened since 1893.

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Tonight	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday	Tuesday Night	Wednesday	Wednesday Night
						
Clear	Sunny then Sunny and Breezy	Clear	Sunny	Clear	Sunny	Clear
Low: 38 °F	High: 69 °F	Low: 37 °F	High: 73 °F	Low: 39 °F	High: 73 °F	Low: 44 °F

Winds Diminishing Tonight, With Cool Temps



National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD

 weather.gov/Aberdeen  National Weather Service Aberdeen  @NWSAberdeen | Updated: 9/25/2016 3:35 PM Central

Published on: 09/25/2016 at 3:37PM

Winds will begin to decrease after sunset as low pressure continues to move away from the region. A cool air mass over the area will allow temps to become a bit chilly overnight, with lows ranging from the upper 30s to low 40s for most locations.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 80.1 F at 6:19 PM

Low Outside Temp: 58.9 F at 11:58 PM

High Gust: 30.0 Mph at 9:51 AM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 95° in 1938

Record Low: 19° in 1926

Average High: 68°F

Average Low: 42°F

Average Precip in Sept.: 1.83

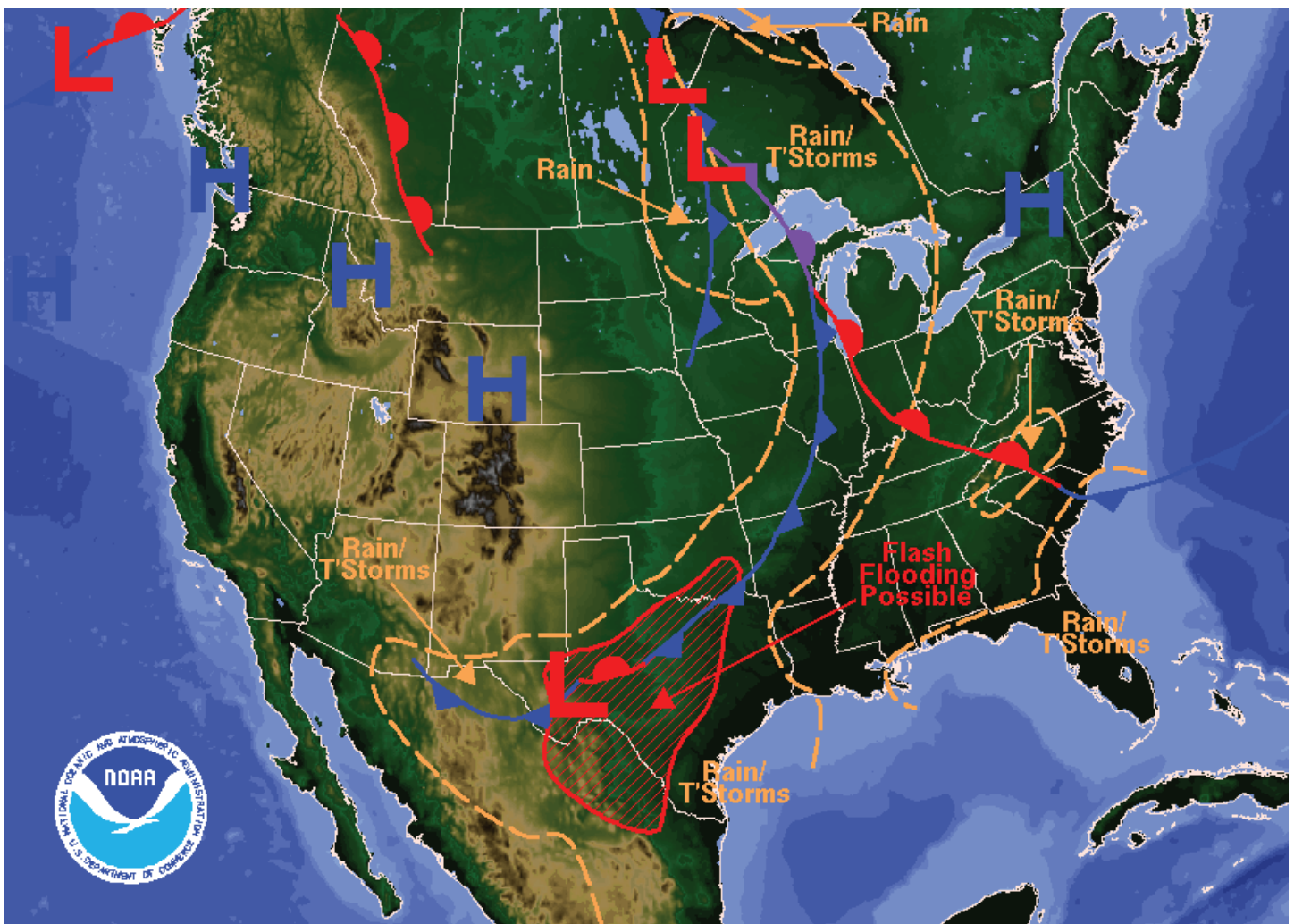
Precip to date in Sept.: 0.54

Average Precip to date: 18.12

Precip Year to Date: 13.20

Sunset Tonight: 7:24 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:26 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Sun, Sep 25, 2016, issued 5:14 PM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Kong based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

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WHOSE SIDE ARE YOU ON?

During one of the civil wars in Italy a regimental leader was having a difficult time recruiting soldiers to fight. To solve his problem he was going from city to city looking for people to join him. Many joined him bringing with them their swords and guns.

One old lady was so moved as she saw the response that she wanted to join in the battle. So, she grabbed her broom, put it over her shoulder and began to march with the men.

Many laughed at her and one person jeered from the crowd, "What are you doing old lady? What good are you?"

"Not much," came the answer, "but at least everyone will know whose side I'm on."

Every day we are confronted with choices that reflect our allegiance to Christ. Often they are subtle and do not require much effort and get little attention from others. Sometimes the call to obedience may result in revolutionary changes and completely upset lifelong plans and dreams. Surely there have been times when all He asked was to "be still and know that I am God."

The call varies but our response to be faithful to Him is always optional. We either turn toward Him and do as he asks us to do or turn away from Him and follow our selfish ambitions. To choose is not optional, but what we choose has lasting consequences.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we are always available when You call us to serve You. We pray, however, that when You call we will respond in faithful service. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: John 14:14-15 You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it. "If you love me, you will obey what I command."

The logo for Golden Living, featuring the words "golden" in orange and "living" in blue, with a stylized orange and blue wave graphic below.

We now accept

The logo for Avera Health Plans, featuring the word "Avera" in white on a blue background, with a white cross symbol to the right, and "Health Plans" in white below.

for out patient therapy.

**1106 N 2nd St., Groton
605/397-2365**

News from the Associated Press

European ballerina auditions, teaches young Aberdeen dancers

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — A professional ballerina from Ukraine has worked with Aberdeen dance students.

The Moscow Ballet's prima ballerina, Olena Nalyvaiko, visited through Moscow Ballet's Dance With Us program, which pairs young dancers with professional ballerinas and ballerinos for a performance, The American News (<http://bit.ly/2d6xwUa>) reported. Aberdeen is one of 20 cities across the country participating in the program.

"It's nice," Nalyvaiko said. "I like to work with kids in different cities because I also can explore. I can explore how families in United States live, and I also learn English more."

Nalyvaiko auditioned dance students last week for parts in the upcoming "Great Russian Nutcracker" and worked with selected students.

"Some kids catch on so quickly they are so like (a) sponge," Nalyvaiko said. "Some kids you need to repeat couple times, you need to have patience. I'm so unpatient a person, but I'm learning to be."

Nalyvaiko will also work with local instructors who will teach the students until the performance. It'll be the first and only time the international cast and the local students rehearse together.

"It's nice to come back with our professional group and see how kids prepared," Nalyvaiko said. "A lot of kids hug me. They are excited, very excited to see me back, see me on stage."

The "Great Russian Nutcracker" performance will be held Nov. 29 in the Johnson Fine Arts Center.

"You can prepare for months and then you can perform like only five minutes," Nalyvaiko said. "It's like Olympic games. They prepare so much for just one second."

Information from: Aberdeen American News, <http://www.aberdeennews.com>

New security system installed at 3 public schools in Howard

HOWARD, S.D. (AP) — The Howard School District has a new security system.

The Mitchell Daily Republic reports (<http://bit.ly/2coVuds>) that the controlled access system for the elementary, junior high and senior high buildings cost more than \$70,000. A Homeland Security grant covered about half of the project.

The system requires teachers and other staff members to use a key fob to get into each entrance. The doors to the schools had previously been unlocked during the day.

Superintendent Todd Lee says the school district is always looking for ways to make the environment safer for students.

Information from: The Daily Republic, <http://www.mitchellrepublic.com>

After failing in Pierre, redistricting forces turn to ballot

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — After years of trying to get South Dakota legislators to surrender control of redistricting to an independent commission, supporters of the idea are trying to do it instead through a constitutional amendment.

Backers say the measure before voters this November would eliminate lawmakers' conflict of interest

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and make people feel elections are fair to all parties.

"It's time for fair representation. Period," said Democratic Rep. Peggy Gibson, who has backed at least nine independent redistricting measures since 2009. "I'm not saying it'll be perfect, but I'm certainly thinking it will be better than the method that we have now."

Opponents — including majority Republicans — say the current system is working fine.

"The idea, I think, is to elect people that are more in line with liberal ideas as far as spending money and a whole host of issues," said GOP Rep. Jim Bolin, who served on the commission that oversaw the last redistricting plan in 2011.

Members of the South Dakota Farmers Union decided to gather signatures for a constitutional amendment after their last failure at the Legislature. The group has given at least \$238,000 in cash and in-kind contributions to a political committee supporting the effort, according to state campaign finance reports.

Redistricting is the process of redrawing electoral district boundaries every 10 years to account for population changes. When the process is carried out by elected officials, it often sparks lawsuits and claims of gerrymandering — attempting to draw the districts for political advantage.

Passage of South Dakota's Amendment T requires a simple majority. It would create a commission of nine people chosen each redistricting year to revise the legislative district boundaries.

No more than three commission members could be part of the same political party, and none could be elected officials in the legislative or executive branches, among other prohibitions. The plan also says party registration and voting history must be excluded from the redistricting process, and that the residency of incumbents or candidates can't be identified or considered.

Opponents argue the plan is meant to tip the political balance toward Democrats. Republicans now hold every statewide office and supermajorities in both legislative chambers, and registered Republicans far outnumber registered Democrats.

The 2011 plan passed with a vote mostly along party lines, with minority Democrats complaining it put them at a disadvantage. Bolin insisted it was fair. He called the amendment "part of a crazy plan to change things around."

Jon Schaff, a political science professor at Northern State University, said the current process probably does favor the Republican majority.

"I don't think anybody thinks that even with neutrally drawn districts that Democrats would control the House or the Senate, but it's likely that the numbers of Democrats would go up," he said.

Political considerations get no mention in redistricting guidance provided by the state constitution. It just says each legislative district must consist of "compact, contiguous territory and shall have population as nearly equal as is practicable."

Reuben Bezpaletz, a former Legislative Research Council staff member who worked on redistricting plans from 1981 through the 2011 redistricting, wouldn't take a position on the measure. But he said it's critical that districts are drawn when possible so that either party could win.

"I believe the creation of competitive legislative districts is the most important single thing that you can do to preserve democracy by giving voters a real choice," he said.

Board approves money for 6 South Dakota solid waste projects

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Board of Water and Natural Resources has approved more than \$860,000 for six solid waste management projects, most of which will go toward construction of a large regional landfill.

The board approved \$788,000 for the Northwest South Dakota Regional Landfill.

The total includes more than \$545,170 in grants and more than \$315,000 in low-interest loans. The

communities of Naples and Seneca received nearly \$24,000 each for dump site cleanup and remediation.

Office seeks public comment on historic preservation needs

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The State Historic Preservation Office is looking for public comment on South Dakota's preservation needs and projects.

The office is asking which properties or areas need to be inventoried and which should be considered for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places. It also wants to know which properties are at-risk or endangered and what types of technical preservation assistance are beneficial.

The office within the South Dakota State Historical Society manages the National Register of Historic Places. It surveys, inventories and registers historical properties and promotes public awareness and provides technical assistance.

State Historical Society director Jay Vogt says historic preservation emphasizes South Dakota's history and boosts heritage tourism and economic development.

The comment period ends Oct. 31.

Endangered African wild dogs on display at Sioux Falls zoo

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Two African wild dogs are now on display at the Great Plains Zoo in Sioux Falls.

KSFY-TV reports (<http://bit.ly/2d2d6tr>) that 11-year-old Chili and 6-year-old Safia are part of an African wild dog species survival plan. The dogs are commonly referred to as African painted dogs due to spots on their bodies that resemble paint splotches

About 6,600 African wild dogs remain in the wild. They are considered to be an endangered species, due to habitat loss, disease and poaching.

Information from: KSFY-TV, <http://www.ksfy.com>

Whiteclay problems draw new scrutiny from Nebraska lawmakers

By GRANT SCHULTE, Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A recent death and other problems in Whiteclay are drawing new scrutiny from Nebraska lawmakers, who plan to announce an initiative to address persistent issues when they visit the tiny village later this week.

Senators say they're looking seriously at ways to improve conditions in Whiteclay, which sells millions of cans of beer each year on the border of South Dakota's Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, where alcohol is banned.

Sen. Patty Pansing Brooks of Lincoln said she organized the trip to show fellow lawmakers the conditions in the ramshackle town dotted with abandoned buildings, garbage-strewn streets and Native Americans lying passed-out on sidewalks. Lawmakers and officials with the Nebraska Public Service Commission will tour the area on Wednesday before releasing details about the new initiative. A legislative hearing will take place next month at the Capitol.

"It's important that more people go up there and understand what's going on," Pansing Brooks said. "There's a public health crisis in our own backyard."

Whiteclay's four beer stores sold the equivalent of 3.5 million cans of beer last year despite having only a dozen residents. Alcoholism is a widespread problem on the reservation, where an estimated one

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in four children is born with fetal alcohol syndrome.

Sen. Roy Baker of Lincoln said he has never seen Whiteclay firsthand but is joining the group to learn more about the village and brainstorm possible solutions.

"It's a problem the Legislature probably needs to be involved in," he said. "We need to find a better solution than the status quo. I think everybody recognizes it's a bad situation."

Lawmakers have tried to address the problems before, with little success. Former state Sen. LeRoy Loudon of Ellsworth introduced bills that would have allowed tighter restrictions on alcohol sales in Whiteclay, but the measures stalled amid opposition from the grocery store and alcohol industries, which argued they could create unintended problems in other parts of the state.

A 2005 plan championed by former Gov. Dave Heineman and Attorney General Jon Bruning would have allowed Pine Ridge tribal police officers to be deputized in Nebraska. Congress approved \$200,000 to pay Pine Ridge officers to patrol Whiteclay.

The plan failed, however, because of what one activist described as a "complicated goulash of politics." Tribal police officers didn't want to be deputized. Some Pine Ridge residents worried the agreement would encourage off-reservation police to encroach on their land, and others saw the deal as damaging to their claim that Whiteclay is part of the reservation. Still others said the \$200,000 earmark wasn't enough.

Pansing Brooks said she's taking a different, "multi-faceted approach" that focuses on the region's public health needs.

"I'm trying to look at it from a different perspective," she said. "If we don't keep trying, nothing's going to happen."

Some longtime Whiteclay residents said they hope lawmakers take a serious look at the recommendations released by a local task force in August. The task force was formed at Gov. Pete Ricketts' urging, and its suggestions are virtually identical to ideas Pansing Brooks put forth earlier this year.

The list includes placing full-time Nebraska law enforcement in the area; creating a detoxification and treatment center; getting rid of abandoned buildings; developing a village economic development plan; seeking authority from lawmakers to enact ordinances aimed at panhandling and vagrancy; and improving the state's relationship with the Oglala Sioux Tribe, whose members live on the reservation.

Pansing Brooks said she also wants to see broadband service in the area to connect with law enforcement and public health officials in distant cities.

Bruce BonFleur, who lives in the village and runs Lakota Hope Ministry, said he believes conditions in the village can improve if residents and elected officials work together. He pointed to the recent construction of a nursing home that will serve Native Americans on the southern edge of town and a \$100,000 federal grant awarded to a nonprofit that will help local Native American artisans sell their work.

"I think it's another sign that Whiteclay is in the process of being transformed into something good," BonFleur said.

BonFleur said he's trying to "build bridges" between activists who want to close all of Whiteclay's beer stores and residents who are content with the town as it is.

Whiteclay gained new attention in August following the death of 50-year-old Sherry Wounded Foot, who lived in the reservation village of Porcupine. Authorities are investigating her death as a homicide but have not publicly named any suspects. Sheridan County Attorney Jamian Simmons has said authorities received conflicting statements about a "potential assault" involving Wounded Foot in Whiteclay.

Wounded Foot was found lying behind a building in Whiteclay on Aug. 5 in an area where intoxicated people sometimes sleep.

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Tech school students using drone in agriculture program

By SARA BERTSCH, The Daily Republic

MITCHELL, S.D. (AP) — After weeks of sitting in the classroom, several Mitchell Technical Institute students were able to spend a few hours outside earlier this month— flying a drone.

The drone, which was purchased for \$49,995 by MTI in June, was being used by precision agriculture students to survey land, taking high resolution images.

The students took instruction from Devon Russell, the precision agriculture technology department head and instructor. Russell was required to attend training and become certified before flying the Trimble UX5. For five days, and eight hours each day, Russell was learning the ins and outs of the Trimble drone before the institution was allowed to purchase the device.

"It's the future," Russell said.

The students spent several minutes making sure everything was in place, going through a flight check-list and completing all of the steps before the launch.

Once the drone took flight, Russell said it pretty much "flies itself."

Before launching, the students created a flight plan in class for the area they wanted to survey. The drone downloads the plan, automatically calculates how it needs to fly the area, and does the rest on its own.

Russell said the flier has controls if there requires any evasive maneuvers, but other than that "it's going to keep its course and survey everything."

There are regulations that must be followed, Russell said, and one important rule is to be in communication with the airport. If the drone is being flown within five miles of the airport, Russell said he has to call the airport and let them know they will be flying the drone in the area.

The drones, which can go up to 60 mph, can go up thousands of feet into the air. But the maximum altitude allowed under regulation is 400 feet, Russell said.

Russell said the goal is getting his students certified to fly drones, and after they graduate, they can fly commercially.

"It's brand new technology everyone is interested in," Russell told The Daily Republic (<http://bit.ly/2d7zMeQ>). "Once they have their certification on their resume, that will really put them above other people."

In March, MTI received approval from the Mitchell Board of Education to purchase the drone. The lone bid, from Scott Supply of Mitchell.

Seth Weeman, an ag technology instructor, said the best part of the drone is that it provides another avenue to bring precision data back to the classroom.

And the new technology is not only going to impact the precision agriculture students, but the entire agriculture department at MTI, Weeman said.

Having a drone and using it in class has caused Weeman and Russell to change the way they structure their classes, but it's a good change.

"Precision is one of those fields that every year you kind of reevaluate your curriculum and see what's relevant and what isn't anymore," Weeman said. "And so for this year, I can't say we've removed anything, but this has certainly been a huge addition to the program."

For the precision agriculture students, they are happy they can get out of the classroom and gain some hands-on experience with the drone.

Marie Demerath, a first-year precision agriculture student, chose MTI because of the program, which is bigger than other schools she considered.

Demerath said if she decides to go into crop scouting, she will have the experience she needs.

For the past few weeks, Demerath and her classmates have been learning how to operate the drone,

and set up flight plans on the computer.

But the best part, Demerath said is going out and flying the drone.

"It's hands-on," Demerath said. "Actually getting to do it ourselves and not just watching."

Weeman said the drone has created more opportunity for students to spend time outside of the classroom and become proficient in the technology.

The drone, which has a battery life of about 50 minutes, allows instructors to "really mix it up," Weeman said, and gets students outside doing more practical work.

"I think that's where the tech school is shining," he said. "We've got a good mix of theoretics and practical applications here at the land labs."

Moving forward, Russell said there are plans to purchase another drone that hovers versus the Trimble UX5, which does not have these capabilities.

Right now, Russell said it's important to implement the technology and the data it delivers into all of the classes.

"The most important part is not the actual drone flying, but the data you collect and what you do with the actual data," Russell said. "You're going to get a pretty picture, but what are you actually going to do with it."

Information from: The Daily Republic, <http://www.mitchellrepublic.com>

Sanford research team draws scientists from around the globe

By JODI SCHWAN, Argus Leader

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A United Airlines flight leaves Sioux Falls at 6:25 p.m. each Friday headed to Chicago.

And nearly every time, Jill Weimer has a seat on it.

Weimer, 41, helps direct the Children's Health Research Center at Sanford Health, is the senior director of therapeutic development and also leads a team of scientists working to cure rare childhood diseases.

Her husband, a nuclear engineer, works in Chicago. So at the end of each week, Weimer boards a plane. She will return on a flight that arrives Monday night. She works from Illinois one week out of every six.

"My lab jokes they hate it when I work off-site because they get 100 percent of my attention versus when I'm here I'm pulled into a hundred meetings," Weimer said. "They get hundreds of emails from me."

When she's in Sioux Falls, Weimer rarely is far from the lab. She estimates she works 12-hour days, while quickly adding "but the mind of a scientist actually never turns off."

The science in her lab received international recognition earlier this year, when Weimer and others from Sanford Health presented at an international stem cell conference in Vatican City. Three patients have been enrolled in a clinical trial for one type of Batten disease, and the Children's Health Research Center also is using stem cells to pursue treatments for other rare diseases and neurological disorders.

Behind the scenes is a team of scientists with global reach. Most are scientists in their 20s and 30s who hail from places as diverse as Brazil, Kenya and Italy.

Other team members split time between Sioux Falls and New York or China.

In spite of the occasional distance to bridge, they seem to be a collaborative, collegial group. While Weimer's 12-hour shifts are not the norm for her team, they have been known to be in lab until after midnight if critical data depended on it.

"I allow them to be really invested in these projects and own them as their science," Weimer told the

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Argus Leader (<http://argusne.ws/2cSzcOx>). "And they see how they're helping people and what the potential is for leading to a therapy. They get as equally excited and passionate about it."

Zhiguang Guo has a commute much longer than even Weimer.

The researcher, who focuses on type 1 diabetes, spends about half his time in his native China. After six weeks there, he works six weeks in Sioux Falls and commutes to Minneapolis, where his family lives on weekends.

Scientist Haotian Zhou, whose wife and daughter live in New York, also is a Sanford Research super-commuter. He returns to New York every two months and spends a few weeks there before coming back to Sioux Falls.

The rest of the Children's Health Research Center team mostly works from the Sanford Research headquarters, but they bring a global reach of experience with them.

When research associate Katie White graduated from the University of Missouri at Columbia, she estimates she applied for 200 jobs nationwide.

Her resume included using pigs as models in research, which caught Weimer's eye because her lab does the same.

"So that's why she hired me," White, 24, said. "I really like it. I realize that a lot of people in my position in other labs across the country don't have the amount of responsibility I'm able to. In Jill's lab, I manage a whole slew of projects, which isn't the norm, so I appreciate the opportunity."

Daniel Kota, a staff scientist and native of Brazil, came to Sioux Falls from Texas, where he went to graduate school.

"The facility is great," he said, adding he was attracted by the chance to "start something new and exciting. The collaboration is good. There's a lot of collaboration here. We try to always bring different expertise together, which is great, and the people are very helpful."

Two weeks after graduating from Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, Gaya Shivega started at the Children's Health Research Center. Shivega, who grew up in Kenya, first saw Sanford as part of a tour when she was a sophomore in college.

Intrigued by the research being done, she applied and was hired as a research associate.

"You just move forward when a lot of people are helping you move forward," Shivega said of her experience in the lab. "We work closely with everybody in the Children's Health Center, and you learn new techniques."

Staff scientist Rosanna Beraldi also has an international history. Born in Italy, she came to the U.S. in 2006 and has been at Sanford for two years.

She had worked at Mayo Clinic and followed her husband to Sioux Falls, where he was doing his residency in internal medicine.

"I knew there was this amazing facility here and they were doing neurological diseases with pig models, and this was a great opportunity to work with pigs because they are the most similar animal model to humans, so I took the opportunity," Beraldi said. "It's going great. It's fun and a very young environment. We do very serious research in a fun way."

The nature of the lab is a good fit for Sammy Davis, 23, a research associate from Minnesota.

"I didn't have a huge background in anything neurological, but I said, 'I'll do whatever you want me to do.' I've learned a lot, and it's been a great opportunity," she said. "We have so many projects going on, but we all piggyback on each other and help."

The older members of the research team, in their 30s, recognize what they call world-class opportunities at the Sanford facility.

Peter Vitiello, 36, an associate scientist, came to Sioux Falls from New York seven years ago when the research center had two faculty. It's grown to 16 faculty and 75 employees.

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"Finding an opportunity to be independent in science, do what you want to do and somebody is going to invest in your idea, was very slim for a while because of poor funding across the nation," he said.

"But a lot of people said this was essentially a place that didn't have a reputation and was career suicide. It's been an honor to be part of a group putting their name on the map and getting our work respected out there and be part of that growth."

There's something, he said, "that has created such an amenable and collegial environment, where we're just rooting for each other at all times. That's really unique in a research environment."

Associate scientist Kevin Francis, 38, came from West Virginia about a year ago. He leads a three-person lab with one team member from Sioux Falls and another who moved from Illinois.

"There are fantastic people to work with and a great living environment," he said, adding the move to Sioux Falls "can be a hard sell, mostly because it's the Midwest and not East or West Coast, California or Boston, which are considered scientific research hubs. It's more about getting Sanford's name and research out there to the community, so people will want to come here and work with us."

Recruitment depends on the level of researcher Sanford is trying to attract, said Kyle Roux, 40, the senior director of biomedical sciences for the center.

Finding faculty members isn't as difficult because there aren't many opportunities nationwide to run a lab, he said. Technicians and associates also aren't as hard because there are nearby universities with applicable training programs.

"If we're talking about requiring Ph.D.s, that's a little more difficult," he said. "We've had some great success, but given the institution is not that large and relatively new, the reputation is still growing."

It might seem counterintuitive, but when Weimer flies in potential new hires, she brings them for a visit to Sioux Falls during the winter.

"We feel that's the one downside, and they need to see that," she said. "When we interview folks, I tell them it's 50 percent smarts and 50 percent personality. They need to be able to intellectually handle what we're doing, but if they're going to have an attitude or create a rift, I don't need them working with us no matter how smart they are."

Once in Sioux Falls, the Children's Health Research Center team seems to settle in easily.

Shivega, from Kenya, calls the city a fun place to live.

"I'm definitely going to be here at least the next year," she said. "I'm applying for medical school, so we'll see how that goes, but I feel like there's still room to grow. And I'm doing some really cool projects that I want to get to a point where I feel like I've moved it forward enough."

Francis, who moved from West Virginia but said he has lived "all over," calls Sioux Falls fantastic.

"For what I would call a smallish town, there's plenty to do, and the people are friendly and nice, and it's a great place to raise my family."

Beraldi, from Italy, agreed.

"I like Sioux Falls," she said, adding she will be here for at least another few years but would like to stay longer. "It's very safe, and for me not having family here — my parents are in Italy — I like to feel safe in Sioux Falls. And I'm very, very happy with the research . because I think we can really find some therapeutics that can cure disease."

Kota, from Brazil, has noticed that in Sioux Falls "people are happy to work. You don't see that anywhere else in the country."

He said he loves the city and hopes to start his own lab in the next year or two focusing on stem cell research and translational therapies.

But unlike the international nature of his team now, Kota, 36, said he's hoping to attract local talent on his team.

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"I think there's a need to demystify that you can only attract talent from talent centers," he said. "Science should be more open to more people. And if you attract local people and they succeed, that affects the community. I don't think you need to go far to attract talent. That's my goal."

Information from: Argus Leader, <http://www.argusleader.com>

Saturday's Scores By The Associated Press

Volleyball

Brookings def. Sioux Falls Washington, 25-14, 25-21, 25-17

James Valley Christian def. Lake Preston, 12-25, 25-19, 22-25, 27-25, 15-10

Mitchell def. Pierre, 25-17, 25-114, 25-22

Pine Ridge def. Cheyenne-Eagle Butte, 25-9, 25-19, 27-25

Sioux Falls O'Gorman def. Watertown, 25-14, 25-17, 21-25, 25-22

Belle Fourche Tournament

Pool Play

Pool A

Belle Fourche def. Upton-Sundance, Wyo., 25-18, 25-17

Belle Fourche def. Hot Springs, 25-16, 25-8

Lyman def. Belle Fourche, 25-21, 25-22

Lyman def. Hot Springs, 25-8, 25-14

Lyman def. Upton-Sundance, Wyo., 25-19, 25-19

Upton-Sundance, Wyo. def. Hot Springs, 25-16, 25-16

Pool B

Douglas def. Sturgis, 25-19, 25-22

Douglas def. Moorcroft, Wyo., 25-16, 25-11

Douglas def. Wall, 25-8, 15-25, 25-16

Moorcroft, Wyo. def. Sturgis, 16-25, 25-15, 25-11

Wall def. Sturgis, 25-18, 25-21

Wall def. Moorcroft, Wyo., 25-15, 25-20

Pool C

Hill City def. Lead-Deadwood, 25-15, 25-13

Hill City def. Bowman County, N.D., 25-22, 25-18

Lead-Deadwood def. Bowman County, N.D., 25-15, 25-18

Philip def. Lead-Deadwood, 18-25, 25-12, 25-20

Philip def. Hill City, 25-27, 25-17, 25-20

Philip def. Bowman County, N.D., 25-9, 25-23

Pool D

Rapid City Central JV def. Bennett County, 25-14, 25-16

Spearfish def. Bennett County, 25-6, 25-15

Spearfish def. Rapid City Central JV, 25-16, 19-25, 25-15

St. Thomas More def. Bennett County, 25-6, 25-15

St. Thomas More def. Spearfish, 25-21, 20-25, 25-23

St. Thomas More def. Rapid City Central JV, 25-16, 23-25, 25-16

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Consolation Semifinal

Moorcroft, Wyo. def. Lead-Deadwood, 25-17, 19-25, 25-16

Rapid City Central JV def. Upton-Sundance, Wyo., 25-19, 22-25, 27-25

Consolation Championship

Rapid City Central JV def. Moorcroft, Wyo., 21-25, 25-23, 25-20

Quarterfinal

Belle Fourche def. Douglas, 25-23, 25-18

Philip def. Spearfish, 25-15, 25-20

St. Thomas More def. Hill City, 25-12, 26-24

Wall def. Lyman, 23-13, 26-28, 25-15

Semifinal

Belle Fourche def. Philip, 25-14, 25-18

St. Thomas More def. Wall, 23-25, 25-16, 25-21

Championship

Belle Fourche def. St. Thomas More, 25-21, 19-25, 25-23

Central South Dakota Conference Tournament

First Round

Sully Buttes def. Sunshine Bible Academy, 25-5, 25-7

Elkton-Lake Benton Tournament

Alcester-Hudson def. Gayville-Volin, 25-20, 25-23

Alcester-Hudson def. Elkton-Lake Benton, 25-12, 25-23

Alcester-Hudson def. Iroquois, 25-12, 25-16

Alcester-Hudson def. Dell Rapids St. Mary, 25-7, 25-23

Dell Rapids St. Mary def. Iroquois, 25-14, 26-24

Elkton-Lake Benton def. Gayville-Volin, 25-21, 25-17

Elkton-Lake Benton def. Dell Rapids St. Mary, 25-12, 25-15

Elkton-Lake Benton def. Iroquois, 25-5, 25-18

Gayville-Volin def. Iroquois, 25-11, 25-22

Gayville-Volin def. Dell Rapids St. Mary, 25-23, 25-12

Kimball Tournament

First Round

Burke/South Central def. Wolsey-Wessington, 25-21, 25-17

Canistota def. Colome, 27-25, 26-24

Freeman def. Wessington Springs, 25-16, 27-25

Kimball/White Lake def. Jones County, 25-15, 25-11

Consolation Semifinal

Jones County def. Colome, 25-22, 25-10

Wessington Springs def. Wolsey-Wessington, 25-11, 25-23

Semifinal

Burke/South Central def. Freeman, 25-13, 25-16

Kimball def. Canistota, 25-20, 23-25, 25-19

Fifth Place

Colome def. Wolsey-Wessington, 23-25, 25-19, 25-19

Jones County def. Wessington Springs, 25-22, 25-17

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Third Place

Canistota def. Freeman, 25-22, 22-25, 25-15

Championship

Kimball def. Burke/South Central, 25-21, 28-26

Little Moreau Conference Tournament (LMC)

Play-In

Newell def. Tiospaye Topa, 25-11, 25-14

First Round

Bison def. McIntosh, 25-20, 25-18

Bison def. Lemmon, 26-24, 25-22

Bison def. Faith, 25-20, 25-22

Faith def. Lemmon, 26-24, 15-25, 25-18

Faith def. McIntosh, 25-11, 27-25

Faith def. Timber Lake, 25-15, 25-20

Harding County def. Bison, 25-19, 25-16

Harding County def. Faith, 25-21, 25-22

Harding County def. Newell, 25-10, 25-11

Lemmon def. Timber Lake, 25-21, 16-25, 25-23

Lemmon def. Dupree, 26-24, 25-20

McIntosh def. Tiospaye Topa, 25-11, 25-13

McIntosh def. Dupree, 25-18, 22-25, 25-22

Timber Lake def. Newell, 25-11, 25-10

Championship

Harding County def. Bison, 25-18, 25-16

Milbank Eastern Classic

First Round

Dakota Valley def. Sisseton, 25-11, 25-8

Elk Point-Jefferson def. Chamberlain, 25-19, 25-6

Milbank Area def. Tri-Valley, 25-18, 14-25, 25-9

Tea Area def. Winner, 25-23, 18-25, 25-17

Consolation Semifinal

Chamberlain def. Sisseton, 25-22, 25-20

Tri-Valley def. Winner, 28-26, 17-25, 25-21

Semifinal

Dakota Valley def. Elk Point-Jefferson, 18-25, 25-17, 25-14

Milbank Area def. Tea Area, 25-19, 25-23

Seventh Place

Sisseton def. Winner, 25-16, 22-25, 25-19

Fifth Place

Tri-Valley def. Chamberlain, 25-15, 25-23

Third Place

Elk Point-Jefferson def. Tea Area, 25-18, 16-25, 25-18

Championship

Dakota Valley def. Milbank Area, 25-15, 25-17

10 Things to Know for Monday

By The Associated Press

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

1. NATION — AND BEYOND — TURNS ATTENTION TO FIRST OF THREE DEBATES

The high-stakes contests between Clinton and Trump could set the momentum for the rest of the U.S. presidential campaign.

2. SUSPECT ARRESTED IN DEADLY SHOOTINGS AT MALL IN WASHINGTON STATE

Police say 20-year-old Arcan Cetin said nothing and appeared “zombie-like” when he was taken into custody.

3. WHAT COULD BE DECISIVE IN WAR AGAINST ISLAMIC STATE GROUP

An array of forces is lining up for a battle to re-take Mosul. Being forced from Iraq’s second-largest city would effectively break the back of the militant group.

4. US TERROR ATTACKS’ COMMON DENOMINATOR: ANWAR AL-AWLAKI

A bomb that rocked New York a week ago was just the latest incident in which the attackers were inspired by the American imam who became an al-Qaida propagandist.

5. STANDOUT PITCHER JOSE FERNANDEZ DEAD AT 24

The Miami Marlins right-hander who escaped Cuba to become one of baseball’s brightest stars is killed in a boating accident.

6. WHY RESIDENTS OF CEDAR RAPIDS ARE LEAVING TOWN

The rain-swollen Cedar River is threatening serious flooding and forcing people from low-lying areas of Iowa’s second-largest city.

7. CALIFORNIA EYES UNUSUAL POWER SOURCE

The state studies whether crystals can be used to produce electricity from the mechanical energy created by vehicles on California’s famously gridlocked highways.

8. ‘SORRY, ONE DOESN’T HIGH-FIVE WITH COMMONERS’

That’s how the Daily Mail headlined its story about William and Kate’s 3-year-old son, who declined to high-five with Prime Minister Trudeau as the royal family arrived in Canada for a tour.

9. WHICH MOVIE TOPPLED ‘SULLY’

“The Magnificent Seven” rides Denzel Washington’s star power to a \$35 million debut, dethroning Tom Hanks’ film at the box office.

10. HUGE PAYDAY FOR RORY MCILROY

The golfer from Northern Ireland sinks a 15-foot birdie putt on the fourth playoff hole to win the PGA Tour Championship — and claim a \$10 million bonus.

Miami Marlins ace Jose Fernandez dies in boating accident

By TIM REYNOLDS and STEVEN WINE, AP Sports Writers

MIAMI (AP) — Jose Fernandez escaped from Cuba by boat on his fourth try as a teenager, and when his mother fell into the Yucatan Channel during the journey, he jumped in and pulled her out.

Fernandez’s heroic backstory made his death early Sunday that much more heart-wrenching. The charismatic Miami Marlins ace was killed in a boating accident at age 24.

Fernandez and two other people died when their 32-foot vessel slammed into a jetty off Miami Beach, authorities said.

Authorities didn’t know the time of the crash. The capsized boat was found shortly after 3 a.m.

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"All I can do is scream in disbelief," said Hall of Famer Tony Perez, a Marlins executive and native of Cuba. "Jose won the love of all. I feel as if I had lost a son."

Major League Baseball released a statement saying it was "stunned and devastated."

"He was one of our game's great young stars who made a dramatic impact on and off the field since his debut in 2013," Commissioner Rob Manfred said. "Our thoughts and prayers are with his family, the Miami Marlins organization and all of the people he touched in his life."

The Marlins' game Sunday at home against the Atlanta Braves was canceled. The Braves, along with several other teams, quickly offered condolences.

"Hands down one of my favorite guys to watch pitch! He brought nothing but intensity and passion," Boston Red Sox pitcher David Price tweeted.

Within hours after the news broke, Marlins players gathered at the ballpark to grieve together.

"A lot of words were said — meaningful words and emotion and prayer," team president David Samson said. "Jose is a member of this family for all time."

Samson spoke at a news conference while surrounded by every player on the Marlins, except their ace. The players wore team jerseys — black ones. Pitcher David Phelps stared at the floor and shook his head, while outfielder Christian Yelich took a deep breath and exhaled slowly. Their eyes were red.

Manager Don Mattingly and president of baseball operations Michael Hill flanked Samson and unsuccessfully fought back tears. Slugger Giancarlo Stanton didn't speak but later posted a tribute on Instagram.

"I'm still waiting to wake up from this nightmare," Stanton said. "I lost my brother today and can't quite comprehend it. The shock is overwhelming. What he meant to me, our team, the city of Miami, Cuba & everyone else in the world that his enthusiasm/heart has touched can never be replaced. I can't fathom what his family is going through because We, as his extended Family are a wreck."

Fernandez was on a vessel that hit a jetty near a harbor entrance, said Lorenzo Veloz of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. The overturned boat remained in the water for several hours, its engines partially submerged as its nose pointed skyward, and debris from the crash was scattered over some of the large jagged rocks.

Veloz described the condition of the boat as "horrible."

City of Miami Fire-Rescue workers were seen carrying bodies, draped and on stretchers, at the Coast Guard station after sunrise. They were taken to the medical examiner's office. Two bodies were found under the vessel and a third was found on the jetty.

The names of the other two victims were withheld pending notification of relatives, the Coast Guard said. One of them was the son of a Miami-Dade police detective, the police department said.

"It does appear that speed was involved due to the impact and the severity of it," Veloz said. "It does appear to be that they were coming at full speed when they encountered the jetty, and the accident happened."

Fernandez died from trauma and not drowning, Veloz said, who added there was no immediate indication that alcohol or drugs were a cause in the crash. He said none of the three victims wore a life jacket.

The boat was owned by a friend of Fernandez.

"It does pertain to a friend of Jose who is very well connected with several Marlins players, and I have stopped that boat before for safety inspections with other Marlins players on board," Veloz said. "We know that this boat knows the area. We just can't answer why this happened."

Marlins owner Jeffrey Loria was out of town but planned to fly to Miami.

"Sadly, the brightest lights are often the ones that extinguish the fastest," Loria said in a statement. "Jose left us far too soon, but his memory will endure in all of us. At this difficult time, our prayers are

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with his mother, grandmother, family and friends.”

A native of Santa Clara, Cuba, Fernandez was unsuccessful in his first three attempts to defect, and spent several months in prison. At 15, he and his mother finally made it to Mexico, and were reunited in Tampa, Florida, with his father, who had escaped from Cuba two years earlier.

The Marlins drafted him in 2011 and Fernandez was in the majors two years later at 20. He went 38-17 in his four seasons with Miami, winning the NL’s Rookie of the Year award in 2013, and was twice an All-Star.

Last week, Fernandez posted a photo of his girlfriend sporting a “baby bump” on his Instagram page, announcing that the couple was expecting its first child.

“I’m so glad you came into my life,” Fernandez wrote in that post. “I’m ready for where this journey is gonna take us together.”

Fernandez became a U.S. citizen last year and was enormously popular in Miami thanks to his success and exuberant flair. When he wasn’t pitching, he would hang over the dugout railing as the team’s lead cheerleader.

“When I think about Josie, it’s going to be thinking about a little kid,” said Mattingly, pausing repeatedly to compose himself. “I see such a little boy in him ... the way he played. ... Kids play Little League, that’s the joy Jose played with.”

Mattingly then wiped away tears, and he wasn’t alone. Retiring Red Sox star David Ortiz asked the Tampa Bay Rays to cancel a pregame tribute they scheduled in his honor before his final game in their ballpark Sunday.

“I don’t have the words to describe the pain I feel,” Ortiz said.

The New York Mets, in the thick of a playoff chase, will begin a series in Miami on Monday. Fernandez’s debut game in 2013 was against the Mets, and he was scheduled to face them Monday after having his start pushed back a day.

“When the first pitch left his hand, the first thought is, ‘Oh, wow, this is something special,’” said Mets manager Terry Collins, who picked Fernandez for this year’s All-Star Game. “This was not only one of the greatest pitchers in the modern game but one of the finest young men you’d ever meet, who played the game with passion and fun and enjoyed being out there.”

The game Monday will be played as scheduled, the Marlins said.

“Deep in our hearts there is a lot of pain,” Miami third baseman Martin Prado said. “Somehow we’ve got to overcome that.”

Fernandez’s death immediately brought memories of past baseball tragedies, such as the deaths of Thurman Munson and Roberto Clemente — stars who died in plane crashes in the 1970s.

Cleveland teammates Steve Olin and Tim Crews were killed in a boating accident in Florida in 1993, and the game also reeled from the sudden deaths of major leaguers Darryl Kile, Nick Adenhardt, Lyman Bostock and Cory Lidle in recent years.

Video boards at Marlins Park on Sunday morning showed a large “16” — Fernandez’s uniform number — over his name. The number was also painted on the mound, and flowers rested on the rubber. A few dozen fans milled about in the ballpark plaza, some wearing Fernandez jerseys.

There were pregame tributes and moments of silence for Fernandez across the majors. His jersey hung in the Mets’ dugout as they played Philadelphia at Citi Field.

Fernandez’s 76th and final game was Tuesday, when he pitched eight shutout innings, struck out 12 and beat the Washington Nationals 1-0.

“He told one of his teammates that the last game he pitched, against the Nationals, was the best game he ever pitched,” Prado said, his voice breaking. “Now he’s gone, and it’s hard.”

AP Baseball Writer Ronald Blum in New York, AP writer Jason Dearen in Gainesville and AP freelancers Ian Harrison in Toronto and Mark Dittler in St. Petersburg contributed to this report.

Things to Know about deadly shootings at mall in Washington

By The Associated Press

BURLINGTON, Wash. (AP) — Authorities on Sunday were investigating the background and possible motive of the suspect arrested in the slayings of five people in the makeup department of a Macy's store at a mall north of Seattle. Here are things to know about the shooting and the investigation:

THE LATEST:

Detectives on Sunday searched an apartment where 20-year-old Arcan Cetin lived in Oak Harbor, Washington.

The four-unit building was surrounded by yellow police tape preventing others from entering, and officers carried out boxes from an upstairs apartment at the back of the building.

Cetin was arrested Saturday, after a nearly 24-hour manhunt.

Authorities say the gunman initially entered the Cascade Mall in nearby Burlington, Washington, without a weapon shortly before 7 p.m. Friday.

About 10 minutes later, he appeared on surveillance video with a rifle and started shooting in the makeup department of the Macy's store. Four females and a male were killed.

THE SUSPECT:

Cetin immigrated to the U.S. from Turkey and went to high school in Washington state. It's not clear how long he had been in the country, but former friend Dejon Devroe said Sunday the two attended elementary school together in Oak Harbor. Cetin is a legal permanent resident.

Authorities have not disclosed a motive for the shooting and say they have ruled out nothing. Cetin had a series of run-ins with the law in recent years, including charges he assaulted his stepfather.

A neighbor of Cetin who also went to high school with him characterized him as "creepy, rude and obnoxious" and said he used social media to send her a picture of his crotch.

Amber Cathey also described Cetin as socially inept and said she tried to avoid him.

THE VICTIMS:

The victims include four women ranging from a teenager to a woman in her 60s, and a man.

Authorities on Sunday were still withholding most names of the victims pending autopsies and notification of the victims' relatives.

The Seattle Times said one victim was a 16-year-old girl who survived cancer.

Another was probation officer Belinda Galde, 64. She "was an amazingly kind and caring individual," said the Snohomish County District Court in a statement.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Cetin is detained but has not been charged. The suspect is expected to make his first court appearance on Monday.

Mall shooting suspect: 'Creepy,' multiple arrests, disputes

By MARTHA BELLISLE and LISA BAUMANN, Associated Press

OAK HARBOR, Wash. (AP) — The 20-year-old man suspected of killing five people with a rifle at a Macy's makeup counter had a string of run-ins with the law in recent years, including charges he assaulted his stepfather, and was described by a neighbor as so "creepy, rude and obnoxious" that she kept a Taser by her front door.

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As investigators tried to piece together information on Arcan Cetin, who was arrested Saturday evening after a nearly 24-hour manhunt, a picture emerged of a troubled young man. Court records show more than a half-dozen criminal cases in Island County alone since 2013.

Authorities said the gunman in the attack at the Cascade Mall in Burlington opened fire in the department store's cosmetics department Friday night, killing a man and four females ranging from a teenager to a senior citizen. The killer then fled.

Cetin said nothing and appeared "zombie-like" when he was taken into custody on a sidewalk outside his apartment complex some 30 miles away in Oak Harbor by a sheriff's officer who recognized him as the suspect in the rampage, authorities said.

Cetin immigrated to the U.S. from Turkey and is a legal permanent resident, officials said.

As the surrounding area absorbed news of the arrest, critical questions remained, including the gunman's motive. The FBI said early Saturday that there was no indication the shooting was terrorism, but local authorities said later in the day that they were ruling nothing out.

On Sept. 17, a 20-year-old man stabbed 10 people at a Minnesota mall before being shot to death by an off-duty police officer. Authorities said they are investigating the attack by Dahir Ahmed Adan as a possible act of terrorism.

On Sunday, investigators searched Cetin's vehicle and the apartment complex and were seen carrying boxes from a rear, upstairs unit. The four-unit building was surrounded with yellow police tape. Detectives would not say what they found.

Amber Cathey, 21, lived in an apartment next to Cetin for the past three months and said she was so frightened by him that she complained to apartment management and kept a stun gun handy. Cathey said she blocked him on Snapchat after he sent her a photo of his crotch.

"He was really creepy, rude and obnoxious," Cathey said. She said she would try to avoid him by walking the long way around to her apartment if she saw his car in the parking lot. The two were in high school together as well, and Cathey said he acted the same way then.

The Seattle Times reported (<http://bit.ly/2cWhxJY>) that court records show Cetin faced three charges of assaulting his stepfather. The newspaper said Cetin also was arrested on drunken driving charges. It gave no details on when the arrests took place or how the cases may have been resolved.

In the assault case, Cetin was told by a judge last December that he was not to possess a gun, the newspaper reported. However, the stepfather urged the judge not to impose a no-contact order, saying his stepson was "going through a hard time."

Attempts to reach Cetin's family for comment by phone and social media weren't immediately successful. It wasn't clear if Cetin had a lawyer yet. A man who came to the door Sunday morning at an Oak Harbor address believed to be where Cetin's stepfather and mother live asked an Associated Press reporter to leave the property.

Social media accounts apparently belonging to Cetin showed he had a fondness for the military and video games.

A Twitter account showed, among other things, selfies, photos of him in younger years and pictures of Turkish food. He once participated in paintball and said he "can't wait for Halo 5," the first-person shooter video game. He also tweeted: "Shout out to the ROTC peeps." A Facebook account showed he liked military-related sites.

Cetin also appeared to have blogs on the site Tumblr that had not been updated in many months. They included seemingly random posts about serial killer Ted Bundy, a collection of selfies, the top-secret Area 51 Cold War test site and photos of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei and Islamic State group leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The two blogs linked back to each other and one of them

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linked to what appeared to be his Twitter page.

Cetin took part in his high school's ROTC program with former classmate Matthew McClimans, who described the suspect as "a pretty normal guy, but he was a little bit weird."

"Every once in a while he'd make inappropriate comments: Things that are rude or in bad taste," McClimans said.

Oak Harbor is a city of 22,000 on Whidbey Island with many military families associated with the nearby Naval Air Station Whidbey Island.

Sheriff's Lt. Mike Hawley said he spotted Cetin Saturday from a patrol car and immediately recognized him as the suspect in the shooting rampage.

"I literally hit my brakes, did a quick turn, I jumped out," Hawley said

No immediate charges were brought against Cetin, who awaited a court appearance Monday.

The names of the dead were not immediately released by police. But The Seattle Times identified one as 16-year-old Sarai Lara. Her mother said she survived cancer as a young girl and was a happy student.

Authorities in suburban Seattle identified another victim as Belinda Galde, 64, a probation officer with the Snohomish County District Court.

Baumann reported from Seattle. Associated Press writers Phuong Le in Burlington, Washington, Gillian Flaccus in Portland, Oregon, Kimberlee Kruesi and Keith Ridler in Boise, Idaho, contributed to this report.

Clinton, Trump buff foreign policy bona fides on debate eve

By LAURIE KELLMAN and JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump were meeting separately with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu Sunday, giving the each candidate fresh bragging rights about their knowledge of foreign policy and readiness to lead the nation on the eve of their first presidential debate.

Trump and Netanyahu discussed "at length" Israel's use of a fence to help secure its borders, an example Trump frequently cites when he's talking about the wall he wants to build between the U.S. and Mexico.

"Trump recognized that Israel and its citizens have suffered far too long on the front lines of Islamic terrorism," the campaign said in a statement. "He agreed with Prime Minister Netanyahu that the Israeli people want a just and lasting peace with their neighbors, but that peace will only come when the Palestinians renounce hatred and violence and accept Israel as a Jewish State."

Clinton was expected to meet with the prime minister later in the day, also in New York.

The meeting was designed to put Israel on good footing with the next U.S. president. But it also served to showcase the candidates' expertise in foreign policy in the shadow of their first debate Monday, six weeks before Election Day. Clinton, a former senator and secretary of state, often says that Trump does not know enough about the world and lacks the temperament to be president. Trump has argued that he has extensive experience with foreign policy through his career as a business executive and blames Clinton for many of the nation's stumbles in foreign policy.

Meanwhile, the candidates deployed their top supporters to the Sunday shows to take early jabs at their opponents and lower expectations for a showdown expected to draw 75 million viewers — many of them disenchanted with both candidates, the least-popular presidential hopefuls in history.

Facts and who will determine them during the 90-minute debate seemed to be a top concern of the campaigns' strategists given Trump's habit of saying things that are untrue and the public's general

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distrust of Clinton.

Robby Mook, Clinton's campaign manager, told ABC's "This Week" that he is concerned Trump will continue his habit of sometimes saying things that aren't true and still get a passing grade. He called on moderator Lester Holt to correct any inaccuracies made by the candidates. But Trump's campaign manager, Kellyanne Conway, said it's not the job of debate moderators to fact check.

Trump's vice presidential running mate, Mike Pence, meanwhile, said that Gennifer Flowers will not attend the debate. Trump had tweeted that if frequent Trump critic Mark Cuban attended the showdown, he'd put Flowers, allegedly the former mistress of Clinton's husband, Bill, in the audience too. Conway said that Flowers had a right to be there if "somebody else gives her a ticket." But Pence drew a harder line.

"Gennifer Flowers will not be attending the debate tomorrow night," Pence said on "Fox News Sunday."

Conway on ABC defended the tweet, saying Trump "wants to remind people that he's a great counterpuncher."

The candidate was focused on other matters Sunday.

Trump's campaign said that during his meeting with Netanyahu, the Republican presidential nominee promised, "extraordinary strategic, technological, military and intelligence cooperation between the two countries" if he's elected.

The press was barred from covering the meeting between Netanyahu and Trump, but Trump's campaign said in a statement that the men, who have known each other for years, discussed "many topics important to both countries," including "the special relationship between America and Israel and the unbreakable bond between the two countries."

Among those topics: the nuclear deal with Iran, the battle against Islamic State militants, military assistance provided by the U.S. to Israel and other security issues.

Kellman reported from Washington. Associated Press writer Ken Thomas in New York contributed to this report.

On Twitter, follow Kellman at <https://twitter.com/APLaurieKellman> , Colvin at <https://twitter.com/colvinj> and Thomas at <https://twitter.com/KThomasDC> .

LSU fires Miles, Cameron, promotes Orgeron

By **BRETT MARTEL, AP Sports Writer**

LSU fired coach Les Miles and offensive coordinator Cam Cameron on Sunday, and promoted defensive line coach Ed Orgeron to interim head coach.

The moves came less than 24-hours after Miles briefly watched his players celebrate what they thought was a last-second winning touchdown pass at Auburn, only to walk off the field with a loss after officials determined on video replay that time had expired before the ball was snapped.

It was the latest of several frantic finishes in which the clock management of a Miles-coached offense had come under intense scrutiny. It will go down as the last.

"Coach Miles has done a tremendous job here and he's been a great ambassador for our University, which makes this even more difficult," LSU athletic director Joe Alleva said in a written statement. "However, it's apparent in evaluating the program through the first month of the season that a change has to be made.

"We have an obligation to our student-athletes to put them in the best position to have success on the

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football field each week. We have great confidence that coach Orgeron will do just that.”

Miles’ firing, reported first by The Advocate of Baton Rouge, came hours after LSU (2-2, 1-1 South-eastern Conference), which was ranked 18th last week, dropped out of the Top 25 in the latest AP Poll released Sunday afternoon.

Miles, who was in his 12th season, went 114-34 at LSU, the second-most victories in school history behind Charles McClendon’s 137 victories from 1962 to 1979.

Cameron, an old friend of Miles from when they were both assistants at Michigan in the 1980s, joined LSU in 2013. His offense was largely effective when his quarterback was Zach Mettenberger, a tall, strong-armed pro-style pocket passer. Production was far less consistent — and the passing game was often anemic — during the past two seasons.

Miles coached the Tigers to a national title in the 2007 season. The 2011 Tigers also reached the national title game, but lost to Alabama in what has grown to a five-game losing streak against the Crimson Tide.

The 2012 Tigers were Miles’ best team since, but an early November loss to Alabama squelched that team’s title hopes while Alabama, under former LSU coach Nick Saban, went on to a decisive national title victory over Notre Dame.

Since the start of the 2013, LSU has gone 15-11 against SEC opponents. His recent struggles nearly led to his firing last season, when a loss to Alabama began the first three-game skid of Miles’ tenure at LSU and the Tigers once again faded from contention. But after the Tigers rallied to close the regular season with a home triumph over Texas A&M, LSU athletic director Joe Alleva announced that Miles would return.

With a slew of starters returning on both offense and defense — including star running back and Heisman Trophy candidate Leonard Fournette — this season was widely seen as a referendum on Miles long-term future. LSU was ranked No. 5 in the preseason, but opened with a close loss to Wisconsin at Lambeau Field. Miles still had a chance to recover from the loss to the Badgers, who’ve since moved up to No. 8 in the AP Poll.

But Auburn was unranked and struggling, and managed to beat LSU without scoring a touchdown on Saturday because LSU’s offense was sluggish and struggled with clock management in the final minutes — a repeated theme during the Miles era.

Miles had tried to give the offense a lift during LSU’s second game against Jacksonville State, when quarterback Danny Etling replaced season-opening starter Brandon Harris. Etling led LSU to victories in that game and against Mississippi State, but struggled at Auburn, finishing with 118 yards passing.

Orgeron is a Louisiana native and renowned recruiter. He was a head coach once before in the SEC with Mississippi, but never had a winning record there and was fired after three seasons. He fared better as interim head coach at Southern California in 2013, going 6-2 in place of Lane Kiffin, who’d been fired that season.

AP college football website: www.collegefootball.ap.org

At least 26 killed in Aleppo as UN meets over Syria

By PHILIP ISSA and EDITH M. LEDERER, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — At least 26 civilians were killed in fresh government airstrikes on the contested city of Aleppo, Syrian activists said Sunday, as the United Nations Security Council convened an emergency meeting on the spiraling violence in Syria but failed to take any action because of deep divisions be-

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tween Russia and the Western powers.

The United States, Britain and France, who called the emergency meeting, heaped blame on Moscow for supporting the Syrian offensive which U.N. envoy Staffan de Mistura called one of the worst of the 5 1/2-year war.

When Syria's U.N. Ambassador Bashar Ja'afari was called to speak in the council, the ambassadors of the three Western powers walked out in protest.

They had demanded a halt to the Aleppo offensive and immediate council action, and their walkout demonstrated anger and frustration not only at Damascus but at Russia for backing close ally Bashar Assad's military campaign while talking about reviving a cessation of hostilities.

"What Russia is sponsoring and doing is not counter-terrorism, it's barbarism," said U.S. Ambassador Samantha Power. "It's apocalyptic what is being done in eastern Aleppo."

As the government offensive entered its fourth day on Sunday, medical workers and local officials reported airstrikes on neighborhoods throughout Aleppo's rebel-held eastern districts.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights reported 26 civilians had been killed by 7:30 p.m. and said it expects the toll to rise. Ibrahim Alhaj of the Syrian Civil Defense search and rescue outfit gave a higher toll, saying hospitals and rescuers had documented the deaths of 43 people so far on Sunday.

The Observatory, which relies on a network of contacts inside Syria, said earlier in the day that 213 civilians had been killed by airstrikes and shelling on opposition areas in and around Aleppo since the U.S.-Russian brokered cease-fire collapsed Monday evening.

Hospitals are overwhelmed with casualties and medical workers are expecting many of the wounded to die from a lack of treatment, according to Mohammad Zein Khandaqani, a member of the Medical Council, which oversees medical affairs in the city's opposition quarters.

"I've never seen so many people dying in once place," he said from a hospital in the city. "It's terrifying today. In less than one hour the Russian planes have killed more than 50 people and injured more than 200."

Conflicting casualty estimates are common in the aftermath of clashes and attacks in Syria.

At the start of the Security Council meeting, U.N. envoy de Mistura said the offensive against eastern Aleppo, where up to 275,000 people "have been under a form of de facto siege for almost 20 days," followed the U.S.-led coalition's bombing of Syrian troops, which Washington called a tragic mistake, and a deadly attack on a U.N. convoy carrying desperately needed humanitarian aid.

"But no incident, irrespective of whether it can be attributed or not, does justify what is going on in front of our own eyes: the unraveling of the cessation of hostilities and the simultaneous unleashing of unprecedented military violence affecting innocent civilians as well," he said.

He urged the United States and Russia "to go that extra mile to see if they can save their agreement of Sept. 9 and do so at the eleventh hour."

He also urged the Security Council to press for a cessation of hostilities, weekly 48-hour pauses to deliver aid, and medical evacuations for several urgent cases in eastern Aleppo.

De Mistura said Syrians and the international community are swiftly losing any remaining hope with Washington and Moscow "unless we salvage what was agreed on."

"All we can expect from Aleppo if the Syrian government is intent on retaking it is ... a slow, grinding, street-by-street fight, over the course of months, if not years, whereby the ancient city will be almost completely destroyed," he warned.

De Mistura reiterated that "a so-called military 'solution' or victory in Syria is impossible, including in

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Aleppo.”

After the meeting ended, he told reporters: “Everything hangs in the balance right now.” And what happens next depends on the Russians and Americans, he said.

Russia’s U.N. Ambassador Vitaly Churkin blamed Syria’s rebels for sabotaging the cease-fire agreement by using the lull to shore up their forces, and he accused the Western coalition of failing to separate the moderate factions it backs from “terrorist” groups especially the al-Qaida-linked Fatah Sham Front.

“In Syria, hundreds of armed groups are being armed,” Churkin said. “The territory of the country is being bombed indiscriminately. Bringing a peace is almost an impossible task now.”

But he made clear that Moscow hasn’t given up on a cessation of hostilities.

“Of course, I would like this very much to be our aim as well as the renewal of negotiations,” he said.

Churkin stressed, however, that Russia first wants to see “a sincere desire” by the U.S. coalition to separate the moderate opposition from the Fatah Sham Front.

Power said the United States knows “that Russia has consistently said one thing, and done the opposite.”

But she said the U.S. also believes it must do “everything in our power to find a way to halt the violence.”

“That is why, even now, we will continue to look for any way possible to restore the cessation of hostilities,” Power said.

While intra-Syria negotiations remain the aim of the Western powers and Russia, a broad coalition of 33 Syrian rebel factions issued a statement Sunday saying: “Negotiations under the present conditions are no longer useful and are meaningless.”

The opposition groups said they won’t accept any Russian mediation, calling Moscow a “partner to the regime in the crimes against our people.”

They also called on the government and Russian forces to halt airstrikes and lift sieges on opposition areas where the U.N. estimates 600,000 Syrians are trapped.

On the sidelines of the meeting, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon urged an end to the offensive saying the bombs “are not busting bunkers, they are demolishing ordinary people looking for any last refuge of safety.”

“International law is clear: The systematic use of indiscriminate weapons in densely populated areas is a war crime,” he said.

Prior to the start of the U.N. meeting, British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson said Russia should be investigated for war crimes following the attack on the aid convoy that claimed 20 lives. And France’s Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault said Russia and Iran will be guilty of war crimes if they don’t pressure Assad to stop escalating violence.

Rebels, meanwhile, shelled Masyaf, a government stronghold near the central city of Hama, for the second day in a row on Sunday, according to the Observatory.

Masyaf is home to a large number of Alawites, members of Assad’s sect. The Syrian leader has rallied Syria’s minorities behind his government behind fears of the Sunni-dominated rebellion.

On a positive note, a set of four towns, two besieged by government forces and two by rebels, were reached by aid convoys for the first time in nearly six months on Sunday, the International Committee for the Red Cross announced.

The organization said it had reached 60,000 residents trapped in the towns of Madaya, Zabadani, Foua, and Kafraya.

Lederer reported from the United Nations.

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Young stars of social media fill Dolce&Gabbana front row

By COLLEEN BARRY, AP Fashion Writer

MILAN (AP) — Social media stars have brought a fresh buzz to Milan Fashion Week. As word of their whereabouts spreads, gaggles of fans gather outside the restaurant or show venue where they are gathered, hoping for the chance to get a selfie — the pixel version of the 15 minutes of fame.

Here are some highlights from the fifth day of Milan Fashion Week womenswear previews for next spring and summer on Sunday. They include Dolce&Gabbana, Marni, Stella Jean and Missoni:

INTERNET STARS

Designers Domenico Dolce and Stefano Gabbana are showing their fashion smarts by inviting a host of Millennial-and-under internet stars and fashion trendsetters to the Dolce&Gabbana front row.

Young VIPs like Cameron Dallas, Sistine Stallone, Zoey Deutch, Lucky Blue Smith and Pyper America Smith, who command millions of followers across multiple social media platforms, give an instant burst of recognition to a very and attentive and targeted audience across the globe.

In all, more than 20 young celebrities of social media, many of them Hollywood offspring, attended the show on Sunday, drawing hundreds of fans with roller coaster screams to the designer's central Milan theater.

ITALIAN TROPICS

Exuberant street dancers filled the runway to set an upbeat tone for the Dolce&Gabbana preview show with their acrobatics.

The duo's collection for next spring and summer was dubbed "Italian Tropics," a fantastical framing of the designers' beloved Sicily, and was exuberant in itself, starting off with a series of bejeweled and embroidered jackets paired with flouncy transparent net skirts, hot pants, decorated ripped jean shorts and silken floral print dresses.

If Italy truly had the tropics, its prints would include oversized penne, bundles of spaghetti, colorful cocktails and cones of multi-flavored gelato, which Dolce&Gabbana fashioned into pretty frocks and comfortable trousers and jackets. In keeping with the Italian food theme, jute mini-dresses appeared to be advertising Italian pizza and a specific brand of canned tomatoes. A dress covered in netting had snagged a selection of seafood, accompanied by lobster earrings.

Nary a box was unticked for next season, hardly a silhouette left unexplored. The designers delivered a selection of pretty black dresses, from sheer lace numbers to short cocktail looks. Big round sequins covered dresses and overcoats, while shoes and ornamental hair pieces not only glimmered -- some actually lit up. Jeans were ripped and possibly covered with metallic ornaments, jewels or fringe. T-shirts came with the Virgin Mary surrounded by saints, or plays on the Dolce and Gabbana D&G logo, showing you can beat the counterfeiters at their own game, with enough self-deprecation.

Amid the endless variety, the final dress of the show perhaps best demonstrated that the designers' intent for next season was something less showy: A baby blue floral dress that hugged the bodice peasant-style and highlighted the curves with a diagonal ruffle. Gently curled hair was decorated with a simple pink flower. The last word being, self-possession.

COUNTERINTUITIVE DRESSING

Marni's collection for next spring and summer appeared to be of such a complex construction that it would seem to require a dress maid, or at least written instructions, perhaps even a video.

Accordion pleated dresses wrapped around along the bias, trailing ribbons or rope drawstrings. Tops

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with manifold folds and dragging cuffs fastened at the waist with a metallic buckle, and tuck into drawstring skirts. High-neck tunics with oversized sleeves and big cargo pockets were wrapped in wide kimono belts. Knitwear was gathered upward, obscuring the practicalities of how to get in or out.

Creative director Consuelo Castiglione counterintuitively played with proportions. Cargo pockets billowed like balloons over jumpsuits and coats. Sleeves were oversized, ending in bell shapes or big open cuffs. On skirts, the arched hemline of previous seasons was revisited. Seen from behind, a peplum layered evenly with a jacket hemline and skirt for a sculptural effect.

For evening, a black dress was constructed out of panels stitched together loosely to allow skin to peek through, creating the effect of an ultra-modernist wedding cake.

Colors are mostly basics, from white to beige to black, with flashes of emerald green, dusty pink and hues of blue. Marni prints for the season include florals and gentle geometrics. Big baubles and pointy shoes finish the looks.

GEEK CHIC

Hatian-Italian designer Stella Jean's collections continually cross borders, seeking what is mutual through fashion. For next season, the unifying force is soccer, the world's most popular game.

"Latitudes, cultures and traditions merge through football, creating a society that does not need technology to live," the designer said in notes. The motto: more soccer, less wifi.

The soccer jersey, inlaid with the captain's armband, plays a central role in the collection, paired with feminine skirts. Tailored shirts flow into sarongs, skirts are layered over shirt dresses, almost like backward aprons, and belted blazers are worn with pleated skirts bearing the ship prints by the painter Prefete Duffaut. The designer called the uniform looks "geek chic."

Stella Jean said she took inspiration from Myanmar, the local variant of soccer, called chinlone, the overlaps of Burmese robes and "the grace and strength of Aung San Suu Kyi."

SIMPLICITY

The Missoni looks for next season flow and wrap, emphasizing the fineness of the brand's knitwear.

The silhouette is exceedingly clear: Micro mini or long and flowing. Tank dresses have surprising color combinations, stripes of dark green or black, and with strong shades of red, green and yellow. Metallic yarn runs through the collection.

The knitwear is close to the body, with curves emphasized by scarves or sweaters wrapped around the middle. Palazzo pant jumpsuits create movement and flow, as do long trailing cardigans over shorter dresses.

"I really all of the sudden felt the need for something clean, pure simple. So I really went for a very simple silhouette."

FROM BIKINI TO BURKINI

Federica Pellegrini showed over her Olympian abs in a bikini top and white linen pants by Raffaella D'Angelo. The champion swimmer says that the experience of modelling for the swim and beachwear label has created an interest in fashion for a possible next career — but only after the Tokyo Games in 2020.

"Every time I feel a different emotion, compared to when I swim. At the end of my career, maybe I will stay in the fashion world," she told the news agency ANSA after the Saturday show.

D'Angelo opened the show with an ornamentally printed burkini in somber shades, winning applause from the crowd.

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"This isn't meant as a provocation, but as an opening," the designer told ANSA, saying her choice to show a burkini was meant as a sign of respect for Islamic culture. She also noted, wryly, that how women dress at the beach has long been the source of social discussion.

"This year we celebrate 70 years of the bikini. A century ago, we all went around all covered. We don't need to be scared of novelty," she said.

While in neighboring France debate over burkinis on beaches was sparked by local bans, Italians have shown more acceptance.

CHARITY AUCTION

Models Adriana Lima and Sara Sampaio helped drive up the bidding for a trip to the 2016 Victoria's Secret fashion show as the amfAR charity raised nearly \$2 million for AIDS research at a gala Saturday night, a Milan record.

Also on hand for the annual event was Heather Graham and Karolina Kurkova. Lapo Elkann, whose family controls both the Fiat Chrysler and Ferrari carmakers, was honored with the AmfAR courage award for his support of the charity, which aims to find a cure to AIDS by 2020.

"I've been fortunate in my life, and for me to be generous is normal. If not it would be a shame," Elkann said. He then urged the well-heeled attendees, who he noted spend freely on expensive cars, airplanes and clothes, "instead of being generous on vanity, be generous on things that have a purpose."

Part of the proceeds from the event will go to the victims of last month's deadly earthquake in central Italy.

Paola Masera contributed to this report. Follow Colleen Barry on Twitter at www.twitter.com/colbarry

Jordanian writer gunned down outside courthouse

By KHETAM MALKAWI and MOHAMMED DARAGHMEH, Associated Press

AMMAN, Jordan (AP) — A prominent and outspoken Jordanian writer on Sunday was shot dead in front of the courthouse where he had been on trial for posting a cartoon deemed offensive to Islam on social media.

A Jordanian security official said the shooter was a former imam, or prayer leader, at a local mosque, and said the man had been motivated by his anger over the cartoon posted to Facebook by writer Nahed Hattar. The shooting was the latest in a string of deadly security lapses in Jordan.

Witnesses and police said Hattar, 56, was preparing to enter the courthouse for a hearing when the gunman shot him at close range.

"He was standing at a short distance of about one meter (yard) in front of Nahed on the stairs of the Supreme Court," a witness told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity, fearing repercussions. The official Petra News Agency said Hattar was shot three times.

The witness said the shooter, who was immediately arrested, was wearing a long grey robe and long beard characteristic of conservative Muslims.

Jordanian media, citing anonymous officials, identified the shooter as Riad Abdullah, 49, a former imam in northern Hashmi, a poor neighborhood in Amman. The reports said Abdullah had recently returned from a trip abroad, but gave no further details.

The security official declined to confirm the suspect's name. But he said he had confessed to the shooting and claimed he had acted alone and had no connections to any militant group.

Prosecutors charged the man with premeditated murder, committing a deadly terrorist act and possession of an unlicensed weapon. The suspect was detained for 15 days while the case was referred

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to the State Security Court.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media, said the suspect said he was motivated by the cartoon, which depicted a bearded man, smoking and in bed with two women, asking God to bring him wine and cashews. All physical depictions of God or the Prophet Muhammad, even respectful ones, are forbidden under mainstream Islamic tradition.

Government spokesman Mohammad Momani condemned the killing as a "heinous crime."

"The government will strike with an iron hand all those who exploit this crime to broadcast speeches of hatred to our community," he told the Petra agency.

But supporters of Hattar said they held the government responsible for the shooting, accusing Prime Minister Hani al-Mulki of creating a hostile atmosphere that encouraged violence against the writer.

"The prime minister was the first one who incited against Nahed when he ordered his arrest and put him on trial for sharing the cartoon, and that ignited the public against him and led to his killing," said Saad Hattar, a cousin of the writer.

Hattar has long been a controversial figure in Jordan. Years ago, he claimed that the late King Hussein had arrested and tortured him many times for his critical writings and vowed not to mourn the king, who died in 1999.

While born a Christian, he considered himself an atheist. He was a strong supporter of Syrian President Bashar Assad and an outspoken critic of the Islamic State group and al-Qaida.

Hattar was detained in August after sharing the cartoon on Facebook. Relatives said the cartoon was meant to illustrate what Hattar viewed as the twisted religious views of Islamic State extremists.

The post was quickly deleted after many angry responses. Jordan is an overwhelmingly Muslim and deeply conservative society.

Hattar was briefly detained for two weeks before he was released on bail.

In a statement, the family called on the government to hold accountable all those who had incited against Hattar.

"Many fanatics wrote on social media calling for his killing and lynching, and the government did nothing against them," they said.

Jordan is a close Western ally and has been largely spared from the violence engulfing neighboring Syria and Iraq. But a series of recent attacks has raised concern about security in the kingdom.

Late last year, a Jordanian police captain opened fire on instructors at an international police training center in Jordan's capital, killing at least five people, including two Americans, before being shot dead by security forces. In June, a suicide car bomb attack near the Syrian border killed seven Jordanian soldiers.

Hundreds of Jordanians have been sentenced to prison, are awaiting trial or are being held for questioning about links to IS. Under toughened anti-terror laws, even liking or sharing the group's propaganda on social media can land someone a prison sentence.

But on Sunday, social media accounts of prominent Islamists in Jordan and elsewhere were celebrating Hattar's death, saying he deserved it for blasphemy.

Anja Wehler-Schoek, resident director of the Friedrich Ebert Foundation in Jordan, said she found the social media posts "shocking." The German foundation promotes democracy and political education in the region.

"This is clearly a very dark day for Jordan, which has long been celebrated as a model of peaceful co-existence," she said. "I am very worried we are seeing the end of an era here and more and more problems to come in the future."

Daraghmeh reported from Ramallah, West Bank.

Road to debate: Trump built image as he built business

By NANCY BENAC, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump once claimed to be publicity shy.

No joke.

It's right there in The New York Times of Nov. 1, 1976. In the same article, the 30-year-old real estate developer talks up his millions, showcases his penthouse apartment and Cadillac, and allows a reporter to tag along as he visits job sites and lunches at the "21" club before hopping an evening flight to California for more deal-making.

So much for that shy-guy claim.

Young and ambitious, Trump worked just as hard at building his image as he did at expanding his real estate empire.

Along the way, he honed the communications skills that would benefit him at the negotiating table, turn him into a reality TV star and launch a presidential campaign.

He'll put them to the ultimate test as he goes one-on-one with Hillary Clinton in three nationally televised debates over the next month that will help determine the next president.

Trump, who'd never participated in a debate before the presidential primaries, is keeping his preparations for Monday's leadoff general-election debate low key — no mock face-offs or the like.

"Really, you're preparing all of your life for these," he told Fox Business Network recently. "You're not preparing over a two-week period and cramming."

Is he ready?

Experts on public speaking find all kinds of faults with Trump's oratory: His vocabulary is juvenile, his syntax is jumbled, he's casual about accuracy, he's demeaning, his voice is thin and nasal, he's weak on policy details and more.

And yet, Aaron Kall, who directs the University of Michigan's Debate Institute and debate team, will venture to tell you this: "He performs like a maestro."

"He's a media natural," says Kall, who edited a book about Trump's primary debate performances. "He really understands audiences and tailors a message to what he thinks that they want to hear."

Trump inherited a flair for promotion from his father.

Fred Trump, who built homes and apartments in Brooklyn and Queens, used all sorts of gimmicks to sell his properties: He filled the scoop of a bulldozer with women in bikinis. He released balloons on Coney Island containing \$50 discount coupons. He dressed up apartment building lobbies with bird cages.

From the beginning, his son Donald never passed up an opportunity to be on camera.

Long before NBC's "The Apprentice" turned Trump into a reality TV star in 2004, he was advancing his biz-whiz image in TV and movie cameos, chatting up Howard Stern on the radio and filming ads for Pizza Hut, McDonald's and more. Then, over 14 seasons of "The Apprentice" and "Celebrity Apprentice," he sharpened his ability to work the camera, think on his feet and promote the Trump brand.

As a presidential candidate, he's drawn on those same skills to keep himself in the news, dishing out provocations and insults sure to guarantee the public's attention.

"Across his history, he evolved from a builder to a brand," says Kathleen Hall Jamieson, director of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania. "He would not be successful were it not for his ingenuity at securing publicity."

A big question heading into Monday's leadoff debate in Hempstead, New York, is which Trump will turn up on stage — the bombastic name-caller who dominated stages for most of the primary season or

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the more disciplined candidate of late who marveled during the final Republican debate, "I can't believe how civil it's been up here."

Voters looking for a smackdown may be disappointed.

Kall says that because a key question for voters is whether Trump has the right temperament to be president, the Republican nominee needs to put the bluster on hold and offer a measured, thoughtful debate performance in which he shows a command of policy detail.

Trump faltered on policy questions at times during the primary debates. At one point he appeared unfamiliar with the concept of the nuclear triad, which includes intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine-launched missiles and strategic bombers. On another occasion, he seemed unaware China was not part of the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal.

Lillian Glass, an expert on speaking and body language, said Trump needs to be "completely focused on what is discussed and not talk about himself and how great his business was and what he did in the past. We know. We all know. Now, it's time to focus on the issues."

There's also Trump's voice to consider.

Ruth Sherman, a public speaking coach, says the public has grown so accustomed to Trump over the decades that people give him a pass on what she says is a poor speaking voice.

"He doesn't get criticized for the quality of his speaking voice but he should," she says. "It's a thin voice. It's not smooth. It's somewhat nasal."

Plenty of critics have highlighted the GOP nominee's banal vocabulary — heavy on "great," "amazing," "stupid," "dumb," "bad" and "sad."

"It almost sounds at times as if he's working from a random word generator in which there are a limited number of adjectives that are repeatedly used," says Jamieson.

But a big part of Trump's appeal is his knack for simplification, skipping over the nuances of complex problems to dangle the promise of easy solutions.

Trump may find that it was easier to pull that off on a crowded debate stage than it will be facing just Clinton, who is sure to try zero in on missing elements and policy gaps.

Dan Schnur, director of the University of Southern California's political institute and a veteran of John McCain's 2000 presidential campaign, says of Trump: "For all his bombast, he must know that 90 minutes toe-to-toe with Hillary Clinton doesn't leave him much margin for error."

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Anthem protests spread to colleges, WNBA player sits

By DOUG FEINBERG, AP Basketball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Liberty guard Brittany Boyd sat on the bench with her head bowed in prayer during the national anthem before a WNBA playoff game.

Hours earlier, college football players for Michigan and Michigan State, along with a group of students at North Carolina, raised their fists during the playing of "The Star-Spangled Banner" on Saturday.

Since 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick refused to stand for the anthem before NFL preseason games, citing racial injustice and police brutality, his movement has slowly spread across fields and courts in the U.S. On Saturday, college and professional athletes joined together to follow his lead after

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a week punctuated by riots in Charlotte, North Carolina , and the killing of an unarmed black man in Tulsa, Oklahoma .

This wasn't the first time Boyd sat during the anthem. She said she also did it at the last few games. "I don't want to stand up. I choose not to stand up and I sit down and pray," the second-year guard said. "Colin and his message about social injustice going on in this country today is something I believe needs change."

The Berkeley, California, native had a Kaepernick jersey hanging in her locker and wore it to the arena Saturday night.

Her New York teammates stood, arms locked with their heads bowed before their WNBA playoff game with Phoenix. Mercury players Mistie Bass and Kelsey Bone kneeled, just as they had done during their first-round playoff game. Bass was inspired that younger athletes were joining an effort that until this weekend had been mostly led by the pros.

"I think it shows that the younger generations are about this and they did it together," she said. "They are understanding what is going on in our society. It's perfect because they are so caught up in their phones. To see them standing up for social injustices and wanting things to be right in their communities, I think is awesome."

Three Michigan State players — Delton Williams, Kenney Lyke and Gabe Sherrod — held their right fists in the air while standing on the sideline before the No. 8 Spartans hosted No. 11 Wisconsin.

"Whether somebody salutes, puts the hand over their heart or does something else, everybody has a choice to make," Michigan State coach Mark Dantonio said after the Spartans' 30-6 loss. "Our young people are in college, and I can promise you one thing, that when the flag is presented in some respect, I guess it becomes much more important now. It's not just, oh by the way, we'll just stand for 'The Star-Spangled Banner.'

"All I can do is try and lead the best way I can, and be positive and accepting to our football team and our players," the coach added.

Several players for No. 4 Michigan also had their fists up before facing Penn State in Ann Arbor, Michigan. Among them were Khalid Hill, Mike McCray, Devin Bush, Elysee Mbem-Bosse and Jourdan Lewis.

Most college conferences play the anthem before the teams take the field. The Big Ten is among the exceptions.

The University of Michigan is 6 miles from Eastern Michigan University, where chanting students marched on the field Friday night after the school's 27-24 victory over Wyoming. The students were protesting racist graffiti on the campus earlier in the week.

"We have great respect for our students engaged in the constructive efforts underway to address the issues we face," Eastern Michigan President James Smith said in a statement.

Before North Carolina hosted Pittsburgh, students wearing black shirts remained seated with fists raised. Roughly 100 black and white students wearing the shirts participated, as well as at least two UNC band members who took a knee, one while raising a fist. Chapel Hill is about 140 miles northeast of Charlotte.

Nebraska players Michael Rose-Ivey, Daishon Neal and Mohamed Barry also kneeled before the No. 20 Cornhuskers' game at Northwestern.

At Baylor, some students in the stands kneeled during the anthem before the game against Oklahoma State.

Not everyone has supported the protests. The 49ers quarterback and some of the other athletes have received backlash from fans and Kaepernick said he even got some death threats .

Michigan coach Jim Harbaugh was Kaepernick's coach for four seasons in San Francisco. Last month, Harbaugh said he supported Kaepernick's motivation to speak out but took exception to his method.

After Saturday's game, Harbaugh said he had been thinking a lot about the issue the past couple of weeks and that he supports his players.

"This is something that's not going away. It's going to keep happening," Harbaugh said after the Wolverines' 49-10 victory. "It's not something that's going to keep them out of heaven. So I'm not going to worry about it. As long as it doesn't keep them out of heaven for supporting their minds, I support it."

Kaepernick was at a high school football game on Friday night. He spoke to players from Castlemont High School and joined them on the sideline before the game. A photo by former NFL linebacker Kirk Morrison on Twitter shows Kaepernick kneeling while the rest of the team laid on their backs with their hands up during the anthem.

The gestures on Saturday came a day after it was announced that Tommie Smith and John Carlos will join the U.S. Olympic team at the White House for a meeting with President Barack Obama. The raised-fist salutes by the American sprinters on the medal stand at the 1968 Olympics became a political flash point.

AP Sports Writers Joe Reedy, Noah Trister and Aaron Beard contributed to this story.

Mother uncovers lasting impact of baby son's organ donation

By LAURAN NEERGAARD, AP Medical Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — An ultrasound showed one of Sarah Gray's unborn twins was missing part of his brain, a fatal birth defect. His brother was born healthy but Thomas lived just six days. Latching onto hope for something positive to come from heartache, Gray donated some of Thomas' tissue for scientific research — his eyes, his liver, his umbilical cord blood.

Only no one could tell the Washington mother if that precious donation really made a difference. So Gray embarked on an unusual journey to find out, revealing a side of science laymen seldom glimpse.

"Infant eyes are like gold," a Harvard scientist told her.

"I don't think people understand how valuable these donations are," said Gray, who hadn't either until her years-long quest brought her face-to-face with startled scientists. They had never met a relative of the donors so crucial to their work either.

Families often find comfort in learning how many lives were saved if they donated a loved one's organs for transplant. But donating a body for research gets less attention — there are no headline-making "saves." Yet critical medical research in labs around the country depends on scientists' ability to work with human cells and organs, so they can study both normal development and how disease does its dirty work.

"A lot of people, if the tissue doesn't get used for transplant, they think it's kind of second-rate tissue or something. I'd like them to know that people who do research with human tissue are doing worthwhile things that are going to, hopefully, lead to cures for all kinds of diseases," said Dr. James Zieske, a corneal specialist at Harvard and the Schepens Eye Research Institute, whose description of treasured infant eyes spurred Gray's hunt.

Now, hoping to help other families facing decisions about donation, Gray has written a book, "A Life Everlasting, The Extraordinary Story of One Boy's Gift to Medical Science." Gray and two of the scientists she met in her quest spoke with The Associated Press about donation for research.

NEONATAL DONATIONS OF ANY TYPE ARE RARE

Gray's obstetrician didn't think donation was an option for a baby with this birth defect, called anen-

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cephaly. Only when Gray persisted late in pregnancy did she learn, from the Washington area's organ procurement agency, that her baby's organs probably would be too small for transplant but that donation for research was an option.

Statistics from the United Network for Organ Sharing show that organs from a dozen newborns, those younger than a month old, were donated last year for transplant.

On the research front, Dr. Arupa Ganguly of the University of Pennsylvania studies retinoblastoma, eye cancer that attacks young children. Before receiving Thomas' tissue, she had waited six years for donation of a healthy young retina to compare with diseased ones.

Cells taken from younger tissue typically grow much better than an adult's, said Zieske, who could recall receiving infant corneas only two or three times in his career. Thomas' corneas were ordered to study how to repair blindness-inducing corneal damage.

MOST ANY TISSUE CAN BE USED

In recovering tissue from deceased donors, hospitals consult a national registry of researchers' current needs.

On that day in 2010, Thomas died at home in his father's arms. The organ agency retrieved his body, and recovered his eyes and liver. Blood from the umbilical cords of both Thomas and his healthy identical twin Callum already had been shipped to Duke University researchers studying what causes anencephaly.

WAS THE RESEARCH WORTHWHILE?

Two years later, all Gray knew was where Thomas' tissue had been shipped. So during a business trip to Boston, she called the Harvard-affiliated eye lab, identified herself as a donor mom, and asked for a tour — a first for the lab, and one that changed the scientists' perspective.

"I still think more about, when we get a donated cornea, who that came from," said Zieske.

Eventually Gray visited each lab that procured and handled Thomas' tissue. A North Carolina biotechnology company, Cytonet, uses liver cells in researching treatment for babies awaiting a liver transplant. Penn's Ganguly froze some retinal tissue for future work.

Callum, now 6, even started coming along.

"We explained to him there are some special scientists there working on helping other people, and they're using some stuff from Thomas to help them," said his father, Ross Gray.

"We always get a sample but we don't see the person behind that sample. The lab has really established a bond with that family. And I think it makes the work a lot more meaningful," Ganguly said.

THE JOURNEY ISN'T OVER

Gray changed careers to work for the non-profit American Association of Tissue Banks. That brought her to a meeting where scientists debated if it was ethical to test a new technology — gene editing — to fight inherited diseases. "If you have the skills and the knowledge to fix these diseases then freaking do it," she told the group, recounting how Thomas had suffered seizures each day of his brief life.

And when Gray recently had a new baby, daughter Jocelyn, she donated the placenta for wound-healing therapy. She'd like to visit that lab, too.

Swooping, gliding over the Alps at free-flight festival

SAINT HILAIRE DU TOUVET, France (AP) — In wild costumes, wingsuits and even home-made flying machines, thousands of people are gliding through the French Alps in the world's oldest free-flight festival.

Hang gliders, paragliders, acrobatic sailplanes and hot air balloons from around the world gathered this weekend for the Icarus Cup, celebrating its 43rd edition on the slopes of Saint Hilaire du Touvet.

Motorized paragliders will race in an airborne slalom in one of the festival's events. Kitted out like a dragon, a trumpet, or a car, some participants are aiming for victory at a costume contest.

Emergency services are on hand in case of accidents — and to watch out for suspicious packages as part of France's state of emergency after deadly extremist attacks.

AP-GfK poll shows voter distaste for Putin-style leadership

By EMILY SWANSON and VIVIAN SALAMA, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump has called Russian President Vladimir Putin "a leader — unlike what we have in this country."

But most Americans don't agree with Trump's assessment of Putin's leadership skills, a new Associated Press-GfK poll shows.

Only 24 percent of registered voters say Putin has leadership qualities that would be good for an American president to share, while 71 percent say he does not. In fact, a majority, 56 percent, said they have an unfavorable view of Putin, while only 10 percent said they view the Russian leader favorably.

Voters were split on whether Trump would be too close to Putin, with 42 percent saying they think Trump would be too close, and 41 percent saying his approach would be about right. Fourteen percent think he would not be close enough.

By comparison, most voters (53 percent) think Democrat Hillary Clinton's relationship with Putin would be about right, while 11 percent think she would be too close and 32 percent think she would not be close enough.

The relationship between the Republican nominee and the Russian strongman began taking on new life when Putin praised Trump last December as "bright and talented" and "the absolute leader of the presidential race."

The billionaire businessman hailed Putin's regard for him as a "great honor," brushing off widespread allegations that the Russian president has ordered the killing of political dissidents and journalists.

"Our country does plenty of killing also," Trump told MSNBC's "Morning Joe" in December.

Four in 10 Trump supporters and only 1 in 10 Hillary Clinton supporters say Putin has leadership qualities that would be good for an American president to have. Still, even among Trump's supporters, just 16 percent have a favorable opinion of Putin. Only 5 percent of Clinton's supporters do.

Marissa Garth, a 28-year-old stay-at-home mom from Smithfield, Utah, said she plans to vote for Trump this November because he exhibits the qualities of a strong leader — not to be compared with Putin.

"I think (Putin) is a strong leader for his country," she said. "But at the same time I don't think he necessarily has the qualities that I would want as a president."

In fact, the poll finds that men are more likely than women to say that Putin has leadership qualities that would be good in an American president, 28 percent to 19 percent.

Among Clinton's supporters, 69 percent say Trump would be too close to Putin. Forty-nine percent of those supporting another candidate share that view, but only 8 percent of Trump supporters say their

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candidate would be too close to Putin. Eighty percent of Trump supporters say his approach would be about right. Among conservatives, 20 percent say Trump would be too close to Putin.

There is nothing 54-year old Gary Sellers, of Homewood, Illinois, likes about Putin — or Trump. He called Putin a “dictator,” adding, “there are no qualities of his that I wish that an American president would have.”

A lukewarm Clinton supporter, he’s concerned that Trump shares Putin’s extreme views of governing. “I feel he has a dictatorial approach toward being president of the United States,” Sellers said of Trump.

Forty-seven percent of voters say they approve and 52 percent disapprove of President Barack Obama’s handling of the U.S. relationship with Russia.

Voters are divided over whether the next president should take a tougher approach to Putin (42 percent) or whether the current approach is about right (39 percent). Just 16 percent think the next president should take a friendlier approach.

Just under half of voters (48 percent) say the U.S. relationship with Russia is a very or extremely important issue, ranking it low on Americans’ list of priorities, far below issues like the economy (92 percent), the threat posed by the Islamic State group (70 percent), the U.S. role in world affairs more generally (68 percent) and immigration (60 percent).

There’s a generational divide over Russia. Two-thirds of voters age 65 and over and more than half of those between 50 and 64 call the U.S. relationship with Russia very or extremely important, while only 4 in 10 30-49 year olds and only a third of those under 30 say the same.

Generally speaking, voters are more likely to say they trust Clinton than Trump on negotiating with Russia, 40 percent to 33 percent. Nineteen percent say they trust neither and 7 percent trust both equally.

John Eppenger, 68, a retiree in Fairfield, Ala., said that when it comes to dealing with Russia, Clinton would “do a much better job than Trump. She’s not perfect, she’s not ideal, but she’s better.”

The AP-GfK Poll of 1,694 adults, including 1,476 registered voters, was conducted online Sept. 15-19, using a sample drawn from GfK’s probability-based KnowledgePanel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 2.5 percentage points, and for registered voters is plus or minus 2.5 percentage points.

Respondents were first selected randomly using telephone or mail survey methods and later interviewed online. People selected for KnowledgePanel who didn’t have access to the internet were provided access for free.

Online:

Poll results: <http://ap-gfcpoll.com>

China begins operating world’s largest radio telescope

By GILLIAN WONG, Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — The world’s largest radio telescope began searching for signals from stars and galaxies and, perhaps, extraterrestrial life Sunday in a project demonstrating China’s rising ambitions in space and its pursuit of international scientific prestige.

Beijing has poured billions into such ambitious scientific projects as well as its military-backed space program, which saw the launch of China’s second space station earlier this month.

Measuring 500 meters in diameter, the radio telescope is nestled in a natural basin within a stunning



In this Saturday, Sept. 24, 2016 photo released by Xinhua News Agency, an aerial view shows the Five-hundred-meter Aperture Spherical Telescope.

landscape of lush green karst formations in southern Guizhou province. It took five years and \$180 million to complete and surpasses that of the 300-meter Arecibo Observatory in Puerto Rico, a dish used in research on stars that led to a Nobel Prize.

The official Xinhua News Agency said hundreds of astronomers and enthusiasts watched the launch of the Five-hundred-meter Aperture Spherical Telescope, or FAST, in the county of Pingtang.

Researchers quoted by state media said FAST would search for gravitational waves, detect radio emissions from stars and galaxies and listen for signs of intelligent extraterrestrial life.

"The ultimate goal of FAST is to discover the laws of the development of the universe," Qian Lei, an associate researcher with the National Astronomical Observatories of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, told state broadcaster CCTV.

"In theory, if there is civilization in outer space, the radio signal it sends will be similar to the signal we can receive when a pulsar (spinning neutron star) is approaching us," Qian said.

Installation of the 4,450-panel structure, nicknamed Tianyan, or the Eye of Heaven, started in 2011 and was completed in July.

The telescope requires a radio silence within a 5-kilometer (3-mile) radius, resulting in the relocation

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of more than 8,000 people from their homes in eight villages to make way for the facility, state media said. Reports in August said the villagers would be compensated with cash or new homes from a budget of about \$269 million from a poverty relief fund and bank loans.

CCTV reported that during a recent test, the telescope received radio signals from a pulsar that was 1,351 light-years from Earth.

The radio telescope has double the sensitivity of the Arecibo Observatory, and five to 10 times the surveying speed, Xinhua said.

China has also completed the construction of tourist facilities such as an observation deck on a nearby mountain, reports said. Such facilities can be a draw for visitors — the one in Puerto Rico draws about 90,000 visitors and some 200 scientists each year.

Earlier this month, China launched the Tiangong 2, its second space station and the latest step in its military-backed program that intends to send a mission to Mars in the coming years. In August, the country launched the first quantum satellite experts said would advance efforts to develop the ability to send communications that can't be penetrated by hackers.

Associated Press researcher Henry Hou contributed to this report.

Suspect in Washington shooting 'zombie-like' when arrested

By PHUONG LE and GILLIAN FLACCUS, Associated Press

BURLINGTON, Wash. (AP) — The 20-year-old suspect in the deadly Washington state mall shooting said nothing and appeared "zombie-like" when he was arrested by authorities nearly 24 hours into an intense manhunt, authorities said.

Island County Sheriff's Lt. Mike Hawley said he spotted Arcan Cetin from a patrol car Saturday evening in Oak Harbor, Washington, and immediately recognized him as the suspect who killed five people at the Cascade Mall in nearby Burlington.

Hawley said at a news conference they had received information that Cetin, of Oak Harbor, was in the area. Cetin, who immigrated to the U.S. from Turkey, is a legal permanent resident who has been living in Oak Harbor, authorities said. He had been arrested once before in the county for assault, Hawley said.

"I literally hit my brakes, did a quick turn, I jumped out," Hawley said. "We both jumped out with our guns, and he just froze."

Cetin was unarmed and was carrying a satchel with a computer in it.

"He was kind of zombie-like," Hawley said.

The suspect's arrest capped a frantic search following the slayings of five people the day before.

The first 911 call came in just before 7 p.m. on a busy Friday at the Cascade Mall: A man with a rifle was shooting at people in the Macy's department store.

By the time police arrived moments later, the carnage at the Macy's makeup counter was complete. Four people were dead, and the shooter was gone, last seen walking toward Interstate 5. The fifth victim, a man, died in the early morning hours Saturday as police finished sweeping the 434,000-square-foot building.

"There are people waking up this morning, and their world has changed forever. The city of Burlington has probably changed forever, but I don't think our way of life needs to change," Burlington Mayor Steve Sexton said Saturday at a news conference.

Authorities said it now appears the rifle was brought into the mall from a suspect vehicle that was there, Mount Vernon police Lt. Chris Cammock said Saturday night.

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Cetin has not been charged, Cammock said. He will be booked into the Skagit County Jail and is expected to appear in Skagit County District Court on Monday.

The Seattle Times reports (<http://bit.ly/2cWhxJY>) that Skagit County court records show three domestic-violence assault charges against Cetin. The victim was identified as Cetin's stepfather.

The newspaper reports Cetin also was arrested for drunken driving.

Cetin was told by an Island County District Court judge on Dec. 29 that he was not to possess a firearm, the newspaper reported.

However, the stepfather urged the judge not to impose a no-contact order, saying his stepson was "going through a hard time."

As the small city absorbed the tragic news, critical questions remained, including the shooter's motive.

Initially the suspect was described as Hispanic, but Hawley said that was based on initial witness statements to the shooting at the mall.

Surveillance video captured the suspect entering the mall unarmed and then recorded him about 10 minutes later entering the Macy's with a "hunting type" rifle in his hand, Cammock said.

Authorities did not say how the suspect may have obtained the weapon — whether he retrieved it from outside or picked it up in the mall — but they believe he acted alone. The weapon was recovered at the scene.

The identities of the victims — four women who ranged in age from a teenager to a senior citizen — were withheld pending autopsies and notification of family. The identity of the man who was fatally shot was also withheld and may not be released until Monday.

Earlier Saturday as police scrambled to find the shooter, the small city about 60 miles (97 kilometers) waited and worried.

The community of 8,600 people is too far from Seattle to be a commuter town, but its population swells to 55,000 during the day because of a popular outlet mall, retail stores and other businesses. Burlington is the only major retail center within 30 miles (48 kilometers) in a region where agriculture is king.

Residents gathered Saturday to comfort each other at a community gathering in a city park.

"It's too scary. It's too close to home," said Maria Elena Vasquez, who attended the gathering with her husband and two young children.

Those who survived were still trying to process what happened as their community became the latest entry on a list of places known by the rest of world for mass shootings.

Joanne Burkholder, 19, of nearby Mount Vernon, was watching the movie "The Magnificent Seven" in the mall's theater when security guards came in and told them to evacuate immediately. Dozens of panicked moviegoers gathered in the hallway, and Burkholder heard screaming as the officers escorted them to safety in a parking lot.

As she drove home later, she had to pull over because she was shaking so hard, she told The Associated Press.

"I'm just very thankful for my life this morning. I've never been so terrified in my life," she said Saturday, trying to hold back tears as she attended the community vigil.

People who believed they may have lost loved ones were being sequestered at a church three blocks from the mall, where counselors and a golden retriever therapy dog were present.

The Seattle Times reported that one of the victims in the deadly Washington state mall shooting is a 16-year-old girl.

Sarai Lara's mother said she had survived cancer as a young girl and was a happy student.

Evangelina Lara told (<http://bit.ly/2cWhxJY>) the newspaper through a translator that she was shop-

ping Friday night at the Cascade Mall in Burlington, Washington, with Sarai and her younger sister, but they split up.

Evangelina Lara says it was confirmed at 2 a.m. Saturday that her daughter was among the five people killed.

Dozens of people attended a Saturday evening prayer service for the victims. The gathering was held at Central United Methodist Church in nearby Sedro-Woolley, Washington.

The Rev. Cody Natland lit five candles on a table in front of the church, one for each victim.

Flaccus reported from Portland, Oregon. Associated Press writers Lisa Baumann in Seattle and Kimberlee Kruesi in Boise, Idaho, contributed to this report.

As Clinton focuses on debate, Trump says he'd champion women

By JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

ROANOKE, Va. (AP) — Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump is arguing that he'll do more to help women from the White House than Democratic rival Hillary Clinton. At the same time, he's taunting her over the infidelities of her husband.

As Trump campaigned in the battleground state of Virginia, Clinton stayed close to home in New York while preparing for Monday night's opening debate. She was spotted at a Westchester hotel near her home in Chappaqua, but her campaign would not comment on whether she was holding practice sessions at the hotel.

Clinton and Trump were expected to meet separately on Sunday with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who has sought to project neutrality in this year's election. There were perceptions that he favored Mitt Romney over President Barack Obama in 2012.

Trump told supporters at a rally Saturday in Roanoke, Virginia, that Clinton has not delivered for women and children.

"My opponent likes to say that for decades she's been fighting for women, that she's been fighting for children. Why, then, are 70 million American women and children living in poverty or on the brink of poverty in our country?" Trump asked. "For years she's been doing this and she's done nothing."

The appeal came hours after Trump threatened on Twitter to invite a woman who'd had an affair with Clinton's husband, former President Bill Clinton, to sit in the first row at their first debate. The Clinton campaign had invited Mark Cuban, a fellow billionaire and Trump rival, to the event.

"If dopey Mark Cuban of failed Benefactor fame wants to sit in the front row, perhaps I will put Gennifer Flowers right alongside of him!" Trump said.

Trump's campaign officials did not respond to requests for comment on Saturday, and it remained unclear whether Flowers would actually attend.

Earlier Saturday, one of Clinton's supporters, Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, accused Trump and his fellow Republicans of "making hate OK." She told Clinton campaign volunteers in Nashua, New Hampshire, that she never predicted a major presidential candidate would base a campaign on scapegoating Mexicans, women and Muslims.

Warren was particularly critical of Texas Sen. Ted Cruz, who denounced Trump in the primary campaign but announced Friday that he strongly opposed Clinton and would vote for his former rival.

"Is that really what your word is worth, Ted Cruz?" she asked.

In Texas, Cruz described as "agonizing" his decision to announce that he would vote for Trump but denied that he had given in to pressure to support his rival for the Republican nomination. His announcement Friday, from which the word "endorsement" was conspicuously absent, drew criticism because of

his longstanding antipathy for the man he had called a "pathological liar."

"Any path we took, if I supported Donald, if I didn't support Donald, the criticism was going to be there," Cruz told a packed Austin auditorium during a policy forum organized by The Texas Tribune. He had refused to endorse Trump at the Republican National Convention and instead urged Republicans to vote according to their conscience.

Trump's running mate, Indiana Gov. Mike Pence, assured home-schooling advocates in North Carolina that Trump would be their champion if elected. Sen. Tim Kaine of Virginia, Clinton's running mate, praised American Indian culture and highlighted his efforts to win federal recognition of the state's tribes while visiting the Chickahominy Indian Tribe Fall Festival near his home in Richmond.

Associated Press writers Ken Thomas in New York; Kathleen Ronayne in Nashua, New Hampshire; Will Weissert in Austin, Texas; Bill Barrow in Des Moines, Iowa; and Alan Suderman in Richmond, Virginia, contributed to this report.

Doubts remain after Charlotte police shooting video released

By MEG KINNARD, JONATHAN DREW and EMERY P. DALESIO, Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — Charlotte police released dramatic video Saturday that shows officers with guns drawn surrounding a black man with his hands at his side before shots are fired and he buckles and falls. It's unclear if there was anything in the man's hands in the footage, which has done little to assuage his relatives.

The footage of the fatal police shooting of Keith Lamont Scott was released amid days of protests, including an outpouring by hundreds earlier Saturday, which coalesced around demands for the public to see the video. Police said Scott had a gun, though residents have said he was unarmed.

In the dashboard camera video released Saturday night, Scott could be seen slowly backing away from his SUV with his hands down, and it's not apparent if he's holding anything. Four shots are heard, and he falls to the ground.

Police also released photos of a handgun from the scene, saying it was loaded and contained Scott's DNA and fingerprints. They also said Scott had marijuana.

The dashboard camera footage starts with a police car pulling up as two officers point their guns at Scott, who is inside the SUV with the doors closed and windows rolled up. Scott gets out and starts walking backward before shots are fired.

From a different angle, newly released police body camera footage shows an officer approach with his gun drawn and another officer already pointing his gun at Scott. When Scott comes into view, his hands are at his side and he's standing beside his SUV. The body camera footage doesn't show the moment shots are fired, and Scott is next seen on the ground.

An attorney for Scott's family, Justin Bamberg, said the footage leaves questions unanswered more than it provides clarity.

"One of the biggest questions," Bamberg said, "is do those actions, do those precious seconds, justify this shooting?"

Ray Dotch, Scott's brother-in-law, objected to reporters' questions about Scott's background, saying he shouldn't have to "humanize him in order for him to be treated fairly."

"What we know and what you should know about him is that he was an American citizen who deserved better," he added.

Before releasing the footage, Chief Kerr Putney said at a news conference that he received assurances from the State Bureau of Investigation that making it public wouldn't impact the state's independent

probe of the shooting.

Asked whether he expected the footage to calm protesters, Putney responded: "The footage itself will not create in anyone's mind absolute certainty as to what this case represents and what the outcome should be. The footage only supports all of the other information" such as physical evidence and statements from witnesses and officers.

Putney said that his officers didn't break the law but noted the state investigation continues.

"Officers are absolutely not being charged by me at this point, but again, there's another investigation ongoing," he said.

Putney said that Scott was "absolutely in possession of a handgun."

A police narrative released along with the video gives the most complete account yet of what brought Scott to police attention.

Two plainclothes officers in an unmarked vehicle were preparing to serve a warrant on someone else when Scott pulled up and parked next to them, according to the document.

The officers saw Scott rolling a marijuana cigar, or blunt, though they didn't consider it a priority at first, it said. But then one of the officers saw him hold up a gun, the document states.

"Due to the combination of illegal drugs and the gun Mr. Scott had in his possession, officers decided to take enforcement action for public safety concerns," the document said.

The narrative says Scott didn't respond to repeated commands to drop his weapon.

Those commands aren't heard in the body camera video, which doesn't have audible sound until after the shooting.

Amid anxiety and unease over the shooting of Scott, demonstrations in Charlotte have gone from violent to peaceful, although demands to see the police video remained a chief concern of protesters.

Before the release of the video, hundreds massed outside at the Charlotte police department building on Saturday afternoon chanting the name "Keith Scott." They also chanted, "No tapes, no peace" and raised signs including one reading "Stop Killing The Black People."

The city has been on edge ever since Scott's shooting death. The demonstrations reached a violent crescendo on Wednesday before the National Guard was called in a day later to maintain order. Forty-four people were arrested after Wednesday's protests, and one protester who was shot died at a hospital Thursday. City officials said police did not shoot 26-year-old Justin Carr, and a suspect was arrested.

The next two nights of protests were free of property damage and violence, with organizers stressing a message of peace at the end of the week.

Charlotte is the latest U.S. city to be shaken by protests and recriminations over the death of a black man at the hands of police, a list that includes Baltimore, Milwaukee, Chicago, New York and Ferguson, Missouri.

Syrian troops advance in Aleppo amid war's heaviest bombing

By BASSEM MROUE, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Syrian troops captured a rebel-held area on the edge of Aleppo on Saturday, tightening their siege on opposition-held neighborhoods in the northern city after what residents described as the heaviest air bombardment of the 5 ½-year civil war.

The U.N. meanwhile said that nearly 2 million people in Aleppo, Syria's largest city and onetime commercial center, are without running water following the escalation in fighting over the past few days.

The U.N. Security Council called an emergency meeting on the escalating attacks Sunday morning at the request of the United States, Britain and France.



In this photo provided by the Syrian Civil Defense group known as the White Helmets, shows heavily damaged buildings after airstrikes hit in Aleppo.

Government forces captured the rebel-held Palestinian refugee camp of Handarat as airstrikes pounded rebel-held eastern neighborhoods of Aleppo, killing 52 people, including 11 children and six women, according to the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. The Local Coordination Committees, another monitoring group, said 49 were killed on Saturday alone.

The Observatory said the death toll in Aleppo is expected to rise since many people are in critical condition and rescue workers are still digging through the rubble.

Residents say the latest bombardment is the worst they've seen since rebels captured parts of the city in 2012. Activists reported dozens of airstrikes on Friday alone.

"Since the beginning of the crisis, Aleppo has not been subjected to such a vicious campaign," said Mohammed Abu Jaafar, a forensics expert based in the city. "Aleppo is being wiped out."

For days, videos and photographs from eastern Aleppo have shown flattened buildings and paramedics pulling bodies from the rubble. Wounded people have flooded into clinics, where many are being treated on the floor because of a lack of stretchers.

"People in Aleppo already suffocating under the effects of the siege, have yet again come under horrific attack," said Carlos Francisco of Doctors Without Borders, which supports a number of area clinics.

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"No aid, including urgent medical supplies, is allowed to enter."

"We are deeply worried by the high numbers of wounded reported by the hospitals we support, and also know that in many areas the wounded and sick have nowhere to go at all — they are simply left to die."

U.N. chief Ban Ki-moon condemned the "chilling" escalation in Aleppo, which he said marked the "most sustained and intense bombardment since the start of the Syrian conflict." The statement issued by his spokesman said the reported use of "indiscriminate" weapons in densely populated areas "may amount to war crimes."

U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, speaking at Tufts University in Boston, said what was happening in Aleppo was "beyond the pale."

"If people are serious about wanting a peaceful outcome to this war, then they should cease and desist bombing innocent women and children, cease cutting off water and laying siege in medieval terms to an entire community," he said.

Riad Hijab, head of the Syrian opposition's High Negotiations Committee, told journalists in New York that "what's happening in Aleppo is a manifestation of the ineffectiveness of any cooperation with murders and terrorists."

"We ask the international community (to take) action to protect Syrian people and deliver aid," he said. "We ask Washington to take action on military, diplomatic and political level to protect the Syrian people."

In the rebel-held neighborhood of Bustan al-Qasr, cluster bombs killed 13 people and wounded 150, according to Ibrahim Alhaj, a member of the Syrian Civil Defense, volunteer first responders also known as the White Helmets.

Syrian state TV said insurgents shelled the government-held neighborhood of Salhiyeh, killing five people. The Observatory said insurgents shelled the government stronghold of Masyaf, home to a large number of Alawites, members of President Bashar Assad's sect, which until now had largely been spared from violence.

An unnamed Syrian military official was quoted by state media on Friday as saying that airstrikes and shelling in Aleppo would continue for an extended period and "include a ground offensive" into rebel-held areas.

The fall of Handarat to Syrian troops allied with pro-government Palestinian fighters pushed insurgents further away from the government-controlled Castello Road, a main artery leading to rebel-held parts of the city.

"Breaking the siege through the Castello Road has become very difficult," Yassin Abu Raed, an opposition activist based in Aleppo province, told The Associated Press.

An unnamed Syrian military official quoted by state TV said government forces killed many insurgents in Handarat, and that experts are removing explosives from the area. The camp, which is almost empty and largely destroyed, has seen intense fighting and bombardment in recent years, and changed hands multiple times.

The Turkey-based Syrian National Coalition, one of Syria's main opposition groups, condemned the attacks on Aleppo, calling it "a crazy crime led by the Assad regime and Russian occupation." It said "the criminal campaign aims to settle international accounts at the expense of Syrians' blood."

The escalation comes as diplomats in New York have failed to salvage a U.S. and Russian-brokered cease-fire that lasted nearly a week. Moscow is a key ally of Assad's government, while Washington supports the opposition.

Aleppo has been an epicenter of fighting in recent months. It is the last major urban area held by the opposition, and the rebels' defeat there would mark a major turning point in the conflict, which has killed more than 300,000 people and driven half of Syria's population from their homes.

Living conditions in the already-battered eastern districts have meanwhile grown even worse.

Recent attacks have damaged the Bab al-Nairab station, which supplies water to some 250,000 people in the rebel-held east, according to Hanaa Singer of the U.N. children's agency, UNICEF.

Singer said that in retaliation, the Suleiman al-Halabi pumping station, also located in the rebel-held east, was switched off — cutting water to 1.5 million people in government-held western parts of the city.

"Depriving children of water puts them at risk of catastrophic outbreaks of water-borne diseases," Singer warned in her statement, released late Friday.

Associated Press writers Sarah El Deeb in Beirut, Albert Aji in Damascus, Syria, Edith M. Lederer at the United Nations and Matthew Lee in Washington contributed to this report.

Black history finds home on National Mall with new museum

By JESSE J. HOLLAND and DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Black history officially has a new, prominent place in America's story.

With hugs, tears and the ringing of church bells, the new Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture opened its doors Saturday to help this nation understand, reconcile and celebrate African-Americans' often-ignored contributions toward making this country what it is today.

President Barack Obama, the nation's first black president, wiped away a tear as he formally opened the Smithsonian's 19th museum with an impassioned 31-minute speech on the National Mall. His audience included two former presidents, leaders from all branches of the federal government, and first lady Michelle Obama, whose lineage has been traced back to slaves in the South. She too shed a tear as her husband spoke.

Obama noted one artifact in the museum: a stone marker from a slave block where Andrew Jackson and Henry Clay spoke in 1830. This item, Obama said, chronicles not just the fact that two powerful men spoke, but also that multitudes of slaves were "bought and sold, and bid like cattle."

"This national museum helps to tell a richer and fuller story of who we are," Obama said. "It helps us better understand the lives, yes, of the president, but also the slave. The industrialist, but also the porter; the keeper of the status quo, but also of the activist seeking to overthrow that status quo; the teacher or the cook, alongside the statesman. And by knowing this other story, we better understand ourselves and each other."

Ground for the \$540 million museum was broken in 2012 on a five-acre tract near the Washington Monument, and construction was completed earlier this year. Millions of donors, known and unknown, contributed \$315 million in private funds ahead of the opening.

"It's like walking across the desert and finally getting to a fountain of water to quench your thirst. It's absolutely breathtaking for me," said Verna Eggleston, 61, of New York City.

The names of some big donors are on prominent spaces inside: the Oprah Winfrey Theater; the Michael Jordan Hall: Game Changers; and the Robert F. Smith Explore Your Family History Center, named for the CEO of investment firm Vista Equity Partners after a \$20 million gift announced Monday.

With exhibits ranging from the glass-topped casket used to bury lynching victim Emmett Till to a fedora owned by late pop superstar Michael Jackson, the museum helps to complete the American tale

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by incorporating highs and lows, triumph and trauma experienced by black Americans since the first African slaves arrived on this continent almost 400 years ago.

"We're not a burden on America, or a stain on America, or an object of pity or charity for America. We're America," Obama said. "And that's what this museum explains, the fact that our stories have shaped every corner of our culture."

Obama was joined on stage by his predecessor, former President George W. Bush, who in 2003 signed legislation establishing the museum, and John Lewis, a veteran civil rights activist and longtime Democratic congressman from Georgia who co-sponsored the bill.

Bush, accompanied by his wife, Laura, said the museum tells the unvarnished truth, that a country founded on the promise of liberty once held millions of people in chains.

"A great nation does not hide its history," Bush said. "It faces its flaws and corrects them."

Lewis, who is featured in the museum, said he could feel the weight of history around the museum, with slave voices whispering of escape and church choirs singing of freedom.

"All their voices, roaming for centuries, have finally found their home here, in this great monument to our pain, our suffering and our victory," Lewis said. After the speech, Obama hugged the congressman as he returned to his seat.

Also on hand were former President Bill Clinton, Chief Justice John Roberts and House Speaker Paul Ryan; celebrities including Oprah Winfrey, Robert De Niro, Will Smith, and Angela Bassett; and thousands of Americans who just wanted to witness the museum's opening firsthand.

"I'm just elated and can't express how much joy and gratitude I have to be here today and witness history," said Master Sgt. Donald Sparks of Houston, who just finished a yearlong deployment in Iraq.

The honor of helping Obama open the doors went to Ruth Bonner, 99, daughter of a Mississippi slave who escaped to freedom. The president and first lady joined Bonner and her family in ringing a bell from the historic First Baptist Church of Williamsburg, Virginia, to signal that the museum was officially open.

The church, believed to be among the first Baptist churches organized entirely by black people, acquired its Freedom Bell in 1886. It will be returned to the church for its 240th anniversary later this year.

The 400,000-square-foot museum, designed by British-Ghanaian architect David Adjaye, strikes a unique shape on the Mall with its three-tiered bronze exterior panels inspired by an African wooden column. The exterior tiles are inspired by 19th century ironwork created by slaves in the South, and allow sunlight into the museum through patterned openings.

Inside, museum officials say they have nearly 3,000 items occupying 85,000 square feet of exhibition space.

The museum's opening "finally marks the place and time where we're finally recognized ... and it's about time," said Shenise Foster of Alexandria, Virginia.

Jesse J. Holland is the AP's race and ethnicity writer. Contact him at jholland@ap.org, on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/jessejholland> or on Facebook at <http://www.facebook.com/jessejholland>.

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Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Sunday, Sept. 25, the 269th day of 2016. There are 97 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Sept. 25, 1956, the first trans-Atlantic telephone cable officially went into service with a three-way ceremonial call between New York, Ottawa and London.

On this date:

In 1513, Spanish explorer Vasco Nunez de Balboa crossed the Isthmus of Panama and sighted the Pacific Ocean.

In 1690, one of the earliest American newspapers, Publick Occurrences, published its first — and last — edition in Boston.

In 1775, American Revolutionary War hero Ethan Allen was captured by the British as he led an attack on Montreal. (Allen was released by the British in 1778.)

In 1789, the first United States Congress adopted 12 amendments to the Constitution and sent them to the states for ratification. (Ten of the amendments became the Bill of Rights.)

In 1890, President Benjamin Harrison signed a measure establishing Sequoia National Park.

In 1919, President Woodrow Wilson collapsed after a speech in Pueblo, Colorado, during a national speaking tour in support of the Treaty of Versailles (vehr-SY').

In 1932, the Spanish region of Catalonia received a Charter of Autonomy (however, the Charter was revoked by Francisco Franco at the end of the Spanish Civil War).

In 1957, nine black students who'd been forced to withdraw from Central High School in Little Rock, Arkansas, because of unruly white crowds were escorted to class by members of the U.S. Army's 101st Airborne Division.

In 1962, Sonny Liston knocked out Floyd Patterson in round one to win the world heavyweight title at Comiskey Park in Chicago.

In 1978, 144 people were killed when a Pacific Southwest Airlines Boeing 727 and a private plane collided over San Diego.

In 1981, Sandra Day O'Connor was sworn in as the first female justice on the Supreme Court.

In 1991, Nazi war criminal Klaus Barbie died in Lyon, France, at age 77.

Ten years ago: British forces in Iraq shot and killed Omar al-Farouq, a leading al-Qaida terrorist, more than a year after he embarrassed the U.S. military by escaping from a maximum security military prison in Afghanistan. Four French tourists kidnapped in Yemen were freed after more than two weeks in captivity. The Louisiana Superdome, a symbol of misery during Hurricane Katrina, reopened for a New Orleans Saints game. (The Saints defeated the Atlanta Falcons, 23-3.)

Five years ago: Declaring they'd been detained because of their nationality, not their actions, Joshua Fattal and Shane Bauer, two American hikers held for more than two years in an Iranian prison, returned to the United States. Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah decreed that women would, for the first time, have the right to vote and run in local elections due in 2015. Wangari Maathai (wan-GAH'-ree mah-DY'), 71, the first African woman recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize, died in Nairobi.

One year ago: House Speaker John Boehner abruptly announced his resignation. President Barack Obama laid out a fresh threat of sanctions for economic espionage emanating from China, even as he and President Xi Jinping pledged their countries would not conduct or support such hacking. During a visit to New York City, Pope Francis offered comfort to 9/11 victims' families at ground zero, warnings to

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world leaders at the United Nations and encouragement to schoolchildren in Harlem. International leaders at the United Nations approved an ambitious 15-year plan to tackle the world's biggest problems, from eradicating poverty to preserving the planet.

Today's Birthdays: Broadcast journalist Barbara Walters is 87. Folk singer Ian Tyson is 83. Former Defense Secretary Robert Gates is 73. Actor Josh Taylor is 73. Actor Robert Walden is 73. Actor-producer Michael Douglas is 72. Model Cheryl Tiegs is 69. Actress Mimi Kennedy is 68. Movie director Pedro Almodovar is 67. Actor-director Anson Williams is 67. Actor Mark Hamill is 65. Basketball Hall of Famer Bob McAdoo is 65. Polka bandleader Jimmy Sturr is 65. Actor Colin Friels is 64. Actor Michael Madsen is 58. Actress Heather Locklear is 55. Actress Aida Turturro is 54. Actor Tate Donovan is 53. TV personality Keely Shaye Smith is 53. Actress Maria Doyle Kennedy is 52. Basketball Hall of Famer Scottie Pippen is 51. Actor Jason Flemyng is 50. Actor Will Smith is 48. Actor Hal Sparks is 47. Actress Catherine Zeta-Jones is 47. Rock musician Mike Luce (Drowning Pool) is 45. Actress Bridgette Wilson-Sampras is 43. Actress Clea DuVall is 39. Actor Robbie Jones is 39. Actor Joel David Moore is 39. Actor Chris Owen is 36. Rapper T. I. is 36. Actor Van Hansis is 35. Actor Lee Norris is 35. Actor/rapper Donald Glover (AKA Childish Gambino) is 33. Actor Zach Woods is 32. Actor Jordan Gavaris is 27. Olympic silver medal figure skater Mao Asada is 26. Actress Emmy Clarke is 25.

Thought for Today: "History is too serious to be left to historians." — Iain Macleod, British politician (1913-1970).