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DAIRY QUEEN HELP WANTED

Dairy Queen in Groton is now hiring. If you're looking for a fun job with part-time hours, flexible scheduling, please stop in for an application.

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

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

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Thursday, March 23

All State Band at Sioux Falls O'Gorman High School

School Lunch: Meatballs, baked tiny potato, fruit, broccoli and dip, tea bun.

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

Senior Menu: Cheeseburger soup, ham salad sandwich, fruit, cookie.

6:00 p.m.: "Swamped" musical at GHS Gym

Friday, March 24

All State Band at Sioux Falls O'Gorman High School

School Lunch: Fish nuggets, sweet potatoes, fruit, romaine salad.

School Breakfast: Cheese omelette, muffin, fruit, juice, milk.

Senior Menu: Lemon baked fish, rice pilaf, California blend veggies, peach crisp, whole wheat bread.

Saturday, March 25

2017 Groton Area Elementary

Kindergarten Roundup (Screening) for children turning

5 on or before September 1, 2017

Friday, March 31

Parents of children who will be turning 5 on or before September 1, 2017 in the Groton Area School District are asked to contact Heidi Krueger at the Groton Area Elementary School during school hours at 397-2317 to set up a screening time or to confirm their screening time. If your child is currently attending Junior Kindergarten they will not be screened.

Packets will be sent home this week with a scheduled time and additional paperwork that will need to be completed.

Kindergarten Roundup will take place at the Groton Area Elementary School. Please check in at the office.

The logo for McKiver Collision, featuring a stylized car silhouette above the text 'MCKIVER COLLISION' in a bold, sans-serif font.

Lifetime Warranty on all Collision Work!

13556 400th Ave., Groton SD 57445
Allen McKiver, Owner ~ 605/397-4404

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Easter Cantata at C&MA Church

Begin the celebration of the Easter season on Sunday, April 2, at 7:00 pm when the choir of the Groton Christian & Missionary Alliance Church at 706 N. Main Street presents the Easter cantata "Because He Lives . . . AMEN!" for the edification and joy of all who attend. The public is invited to listen as the cantata shares the last week in Jesus' life before the Crucifixion to the totally unexpected but jubilant joy at the Resurrection of Jesus from the grave on Easter.

The choir is directed by Carrie Olson, the cantata is narrated by Lowell Harms, and the soloist will be Shawna Tunby. Members of the choir include Linda Bahr, Rick Buhler, Nancy Cutler, Amy Duncan, Darby Duncan, Moira Duncan, Doug Duncan, Zeke Duncan, JoAnn Ehresmann, Adam Franken, Dale Grenz, Joyce Grenz, Lowell Harms, Sophie Hughes, Deb Jacobs, Scott Krueger, Carrie Olson, Paul Perkins, Larry Remington, Darinda Tunby, Shawna Tunby, Sierra Tunby, Dawson Tunby (PA system), and Lars Tunby.

The congregation will host a Fellowship lunch following the Cantata in the church Social Hall immediately following the concert.

A photograph of a laundry facility. In the foreground, there is a white sign with a corkboard on top. The sign has several notices pinned to it. One prominent notice says "PLEASE Empty your pockets before loading the washer!" and another says "Welcome to GDI Clean! For any questions or problems, call or text Paul 605-397-7460 or Tina 605-397-7285". In the background, there are several white washing machines in a row. The floor is dark and polished. The overall scene is clean and well-maintained.

Now Open!
GDI CLEAN!
Downtown
Groton

Paul - 397-7460
Tina - 397-7285

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Bates Township Right-of-Way Notice

Bates Township Board of Supervisors reminds all landowners and tenants that the road right-of-way extends 33 feet from the center of the township road. This ditch is to be maintained and mowed. Any crops planted in the road right-of-way will be mowed and charged to the landowner, effective with the 2017 growing season.

Bates Township Board of Supervisors
Betty Geist
Township Clerk

For Sale

City of Groton is taking sealed bids on 2 used John Deere 725 mowers and 3 propane cylinders-100 lb. until Mar 29. Send bid with your name to City Hall, PO Box 587, Groton, SD 57445 in envelope marked bid. Call 397-2690 for more info.

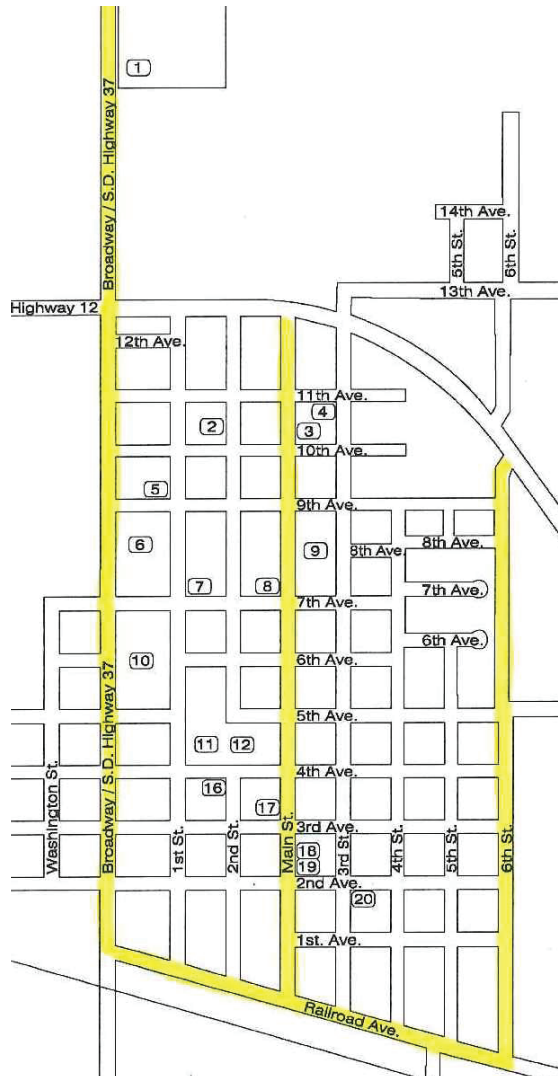


**Call or Text
Paul at
397-7460
or Tina at
397-7285
for
membership
Information**

GDI Living Fitness
25 Main St., Downtown Groton

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EFFECTIVE MARCH 27TH, 2017 UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

**To Help Preserve Our Streets
GROTON Garbage Pickup Service
Will only be on Railroad Ave,
Main St, 6th St, & Hwy 37**

Residents of HRH Mobile Home Park need to take their garbage to Highway 37.

Residents north of 13th Avenue (Olson and Jacobson Development) need to bring their garbage to the Bus Barns.

Please bring your garbage bags & cans to these streets for Tuesday pickup
Thank you for your cooperation!!

Campbell County Economic Development In the Spotlight

BROOKINGS, S.D. - In recent years, Campbell County Economic Development Corporation has succeeded in overcoming challenges faced by rural communities across South Dakota.

To better understand the strategy behind these successes, SDSU Extension Community Vitality Field Specialist, Paul Thares sat down with Andrew Van Kuren, Coordinator for Campbell County Economic Development Corporation for a question/answer session.

The discussion is recorded below.

First, some more about Campbell County. Campbell County is made up of four small communities, Artas, Herreid, Pollock and Mound City.

Campbell County is located in north central South Dakota. U.S. Highway 83 runs through the middle of the county (north / south), with S.D. State Route 10 connecting the east and west portions of the county.

The western edge of the county borders the Missouri River and Lake Oahe. North Dakota is the county's northern neighbor.

According to the 2016 U.S. Census, the total population of the county is 1,397 2016. Population of the four communities is 759.

For more information, check out Campbell County Economic Development on Facebook and LinkedIn.

Question: Herreid recently made a commitment to raise \$250,000 for housing projects. How did that come about and what was your role?

Van Kuren Answers: Grow SD - First Impressions tours jettisoned the discussions on how to make our community better.

SDSU Extension Representatives helped guide the brainstorming and action plan formulation. I helped organize the tours / discussions and encouraged key leaders to participate in the process.

Question: How did Herreid-area residents react to such a big win - raising the money and starting several housing projects - were they surprised?

Van Kuren Answers: Reaction was very supportive. Especially with those who invested their time and money.

I think some people were pleasantly surprised. Dean Schwartz, Board President for Campbell County Economic Development and I organized public meetings and took the issue to the people. We didn't know what to expect, if anything, we were the people who were most surprised.

Question: It pays to be able to network. Tell us a bit about the community member's involvement?

Van Kuren Answers: I can't say enough good things about the people who are involved.

Some people offered to write checks at our very first meeting. Not only were people willing to invest money, they invested their time and physical efforts to get the housing group going. This project is a testament to the people who make up our communities.

Question: The housing project came on the heels of several big achievements for Campbell County. Could you please explain these successes and your role?

Van Kuren Answers: Ralph Hanson got the ball rolling with the Campbell County Wind Park. He received the 2016 Governor's Office of Economic Development's Economic Developer of the Year, post humus.

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Our Campbell County Economic Development board is really great to work with. I feel fortunate to have their support.

Our County Commissioners are very approachable and listen to our concerns. Cooperative, local land-owners are key to being able to negotiate pricing, secure plots and be flexible in their expectations.

Without all of those people it would be very difficult to be successful.

Question: Tell us about a pivotal moment in this housing development process?

Van Kuren Answers: When Dean Schwartz, president of Campbell County Economic Development Board said, "We have to do this ourselves. No grant money is ever going to do this for us."

Question: Were some people skeptical that these projects would be successful?

Van Kuren Answers: You will always have skeptics and critics, which, in a certain way, is good.

I don't dismiss people's concerns as long as they are logical and have merit.

I am the outsider, so I have learned a lot by listening to all sides of an issue.

Question: Has opportunity been scarce for Campbell County?

Van Kuren Answers: Yes, and then again, no.

I understand we are a remote rural county. So, in that sense, we don't have the opportunity that some other larger communities do.

We have had and will continue to have good opportunities in the agricultural markets, energy industries, hunting and fishing segments, too.

I see future opportunities in the information technology and other white collar careers. We have excellent telecommunications capabilities (Valley Tel. Corp.) and authentic life styles to offer. Which are perfect for individuals who telecommute part-time or work out of their own homes.

Question: It seems you have a lot of dedicated people in the county. Has this contributed to the success?

Van Kuren Answers: We have been successful up to this point because of the dedication of community members.

Like the old saying, "Success is a journey, not a destination."

As long as our county has the leadership we currently do, today and into the future, I am confident we will experience continued success.

Question: Through this process, what have you learned?

Van Kuren Answers: I have learned to slow down and listen. Build support within a group or community before you go public with an idea.

I also believe that a community needs an economic developer to drive new ideas, champion worth-while community causes and to keep community leaders informed.

Question: What advice do you have for other rural communities?

Van Kuren Answers: Don't be afraid to ask for support of a project or program. Also, don't be afraid to try an old idea again. People do change their attitudes and beliefs. This could mean the community, as a whole, may have a different attitude toward a project or program.



Pappas earns Thurman award

Senior Keri Pappas was presented the JoAnne Thurman Memorial Award at the Upper Dakota Forensic League Student Congress Contest. This award is presented to a conference student that demonstrates good sportsmanship and ethics in forensics, good character, a commitment to forensics and a student that has achieved success and mastering in the use of communication skills. Schools in the UDFL include Aberdeen Central, Groton, Milbank, and Watertown. Each school nominates up to four students and then the student receiving the most nominations are placed on a final ballot for each school to vote. Also at this contest, Samantha Pappas was awarded the outstanding presiding officer award for the inexperienced house.

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Today in Weather History

March 23, 1987: Strong winds and heavy snow produced blizzard conditions across South Dakota March 23rd through the 25th. Snow amounts ranged from 6 to 19 inches. Snow totals included 19" at Winner (in Tripp County), 15" at Murdo (in Jones County), and 12" at Woonsocket (in Sanborn County) and Platte (in Charles Mix County). The wind piled the snow into drifts up to 10 feet deep. The heavy, wet snow broke power lines in several counties in the south central and east central parts of the state knocking out power for up to a few days.

March 23, 2011: A low-pressure system brought a variety of precipitation to central and eastern South Dakota and west central Minnesota on March 22nd and 23rd. Areas experienced rain, hail, sleet, snow and in some cases thundersnow.

1907: Today was the warmest March day ever recorded in Washington, DC with a maximum temperature of 93 degrees. Washington DC has seen three, 90 degrees days in March, all of which occurred in 1907.

1913 - A vicious tornado hit the city of Omaha, NE. The tornado struck during the late afternoon on Easter Sunday, and in just twelve minutes cut a swath of total destruction five miles long and two blocks wide across the city killing 94 persons and causing 3.5 million dollars property damage. (David Ludlum)

1916 - Pocatello, ID, received a record 14.6 inches of snow in 24 hours. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A blizzard raged across western Kansas, and the panhandle of Texas and Oklahoma. Pampa TX received 21 inches of snow, and winds gusted to 78 mph at Dodge City KS Altus OK. Governor Hayden declared forty-six counties in western Kansas a disaster area. In southwest Kansas, the storm was described as the worst in thirty years. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms developing along a strong cold front spawned tornadoes near Roberts ID and Bridger MT. Strong and gusty winds prevailed in the western U.S. Wind gusts in the southwest part of Reno NV reached 89 mph. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Charlotte and Wilmington, NC, reported rainfall records for the date as showers and thunderstorms prevailed in the southeastern U.S. Freezing rain glazed parts of North Carolina and southern Virginia. Gale force winds produced a heavy surf along the coast of North Carolina. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)








1990 - An upper level storm system produced heavy snow in the Lower Missouri Valley. Snowfall totals ranged up to nine inches at Kansas City MO, with eight inches reported at Falls City NE, Columbia MO and Saint Louis MO. Thunderstorms produced heavy snow in the Kansas City area during the evening rush hour. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2007 - A trailer is thrown through a bowling alley as a tornado moves through Clovis, NM. About 100 homes and businesses are destroyed, at least three schools are damaged and telephone poles are snapped. Thirteen tornadoes struck a dozen communities along the New Mexico/Texas border. Two people were critically injured.

2011 - A series of tornados are spawned from severe thunderstorms in Pennsylvania. In Hempfield Township dozens of homes and a high school auditorium where students are rehearsing a play are severely damaged.

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Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday
						
Mostly Cloudy then Slight Chance Showers	Slight Chance Showers	Mostly Cloudy	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Patchy Fog	Areas Fog then Slight Chance Rain
High: 51 °F	Low: 34 °F	High: 47 °F	Low: 27 °F	High: 52 °F	Low: 35 °F	High: 52 °F

End Of The Work Week/Weekend Low Pressure Moving South of The Forecast Area

Thursday



Showers & Breezy
Highs: 40s Northeast to 60s Southwest

Friday



Drying Out But Mostly Cloudy
Highs: 40s & 50s

Saturday



Clearing
Highs: Upper 40s East to Upper 50s West

Sunday



Showers
Highs: Upper 40s East to Upper 50s West

National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD



weather.gov/Aberdeen



National Weather Service Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen

Updated: 3/23/2017 5:53 AM Central

Published on: 03/23/2017 at 5:56AM

A broad area of low pressure will bring showers to the region today, with more widespread rain developing to our south tonight and for Friday. We'll be between systems for Saturday with another system moving in and bringing us showers for Sunday

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 37.2

Low Outside Temp: 18.4

High Gust: 32

Snow: Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 81° in 1963

Record Low: -21 in 1899

Average High: 44°F

Average Low: 23°F

Average Precip in March.: 0.79

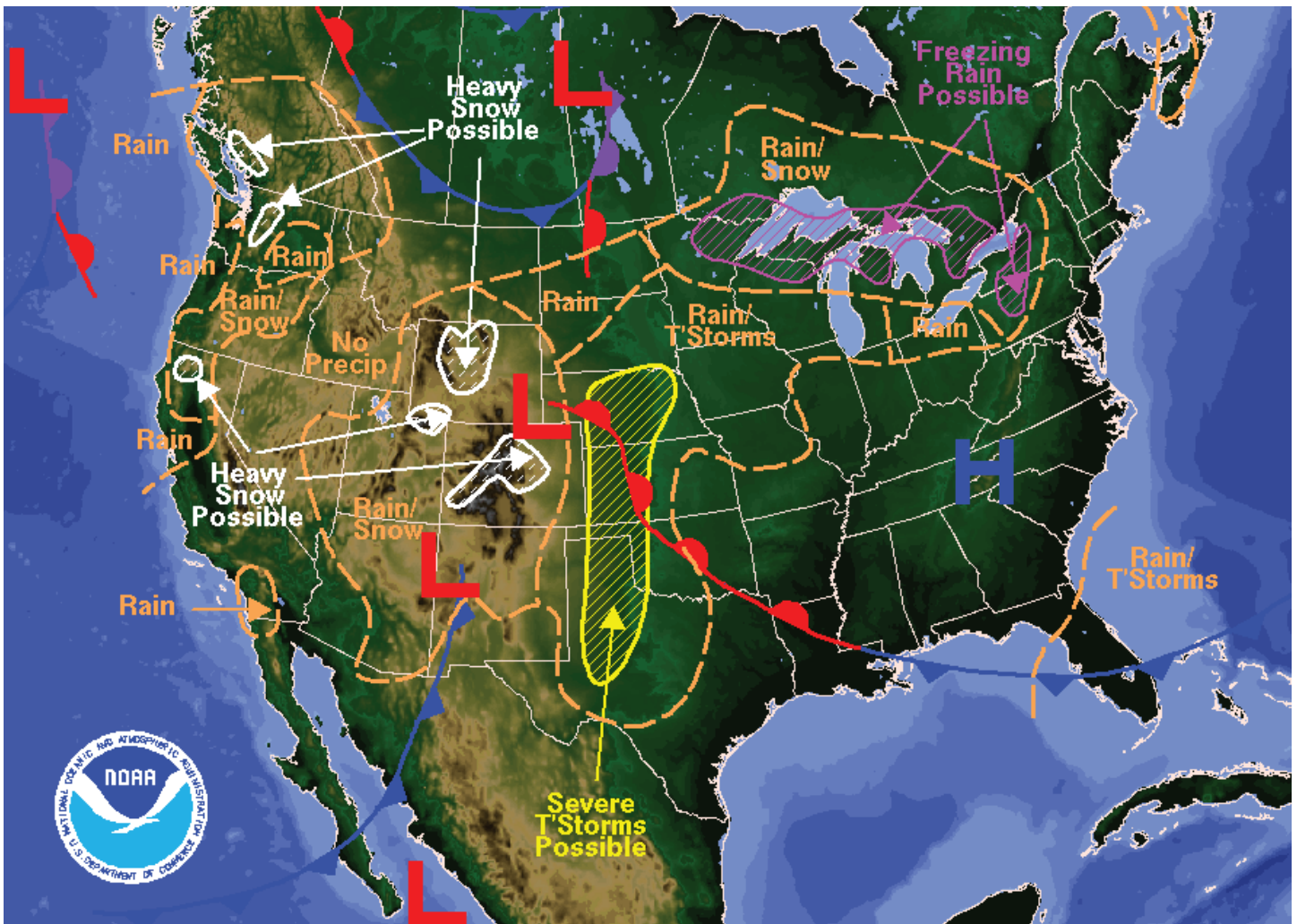
Precip to date in March.: 0.59

Average Precip to date: 1.81

Precip Year to Date: 0.59

Sunset Tonight: 7:50 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:28 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Thu, Mar 23, 2017, issued 4:42 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McCreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

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DOING WHAT FOR WHOM?

One of the world's greatest composers and musicians was Johann Sebastian Bach. He is recognized as the most celebrated German composer of all times. He was also known as a deeply religious man. Over every one of his compositions he wrote the words, "To the glory of God." He never lost sight of Who got credit for what he did.

This sets a great example for us: Whatever we do we must do, as Paul said, for the glory of God. But how is this possible and what does it mean? Am I to receive no recognition for what I do? Must God get all the credit for all of my accomplishments?

Perhaps the first truth we need to understand is the impact of our behavior on others. Many things that we can do may not bring harm to ourselves. But we must not ever, under any conditions, do anything that may or will bring harm to other Christians or non-Christians. There is nothing more wonderful than the Christian's freedom. But that freedom must be used to help – not hurt others.

We also need to consider the important fact that we as disciples are responsible to disciple others. It is not enough to live right, we must be involved in sharing the insights, knowledge and wisdom God has given us with those who want to grow into the likeness of Christ. We need to strengthen the weak and lift up the fallen. When we, in our lives, do as Jesus did with His life, we will not be concerned about "being recognized." We will do what we do because we love our Father!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, may we be conscious and considerate of everything we do and say. May we also work with You to equip those who are struggling. In Jesus' Name, Amen

Scripture for Today: 1 Corinthians 10:31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

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News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) _ These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Wednesday:

Dakota Cash
08-09-10-15-30
(eight, nine, ten, fifteen, thirty)
Estimated jackpot: \$46,000

Hot Lotto
05-13-22-27-30, Hot Ball: 1
(five, thirteen, twenty-two, twenty-seven, thirty; Hot Ball: one)
Estimated jackpot: \$4.91 million

Mega Millions
Estimated jackpot: \$151 million

Powerball
02-09-27-29-42, Powerball: 9, Power Play: 2
(two, nine, twenty-seven, twenty-nine, forty-two; Powerball: nine; Power Play: two)
Estimated jackpot: \$155 million

Sioux Falls man sentenced in cyberstalking case

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A Sioux Falls man has been sentenced to 2 1/2 years in prison for placing Craigslist advertisements inviting men to come to a woman's home for sex.

The U.S. Attorney's office says 55-year-old Eugene Ogden pleaded guilty in November 2016. U.S. District Judge Karen Schreier on Wednesday sentenced him to 30 months in custody and 3 years of supervised release for cyberstalking.

Authorities say the victim contacted Sioux Falls police in 2016, saying that strange men were coming to her home in response to a Craigslist ad for sex. Officials say investigation showed that Ogden put eight ads on the website's personal section that invited men to the home and included the woman's photo and her address.

U.S. Attorney Randy Seiler says the case is cyberstalking at its "ugliest."

Activists seek to intervene in Nebraska Keystone XL review

By GRANT SCHULTE, Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Activists who want to derail the Keystone XL pipeline in Nebraska are again mobilizing to try to make their case to a small state commission that will decide the project's fate.

Opponents asked the Nebraska Public Service Commission Wednesday to let them intervene in the case, allowing them to file legal briefs, cross-examine witnesses and present formal arguments alongside pipeline developer TransCanada's attorneys.

Nebraska requires residents to show a "substantial legal interest" in a project before they can intervene. Commission Chairman Tim Schram will decide who qualifies at a later date.

TransCanada announced last month that it had filed an application with the commission, which regulates

oil pipelines in Nebraska. The Canadian company's previous attempts to start construction in Nebraska have been thwarted by activists and some landowners who argue the pipeline could damage property and contaminate groundwater.

The fight in Nebraska had been rendered moot when President Barack Obama rejected the Keystone XL in 2015, but President Donald Trump in January signed executive memos to make it easier for the project to move forward. The Keystone XL would carry about 830,000 barrels a day from Canada through Montana, South Dakota and Nebraska, where it would connect with an existing Keystone pipeline network to carry crude to Texas Gulf Coast refineries.

Keystone opposition group Bold Nebraska contends that opponents have an interest as taxpayers and consumers of the state's water, among other roles, said executive director Linda Anderson. Native American members of Anderson's group will argue that members of the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska have an interest because the pipeline could cross an historic route known as the Ponca Trail of Tears, Anderson said.

"We've been going all around Nebraska, talking to people and trying to get them involved," she said. "My hope is that there are quite a few applications."

TransCanada spokesman Terry Cunha said he did not know of anyone seeking to intervene in support of the company.

"We continue to have positive dialogue with our Nebraska stakeholders ... and will continue to do so as the project moves through the PSC process," Cunha said.

The commission had received less than 50 applications just before the 5 p.m. deadline, including some from pipeline supporters, said agency spokeswoman Deb Collins. Pipeline opponents organized by Bold Nebraska dropped off 10 more applications at 4:30 p.m. Wednesday.

"Bold is proud to stand with the many brave Nebraskans who have been fighting the Keystone XL pipeline for years," said Ken Winston, an attorney for the umbrella group that includes Bold Nebraska.

Members of the Public Service Commission generally take about seven months to approve or deny an application, but they can postpone a decision for up to a year. Their decision hinges on whether they believe the project serves a public interest, based on evidence presented at a public hearing. Four of the commission's five members are Republicans.

According to a 2014 report by the U.S. State Department, Keystone XL would support about 42,100 jobs, including about 3,900 workers directly involved in construction. Workers, including those indirectly supported by the pipeline, would earn about \$2 billion.

Once construction ends and oil starts flowing, the pipeline would support just 35 permanent jobs, according to the report.

Follow Grant Schulte on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/GrantSchulte>

Good Samaritan Society cutting over 100 jobs in Sioux Falls

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The Evangelical Lutheran Good Samaritan Society says it's cutting more than 100 positions at its Sioux Falls national campus.

The Argus Leader (<http://argusne.ws/2n8Kymj>) reports that the nonprofit is re-organizing because of financial pressures. President and CEO David Horazdovsky says that rather than letting financial pressure be a constant distraction, the organization decided to create a "more adaptive business model."

He says it's one of the hardest things the organization has ever done.

The senior care nonprofit has locations in two dozen states. The first Good Samaritan Society center opened in North Dakota in the 1920s.

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

Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorials

By The Associated Press

Capital Journal, Pierre, March 22

A look on the bright side of the J.C. Penney closure

Pierre is about to be short another major retailer.

It's through no fault of our own that the J.C. Penney store at Northridge Plaza is slated to close its doors this summer. Indeed, the closure owes more to demographics and shifts in shopping patterns than to a wholesale abandonment of the Pierre store by area residents.

Department stores have suffered mightily in this new age of internet shopping. When a person can sign up for a web-based service that sends new clothes to you each month so you can decide to keep them or send them back depending on your own preferences, going to the local Penney's for wardrobe additions or a new pair of jeans just isn't necessary anymore.

To be sure, not everyone uses these services and they certainly can't save the day if you need a new shirt for a job interview. Without a department store, it's going to be a bit tougher to find the things we want or need without having to leave town.

This, of course, will make recruiting new people to work here that much more difficult. It's already hard. We know that because we've had our own struggles with recruiting, just like every other employer in our community. Lack of amenities such as shopping often is a concern for potential hires.

We can be justifiably frustrated at the J.C. Penney company's decision, but we must also recognize that the company's mandate isn't to provide us with a place to shop, it is to make its shareholders money. Which is part of the problem when it comes to large, national department stores these days.

But that's enough of the doom and gloom. We are firm believers that every end has the potential to be a new beginning. In this case, perhaps the time has come to focus as a community not on finding a new big-box store to replace J.C. Penney with, but rather to look for ways to encourage local entrepreneurs to plug the gaps left by the big store.

There has been much discussion in our community about the loss of the store over the last few days. But very little has been said about all the open retail space on Pierre Street, which should be just as, if not more, frustrating to our community than the loss of a big box store owned by some corporation based in Texas.

City officials and developers spend a lot of time at conferences trying to recruit national and regional chains to Pierre. That's great. But what about recruiting small businesses? What about helping small businesses identify community needs and target customers? What about giving small businesses the some tax breaks like the ones Wal-Mart and Menards got? What about finding ways to encourage Pierre Street property owners to improve and/or rehabilitate some of the historic buildings there?

It's not just a problem for city officials either. We as a community are going to need to commit to buying local. We're not going to have much choice at least for a while.

The retail marketplace, perhaps more than any other, is changing. Online retailers are taking over but there are some things they'll never be able to do such as properly fitting a suit or saving your bacon with a last-minute new blouse. Losing J.C. Penney could very well open the door for local entrepreneurs to move in and fill the gaps the store leaves.

We hope it does.

The Daily Republic, Mitchell, March 20

Sunshine Week is over, but work remains

Slowly but surely, government transparency continues its march forward in South Dakota.

In the wake of Sunshine Week, a week set aside each year to encourage public access to information, we looked back at the 2017 South Dakota legislative session and saw two bills that caught our eyes: Senate bills 25 and 116.

Both measures became law and had powerful backers in Attorney General Marty Jackley and Gov. Dennis Daugaard, respectively, and we're proud to see two of our state's elected officials promoting transparency.

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Through SB 25, South Dakota joins a list of 48 other states to publicly release mug shot photographs when a criminal suspect is booked. Along with Jackley, South Dakota Newspaper Association General Manager Dave Bordewyk supported the bill, which he said could serve as a useful public safety tool.

Daugaard also hopped on the transparency train with SB 116, a measure requiring state boards and committees to provide public notice and agendas for public meetings.

These are small, but necessary steps toward improved government transparency efforts, and we hope local boards and commissions follow suit.

While 2017 has been a fantastic year for openness from the state's perspective, it's a tale of two wildly different approaches to transparency at home in Mitchell. We've seen the city of Mitchell produce robust agenda packets giving residents a great early look at what will be discussed at Mitchell City Council meetings, while the Davison County Commission agendas continue to provide a cursory and nonspecific agenda that leaves citizens with more questions than answers.

We commend both the city and county, along with various local school districts and other committees, for improving access to agendas via the internet, but more work could be done.

The area with the most work left to do is in law enforcement.

As the state's top law enforcement official helped push for access to mug shots, local authorities often delay the release of information in a way that could slow the apprehension of suspects or could be perceived as hiding information from the public.

Take last week's press release from the Mitchell Area Crime Stoppers asking for the public's help locating suspects in five burglaries that occurred one to two weeks prior. Had the Davison County Sheriff's Office released this information sooner, perhaps when The Daily Republic calls each weekday afternoon, possible criminals wouldn't be on the prowl for so long. We understand some information must be kept confidential due to ongoing investigations, but why not release as much information as possible?

Both government and law enforcement work best when they have the public's trust, and initiatives like Jackley's and Daugaard's are great examples to follow. We only hope local governmental organizations and law enforcement agencies take note. And maybe by Sunshine Week 2018, South Dakota will see even more improvements in transparency and openness.

Rapid City Journal, Rapid City, March 12

Barnett Arena deserves our attention

It's been four years since Rapid City was notified that the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center was riddled with Americans with Disabilities Act violations and more than six years since then-Mayor Sam Kooiker formed a Brainstorming Committee to examine Barnett Arena, which was built in 1977.

A Civic Center Futures Committee was formed in November 2012, three months after the city was informed that a Department of Justice inspection revealed the ADA violations that the city said would cost an estimated \$73 million to address and five months after plans were announced to spend \$125 to \$150 million to expand and improve the facility.

The primary pitch was that a more modern and larger Barnett Arena would attract top-notch bands and performers who would attract concert-goers from neighboring states who would stay at our hotels and eat and drink at our bars and restaurants.

"I would like to go after Lady Gaga. I would like to go after U2. I would like to go after that level of act," Brian Maliske, the civic center general manager said in July 2012. "They will not come into a 9,400-seat arena. ... The reality of it is pure economics."

At that time, the city was proposing an arena that could seat from 15,000 to 18,000 people and two elevated parking garages. The project's price tag would grow to \$180 million by the time the City Council voted 9-0 in 2014 to dedicate Vision Funds for the next 30 years to pay off the bonds to finance the project — for a total expenditure of \$420 million, the most expensive project in the city's history.

The council's action was referred to a public vote and overwhelmingly rejected in 2015. Kooiker would lose his bid for re-election a few months later to Steve Allender, who would form a 17-member advisory committee to re-examine the ADA issues at the civic center. Allender then formed a task force in December 2015 to look more specifically at Barnett Arena.

Recently, the mayor dismissed the task force but no findings were released to the public, which raised

questions from Civic Center Board member Donna Winkler, who said no plan has been articulated even though the deadline for addressing the ADA issues is fast approaching.

"I think that we're definitely at a point where we need the city to step up and at last give us an idea of what the intention is going to be with Barnett Arena," she said at a recent meeting. "We don't have a plan. We don't have any idea."

On the other hand, the current executive director of the civic center, Craig Baltzer, expressed a vision that has a familiar ring to it.

"Do we spend a lot of money on fixing ADA and life safety but do nothing about the building in order to do the traveling shows," he said. "Or do we spend more money and build or renovate building, expand the floor, expand the seating ... and start attracting bigger shows and really make it work for the next 40 or 50 years."

In other words, it seems the city has adopted the same position that served as the foundation for the proposal voters rejected in January 2015.

The city, however, says the process is far from over. In April, Mayor Allender plans to make public presentations that look at the pros and cons of two options for the Barnett Arena. After that, he plans to conduct a poll where city residents can weigh in. According to Baltzer, the only ADA issues that now exist at the civic center are in the Barnett Arena.

The city now has invested around six years and thousands of dollars on determining the best course of action for the Barnett Arena and judging by Baltzer's statement it still favors the big-band theory.

But the city also is giving residents a chance to weigh in before the City Council debates the future of the Barnett Arena. We urge everyone to pay close attention to the mayor's presentations and participate in the poll.

The Barnett Arena is clearly an important part of the community and a vital source of revenue and economic activity. It requires our full attention until the matter is resolved.

South Dakota regents to mull public university tuition hikes

SPEARFISH, S.D. (AP) — Tuition and fees at South Dakota's six public universities would increase by an average of 2.9 percent next school year under one plan the state Board of Regents is set to consider next week.

The board, which oversees the state's public universities, will meet next Wednesday at Black Hills State University to discuss the proposals, including an option to raise tuition and fees for on-campus resident students by an average of 2.4 percent. The higher-cost proposal would encompass raising tuition rates at schools focusing on undergraduate and masters programs and students to match the system's three research universities.

The regents' goal is to provide the activities and experiences that make students' educations as valuable as possible and help retain them, said Mike Rush, the board's executive director and CEO.

"I think any increase is significant," he said. "The board's very sensitive to price increases."

The proposed increases would be 0.5 percent at the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology; 2.6 percent at South Dakota State University; and 3.7 percent at the University of South Dakota. The costlier option would include larger increases for the state's comprehensive schools: 2.5 percent at Dakota State University; 3.4 percent at Black Hills State University; and 5 percent at Northern State University.

The higher-priced plan would mean the average cost of tuition and fees at a South Dakota public university for undergraduate resident students next school year would be \$8,555.32, up from \$8,317.50. The smaller option would be \$8,515.00, an increase of \$197.50.

Tuition rates were held flat for the 2016-2017 academic year after Gov. Dennis Daugaard and the Legislature funded a tuition freeze for resident university students. Lawmakers this session dealt with lower-than-expected state revenues that resulted in budget cuts for the universities.

In Alabama church, marijuana is part of spiritual journey

By GREG GARRISON, Al.com

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (AP) — With a stained-glass window behind them, a lineup of speakers stepped to the front of the church and talked about the potential health benefits of legalizing plants that are currently outlawed in Alabama.

"I smoke cannabis on a daily basis for my pain," said Janice Rushing, president of the Oklevueha Native American Church of Inner Light in Alabama. "If I did not, I'd be on pain pills."

Her husband, Christopher Rushing, chief executive officer of Oklevueha Native American Church of Inner Light, says he also uses marijuana routinely.

The Rushings founded the Oklevueha Church in 2015 and claim that it has a legal exemption for its members to smoke marijuana and ingest hallucinogenic mushrooms and peyote cactus.

At a January forum with an audience of about 30 gathered at Unity Church in Birmingham, which allowed the use of its facilities, speakers discussed the potential benefits of marijuana and other substances for medicinal purposes.

"I had an ungodly facial rash," said Sherrie Saunders, a former U.S. Army medic who is now a member of Oklevueha Native American Church in Alabama.

"We made a cream that completely got rid of that rash," Mrs. Rushing said.

Someone in the audience discussed a heart problem and sleep apnea.

"That could be something that cannabis could help," Saunders said.

She also said marijuana can ease manic bipolar disorder and Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome.

"The medical establishment took away cannabis so they could sell us pills," Saunders said.

Before marijuana was stigmatized as an illegal drug, Native Americans valued it as a natural herbal treatment for more than 90 percent of sicknesses, she said. "A woman in Nicaragua showed me how to cure cancer with cannabis," Saunders said.

The woman had a son who was cured, she said. "I know why," Saunders said. "God and cannabis."

The National Cancer Institute, in its overview of cannabis in treatment of cancer, makes no claims for curative powers, but acknowledges that cannabis has been used for medicinal purposes for thousands of years and that it "may have benefits in the treatment of cancer-related side effects."

Chris Rushing stood in the pulpit and preached a sermon that mixed theology and a belief in natural, hallucinogenic plants. "That is God's way of turning our brain on," Rushing said.

"These entheogens work like tools to open up spaces and pathways of the mind," Rushing said. "Yet it's illegal. We all walk around producing natural chemicals that do the same."

Rushing said it does not make sense that pharmaceutical companies make large profits on harmful synthetic and dangerous drugs, while plant and herbal medicines are illegal.

Rushing said the health benefits of marijuana, mushrooms and cacti are enormous. They can combat depression and cure people of addictions, he said.

The Oklevueha Native American Church of Inner Light in Warrior has been licensed as a federally registered branch of the Oklevueha Lakota Sioux Nation Native American Church, Rushing said.

The church has a religious exemption to use psilocybin mushrooms and peyote cactus, both of which have properties that augment traditional Native American spiritual beliefs and experiences, Rushing said. He calls their use in religious ceremonies a sacrament.

All 120 members in the Alabama church carry photo identification, similar to a driver's license, that identifies them as members of a church that has a federal religious exemption to use natural drugs that are otherwise prohibited by law, he said.

He believes all natural plants should be legal for medicinal use, including marijuana, peyote cactus and psilocybin mushrooms.

Rushing carries around with him documentation of court rulings such as a unanimous ruling in *United States v. Robert Boyll* in the U.S. 10th Circuit Court of Appeals, which found that a non-Native American who was arrested for possession and intent to distribute peyote had the same constitutional protections as Native American members of the church.

Rushing said he was licensed in the church by James Warren "Flaming Eagle" Mooney of Utah, who

won a court battle with the state of Utah. The Utah Supreme Court ruled in Mooney's favor in 2004, in State of Utah vs. Mooney's and Oklevueha Native American Church. The state had argued that Mooney was engaged in a criminal enterprise for distributing peyote and tried to seize the church property. The Supreme Court ruled that the Native American Church was entitled to the religious exemption.

After the Jan. 21 forum at Unity Church, some in attendance expressed hope Alabama might soon follow in the footsteps of other states that have legalized marijuana. More than half of the states have decriminalized marijuana for medical uses and eight states have decriminalized marijuana for recreational uses.

Some of them say the Oklevueha Native American Church of Inner Light in Alabama is helping raise awareness.

"I think Chris' work is vital," said Jonah Tobin, founder of the Alabama Mother Earth Sustenance Alliance, or MESA. "People like him are part of that movement."

The Latest: Pope Francis sends prayers to London victims

LONDON (AP) — The latest on the attack outside Britain's Parliament (all times local):
12 p.m.

Pope Francis is sending prayers and solidarity to victims of the London attack.

In a telegram of condolence, Francis said he was "deeply saddened" to learn of the "tragedy" in central London on Wednesday.

He said he was praying for "divine strength and peace" for the families of the injured and dead.

11:35 p.m.

The world's largest body of Islamic nations and the Saudi king have condemned the attack in London, saying they reject such acts of terrorism.

Yousef Bin Ahmad Al-Othaimen, who heads the Saudi-headquartered organization, said acts of terrorism contradict the fundamentals of Islam. The OIC is comprised of 57 Muslim-majority countries from around the world.

Meanwhile the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council, which includes Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain and Oman, described the attack as "a terrible crime that is incompatible with all values and principles of humanity."

The Saudi Press Agency reports that Saudi Arabia's King Salman sent a cable of condolences to British Prime Minister Theresa May in which he says the kingdom "strongly condemns this terrorist act." London is a popular destination for thousands of Saudi and Arab Gulf tourists.

11:20 a.m.

Spanish politicians gathered on parliament's steps in Madrid for a minute's silence for the victims of the attack in London, among them a British national with Spanish ancestry.

At the same hour, officials and residents of the northwestern town of Betanzos stood in silence in memory of 43-year-old Aysha Frade, one of the attack victims and whose mother was born in the town.

In a note on its Facebook page, the town hall said that "Aysha was the daughter of a Betanzos resident and was linked by family and emotionally to our town."

Betanzos declared three days of mourning for the victims.

Flags at the town hall and the parliament building were flown at half-staff.

11:15 a.m.

Iran's foreign ministry spokesman has condemned the attack outside Britain's Parliament, according to the official IRNA news agency.

Bahram Ghasemi expressed his sympathy with the bereaved families of the victims.

Ghasemi underlined that Iran invites all countries to form a coalition and foster cooperation aimed at tackling terrorism. He added that terrorism is not limited to geographical boundaries.

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11:10 a.m.

A 26-year-old Portuguese man was among the injured when a man plowed into pedestrians with an SUV on London's Westminster Bridge.

Francisco Lopes told Portuguese channel TVI that he heard shouts behind him as he walked across the bridge and when he turned around he was struck by the vehicle which had mounted the sidewalk.

He said he lost consciousness and woke up wracked with pain. He sustained cuts on a knee and a hand but was released from Chelsea-Westminster hospital after treatment. "I was lucky," said Lopes, who lives in London with his mother.

Portuguese authorities confirmed that consular officials provided assistance to Lopes.

11 a.m.

Britain's prime minister says people from 11 countries were hospitalized after the attack outside Parliament.

Theresa May said that 12 Britons, 3 French, 2 Romanians, 4 South Koreans, 1 German, 1 Pole, 1 Irish, 1 Chinese, 1 Italian, 1 American and two Greeks required hospital treatment. Police earlier said that seven of the 29 who are hospitalized are in critical condition.

A knife-wielding attacker driving an SUV mowed down pedestrians, killing two on Westminster Bridge before breaching Parliament's grounds and fatally stabbing a police officer. The attacker was then shot dead by police.

10:45 a.m.

Prime Minister Theresa May says "millions of acts of normality" are the best response to terrorism.

In the House of Commons, May saluted the "everyday actions" of "millions people ... going about their days and getting on with their lives."

Though streets around Parliament are cordoned off, the vast majority of London is open and bustling as usual. Parliament resumed sitting Thursday, less than 24 hours after the attack.

May says the resolve of ordinary people shows "our values will prevail."

10:40 a.m.

British Prime Minister Theresa May says police know the identity of the British-born man who went on a car and gun rampage at Parliament.

May says he was once investigated for extremist links but was considered a peripheral figure. She didn't disclose his name.

May says police believe the man acted alone and there is no reason to believe "imminent further attacks" are planned.

10:35 a.m.

British Prime Minister Theresa May has delivered a defiant message after a deadly attack, saying "we are not afraid."

May has told lawmakers in the House of Commons that "yesterday an act of terrorism tried to silence our democracy, but today we meet as normal."

She called the car and knife rampage that killed three victims "an attack on free people everywhere."

10:30 a.m.

France's foreign minister says three French teenagers hospitalized after the attack outside London's Parliament are not in life-threatening condition.

Foreign Minister Jean-Marc Ayrault, after visiting the victims in London, said democratic nations should not be cowed by this kind of attack.

"We must say no to those who want to kill our democracy," he told reporters. "We will not put up walls."

While no information has been released about the attackers' identity, Ayrault said authorities should fight against the radicalization of young people and against the Islamic State group in particular. Ayrault was at a meeting in Washington about fighting IS when the London attack hit.

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The three French teens, part of a large group on a high school trip to London, were among those injured Wednesday.

10:25 a.m.

London's mayor has paid tribute to a slain police officer who tried to stop a knife-wielding attacker who had entered Parliament's grounds.

Mayor Sadiq Khan says that 48-year-old police officer Keith Palmer "was doing the job he loved and protecting our city, protecting Parliament, protecting Londoners, unarmed, and he died in the course of his duty. And I pay tribute to him."

The attacker, who had earlier mowed down pedestrians on Westminster Bridge, was shot dead by police after stabbing Palmer. Two other people were killed in the attack.

Khan says that there have been "13 occasions over the last three or four years where attempts to terrorize us, to kill and to maim, have been thwarted."

10:05 a.m.

Britain's defense secretary has praised the work of police officers after the attack outside Parliament by a knife-wielding man driving an SUV.

Michael Fallon says that a "very urgent investigation" had been going on around the clock to determine whether "anybody else was involved."

Earlier, police said they believe the attacker who killed three people, including a police officer, acted alone and was "inspired by international terrorism."

Police have conducted major raids overnight and detained seven people.

9:55 a.m.

The Spanish Foreign Ministry says that a British national whose mother is Spanish has been identified as one of the people killed in the London attack.

A spokesman says that Spanish consular officials have made contact with Aysha Frade's relatives in Spain's northwestern region of Galicia when her identity was confirmed. He was unable to give any further details.

The regional Voz de Galicia newspaper said that Frade was 43 years old and was teaching Spanish in London.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity in keeping with ministry regulations.

--By Ciaran Giles in Madrid.

9:40 a.m.

The British Parliament has observed a minute of silence to remember those killed in the attack at that heart of the government.

The sitting Thursday is an important act of defiance, showing a commitment to the values at the core of the nation's government.

A man driving an SUV plowed into pedestrians on Westminster Bridge on Wednesday before he fatally stabbed a police officer on Parliament's grounds. Two other people were killed, and police shot dead the attacker.

Parliament was put into lockdown after the attack.

9:25 a.m.

French prosecutors have opened a terrorism investigation into the attack outside London's Parliament because three French teens were among those injured.

The Paris prosecutor's office says that its anti-terrorism section has opened an investigation into attempted murder in relation with a terrorist enterprise. The move means French police would likely travel to London to pursue their investigation.

French authorities, whose country has suffered a string of deadly extremist attacks, have offered to

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work with British authorities on the investigation.

The injured French were part of a group of high school students from Brittany in western France on a school trip to London.

Three people were killed and many injured when a man mowed down pedestrians on Westminster Bridge and stabbed a police officer Wednesday. The attacker was killed by police.

9:20 a.m.

Romanian officials say a woman who plunged into the River Thames when a man plowed into pedestrians with an SUV on London's Westminster Bridge was a Romanian tourist in London to celebrate her boyfriend's birthday.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Ionut Valcu said Thursday that the woman fell into the Thames. It wasn't clear if she jumped or was thrown into the water by the SUV.

Romanian Ambassador Dan Mihalache told Realitatea TV late Wednesday that the woman sustained serious head injuries and has badly damaged lungs. Her boyfriend suffered a foot fracture. The pair haven't been named.

Mihalache said: "They were tourists, unfortunately they were unlucky. They had come to celebrate his birthday." He said the pair planned to wed.

8:40 a.m.

Russian President Vladimir Putin says the attack outside Parliament in London underlined the need for pooling global efforts against terrorism.

In a letter to British Prime Minister Theresa May released by the Kremlin Thursday, Putin said the "forces of terror are acting in an increasingly treacherous and cynical way."

He emphasized that "it's necessary to unite efforts of all members of international community to confront the terror threat."

Putin offered condolences to the families of the victims and wished a quick recovery to those injured in Wednesday's attack.

7:50 a.m.

British police say they believe the attacker who killed three people including a police officer outside Parliament acted alone and was "inspired by international terrorism."

Metropolitan Police counterterrorism chief Mark Rowley says that police have raided six addresses and arrested seven people in connection with Wednesday's attack by a knife-wielding man who also mowed down pedestrians with an SUV. Rowley refused to identify the attacker.

He revised the death toll down to four, including the attacker, a police officer guarding Parliament and two civilians. He said that 29 people required hospitalization and seven of them are in critical condition.

--This item has been corrected to show that death toll, including attacker, has been revised to four.

7:25 a.m.

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan has condemned the attack outside Britain's Parliament in London.

The rampage occurred hours after Erdogan warned that the safety of Western citizens could be in peril if European nations persist in what he described as their arrogant conduct.

In a series of tweets posted late Wednesday, Erdogan said Turkey shared "the pain of the United Kingdom."

Erdogan tweeted: "We stand in solidarity with the U.K., our friend and ally, against terrorism, the greatest threat to global peace and security."

Earlier Wednesday, Erdogan warned that Europeans wouldn't be able to walk the streets safely, in remarks he made amid tensions over Dutch and German restrictions on Turkish ministers wanting to hold campaign meetings with Turkish citizens.

7:15 a.m.

British armed police have carried out a raid on a property in the central city of Birmingham, after an

attacker killed four people before being fatally shot by police within Parliament's grounds.

Police refused to say if the raid was linked to the rampage in the heart of Britain's seat of power. But British media including the Press Association on Thursday quoted an unnamed witness saying that the operation was linked to the attack that also injured around 40 people.

A knife-wielding man drove an SUV into pedestrians on Westminster Bridge before crashing the vehicle into the gates of Parliament on Wednesday. He scaled the fences and later fatally stabbed a policeman before being gunned down by officers. He hasn't been identified. Three pedestrians were among the dead.

4:10 a.m.

Chinese Premier Li Keqiang says the attack outside the British Parliament in London was the first subject of discussion when he met with Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull of Australia on Thursday morning in Canberra.

Li says that "together, we send our condolences to the prime minister of the U.K. and together we condemn terrorism and we stand against all forms of terrorism."

The Chinese leader says that "there cannot be continued instability in the world," adding: "We must cherish peace and stability."

1:35 a.m.

New Zealand's prime minister is condemning the attack outside Britain's Parliament that resulted in five deaths, including the assailant.

Prime Minister Bill English told reporters in Rotorua that he has written to British Prime Minister Theresa May to express support for her government and to offer his country's condolences to the victim's families.

A knife-wielding man went on the deadly rampage in the heart of Britain's seat of power Wednesday, plowing a car into pedestrians on London's Westminster Bridge before stabbing a police officer to death inside the gates of Parliament. Other officers fatally shot the attacker.

In addition to the dead, 40 people have injuries.

May has condemned the incident as a "sick and depraved terrorist attack."

12:15 a.m.

South Korea's Foreign Ministry says five South Koreans in their 50s and 60s were among the 40 people injured in London during the terror attack outside Parliament.

The ministry says the five were hurt when they were caught up in a stampede of people trying to escape the attack.

It says four of the South Koreans suffered broken bones and other injuries and a woman in her late 60s needed an operation to treat a head injury.

GOP health bill on the brink hours from House showdown vote

By ERICA WERNER and RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The GOP's long-promised legislation to repeal and replace "Obamacare" stood on the brink just hours before Republican leaders planned to put it on the House floor for a showdown vote. Short of support, GOP leaders looked to President Donald Trump to close the deal with a crucial bloc of conservatives, in the first major legislative test of his young presidency.

The stakes could hardly be higher for a party that gained monopoly control of Washington largely on promises to get rid of former President Barack Obama's signature legislative achievement and replace it with something better. Now Republicans are staring at the possibility of failure at the very moment of truth, an outcome that would be a crushing political defeat for Trump and Hill GOP leaders and would throw prospects for other legislative achievements into extreme uncertainty.

Frenzied last-minute wheeling and dealing was under way on Capitol Hill and the White House, where

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Trump summoned the balky conservative Freedom Caucus to meet with him mid-day Thursday, ahead of the planned vote. But concessions being offered to the conservatives, who sought to limit requirements for health plans to offer certain benefits including substance abuse and maternity care, appeared to be scaring off moderate Republicans.

The Republican legislation would halt Obama's tax penalties against people who don't buy coverage and cut the federal-state Medicaid program for low earners, which the Obama statute had expanded. It would provide tax credits to help people pay medical bills, though generally skimpier than the aid Obama's statute provides. It also would allow insurers to charge older Americans more and repeal tax boosts the law imposed on high-income people and health industry companies.

Tension has been building in advance of the critical vote, and a late-night meeting of moderate-leaning members in Speaker Paul Ryan's office Wednesday broke up without resolution or a deal as most lawmakers and Ryan himself left out of side exits and avoided talking to reporters.

One lawmaker present, GOP Rep. Ryan Costello of Pennsylvania, said members had been asked to weigh in on the changes being offered to the Freedom Caucus. He demurred on how the concessions might impact his vote, but said, "The Freedom Caucus has presented what it will take for them to make some 'yeses' and I think there are a lot of members who will now have to evaluate things a little bit further."

Shortly thereafter a key moderate who had been in the meeting, Rep. Charlie Dent of Pennsylvania, issued a statement saying he would be voting "no" on the health bill. "I believe this bill, in its current form, will lead to the loss of coverage and make insurance unaffordable for too many Americans," said Dent, a leader of the Tuesday Group of moderate-leaning Republicans.

Yet Freedom Caucus members, even after winning the prospect of eliminating the so-called "essential health benefits," were not quite ready to guarantee their support.

"Tonight is an encouraging night," Rep. Mark Meadows, R-N.C., leader of the Freedom Caucus, said after a late round of negotiating Wednesday. But after boasting for days he has the votes to kill the health bill, Meadows added that "I don't want to be so optimistic as to say the deal is done."

Thursday's White House meeting between Trump and Freedom Caucus members looked to be pivotal as to whether the vote could go forward as planned. Trump has played an increasingly central role, repeatedly summoning different groups of lawmakers to the White House, traveling to the Capitol himself, and calling others on the phone to press for "yes" votes.

And congressional leaders have increasingly put the onus on the president to close the deal, seemingly seeking to ensure that he takes ownership of the legislation — and with it, ownership of defeat if that is the outcome.

In a count by The Associated Press, at least 26 Republicans said they opposed the bill, enough to narrowly defeat the measure. The number was in constant flux amid the eleventh-hour lobbying.

Including vacancies and expected absentees, the bill would be defeated if 23 Republicans join all Democrats in voting "no."

In a show of support for the opponents, the conservative Koch network promised Wednesday night to spend millions of dollars to help House members who vote against the health care bill.

The Republican legislation would halt Obama's tax penalties against people who don't buy coverage and cut the federal-state Medicaid program for low earners, which the Obama statute had expanded. It would provide tax credits to help people pay medical bills, though generally skimpier than the aid Obama's statute provides. It also would allow insurers to charge older Americans more and repeal tax boosts the law imposed on high-income people and health industry companies.

Moderates were daunted by projections of 24 million Americans losing coverage in a decade and higher out-of-pocket costs for many low-income and older people, as predicted by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office.

Yet some Republicans were showing irritation at their party's holdouts.

"At some point we have to cowboy up and prove we can govern," said Rep. Kevin Cramer, R-N.D. "Otherwise we're just going to be the 'no' party and some people are OK with that, it appears."

Associated Press reporters Alan Fram, Kevin Freking and Ken Thomas contributed to this report.

AP Exclusive: US probes banking of ex-Trump campaign chief

By JACK GILLUM, MENELAOS HADJICOSTIS and ERIC TUCKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. Treasury Department agents have recently obtained information about offshore financial transactions involving President Donald Trump's former campaign chairman, Paul Manafort, as part of a federal anti-corruption probe into his work in Eastern Europe, The Associated Press has learned.

Information about Manafort's transactions was turned over earlier this year to U.S. agents working in the Treasury Department's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network by investigators in Cyprus at the U.S. agency's request, a person familiar with the case said, speaking on condition of anonymity because the person was not authorized to publicly discuss a criminal investigation.

The Cyprus attorney general, one of the country's top law enforcement officers, was made aware of the American request.

A spokesman for Manafort did not immediately respond to questions from the AP.

Manafort, who was Trump's unpaid campaign chairman from March until August last year, has been a leading focus of the U.S. government's investigation into whether Trump associates coordinated with Moscow to meddle in the 2016 campaign. This week, the AP revealed his secret work for a Russian billionaire to advance the interests of Russian President Vladimir Putin a decade ago.

Federal prosecutors became interested in Manafort's activities years ago as part of a broad investigation to recover stolen Ukrainian assets after the ouster of pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich there in early 2014. No U.S. criminal charges have ever been filed in the case.

It was not immediately clear what time period was covered under the government request for information about Manafort's financial transactions in Cyprus. Manafort was known to route financial transactions through Cyprus, according to records of international wire transfers obtained by the AP and public court documents filed in a 2014 legal dispute in the Cayman Islands.

In the 2014 case, Manafort used Cypriot shell companies as part of a nearly \$19 million deal with Russian billionaire Oleg Deripaska to purchase Ukrainian cable television provider Black Sea Cable. Deripaska said that after taking the money, Manafort and his associates stopped responding to Deripaska's queries about how the funds had been used.

As part of their investigation, U.S. officials were expected to look into millions of dollars' worth of wire transfers to Manafort. In one case, the AP found that a Manafort-linked company received a \$1 million payment in October 2009 from a mysterious firm through the Bank of Cyprus. The \$1 million payment left the account the same day — split in two, roughly \$500,000 disbursements to accounts with no obvious owner.

There is nothing inherently illicit about using multiple companies as Manafort was doing. But it was unclear why he would have been involved with companies in Cyprus, known for its history of money laundering before joining the European Union, with unclear sources of the money flowing in to them and with such secrecy surrounding the firms' connections to Manafort.

A Treasury Department spokesman, Stephen Hudak, declined to answer the AP's questions about Manafort's records. "We often get press inquiries concerning individuals and our policy is to never confirm, nor deny the existence, or non-existence, of any potential investigation," Hudak said.

Cypriot officials said further information would have to come to the agency through a formal request to the Cypriot Ministry of Justice and Public Order — under a mutual legal assistance treaty — although no request has been made, according to two officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss the case.

Democrats on Capitol Hill who are part of two congressional investigations of Trump associates said the new disclosures about Manafort's work for the Russian billionaire guarantee that Manafort will be sought as a key witness in upcoming hearings. Sen. Martin Heinrich, D-N.M., who is a member of the Senate intelligence committee, said revelations about Manafort's work were "serious and disturbing."

The AP's reporting about Manafort's activities "undermines the groundless assertions that the administration has been making that there are no ties between President Trump and Russia. This is not a drip, drip, drip," said Democratic Rep. Jackie Speier of California, a member of the House intelligence

committee. "This is now dam-breaking with water flushing out with all kinds of entanglements."

The White House said Trump had not been aware of Manafort's work on behalf of Deripaska, a close Putin ally with whom Manafort eventually signed a \$10 million annual contract beginning in 2006. "To suggest that the president knew who his clients were from 10 years ago is a bit insane," Press Secretary Sean Spicer said. "I don't know what he got paid to do," Spicer said, adding, "There's no suggestion he did anything improper."

The Financial Crimes Enforcement Network, known as FinCEN, was established in 1990 and became a Treasury Department bureau soon after the Sept. 11, 2001, terror attacks. It collects a vast repository of records that financial institutions are required to report under the Bank Secrecy Act, such as suspicious activity reports and currency transaction reports, and assists law enforcement agencies in helping analyze complex data.

The agency is a part of an international network of so-called financial intelligence units that share information with each other in money laundering and terrorism financing investigations. It's work has been critical in helping officials piece money trails together and identify leads for criminal investigators.

Hadjicostis reported from Nicosia, Cyprus. Associated Press writers Jeff Horwitz and Chad Day contributed to this report from Washington, and Nataliya Vasilyeva contributed to this report from Moscow and Kyiv.

Follow Jack Gillum on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/jackgillum> and Menelaos Hadjicostis at <https://twitter.com/menhad>.

Submit tips to The Associated Press <https://www.ap.org/tips>.

Rights of learning-disabled students bolstered by high court

By SAM HANANEL, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A unanimous Supreme Court has bolstered the rights of millions of learning-disabled students in a ruling that requires public schools to offer special education programs that meet higher standards. The court struck down a lower standard endorsed by President Donald Trump's nominee to the high court.

Chief Justice John Roberts said that it is not enough for school districts to get by with minimal instruction for special needs children. The school programs must be designed to let students make progress in light of their disabilities.

The Wednesday ruling quickly led to tough questions at the confirmation hearing of Supreme Court nominee Neil Gorsuch. Democratic Sen. Dick Durbin of Illinois said the high court had just tossed out a standard that Gorsuch himself had used in a similar case that lowered the bar for educational achievement.

In its ruling, the Supreme Court sided with parents of an autistic teen in Colorado who said their public school did not do enough to help their son make progress. They sought reimbursement for the cost of sending him to private school.

The case helps clarify the scope of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, a federal law that requires a "free and appropriate public education" for disabled students. Lower courts said even programs with minimal benefits can satisfy the law.

Roberts said the law requires an educational program "reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in light of the child's circumstances." He did not elaborate on what that progress should look like, saying it depends on the "unique circumstances" of each child. He added that there should also be deference to school officials.

"When all is said and done, a student offered an educational program providing merely more than de minimis progress from year to year can hardly be said to have been offered an education at all," Roberts

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said. "For children with disabilities, receiving instruction that aims so low would be tantamount to sitting idly awaiting the time when they were old enough to drop out."

At Gorsuch's hearing, Durbin said the nominee had gone beyond the standards of his own appeals court by adding the word "merely" in his 2008 opinion approving the "de minimis" — or minimum — standard for special needs education. Durbin suggested that Gorsuch had lowered the bar even more.

Gorsuch, handed a copy of the ruling during a break on the third day of his hearings, noted that his panel reached its decision unanimously based on a 10-year-old precedent.

Durbin also said Gorsuch had ruled against disabled students in eight out of 10 cases dealing with the IDEA.

"To suggest I have some animus against children, senator, would be a mistake," Gorsuch said.

Later, Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., pressed Gorsuch again, saying he added the word "merely" to the standard "to make it even more narrow."

Gorsuch responded: "I disagree."

Disability advocacy groups argued that schools must offer more than the bare minimum of services to children with special needs.

The ruling does not go as far as the parents wanted. They had argued that educational programs for disabled students should meet goals "substantially equal" to those for children without disabilities. Roberts rejected that standard, saying it was "entirely unworkable."

The court's decision to require a more demanding test for progress has major implications for about 6.4 million disabled students who want to advance in school and rely on special programs to make that happen. School officials had cautioned that imposing higher standards could be too costly for some cash-strapped districts. They warned that it could also lead parents to make unrealistic demands.

The case involved a boy known only as Andrew F. who attended public school outside Denver from kindergarten through fourth grades. He was given specialized instruction to deal with his learning and behavioral issues.

But Andrew's parents decided to send him to private school in 2010 after complaining about his lack of progress. They asked the school district to reimburse them for his tuition — about \$70,000 a year — on the basis that public school officials weren't doing enough to meet their son's needs.

The Colorado Department of Education denied their claim, saying the school district had met the minimum standards required under the law. The federal appeals court in Denver upheld that decision, ruling that the school district satisfied its duty to offer more than a "de minimis" effort.

Disability advocacy groups cheered the ruling, saying it raises the expectations for learning-disabled students.

"It is now clear that schools must provide students with disabilities the supports they need to help them achieve meaningful and substantive educational goals," said Ira Burnim, legal director at the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law.

Francisco Negron, general counsel of the National School Boards Association, said the court had issued a "measured" decision "that isn't really upsetting the apple cart." He said it would lead to schools more carefully tracking the progress of special needs students. But he praised the court for saying it would defer to the judgment of educational officials.

Miller and Mack still close after time together at Xavier

By JOHN MARSHALL, AP Basketball Writer

SAN JOSE, Calif. (AP) — Sean Miller had just been named Xavier's head basketball coach when he began meeting with athletic director Dawn Rogers about filling out his staff.

Rogers had previously worked with Chris Mack, then on Skip Prosser's staff at Wake Forest, and suggested Miller consider him with the Musketeers. Miller knew nothing about Mack, but during the meticulous process of finding assistants, the Xavier alum's name kept coming up.

"Sean is very analytical, he doesn't do things by chance, takes time to make thoughtful decisions," said Rogers, now president and CEO for Final Four Phoenix 2017. "He made a great decision and Chris

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brought a lot to the staff.”

Mack and Miller are back together in San Jose, facing each other from opposing benches for the second time in three years — Miller with No. 3 seed Arizona, Mack with No. 11 Xavier in the Sweet 16.

Just like two years ago, when Miller’s Wildcats knocked off Mack’s Musketeers to reach the Elite Eight, this will not be fun for either coach.

“It stinks. It really does because he means so much to me,” Mack said. “He’s taught me so much about what to do and how to be a coach. I’d rather face somebody I don’t know real well.”

Miller was a natural to take over Xavier’s program when he got the job. So was Mack when it was his turn.

Miller was a feisty point guard at Pittsburgh who could shoot and understood the game like few college players can. He served as an assistant at four difference schools, including a five-year stint as associate head coach at North Carolina State, before taking the same position under Thad Matta at Xavier.

Miller worked as an assistant for three years before Matta left to coach at Ohio State in 2004. Rogers did not have to look far for Matta’s replacement.

“There was no doubt he was the right person to coach Xavier,” said Rogers, Xavier’s AD from 2004-06. “I don’t know anything about basketball — I can’t dribble the ball with my head up — but you could just tell he understood the game in great detail.”

Just like Mack.

Mack played at Xavier and was a two-time captain under coach Pete Gillen. He earned a job on Prosser’s staff at Xavier — later becoming director of basketball operations — before following him to Wake Forest in 2001.

Miller was hired as Xavier’s coach in 2004 and Mack worked under him until Miller left for Arizona in 2009.

“Sean has such a great basketball mind and there’s times he could go into a game and coach it himself, but he doesn’t do that,” Rogers said. “He asks the staff their opinion and that’s what worked really well, that Chris brought different thoughts and recruited well. He was able to tell Sean what he thought and not every assistant is able to do that, especially with someone like Sean who is so sure of himself from a coaching standpoint.”

The friends and former colleagues went different directions, but with one big thing in common: Winning.

Arizona played the first 19 games without sophomore guard Allonzo Trier and suffered through a string of injuries, yet shared the Pac-12 regular-season title and won the conference tournament. The Wildcats eclipsed 30 wins for the fourth time in seven seasons and reached the Sweet 16 for the fifth time in that span.

Xavier had an even tougher 2016-17 season. The Musketeers lost star point guard Edmond Sumner to a season-ending knee injury in late January and suffered through a six-game losing streak while Trevon Bluiett battled injuries.

The losing streak nearly knocked Xavier out of NCAA Tournament contention, but a late-season run not only got them into the bracket but through to the Sweet 16 for the sixth time in 10 years.

“Chris Mack is one of our game’s bright coaches, great coaches,” Miller said. “He’s not my former assistant. He stands on his own two feet and his record and what he’s done speaks for itself. And I don’t know if I’ve seen a coach take a team that had lost a number in a row and lost such a terrific player, and now flip it and have them playing at such a high level. We’re playing against one of the hottest teams that’s remaining in the tournament.”

So is Xavier, thanks to the work of Mack’s mentor.

For more AP college basketball coverage: <http://collegebasketball.ap.org> and http://twitter.com/AP_Top25

5 dead in vehicle, knife attack at British Parliament

By JILL LAWLESS, PAISLEY DODDS and DANICA KIRKA, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — A knife-wielding man went on a deadly rampage in the heart of Britain's seat of power Wednesday, plowing a car into pedestrians on London's Westminster Bridge before stabbing a police officer to death inside the gates of Parliament. Five people were killed, including the assailant, and 40 others were injured in what Prime Minister Theresa May condemned as a "sick and depraved terrorist attack."

Lawmakers, lords, staff and visitors were locked down after the man was shot by police within the perimeter of Parliament, just yards (meters) from entrances to the building itself and in the shadow of the iconic Big Ben clock tower. He died, as did three pedestrians on the bridge, and the police officer.

A doctor who treated the wounded from the bridge said some had "catastrophic" injuries. Three police officers, several French teenagers on a school trip, two Romanian tourists, a Chinese citizen and five South Korean visitors were among the injured.

Police said they were treating the attack as terrorism. There was no immediate claim of responsibility.

Metropolitan Police counterterrorism chief Mark Rowley said police believed there was only one attacker, "but it would be foolish to be overconfident early on." He said an unarmed policeman, three civilians and the attacker died. Forty others, including three police officers, were injured.

Islamic extremism was suspected in the attack, Rowley said, adding that authorities believe they know the assailant's identity but would not reveal it while the investigation was ongoing.

The threat level for international terrorism in the U.K. was already listed at severe, meaning an attack was "highly likely."

Speaking outside 10 Downing St. after chairing a meeting of government's emergency committee, COBRA, May said that level would not change. She said attempts to defeat British values of democracy and freedom through terrorism would fail.

"Tomorrow morning, Parliament will meet as normal," she said. Londoners and visitors "will all move forward together, never giving in to terror and never allowing the voices of hate and evil to drive us apart."

U.S. President Donald Trump was among world leaders offering condolences, and in Paris, the lights of the Eiffel Tower were to be dimmed in solidarity with London.

London has been a target for terrorism many times over past decades. Just this weekend, hundreds of armed police took part in an exercise simulating a "marauding" terrorist attack on the River Thames.

Wednesday was the anniversary of suicide bombings in the Brussels airport and subway that killed 32 people last year, and the latest events echoed recent vehicle attacks in Berlin and Nice, France.

In the House of Commons, legislators were holding a series of votes on pensions when deputy Speaker Lindsay Hoyle announced that the sitting was being suspended and told lawmakers not to leave.

Parliament was locked down for several hours, and the adjoining Westminster subway station was shuttered.

Conservative lawmaker Tobias Ellwood, whose brother was killed in the Bali terror attack in 2002, performed first aid on the wounded police officer, who later died. About 10 yards away lay the assailant.

"I tried to stem the flow of blood and give mouth to mouth while waiting for the medics to arrive but I think he had lost too much blood," Ellwood said. "He had multiple wounds, under the arm and in the back."

The attack began early Wednesday afternoon as a driver in a gray SUV slammed into pedestrians on the bridge linking Parliament to the south bank of the River Thames.

Former Polish foreign minister Radek Sikorski was in a car crossing the bridge when he heard "something like a car hitting metal sheet" and then saw people lying on the pavement.

"I saw one person who gave no signs of life. One man was bleeding from his head. I saw five people who were at least seriously injured," Sikorski told Poland's TVN24.

Ambulances arrived within minutes to treat people who lay scattered along the length of the bridge. One bloodied woman lay surrounded by a scattering of postcards.

Police said one injured woman was pulled from the river.

The car crashed into railings on the north side of the bridge, less than 200 yards (meters) from the entrance to Parliament. As people scattered in panic, witnesses saw a man holding a knife run toward

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the building.

"The whole crowd just surged around the corner by the gates just opposite Big Ben," said witness Rick Longley. "A guy came past my right shoulder with a big knife and just started plunging it into the policeman. I have never seen anything like that. I just can't believe what I just saw."

The attacker managed to get past a gate into Parliament's fenced-in New Palace Yard, a cobbled courtyard in the shadow of the Big Ben clock tower.

Daily Mail journalist Quentin Letts said a man in black attacked the police officer before being shot two or three times as he tried to storm into the building.

"As this attacker was running towards the entrance two plain-clothed guys with guns shouted at him what sounded like a warning, he ignored it and they shot two or three times and he fell," Letts told the BBC.

The attacker fell to the cobbles just yards from the entrance to 1,000-year-old Westminster Hall, the oldest part of the parliamentary complex, busy with visitors and school groups. Beyond that, a corridor leads to the building's Central Lobby, flanked by House of Commons and House of Lords chambers.

The prime minister was among lawmakers near the Commons at the time of the attack, and was quickly ushered away by security officers and driven back to Downing Street.

To get that far, the attacker would have had to evade the armed officers who patrol the Parliament complex in pairs, as well as Parliament's own security staff, who don't carry guns.

The attack unfolded near some of the city's most famous tourist sites, including the London Eye, a large Ferris wheel with pods that overlook the capital. It was halted after the attack, stranding visitors in the pods, with an aerial view of the attack scene.

London Ambulance Service said medics treated 12 people for serious injuries and eight who were less seriously hurt.

Dr. Colleen Anderson of St. Thomas' Hospital said some of the wounded had "catastrophic" injuries.

The French Foreign Ministry said that three students on a school trip from Saint-Joseph in the Brittany town of Concarneau were among the injured. Two Romanians were also among the injured, the country's Foreign Ministry said.

Trump spoke with May by telephone and applauded "the quick response of British police and first responders," White House press secretary Sean Spicer said.

London has often been the target of terrorist attacks, from IRA campaigns in the 1970s and 80s to more recent Islamist plots.

On July 7, 2005, four al-Qaida-inspired British bombers blew themselves up on three subway trains and a bus in London, killing 52 people.

British security forces say they have thwarted some 13 terror plots over the past four years, but in recent years the U.K. has largely been spared major international terror attacks such as the ones seen in Belgium and France.

Last year, a far-right supporter shot and killed British lawmaker Jo Cox, who had campaigned for the U.K. to remain in the European Union. Prior to that, an attacker claiming to be motivated by Syria stabbed three people at a London subway station.

The most gruesome recent attack occurred in 2013 when two Muslim converts of Nigerian descent attacked Lee Rigby, a British soldier who was walking down the street. The men ran Rigby down with their vehicle and then used a cleaver to hack him to death as bystanders watched in horror.

Associated Press writers Sophie Berman, Gregory Katz and Rob Harris in London and Lori Hinnant in Paris contributed to this report.

Less-educated middle-age US whites dying younger than others

By CHRISTOPHER S. RUGABER, AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Middle-age white Americans with limited education are increasingly dying younger, on average, than other middle-age U.S. adults, a trend driven by their dwindling economic opportunities, research by two Princeton University economists has found.

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The economists, Anne Case and Angus Deaton, argue in a paper released Thursday that the loss of steady middle-income jobs for those with high school degrees or less has triggered broad problems for this group. They are more likely than their college-educated counterparts, for example, to be unemployed, unmarried or afflicted with poor health.

"This is a story of the collapse of the white working class," Deaton said in an interview. "The labor market has very much turned against them."

Those dynamics helped fuel the rise of President Donald Trump, who won widespread support among whites with only a high school degree. Yet Deaton said his policies are unlikely to reverse these trends, particularly the health care legislation now before the House that Trump is championing. That bill would lead to higher premiums for older Americans, the Congressional Budget Office has found.

"The policies that you see, seem almost perfectly designed to hurt the very people who voted for him," Deaton said.

Case and Deaton's paper, issued by the Brookings Institution, follows up on research they released in 2015 that first documented a sharp increase in mortality among middle-aged whites.

Since 1999, white men and women ages 45 through 54 have endured a sharp increase in "deaths of despair," Case and Deaton found in their earlier work. These include suicides, drug overdoses, and alcohol-related deaths such as liver failure.

In the paper released Thursday, Case and Deaton draw a clearer relationship between rising death rates and changes in the job market since the 1970s. They find that men without college degrees are less likely to receive rising incomes over time, a trend "consistent with men moving to lower and lower skilled jobs."

Other research has found that Americans with only high school degrees are less likely to get married or purchase a home and more likely to get divorced if they do marry.

"It's not just their careers that have gone down the tubes, but their marriage prospects, their ability to raise children," said Deaton, who won the Nobel prize in economics in 2015 for his long-standing work on solutions to poverty. "That's the kind of thing that can lead people to despair."

It's not entirely clear why these trends have affected whites much more than they have African-Americans or Hispanics, whose death rates are improving.

Case and Deaton note that many Hispanics are "markedly better off" than parents or grandparents who were born abroad, enabling a greater sense of optimism. African-Americans, they add, may have become more resilient to economic challenges given their long-standing disadvantages in the job market.

The data is clear, though: In 1999, the death rate for high school-educated whites ages 50 through 54 was 30 percent lower than the death rate for all African-Americans in that age group. By 2015, it was 30 percent higher.

The educational split is also growing. Even while the death rate for whites without a college degree is rising, the rate for whites who are college graduates is falling, Case and Deaton found.

Americans with less education are also faring much worse when compared with adults in other countries, Case and Deaton concluded. Death rates in Europe for people with limited education are falling — and in most countries, they're falling faster than death rates for those with more education.

For those reasons, Case and Deaton discount the notion that government disability benefit programs are responsible for some of these problems by enabling more Americans to stop working. Social welfare programs in Europe are typically more generous yet haven't caused a rise in death rates.

Given the long-running nature of these trends, many of which stem from the 1970s, reversing them could take years, Case and Deaton write. But there are immediate steps that could be taken, Deaton said in the interview. Routine prescriptions for opioids should be cut back.

And, "Europe has a much better safety net than we do, and they're not seeing the same sort of problems as we are," he said.

Follow Chris Rugaber on Twitter at <http://Twitter.com/ChrisRugaber> .

Leaders need votes for health bill on eve of House showdown

By ALAN FRAM and RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The top Republican legislative priority in peril, President Donald Trump dangled possible changes to the health care bill Wednesday aimed at placating conservatives threatening to torpedo the legislation. The White House seemed to make progress with the hardliners while House leaders struggled with moderates ahead of a showdown vote.

Trump huddled at the White House with 18 lawmakers, a mix of supporters and opponents, Vice President Mike Pence saw around two dozen and House GOP leaders held countless talks with lawmakers at the Capitol. The sessions came as leaders rummaged for votes on a roll call they can ill-afford to lose without diminishing their clout for the rest of the GOP agenda.

Most GOP opponents were conservatives asserting that the legislation demolishing former President Barack Obama's health care law did not go far enough. They were demanding repeal of the law's requirements that insurers pay for specified services like maternity care, prescription drugs and substances abuse treatment.

Late Wednesday night, House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., met with moderate Republicans from Pennsylvania, Illinois, Maine and New York as well as members of leadership. Any changes on essential health benefits would likely trigger an immediate backlash from patient advocacy groups and doctors.

In early meetings with Trump and Pence and later discussions with the White House, talks focused on language addressing conservatives' concerns that those coverage requirements drive up premiums. Details were unclear, but members of the House Freedom Caucus, the hard-line group spearheading the opposition, were expected at the White House early Thursday.

"Tonight is an encouraging night," said Rep. Mark Meadows, R-N.C., leader of the caucus, who for days has said he has the votes to kill the measure. "But I don't want to be so optimistic as to say the deal is done."

It was initially uncertain if the provision could survive in the Senate or how moderate Republicans would react. Democrats said the language would die in the Senate because that chamber's rules don't allow provisions not directly related to the federal budget.

The Republican legislation would halt Obama's tax penalties against people who don't buy coverage and cut the federal-state Medicaid program for low earners, which the statute expanded. It would provide tax credits to help people pay medical bills, though generally skimpier than the aid Obama's statute provides. It also would allow insurers to charge older Americans more and repeal tax boosts the law imposed on high-income people and health industry companies.

In a count by The Associated Press, at least 26 Republicans said they opposed the bill and others were leaning that way, enough to narrowly defeat the measure. The number was in constant flux amid eleventh-hour lobbying by the White House and GOP leaders.

Including vacancies and expected absentees, the bill would be defeated if 23 Republicans join all Democrats in voting "no."

In a show of support for the opponents, the conservative Koch network promised Wednesday night to spend millions of dollars to defeat the health care overhaul, the influential network's most aggressive move against the bill.

Moderates were daunted by projections of 24 million Americans losing coverage in a decade and higher out-of-pocket costs for many low-income and older people, as predicted by the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office.

For now, leaders showed no sign of delaying a House vote, their initial attempt to deliver on a pledge to erase Obama's law they've repeated since its 2010 enactment.

Underscoring the delicate pathway to victory, participants in the Pence meeting said there were no visible signs of weakened opposition and described one tense moment. Rep. Randy Weber, R-Texas, said White House chief strategist Steve Bannon told them: "We've got to do this. I know you don't like it, but you have to vote for this."

Weber said Rep. Joe Barton, R-Texas, bristled.

"When somebody tells me I have to do something, odds are really good that I will do exactly the op-

posite," Barton said, according to Weber.

Rep. Steve King, R-Iowa, said that talk of deleting the insurance coverage requirements had converted him into a supporter. But before the late talks, others were skeptical.

"We're being asked to sign a blank check," said Rep. Scott Perry, R-Pa., who's been an opponent. "In the past, that hasn't worked out so well."

Some Republicans were showing irritation at their party's holdouts, all but accusing them of damaging the GOP.

"At some point we have to cowboy up and prove we can govern," said Rep. Kevin Cramer, R-N.D. "Otherwise we're just going to be the 'no' party and some people are OK with that, it appears."

The Rules Committee, usually tightly controlled by GOP leadership, was expected to let the chamber vote on revisions that top Republicans concocted to win votes. These include adding federal aid for older people and protecting upstate New York counties — but not Democratic-run New York City — from repaying the state billions of dollars for Medicaid costs.

There were other glimmers of hope for GOP leaders.

Rep. Lou Barletta, R-Pa., said he had switched from "no" to "yes" after Trump endorsed his bill to use Social Security numbers to hinder people from fraudulently collecting tax credits. Barletta, an outspoken foe of illegal immigration, said he had been promised a vote next month on the measure by House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis.

Associated Press reporters Ken Thomas, Vivian Salama, Erica Werner, Matt Daly and Kevin Freking contributed to this report.

Facebook rape stirs questions about witnessing crimes online

By MICHAEL TARM, AP Legal Affairs Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — The case of a 15-year-old Chicago girl who authorities say was raped while around 40 people watched on Facebook raises questions that have come up before in other attacks: What's the obligation of bystanders who see a crime unfolding? And why do they not intervene?

None of those who watched the sexual assault involving five or six men or boys called police. The girl knows at least one of her attackers, and investigators reported making good progress toward identifying the others. A closer look at what laws in the United States say about people who witness crimes:

THE LAW IN GENERAL

There is no all-encompassing legal obligation in the United States that a bystander who sees an act of violence must intervene or call police. But there are exceptions to that idea, dubbed the no-duty rule. Many states have laws requiring intervention when the victim of an ongoing attack is a child. The relationship of the witness to the victim is also a factor in assessing criminal or civil liability: Bosses may have a duty to intervene on behalf of employees, teachers for students and spouses for spouses.

Other countries enshrine the principle that you must intervene into writing. The charter of human rights and freedoms in the Canadian province of Quebec says "every person must come to the aid of anyone whose life is in peril, either personally or calling for aid, by giving him the necessary and immediate physical assistance, unless it involves danger to himself or a third person, or he has another valid reason."

A LONG HISTORY

The legal and ethical questions surrounding when and under what circumstances someone must help date back to ancient times.

The biblical parable of the good Samaritan tells of a man who is beaten and robbed, then left wounded by the roadside. A Levite and a priest walk by, offering no assistance. A Samaritan eventually stops to care for the man. Some state laws that spell out witness obligations and liabilities are called good Samaritan laws. They are also sometimes referred as duty-to-rescue laws and duty-to-report laws.

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Among the best known recent instances of witness inaction happened in 1964, when Kitty Genovese was fatally stabbed outside her New York City apartment. Reports at the time alleged that dozens of witnesses saw the attack or heard the young woman scream but did nothing. While many researchers later concluded those accounts were exaggerated and even incorrect on key details, the slaying did focus a national spotlight on the obligations of witnesses to a crime.

STATES WITH LAWS

Some states require some level of intervention, even if only a 911 call, including California and Wisconsin. In Texas, it is a Class A misdemeanor not to immediately report an offense in which someone could be seriously hurt or killed. Massachusetts law requires, among other things, that people who witness a crime have full knowledge that what they are seeing is a crime.

THE INTERNET

Few if any states have amended their laws to incorporate the phenomena of witnessing crimes online, explained Eugene Volokh, a law professor at UCLA who has studied the issue. In theory, he says, laws that apply to in-person witnesses could be applied to social media witnesses.

But a major complicating factor is whether internet witnesses can accurately assess what they see on their screens.

"It's even harder to determine if a crime is real or not," he said. Most internet users are used to seeing odd or surreal depictions and manipulated videos.

Some state laws that make witnesses liable require that they were actually at the scene of the crime. That could not apply to someone watching from miles away.

THE CHICAGO CASE

Investigators in the Chicago sex assault know the number of Facebook viewers because the count was posted with the video. To find out who they were, though, investigators would have to subpoena Facebook and show proof of a direct link to the crime, police said. Jeffrey Urdangen, a professor at Northwestern University's law school, said it is not illegal to watch such a video or to fail to report it to police.

THE 'GENOVESE SYNDROME'

Genovese's death gave rise to the "Genovese syndrome," which is now more widely known as "bystanders' effect." It's the phenomenon described by psychologists that the more people who are watching an attack or some perilous situation befall a victim, the less likely any one of them will intervene.

Multiple studies in the 1960s and since then made other observations, including that bystanders were even less likely to intervene if they were strangers than if they were friends. Some studies suggested crowds were less likely to act because each individual rationalizes that someone else in the crowd would act or already had.

Associated Press Writer Caryn Rousseau contributed to this report.

Spying claim by Intel chair renews fight over Russia probe

By JULIE PACE and DEB RIECHMANN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Private communications of Donald Trump and his presidential transition team may have been scooped up by American intelligence officials monitoring other targets and improperly distributed throughout spy agencies, the chairman of the House intelligence committee said Wednesday — an extraordinary public airing of often-secret information that brought swift protests from Democrats.

Republican Rep. Devin Nunes' comments led the committee's ranking Democrat, Adam Schiff, to renew his party's calls for an independent probe of Trump campaign links to Russia in addition to the GOP-led panel's investigation. Schiff also said he had seen "more than circumstantial evidence" that Trump as-

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sociates colluded with Russia.

In back-to-back news conferences at the Capitol and then the White House — where he had privately briefed the president — Nunes said he was concerned by officials' handling of the communications in the waning days of the Obama administration.

He said the surveillance was conducted legally and did not appear to be related to the current FBI investigation into Trump associates' contacts with Russia or with any criminal warrants. And the revelations, he said, did nothing to change his assessment that Trump's explosive allegations about wiretaps at Trump Tower were false.

Still, the White House immediately seized on his statements in what appeared to be a coordinated public display.

Moments after Nunes spoke on Capitol Hill, Trump spokesman Sean Spicer read his statements from the White House briefing room podium. The California congressman quickly headed up Pennsylvania Avenue to personally brief the president and to address reporters outside the West Wing. Nunes' decision to brief the president was particularly unusual, given Trump almost certainly has access to the information from his intelligence agencies.

Rep. Jackie Speier, D-Calif., said Nunes' disclosure could be a "weapon of mass distraction" in light of allegations of coordination between Russians and the Trump campaign during the 2016 campaign against Democrat Hillary Clinton.

"This could be a lot of theatrics," said Speier, also a member of the House intelligence committee.

"This is a bizarre situation," Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., said in an interview on MSNBC. "I'm calling for a select committee because I think this back-and-forth shows that Congress no longer has the credibility handle this alone."

Outside the White House, Nunes said, "What I've read bothers me, and I think it should bother the president himself and his team."

Trump said he felt "somewhat" vindicated by the Republican's revelations. "I very much appreciated the fact that they found what they found," he said.

The disclosure came two days after FBI Director James Comey publicly confirmed the bureau's own investigation into the Trump campaign's connections with Russia and rejected Trump's explosive claims that President Barack Obama wiretapped his New York skyscraper during the election. Comey's comments came during the intelligence committee's first public hearing on Russia's election interference, an investigation being overseen by Nunes.

Nunes briefed reporters on the new information without consulting with Schiff, and that did not sit well with the top Democrat on the committee.

Schiff declared he now has "profound doubt" about the integrity and independence of the committee's probe. He said that "a credible investigation cannot be conducted this way."

Later, in an interview with MSNBC, Schiff said evidence "that is not circumstantial and is very much worthy of an investigation" exists of Trump associates colluding with Russia as it interfered in last year's election. He did not outline that evidence.

Nunes said he believed the Trump team's communications were caught "incidentally." But he suggested the contents may have been inappropriately disseminated in intelligence reports. He left open the possibility the communications were spread for political reasons. Nunes would not disclose how he received the new information.

It was unclear whether Trump's own communications were monitored. Nunes initially said "yes" when asked if Trump was among those swept up in the intelligence monitoring, but then said it was only "possible."

It's common for Americans to get caught up in U.S. surveillance of foreigners, such as foreign diplomats in the U.S. talking to an American. Typically, the American's name would not be revealed in a report about the intercepted communications. However, if there is a foreign intelligence value to revealing the American's name, it is "unmasked" and shared with other intelligence analysts who are working on related foreign intelligence surveillance.

Schiff disputed Nunes' suggestions that there was improper "unmasking." He said that after speaking

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with Nunes, it appeared that the names of Americans were still guarded in the intercepts though their identities could be gleaned from the materials.

Obama administration officials disputed the suggestion that the outgoing administration was improperly monitoring its successors. Ned Price, who served as spokesman for Obama's National Security Council, said Nunes' assertions "were nothing more than an attempt to offer a lifeline to a White House caught in its own netting following President Trump's baseless tweets."

Matthew Waxman, a national security law professor at Columbia University, said Nunes' actions "in this case are contributing to, rather than alleviating concerns, about politicization of intelligence."

Nunes said the information on the Trump team was collected in November, December and January, the period after the election when Trump was holding calls with foreign leaders, interviewing potential Cabinet secretaries and beginning to sketch out administration policy. He said the monitored material was "widely disseminated" in intelligence reports.

Asked whether he believed the transition team had been spied on, Nunes said: "It all depends on one's definition of spying."

Nunes did not identify any of the Trump associates he said were "unmasked," but they are believed to include Michael Flynn, who was fired as White House national security adviser after misleading Vice President Mike Pence and other top officials about his contacts with Russia's ambassador to the United States.

AP writers Eileen Sullivan and Eric Tucker contributed to this report.

Follow Julie Pace at <http://twitter.com/jpaceDC> and Deb Riechmann at <http://twitter.com/debriechmann>

10 Things to Know for Thursday

By The Associated Press

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

1. KNIFE-WIELDING MAN LAUNCHES ATTACK IN LONDON

Five are killed, including the assailant, after he plows a car into pedestrians on Westminster Bridge, then stabs a police officer to death inside the gates of Parliament.

2. WHY TRUMP FEELS 'SOMEWHAT VINDICATED' ON WIRETAP CLAIM

Private communications of the president and his transition team may have been scooped up by U.S. intelligence officials monitoring other targets, a leading lawmaker says.

3. HEALTH CARE OVERHAUL IN PERIL

Trump dangles possible changes aimed at placating conservatives threatening to torpedo the bill.

4. WHICH ONE-TIME BUSINESS BEHEMOTH MAY FADE AWAY

Sears, continuing to lose staggering amounts of money, says there is "substantial doubt" that it will be able to keep its doors open.

5. US TAKES STEP IN SYRIA'S CIVIL WAR

U.S. aircraft ferry Syrian Kurdish fighters and allied forces behind Islamic State lines. It's the first time American forces have provided an airlift for local forces on a combat operation in Syria.

6. PYONGYANG WEIGHS IN ON TRUMP ADMINISTRATION

North Korea has a criticism of the president he probably wasn't expecting: he's too much like Barack Obama.

7. WHAT'S SEEN AS FRESH SIGN OF OVERHEATING WORLD

The Arctic just set yet another record for low levels of sea ice.

8. BOYCOTT COULD COST GOOGLE HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS

AT&T, Verizon and other major advertisers are suspending their marketing campaigns on Google's YouTube site because their brands have been appearing alongside videos promoting terrorism and other unsavory subjects.

9. HOW UPCOMING 'CHIPS' MOVIE IS BEING RECEIVED

Hardcore fans of the old TV show are poised to hate it. And the real California Highway Patrol seems not quite sure what to make of it.

10. NEXT UP, OLD-FASHIONED DETECTIVE WORK

Authorities believe they've recovered Tom Brady's stolen Super Bowl jersey. The next step will be to determine that fact for sure.

Police: White sword killer went to NY to attack black people

By COLLEEN LONG and JENNIFER PELTZ, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A white U.S. Army veteran from Baltimore bent on making a racist attack took a bus to New York, the "media capital of the world," randomly picked out a black man who was collecting bottles on the street and killed him with a sword, police said Wednesday.

James Harris Jackson turned himself in at a Times Square police station early Wednesday, about 25 hours after Timothy Caughman staggered into a police precinct bleeding to death.

"I'm the person that you're looking for," Jackson told police, according to Assistant Chief William Aubrey.

Jackson, who was arrested on suspicion of murder, told police he'd harbored feelings of hatred toward black men for at least 10 years, authorities said. He traveled to New York on March 17 and had been staying in a Manhattan hotel.

"The reason he picked New York is because it's the media capital of the world and he wanted to make a statement," Aubrey said.

Jackson was wandering the streets in a long overcoat concealing a 26-inch sword when he encountered Caughman, who was collecting bottles from trash cans, police said. Jackson stabbed him repeatedly in his chest and back, they said.

Caughman, who was 66 years old and lived nearby in a transitional house, was taken to a hospital by police shortly after he arrived to the station house. He died at the hospital. According to his Twitter page, he was an autograph collector and a music and movie lover who tweeted about John Lennon, Chuck Berry and the best St. Patrick's Day writing. He said he'd like to visit California someday.

After the attack, Jackson, who's 28, went to the bathroom of a nearby restaurant and washed off the blood from the killing, authorities said.

Investigators said they believed Jackson was considering other attacks but surrendered after noticing his photo in media reports. He had two knives and told investigators where they could find the sword, police said. The sword was retrieved from a trash can not far from the scene.

Video surveillance captured Jackson in the days leading up to the attack, and investigators said he had walked purposefully toward a black man but didn't attack him.

Jackson was expected to appear in court later Wednesday. It was unclear when he might get a lawyer who could comment on his case. He said nothing to reporters as he was led from a police station. A call to his family's home phone rang unanswered.

A former neighbor who tangled with Jackson over an apartment in Baltimore recalled him as "a piece of work" who fell months behind on rent.

"He's just one of those people that you wish you never met," said Marcus Dagan, who had been informally managing the building on behalf of its then-owner and took Jackson to court over the rent.

Dagan said Jackson moved out in 2015 without paying.

When Jackson moved in in 2014, he indicated he was a military veteran and was in college, studying toward becoming a lawyer, Dagan said. Jackson left behind a collection of war movies in the apartment, the former neighbor said.

Jackson was in the Army from March 2009 to August 2012 and worked as a military intelligence analyst, the Army said. Deployed in Afghanistan from December 2010 to November 2011, he earned several medals and attained the rank of specialist.

The circumstances of his discharge are unclear; the Army cites privacy laws that prevent releasing such details.

Bias attacks have more than doubled this year in New York, and there have been nine bias crimes

against black people reported, up from five in the same time period last year.

Mayor Bill de Blasio said the sword killing was "an assault" on the city's inclusiveness and diversity. The Democrat called it "an unspeakable human tragedy" and urged city residents to "speak clearly and forcefully in the face of intolerance and violence."

Associated Press writer Kasey Jones in Baltimore contributed to this report.

Hard times for Sears as retailer notes doubt about future

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO and HANNAH WEIKEL, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Sears, a back-to-school shopping destination for generations of kids, has said that after years of losing money that there is "substantial doubt" it will be able to keep its doors open. But it also insisted that its actions to turn around its business should help reduce that risk.

It was still a dramatic acknowledgment from the chain that owns Sears and Kmart stores, which has long held fast to its stance that a turnaround is possible, even as many of its shoppers have moved on to Wal-Mart, Target or Amazon.

Sears has survived of late mainly with millions in loans funneled through the hedge fund of Chairman and CEO Edward Lampert, but with sales fading it is burning through cash. Sears Holdings Corp. said late Tuesday it lost more than \$2 billion last year, and its historical operating results indicated doubt about the future of the company that started in the 1880s as a mail-order catalog business.

At a largely empty Sears store in St. Paul, Minnesota, where the available parking far outstripped the number of cars in the lot, 85-year-old Jack Walsh and his 82-year-old wife, Mary Ann, said they have shopped at Sears their entire lives, buying items from curtains and window treatments to tires and tools.

"I bought my tools from Sears and I've still got them," Jack Walsh said.

The company known for DieHard batteries and Kenmore appliances has been selling assets, most recently its Craftsman tool brand. But it says pension agreements may prevent the sale of more businesses, potentially leading to a shortfall in funding.

"It's a sad story. This is the place that created the first direct to consumer retail, the first modern department store. It stood like the Colossus over the American retail landscape," said Craig Johnson, president of Customer Growth Partners, a retail consulting firm. "But it's been underinvested and bled dry."

Company shares, which hit an all-time low last month, tumbled more than 13 percent Wednesday. Sears tried to soothe investors' fears, saying in a post on its site that it remains focused on "executing our transformation plan" and that news reports miss the full disclosure that it's highlighting actions to reduce risks. It also said that the comments made in the filing were in line with "regulatory standards."

Lampert combined Sears and Kmart in 2005, about two years after he helped bring Kmart out of bankruptcy. He pledged to return Sears to greatness, leveraging its best-known brands and its vast holdings of land, and more recently planned to entice customers with its loyalty program. The company, which employs 140,000 people, announced in January said it would close 108 additional Kmart and 42 more Sears locations, and unveiled yet another restructuring plan in February aimed at cutting costs and reconfiguring debts to give itself more breathing room.

But it has to get more people through the doors or shopping online for what it's selling. Sears, like many department stores, has been thwarted by a new consumer that has ripped up the decades-old playbook that the industry has relied upon. A plethora of new online players have also revolutionized the market.

Sears has upped its presence online, but is having a hard time disguising its age. Its stores are in need of a major refresh as rivals like Wal-Mart and Target invest heavily to revitalize stores. Sales at established Sears and Kmart locations dropped 10.3 percent in the final quarter of 2016.

Industry analysts have placed the staggering sums of money that Sears is losing beside the limited number of assets it has left to sell, and believe the storied retailer may have reached the point of no return.

The company has lost \$10.4 billion since 2011, the last year that it made a profit. Excluding charges

that can be listed as one-time events, the loss is \$4.57 billion, says Ken Perkins, who heads the research firm Retail Metrics LLC, but how the losses are stacked no longer seem to matter.

"They're past the tipping point," Perkins said. "This is a symbolic acknowledgement of the end of Sears of what we know it to be."

For Sears to survive, Perkins believes it would need to do so as a company running maybe 200 stores. It now operates 1,430, a figure that has been vastly reduced in recent years. As for Kmart, Perkins does not see much of a future.

For decades, Sears was king of the American shopping landscape. Sears, Roebuck and Co.'s storied catalog featured items from bicycles to sewing machines to houses, and could generate excitement throughout a household when it arrived. The company began opening retail locations in 1925 and expanded swiftly in suburban malls from the 1950s to 1970s.

"When I first got married at 19 or 20, we bought our first set of kettles from Sears," said Darla Klemmensen, who was shopping at the St. Paul store on Wednesday. "We still have some of those."

Klemmensen says Sears has been part of her life since she was a child watching her grandmother order stockings and garters, and she remembers flipping through Sears catalogs as thick as her forearm, full of appliances, clothing and kitchen wares.

But the onset of discounters like Wal-Mart created challenges for Sears that have only grown. Sears faced even more competition from online sellers and appliance retailers like Lowe's and Home Depot. Its stores became its albatross, many of them looking shabby and outdated. The company, based northwest of Chicago in Hoffman Estates, Illinois, lost \$607 million in the most recent quarter and revenue fell.

"They've been delusional about their ability to turn around the business," said Perkins.

Johnson, though, believes one avenue for Sears could be returning to its roots as a direct-to-consumer company, only using the internet versus the old catalog. He believes the Sears name still stands for something for the 40-plus customer.

"It has a lot of good memories," he said. "It stands for being dependable and reliable."

Weikel reported from St. Paul, Minnesota. AP Business Writer Michelle Chapman contributed to this report from Newark, New Jersey.

Ex-pharmacy exec convicted in deadly meningitis outbreak

By DENISE LAVOIE, AP Legal Affairs Writer

BOSTON (AP) — The former head of a Massachusetts pharmacy was acquitted Wednesday of murder allegations but convicted of racketeering and other crimes in a meningitis outbreak that was traced to fungus-contaminated drugs and killed 64 people across the country.

Prosecutors said Barry Cadden, 50, ran the business in an "extraordinarily dangerous" way by disregarding unsanitary conditions to boost production and make more money.

Cadden, president and co-founder of the now-closed New England Compounding Center, was charged with 25 counts of second-degree murder, conspiracy and other offenses under federal racketeering law.

After five days of deliberations, the jury refused to hold Cadden responsible for the deaths and cleared him on the murder counts. He was found guilty of racketeering, conspiracy and fraud and could get a long prison term at sentencing June 21.

The 2012 outbreak of fungal meningitis and other infections in 20 states was traced by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to contaminated injections of medical steroids, given mostly to people with back pain. In addition to those who died, 700 people fell ill. Indiana, Michigan and Tennessee were hit hardest.

Joan Peay, 76, of Nashville, Tennessee, suffered two bouts of meningitis after receiving a shot for back pain. She wept upon learning the verdict.

"He killed people and he's getting away with murder. I am furious," she said. She said that she got so sick from meningitis "I didn't care if I died," and that she still suffers from hearing loss, memory problems, a stiff neck and low energy.

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Alfred Rye, 77, of Maybee, Michigan, said: "I wish I could give him the same shot he gave me. I think they should pay for their crime."

Rye fell ill after getting an injection in his lower back 4½ years ago. He said he continues to suffer from a loss of balance and other ill effects.

"Life has been totally hell," he said.

The racketeering charge and the 52 counts of fraud carry up to 20 years in prison each, but federal sentencing guidelines typically call for far less than the maximum.

Companies charged with selling contaminated drugs often reach settlements with the federal government and agree to pay large fines. The case against the New England Compounding Center stands apart because of the large number of deaths and serious illnesses and because of evidence that Cadden was aware of the unsanitary conditions, said Eric Christofferson, a former federal prosecutor in Boston.

The scandal threw a spotlight on compounding pharmacies, which differ from ordinary drugstores in that they custom-mix medications and supply them directly to hospitals and doctors. In 2013, in reaction to the outbreak, Congress increased federal oversight of such pharmacies.

Federal prosecutor Amanda Strachan told the jury during the two-month trial that the deaths and illnesses happened because Cadden "decided to put profits before patients."

NECC used expired ingredients and falsified logs to make it look as if the so-called clean rooms had been disinfected, prosecutors said. After the outbreak, regulators found multiple potential sources of contamination, including standing water and mold and bacteria in the air and on workers' gloved fingertips.

Cadden's lawyer, Bruce Singal, told the jury Cadden was not responsible for the deaths and pointed the finger at Glenn Chin, a supervisory pharmacist who ran the clean rooms where drugs were made. Chin has pleaded not guilty and is awaiting trial.

After the verdict, Singal said it was a "disgrace" that prosecutors brought murder allegations against Cadden.

"We're very pleased that the jury acquitted Barry on all 25 of the murder charges and that he can now go home and tell his children that he's not a murderer," Singal said. "At the same time, it is Barry's fervent wish ... that people still remember the victims of this terrible public health outbreak."

NECC filed for bankruptcy after getting hit with hundreds of lawsuits. NECC and several related companies reached a \$200 million settlement with victims and their families.

The son of Kentucky Judge Eddie C. Lovelace, who died after receiving injections to treat neck and back pain, said the outcome had shaken his family's faith in the medical and legal systems.

"Dad always ensured that the defendants were treated justly and fairly. He did that in life, and in death, I feel like he wasn't afforded either justice or fairness," Chris Lovelace said.

"As of today, criminally no one has been held responsible or held accountable for my father's death," he added. "The only mistake, if you want to call it a mistake, that my father made was he sought out relief from back pain from the medical profession and the consequence of that decision for him was death."

Associated Press writers Chris Ehrmann in Lansing, Michigan; Sheila Burke in Nashville, Tennessee; and Bruce Schreiner in Frankfort, Kentucky, contributed to this report.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Thursday, March 23, the 82nd day of 2017. There are 283 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On March 23, 1792, Joseph Haydn's Symphony No. 94 in G Major (known as the "Surprise" symphony because of an unexpected crashing chord in the second movement) had its first public performance in London.

On this date:

In 1775, Patrick Henry delivered an address to the Virginia Provincial Convention in which he is said to have declared, "Give me liberty, or give me death!"

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In 1806, explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, having reached the Pacific coast, began their journey back east.

In 1914, the first installment of "The Perils of Pauline," the legendary silent film serial starring Pearl White, premiered in the greater New York City area.

In 1933, the German Reichstag adopted the Enabling Act, which effectively granted Adolf Hitler dictatorial powers.

In 1942, the first Japanese-Americans evacuated by the U.S. Army during World War II arrived at the internment camp in Manzanar, California.

In 1956, Pakistan became an Islamic republic.

In 1965, America's first two-person space mission took place as Gemini 3 blasted off with astronauts Virgil I. Grissom and John W. Young aboard for a nearly 5-hour flight.

In 1973, before sentencing a group of Watergate break-in defendants, Chief U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica read aloud a letter he'd received from James W. McCord Jr. which said there was "political pressure" to "plead guilty and remain silent."

In 1983, President Ronald Reagan first proposed developing technology to intercept incoming enemy missiles — an idea that came to be known as the Strategic Defense Initiative. Dr. Barney Clark, recipient of a Jarvik permanent artificial heart, died at the University of Utah Medical Center after 112 days with the device.

In 1994, Aeroflot Flight 593, an Airbus A310, crashed in Siberia with the loss of all 75 people on board; it turned out that a pilot's teenage son who was allowed to sit at the controls had accidentally disengaged the autopilot, causing the jetliner to go out of control.

In 2001, Russia's orbiting Mir space station ended its 15-year odyssey with a planned fiery plunge into the South Pacific.

In 2011, Academy Award-winning actress Elizabeth Taylor died in Los Angeles at age 79.

Ten years ago: The House voted for the first time to clamp a cutoff deadline on the Iraq war, agreeing by a thin margin to pull combat troops out by late 2008, an action dismissed by President George W. Bush as "political theater." Iranian forces captured 15 British sailors and marines who were searching a merchant ship in the disputed Shatt Al-Arab waterway Persian Gulf; they were held for 13 days. Miss Tennessee Rachel Smith was crowned Miss USA at the pageant in Los Angeles.

Five years ago: Urging Americans to "do some soul searching," President Barack Obama injected himself into the emotional debate over the fatal shooting of Trayvon Martin in Florida, saying, "If I had a son, he'd look like Trayvon." The U.S. Army formally charged Staff Sgt. Robert Bales with 17 counts of premeditated murder in the deaths of 17 villagers, more than half of them children, during a shooting rampage in southern Afghanistan. Pope Benedict XVI landed in Mexico to throngs of faithful who lined more than 20 miles of his route into the city of Leon.

One year ago: President Barack Obama, on a fence-mending state visit to Buenos Aires, held up Argentina as an emerging world leader worthy of U.S. support, as he and President Mauricio Macri broke with years of tensions between their countries. Death claimed former baseball player-turned-broadcaster Joe Garagiola at age 90 and actor Ken Howard at age 71.

Today's Birthdays: Comedian Marty Allen is 95. Sir Roger Bannister (the runner who broke the 4-minute mile in 1954) is 88. Movie director Mark Rydell is 88. International Motorsports Hall of Famer Craig Breedlove is 80. Singer-producer Ric Ocasek is 68. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson is 65. Singer Chaka Khan is 64. Actress Amanda Plummer is 60. Actress Catherine Keener is 58. Actress Hope Davis is 53. Actor Richard Grieco is 52. Country musician Kevin Griffin (Yankee Grey) is 52. Actress Marin Hinkle is 51. Rock singer-musician Damon Albarn (Blur) is 49. Actress-singer Melissa Errico is 47. Rock musician John Humphrey (The Nixons) is 47. Bandleader Reggie Watts (TV: "The Late Late Show With James Corden") is 45. Actor Randall Park is 43. Actress Michelle Monaghan is 41. Actress Keri Russell is 41. Actress Anastasia Griffith is 39. Gossip columnist-blogger Perez Hilton is 39. Actress Nicholle Tom is 39. Country singer Paul Martin (Marshall Dyllon) is 39. Actor Nicolas Wright is 35.

Thought for Today: "In anger, you look ten years older." — Hedda Hopper, American gossip columnist (1890-1966).