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For Sale by Owner: Very nice two-story home 107 South First Street, Andover, SD – 10 minutes from Groton and 20 minutes to Webster. Includes two lots, garage, small shed, three bedrooms, kitchen, living room, dining room, 1 ½ baths, new roof. Call 605-351-7991

Correction

In yesterday's article about the school bond election results, the quote was attributed to Superintendent Joe Schwan. It was actually said by Election Superintendent Michael J. Weber. We apologize for the error.

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

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

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Thursday, April 13

7th/8th grade track at Sisseton, 4 p.m.

School Lunch: Chicken noodle soup, grilled cheese, broccoli and dip, fruit.

School Breakfast: Cereal, yogurt, fruit, juice, milk.

Senior Menu: Easter Dinner: Ham, raisin sauce, baked sweet potato, green bean casserole, Easter dessert, dinner roll.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with 1st communion for Fifth Graders at 7 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Maundy Thursday Service at 7 p.m.

United Methodist: Conde Maundy Thursday service at 5:30 p.m., Finance Meeting at 6 p.m., Groton Maundy Thursday service at 7:30 p.m.

Friday, April 14

Community Good Friday service at Groton Christian & Missionary Alliance Church at noon

GOOD FRIDAY - NO SCHOOL

No Senior Meal

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship at 7 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Service at 7 p.m.

United Methodist: Conde Good Friday Service at 5:30 p.m., Groton Good Friday Service at 7:30 p.m.

Saturday, April 15

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship at Rosewood Court at 10 a.m.

Monday, April 17

EASTER MONDAY - NO SCHOOL

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study at 6:30

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Groton CCD presents 17th Living Stations

This was the 17th year for the Living Stations event held at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church in Groton. According to Father Mike Kelly, Tom Woods started the event 17 years ago. Then when Tom retired from teaching CCD (Confraternity of Christian Doctrine), Woods had suggested that the seniors could be in charge of the event each year, and it has worked out well. This year, Shane Simon was the director with the juniors assisting. This year's event was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM.

Front Row: Fr. Mike Kelly, Luke Thorson, Jessica Bjerke, Shane Simon, Emily Locke, Hannah Lewandowski, and Carol Smith. Second Row: Erika Herr, Anne Marie Smith, Alexis Simon, Emily Thompson, Wyatt Locke, Erin Smith, Kaden LaBrie, and Steve Smith. Back Row: Jackson Oliver, Joe Groeblichhoff, Shyla Larson, Nicole Marzahn, Ashley Flihs, Garrett Schroeder, Sean Schuring, Korbin Blackmun, and Landon Marzahn. (Photo by Renee Marzahn)

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Groton Kiwanis Club

Fourteen members attended the Wednesday weekly Kiwanis Club meeting.

Tom Paepke, president; led the short business session. Plans are being made for the annual Kiwanis sponsored GHS track meet, set for April 25, and the annual GHS athletic banquet, set for May 1.

Sharon Simon was the program leader, and introduced Shannon and Grace Weidrick, who gave a travelogue on their last February trip to Jamaica. A couple facts given about Jamaica was that they are all about singing, dancing, and having fun; and they only have one airport, along with quite a bit of severe poverty.

Steve Simon is next week's program chairman, followed by Mike Ehresmann.

\$1.33 Billion Spent on Outdoor Recreation in South Dakota

PIERRE, S.D. – Outdoor and wildlife-associated recreation contributes \$1.3 billion annually to the South Dakota economy according to a recent report from the Department of Game, Fish and Parks (GFP).

"Large numbers of hunters, anglers, and outdoor enthusiasts spend many days enjoying the great outdoors of South Dakota," stated Kelly Hepler, GFP department secretary. "Hunting, fishing, camping and outdoor recreation have long been a fundamental part of the South Dakota experience. Those who participate in these activities create a significant economic engine, supporting thousands of jobs and generating hundreds of millions of dollars in labor income and growth within our state's economy."

Both residents and non-residents who visited state parks in 2016, fished, hunted, trapped, boated or viewed wildlife in South Dakota recreated for a combined total of 18.6 million days. Participating in these activities typically involves spending money on travel, supplies and equipment. Collectively anglers, hunters, trappers, wildlife viewers, boaters, state park visitors and snowmobilers spend \$1.3 billion in South Dakota annually in support of these activities.

The top three activities accounting for nearly 90 percent of the \$1.3 billion are hunting (\$683 million), fishing (\$271 million) and state park visitation (\$212 million), supporting an estimated 18,000 full- and part-time jobs which provide \$520 million of income.

The Department estimates the total economic contributions to be nearly \$1.9 billion.

Historically, the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) has relied on estimates from national surveys to determine the economic effects of outdoor and wildlife-associated recreation. In 2016, GFP commissioned a study to specifically estimate the economic activity generated by hunting, fishing, state park visitation and other outdoor recreation activities in South Dakota.

To view the 2016 economic impact study reports in more detail, visit <http://gfp.sd.gov/agency/information/economic-impact.aspx>. An infographic outlining the highlights of the report is also included here.

Financing Beginning Farmers

PIERRE, SD-- Bond purchasers can potentially save thousands of dollars in federal taxes by investing in a beginning farmer.

Through the Beginning Farmer Bond program, the South Dakota Value Added Finance Authority (VAFA) issues tax-exempt bonds for qualifying beginning farmers to purchase agricultural land at lower interest rates. The limit on a beginning farmer bond is \$524,200.

"The beginning farmer bond program has different eligibility criteria than other governmental programs, so I would encourage producers to contact us if they are purchasing agricultural real estate," says Terri LaBrie, finance administrator for the South Dakota Department of Agriculture (SDDA). "To be eligible for the program, an applicant must be at least 18 years old, a resident of South Dakota, have a net worth under \$400,000 and own less acres than 30 percent of the county median." (***)Download LaBrie1 audio here(***)

Typically the Beginning Farmer Bond program works through a local lender. However, if a retiring farmer is interested in passing on his or her land to a beginner farmer, the interest from that contract sale is federally tax exempt- providing substantial savings to the seller. There are regulations prohibiting this type of transaction with closely related parties such as parents or grandparents so a third party lender is required in those cases.

"Not only is this a great way to get our kids back on the farms and staying in South Dakota, it also helps retiring farmers pass on their land to a qualifying beginning farmer with a contract for deed while saving money on their federal income taxes," says LaBrie. (***)Download LaBrie2 audio here(***)

SDDA administers the Beginning Farmer Bond program through the VAFA board. The board meets monthly and reviews the applications for the program and issues the bonds for approved projects. Board members include: Bob Hull, Sisseton; Mark Gross, Sioux Falls; Jim Schmidt, Lennox; Chuck Jepson, Ft. Pierre; Jim Doolittle, Belle Fourche; Marcia Hendrickson, Chancellor; and Nathan Jensen, Beresford.

For information on the financial programs offered through SDDA, please contact one of the board members or Terri LaBrie, finance administrator, at 605.280.4745 or terri.labrie@state.sd.us.

Time to Revisit Drought Plans for the Ranch

BROOKINGS, S.D. - In light of the dry range conditions forecast for much of central and western South Dakota, cattle producers are encouraged to review their drought management plans.

"Recently released grass production estimates show dry conditions spreading across areas of central and western South Dakota," said Sean Kelly, SDSU Extension Range Management Field Specialist.

The maps Kelly references are updated each month by the South Dakota Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) (Figures 1 and 2).

"The next three months are a critical period for precipitation and grassland production," Kelly explained. "Areas in central South Dakota that were not in drought conditions last year, are experiencing dry conditions right now. Producers depending on grass and forage in those regions, need to pay close attention to precipitation and grass conditions and make sure a drought plan with management actions is in place to reduce stocking rates if dry conditions persist."

Kelly encouraged those cattle and forage producers entering their second season of drought conditions to continue with management actions taken last season and make necessary adjustments to this year's drought plan if dry conditions persist.

To help with developing a drought management plan for the 2017 grazing season, Kelly outlines tools cattle producers and range managers can reference.

South Dakota Drought Tool

This is an excellent place to start if your ranch does not have a drought plan in place (Figure 3).

The drought tool is an easy-to-use tool that Kelly said gives a ranch manager an estimate of precipitation records and projected forage production for the area of South Dakota their ranch lies on.

"If a ranch has its own precipitation records, a manager can input them into the drought tool for a more accurate assessment for their

South Dakota Grasslands Drought Condition
Current Status - March 15, 2017

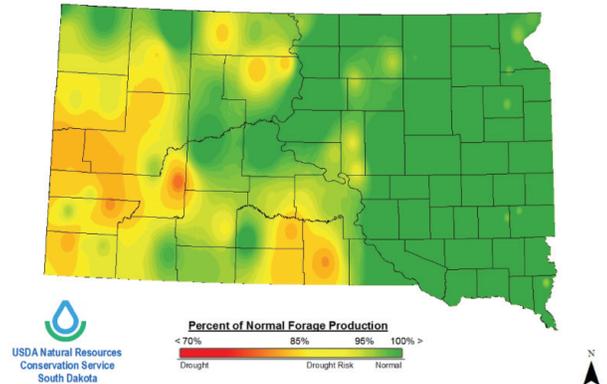


Figure 1

South Dakota Grasslands Drought Condition
Projected Peak Production* (July 1) - March 15, 2017

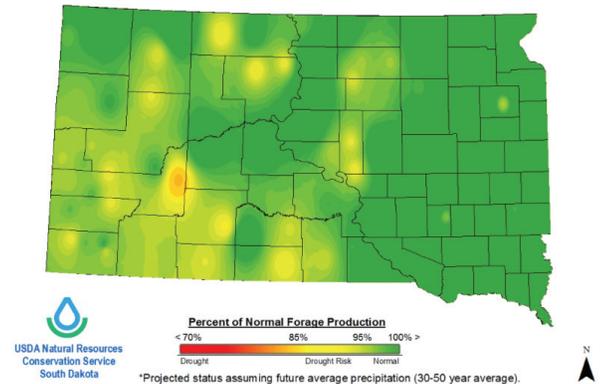


Figure 2

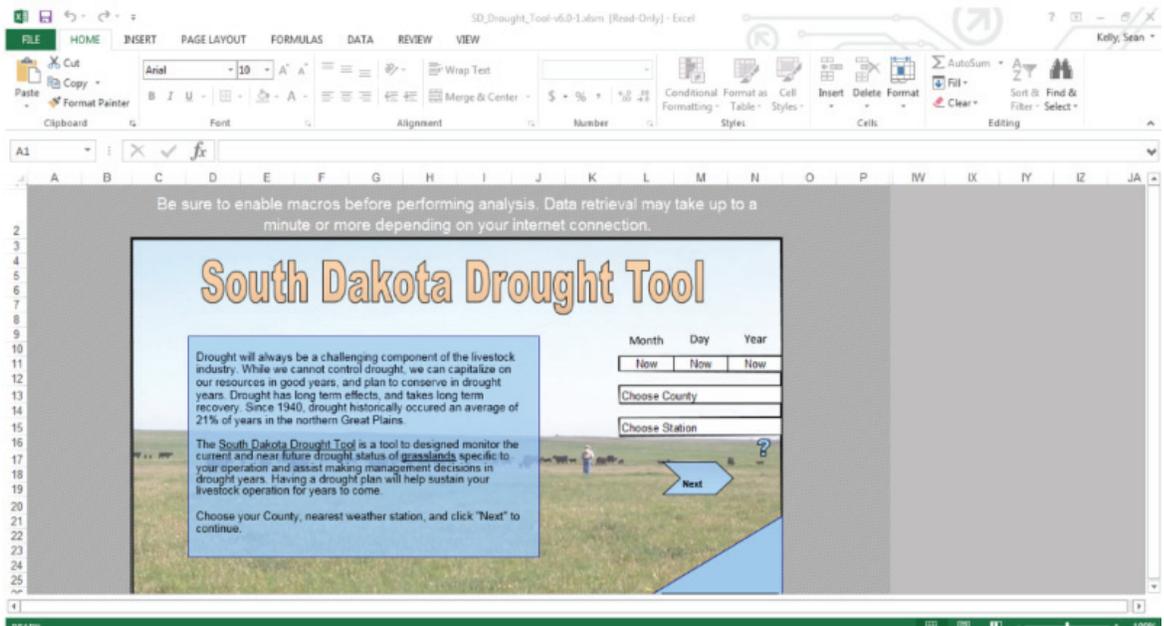


Figure 3

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ranch," Kelly said.

Trigger Dates

Trigger dates are also vitally important for an effective drought plan (Figure 4).

The first trigger date is based on growing conditions from the previous year.

"For example, much of western South Dakota was experiencing drought conditions last year (Figure 5), therefore average precipitation will not be enough to recharge soil moisture this year," Kelly explained. "Above normal rainfall will be needed to bring that soil moisture back to normal. So many ranchers affected by

Example critical date and action flow plan		
Precipitation Period	Stocking Rate Impact	Management Action
Previous growing season	Average → None	1) Sell steer calves (no yearlings) 2) Cull 10% of cows
	Severe drought → Reduce 15%	
April 15 Dormant season (October – March)	Average → None	1) Feed hay 2) Delay turn out 3 weeks
	Drought (<70%) → Reduce 10%	
May 15	Average → None	1) Add 1 week on turn out delay 2) Plant 30 acres to annual forage
	Dry (80-90%) → Reduce 10%	
June 15	Average → None	1) Cull 10% of cows 2) Wean calves at 100 days of age
	Dry (80-90%) → Reduce 15%	

Adapted from Jerry Volesky, 2013

Figure 4

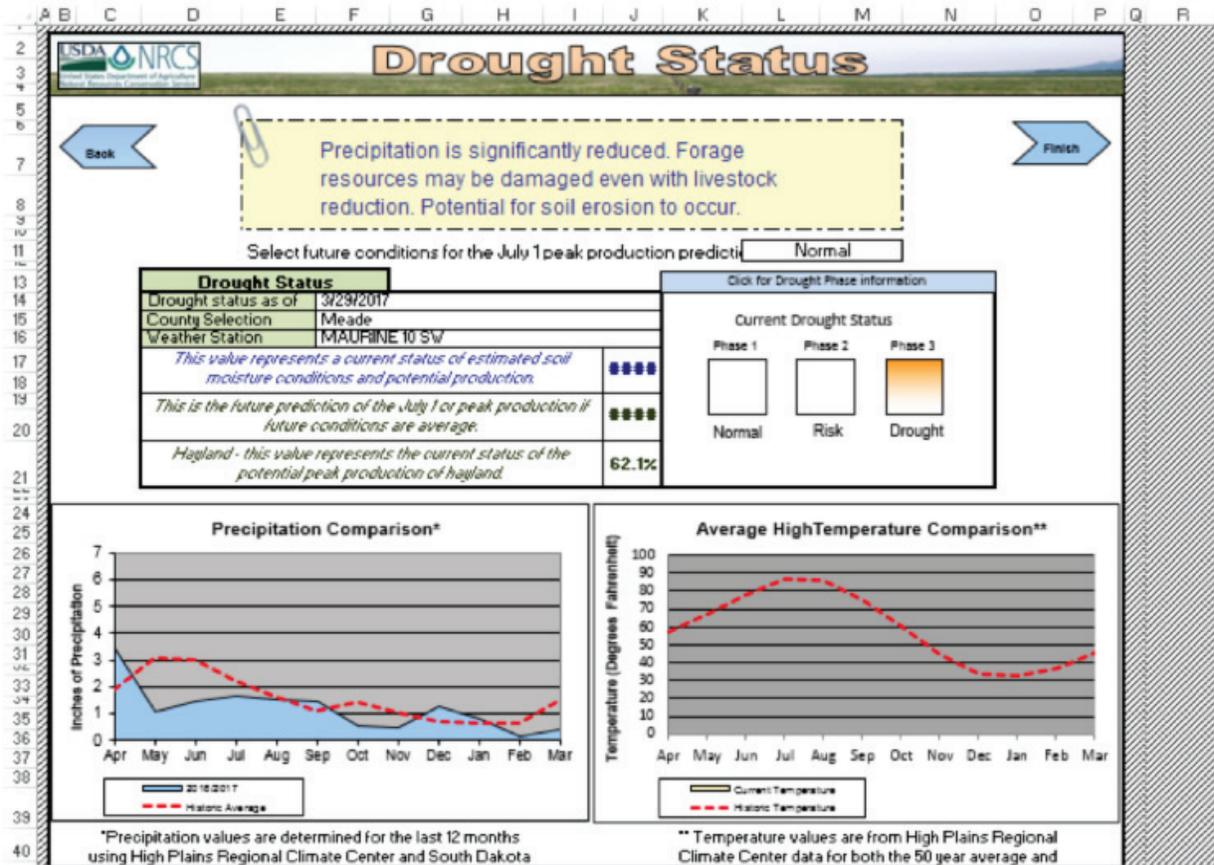


Figure 5

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drought last year are already implementing management actions for this year such as adjusting stocking rates and culling cows.”

Kelly added that cattle producers in central South Dakota who had normal precipitation last year need to keep a very close eye on precipitation and grass conditions for the rest of this spring. “Producers in these areas need to have a drought management action plan in place if dry conditions persist and a reduction in livestock numbers is needed,” Kelly said.

April 15 is second trigger date

“The second important trigger date is around April 15,” Kelly said. “Up to this date we can assess how much dormant season moisture we received from October thru March and we can assess the precipitation forecast estimates for the rest of the spring.”

To further explain this point, Kelly quotes Roger Gates, former SDSU Extension Rangeland Management Specialist. “In the Northern Plains, where rangelands are dominated by cool-season grasses, spring precipitation - April, May and June - the best single predictor of vegetation production for the entire growing season,” Gates said. “By mid-April climate prediction models for spring rainfall are correct more often than not. If rainfall forecast predictions are below normal for the next three months reductions in livestock numbers should be made.”

“This reinforces the fact that cattle operations in areas with normal precipitation last year, do need to start thinking about how they can reduce their livestock numbers and have a plan in place, if the precipitation outlook for the rest of this spring is below normal,” Kelly said.

May 15 is third trigger date: Roughly May 15 is another trigger date Kelly encouraged cattle and forage producers to be aware of. “If conditions are still dry by May 15, it becomes increasingly difficult to get enough precipitation to maintain average soil moisture for the remainder of the growing season. Further reduction in livestock numbers may need to happen,” he said.

Precipitation Reassessment: Research shows that by July 1, 75 percent to 90 percent of vegetation growth is complete - making reassessment of precipitation and moisture conditions should be done again around June 15.

“If dry conditions persist, more management actions will need to be implemented,” Kelly said.



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GDI Living Fitness
25 Main St., Downtown Groton

Today in Weather History

April 13, 1986: A major spring storm quickly intensified bringing blizzard conditions to much of the Northern Plains Region. Up to 18 inches of snow was reported in North Dakota, and in South Dakota, winds gusting to 90 mph whipped the snow into drifts fifteen feet high. Livestock losses were in the millions of dollars, and for some areas, it was the worst blizzard ever.

April 13, 1995: Flooding, resulting from snowmelt from the two major snowstorms in April and saturated soils, caused extensive road damage and inundation. The flooding caused several road closings and numerous flooded basements in many counties. Also, many lakes were overfull in Day and Campbell Counties. Flooded farmland caused severe delays in small grain planting. Spink, Sully, McPherson, and Brown Counties were declared disasters.

April 13, 2010: Unyielding south winds developed over central and northeast South Dakota in the early afternoon and continued into the early evening hours. South winds of 30 to 50 mph with gusts to near 70 mph caused some structural and shingled damage across the area. A pickup on Interstate-90 lost a camper to the high winds. The high winds, combined with lowered humidity and dry fuels, helped fan several grassland fires across the region. The largest fire started from a downed power line in Campbell County near the town of Glenham. The fire grew to be five miles long by two miles wide and traveled eight miles before it was under control. Almost 6000 acres were burned with nearly 20 fire departments dispatched.

1999: A two-mile wide area of wind-driven hail pounded residences and farm equipment for about a 5 mile stretch at least as far as State Highway 158 in west Texas near Midland/Odessa. Hail grew up to about golf ball size and winds peaked at approximately 80 mph. The wind-driven hail broke windows in houses and blasted paint off the wooden siding. The strong winds took roofs off several mobile homes and at least one single-family house. Utility crews stated that a total of 27 poles were downed by the winds. The American Red Cross determined that 324 units were affected with 18 mobile homes and four houses destroyed. About 50-60 families were at least temporarily displaced.

2006: An F2 tornado hit Iowa City, Iowa and trekked across other Southeast parts of the University of Iowa campus doing 15+ million dollars damage hurting 30 people and damaging or destroying 1051 buildings. The roof/steeple/ bricks fell from the St. Patrick's Church shortly after 75 parishioners were taken to the rectory basement next door.



The photograph is courtesy of the Des Moines Register.

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Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday
						
Patchy Dense Fog then Mostly Sunny	Increasing Clouds	Breezy, Mostly Cloudy then Slight Chance T-storms	Slight Chance T-storms	Slight Chance Showers	Mostly Clear	Sunny
High: 64 °F	Low: 49 °F	High: 70 °F	Low: 46 °F	High: 66 °F	Low: 36 °F	High: 58 °F

Today: Fog early, Mostly Sunny and Mild ~ Highs in 60s

Tonight: Mostly Dry ~ Lows mid 40s to lower 50s

Friday: Partly Sunny, Isold-Sct showers & thunderstorms ~ Highs 65 to 75

National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD



weather.gov/Aberdeen



National Weather Service Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen

Updated: 4/13/2017 5:11 AM Central

Published on: 04/13/2017 at 5:15AM

After some morning fog, it will turn mostly sunny across the forecast area, with highs in the 60s. Friday should bring isolated to scattered showers and a few thunderstorms to the area; however, rainfall amounts are expected to be light. Highs on Friday will range from 65 to 75 degrees.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 63.4 F at 5:24 PM

Low Outside Temp: 40.4 F at 12:00 AM

High Gust: 20.0 Mph at 5:51 PM

Snow: Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 92° in 2003

Record Low: 9° in 2013

Average High: 56°F

Average Low: 31°F

Average Precip in April.: 0.63

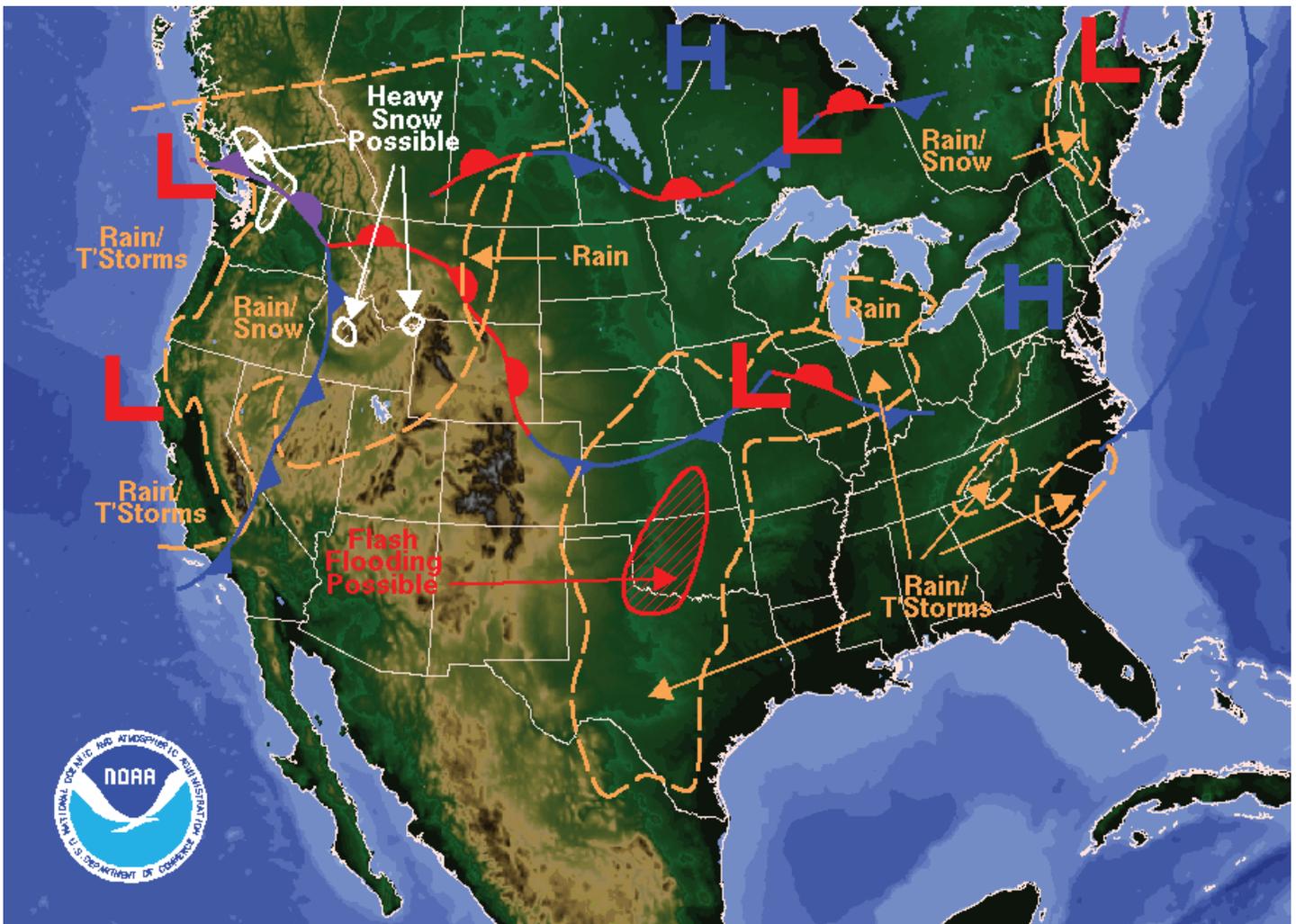
Precip to date in April.: 0.13

Average Precip to date: 2.81

Precip Year to Date: 0.72

Sunset Tonight: 8:17 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:49 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Thu, Apr 13, 2017, issued 4:31 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McReynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

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IS IT HOW LONG OR HOW WELL?

Most people who know a little about the Bible at least know that Methuselah lived to be 969 years old. Some might even know that he was the son of Enoch and the grandfather of Noah. Even though we know that he walked and talked, we have no idea where he walked or who he might have walked with or even what he talked about. All we know is that he walked and talked.

Imagine holding the world record for having more birthdays than anyone else who ever lived but being remembered for nothing else but walking and talking.

According to the Bible, Methuselah lived when the earth was full of wickedness. Everywhere he walked, he was surrounded by sin and sinners. But he never mentioned a word about God or God's grace. In fact, he had nothing to do with God.

Imagine the influence he could have had on the multitudes of individuals whom he must have seen or talked with. Consider what he might have done for God if he had followed in the footsteps of his father. Enoch, Scripture tells us, "enjoyed a close relationship with God throughout all of his life – then he suddenly disappeared because God took him!"

Methuselah lived almost three times as long as his father, Enoch. Yet, when he died, he left no legacy of having made a difference for God or for good. In the final analysis, it is not how long we live but whether or not we enjoy a close relationship with God and honor Him.

Prayer: Help each of us, Father, to recognize the importance of living and walking for and with You. May our lives reflect Your love and salvation each day we live. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Genesis 5:21 Enoch lived sixty-five years, and begot Methuselah.

News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Dakota Cash
03-10-20-25-26
(three, ten, twenty, twenty-five, twenty-six)
Estimated jackpot: \$73,000

Hot Lotto
05-18-20-35-42, Hot Ball: 2
(five, eighteen, twenty, thirty-five, forty-two; Hot Ball: two)
Estimated jackpot: \$5.5 million

Mega Millions
Estimated jackpot: \$30 million

Powerball
08-14-61-63-68, Powerball: 24, Power Play: 2
(eight, fourteen, sixty-one, sixty-three, sixty-eight; Powerball: twenty-four; Power Play: two)
Estimated jackpot: \$60 million

FBI investigating reservation shooting involving police

KYLE, S.D. (AP) — The FBI says it's investigating a shooting on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in which a man died during an exchange of gunfire with authorities on Saturday.

The agency said in a statement Wednesday that preliminary reports indicate Jeffrey Lynn Curry Jr., of Allen, South Dakota, died during the exchange. An FBI spokesman says he doesn't have any further information beyond what's in the statement, which says the investigation is ongoing.

Oglala Sioux President Troy "Scott" Weston said in a separate statement Wednesday that a man who fired multiple shots at authorities during a chase had been killed.

Tribal Police Chief Harry Martinez tells the Rapid City Journal at least 11 tribal officers were involved and have been placed on administrative leave. The department referred further questions to the FBI.

Democrats' executive director leaves for statewide campaign

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The state Democratic Party's executive director has left to work on a statewide campaign.

Top races for 2018 include contests for governor and U.S. House, both of which are currently controlled by Republicans. Suzanne Jones Pranger wrote in her resignation letter that she was departing to pursue "professional opportunities working with a statewide campaign."

Jones Pranger says that South Dakota Democrats have many great potential candidates like state Senate Minority Leader Billie Sutton. The party hired Jones Pranger in 2015.

Sutton tells the Argus Leader that he hasn't made a final decision about running for governor or Congress — or neither.

Republicans hold every statewide office and supermajorities in both legislative chambers.

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Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorials

By The Associated Press

Rapid City Journal, Rapid City, April 9

Tuition hikes not helping enrollment

With its announcement that it would again raise tuition at South Dakota's six public universities, the Board of Regents continues a trend that either ignores or discounts a new reality in higher education.

As costs steadily rise, fewer South Dakotans are going to college in their home state, begging the question of whether they are being priced out of higher learning.

At its March meeting in Spearfish, the regents approved a 2.9 percent tuition and fee increase for the upcoming school year, which follows a 5.8 percent hike in 2015.

As a result of the latest hike, the average cost of tuition and fees has increased from \$7,925 in 2014 to \$8,555 in 2017, which continues a 10-year trend of increases that makes college here more expensive than in North Dakota, Montana, Wyoming and Nebraska. These costs do not include room, board, books, supplies or gasoline money and other ancillary costs.

At the same time, overall enrollment has been flat since 2010 and there's been a significant decline in resident enrollment.

According to an analysis done by the regents in 2015, the state's six public universities lost 4,500 resident, or South Dakotan students, since 2010. Enrollment was also down at the university centers in Rapid City and Sioux Falls, which were created specifically to boost in-state enrollment by increasing access to the system.

As a result, enrollment has been trading water since 2010 while regents continue a spending wave by approving new building projects that are largely paid for by the students themselves. The higher education facilities fund, which is used to pay off bond debt, is the recipient of 20 cents of every dollar spent on tuition and fees.

But new buildings simply are not boosting enrollment.

In 2010, a total of 36,440 students were enrolled in the university system. In 2016, it was 36,531, an increase of 92 over 2015. It is an influx of nonresidents and high school students taking dual-credit courses that have enabled the state to maintain a flat enrollment trend.

What is the consequence of fewer South Dakotans attending college in their home state? According to that same 2015 report, it means we will likely not have enough trained professionals to fill key positions in the state someday, which would hamper economic growth. In fact, it is already difficult to retain graduates who in some cases leave college with staggering amounts of student-loan debt, forcing them to look out of state for higher-paying jobs.

Despite all of this, it seems the Board of Regents has yet to learn the lessons of the past several years. In announcing the recent hike, the board's executive director, Mike Bush, said the increase will "have a direct impact on the quality of the higher education experience and improve student retention."

It will have an impact on the student experience, especially when it's time to pay the bills or take out another loan. As far as retention or growth in enrollment goes, recent history would suggest otherwise.

Argus Leader, Sioux Falls, March 31

Put state basketball tournaments in Sioux Falls

When it comes to high school state basketball tournaments, South Dakotans think too much.

We think about tradition, or the way it's always been done. We consider the concept of geographical fairness and giving everyone a chance to host. We wonder why some events have lost their luster.

Why not cut through the nonsense and state the obvious? It's really not that hard. As the state's biggest city with its most modern and sizable arena, Sioux Falls should host the great majority of high school basketball tournaments, if not all of them.

Anyone who observed countless rows of empty seats at the Class AA state tournament in Rapid City knows that something must be done.

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The South Dakota High School Activities Association is entrusted by member schools to stage championships that create the best possible experience for student-athletes while sparking revenue to help sponsor state events in other activities. Period.

In a 2014 survey of students, parents, coaches and fans contracted by the SDHSAA, 52 percent said Sioux Falls was their first choice for events, compared to 15 percent for Rapid City. Respondents also made it clear that parking, ample seating, locker rooms and other amenities were crucial to the experience, as were plentiful hotels and restaurants.

Again, why are we even debating this topic? Why not follow the "road to the big city" format used by just about every other state in America when it comes to revenue-based high school tournaments and use the 12,000-seat Denny Sanford Premier Center as a signature destination?

This is not about Sioux Falls "wanting more money" by hosting these events. Approaching this from a chamber of commerce perspective is what created the problem in the first place. With the Summit League tournament, NCAA championships and major concerts crowding the Premier Center calendar, the SDHSAA site committee needs Sioux Falls more than the other way around.

A positive step was taken with the addition of "combined" state basketball tournaments, in which boys and girls within each class compete at the same site on the same weekend. In wrestling and volleyball, all classes play at a common venue at the same time rather than separate sites.

For now, Rapid City is part of the rotation of combined tournaments, not just for basketball but wrestling and volleyball. Other than football, entrenched at the DakotaDome in Vermillion, those three sports are the biggest revenue-producers for the SDHSAA, which relies on state tournament profits for 70 percent of its budget.

That means the bigger events must be successful in order to support statewide events in activities such as golf, tennis, show choir, student council, debate and one-act play.

In recent years, Class AA and A boys basketball tournaments have rotated between Rapid City and Sioux Falls, with Class B taking place in Aberdeen. Other tournaments are spread around to communities such as Brookings, Watertown and Huron.

But hosting guidelines for combined events eliminate most sites from consideration. Hosting a combined boys basketball tournament calls for a minimum seat capacity of 10,000 and 1,237 available hotel rooms, meaning only Sioux Falls and possibly Rapid City make the cut.

Attendance has been affected recently by having all games available on TV and more information on-line. Class AA schools, lacking the widespread community appeal of smaller classes, drew underwhelming crowds not only in Rapid City this year but at the Premier Center in 2016.

If all things are equal, though, Sioux Falls still wins. There are many more teams that qualify from the Interstate 29 corridor as opposed to West River squads, and SDHSAA must reimburse schools for travel.

Using pre-combined tournament data, the past three Class AA boys tournaments in Sioux Falls averaged \$94,220 in net profit, while the past three in Rapid City averaged \$45,539.

The site committee is taking things a step further by holding a combined Class A tournament in 2019 in Sioux Falls, with the possibility of Class B playing a combined event sometime in the future. The Summit League tournament makes it unfeasible to play three high school tourneys on successive March weekends at the Premier Center, but two makes a lot of sense.

Bringing the Class B to Sioux Falls for a trial run would not mean the SDHSAA is trying to "steal" the event away from Aberdeen, where it has been a fixture at the Barnett Center. It would merely give the site committee a chance to compare attendance and net revenue, much like it is doing with Sioux Falls and Rapid City.

Again, this is not a chamber of commerce discussion. It's about giving players and fans the best experience possible while sparking revenue for other activities under the SDHSAA umbrella.

Holding combined state tournaments in South Dakota's largest city and venue could be much like adopting the high school football playoffs in the early 1980s. It took a lot of hand-wringing (and a legal challenge) to get it going, but no one would ever think about turning back.

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The Daily Republic, Mitchell, April 11

Legislature should have acted earlier on non-meandered waters

South Dakota is in deep water, and residents have years of lawmakers kicking the can down the road to blame.

Last month, the South Dakota Supreme Court issued a ruling on a controversial issue that's been plaguing the state for years — non-meandered waters and the public's right to recreate on them.

A quick explanation: In the early- to mid-1990s, flooding was persistent in northeast South Dakota. That connected some public bodies of water to ponds and sloughs on private property, known as non-meandered waters. When that occurred, outdoor enthusiasts chose to hunt and fish on the water above the private ground, which upset some landowners.

The recent Supreme Court ruling explained "the Legislature must decide how these waters are beneficially used in the public interest."

Now, outdoor enthusiasts who wish to use these lakes and streams are in the midst of a battle with landowners who don't want people on their property.

And, unless a special session is called this year, we're going to have to wait until January for a resolution when the next Legislature meets. That's not good, and South Dakota lawmakers for the past two decades should be ashamed for putting the state in this battle.

The Supreme Court ruling specifically listed 1993 as the year excessive rainfall submerged areas of northeast South Dakota.

Since that time, hundreds of legislators have filed in and out of the Capitol for session and decided they weren't going to take up this issue.

And why?

It's presumably because no one was interested in getting between landowners, small business and outdoor enthusiasts until they had to.

This is a major problem the Legislature needs to address, and the final decision will impact thousands of people in South Dakota. That's why it should not have taken a Supreme Court ruling to get a discussion started.

Someone should have recognized the importance of this problem much earlier. But because they didn't, landowners and outdoor enthusiasts are stuck in limbo with far too much uncertainty.

Study: Outdoor recreation an economic boom in South Dakota

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Outdoor recreationists contributed more than \$1.9 billion worth of economic activity in South Dakota between October 2015 and October 2016, according to a new study.

The study commissioned by the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Department said recreational activity supported nearly 18,400 jobs, generating more than \$534 million worth of income to state residents and about \$85.5 million in state and local tax revenue during the survey period.

The department found that hunters spent more than \$682.7 million and anglers spent over \$271.3 million. Trappers, wildlife viewers and boaters were also big spenders with a combined contribution of almost \$140 million.

"We were curious about these numbers," said the department's administration chief, Scott Simpson. "I don't want to say we were surprised."

The Capital Journal (<http://bit.ly/2osIjMQ>) reported that marketing and analytics firm Southwick Associates conducted the study. More than 9,600 people were surveyed directly. Nearly 35 percent of people surveyed were South Dakota residents, while 65 percent were nonresidents.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service used to track the economic impact of outdoor recreation, but there were significant holes in its tracking, such as using small sample sizes and not including state park visitation.

The South Dakota study found that state park visitation contributed almost \$214 million to South Dakota's economy in a one-year period.

This story has been corrected to show that anglers spent over \$271.3 million, not \$271.3.

Information from: Pierre Capital Journal, <http://www.capjournal.com>

Dakota Access company can keep some pipeline secrets

By **BLAKE NICHOLSON, Associated Press**

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — A federal judge is allowing the developer of the Dakota Access oil pipeline to keep secret some but not all pipeline information that the company believes could be useful to vandals and terrorists.

U.S. District Judge James Boasberg said in a ruling dated Friday that information such as spill risks at various points along the pipeline should be shielded from public view but that certain details relating to how a spill might be handled don't warrant such protection.

Two American Indian tribes who oppose the pipeline had argued that the spill risk data could bolster their case that more environmental study is needed. Attorneys for the Standing Rock and Cheyenne River Sioux didn't immediately respond to requests for comment Wednesday.

Vicki Granado, a spokeswoman for pipeline developer Energy Transfer Partners, declined to comment, citing the tribes' ongoing federal lawsuit over the \$3.8 billion project to move North Dakota oil to a distribution point 1,200 miles away in Illinois.

The Texas-based developer in February asked Boasberg to shield information that it contends could be used by anyone "with the malicious intent to damage the pipeline." At the time, there had been about 750 arrests of anti-pipeline activists in North Dakota since August, and also vandalism to company equipment in Iowa and North Dakota during construction. In March, there were confirmed instances in which someone apparently had used a torch to burn holes through empty sections of the pipeline at aboveground shut-off valve sites, though no one was arrested.

Attorneys for the tribes, which are suing because they believe the pipeline threatens water, sacred sites and their religion, objected to the company's request to keep documents secret. They called the company's reasoning "a ruse" to conceal documents that undermine its assertion that no further environmental review of the pipeline is needed because it's safe.

The Army Corps of Engineers, which also is a defendant in the lawsuit because it permitted pipeline water crossings, maintained that only a limited amount of the information should be kept from public view based on analyses by the Transportation Security Administration and the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration.

Boasberg reviewed those agencies' determinations before reaching his decision. The judge is allowing the shielding of documents that include such details as pipeline maps at certain crossings, information on detecting and shutting down spills, graphs of spill risk scores at various points along the pipeline, maps of spill scenarios, oil spill volume predictions and details related to monitoring systems.

Boasberg said "the asserted interest in limiting intentionally inflicted harm outweighs the tribes' generalized interests in public disclosure and scrutiny," noting that tribal attorneys would be privy to the information anyway as their lawsuit proceeds. Standing Rock attorney Jan Hasselman has argued previously that public scrutiny of the documents could help the tribe.

Among the information that the judge won't allow to be kept from the public are the phone numbers of government agencies, the names of waterways that could be affected by spills, and maps and descriptions of oil spill handling methods.

Follow Blake Nicholson on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/NicholsonBlake>

Avera Health to build new \$134 million campus in Sioux Falls

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Avera Health said Wednesday that it plans to build a new \$134 million campus in southwest Sioux Falls and to make \$40 million in renovations to existing facilities.

Avera said the first phase of the new campus project will be the construction of a 24-bed surgical hospital and connected medical office building on 82 acres that will specialize in orthopedics and sports medicine, gastroenterology, internal medicine and rheumatology.

Construction is expected to begin this fall and the campus is expected to open in early 2020. Avera said it expects more than 600 workers to take part in construction, with a payroll estimated at almost \$28 million.

Dave Kapaska, president and CEO of Avera McKennan Hospital & University Health Center, said the health system has to prepare to take care of Sioux Falls' growing population in future years. Avera facilities in Sioux Falls serve 86 counties and 72,000 square miles over five states, according to the health system.

Avera McKennan is also planning the \$40 million renovation project on its main campus to allow for the expansion of surgical suites and ICU and clinic space.

Reward offered in case of woman who may be dead

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Rapid City police are offering a \$5,000 reward for help in solving the case of a woman who may be dead.

Police began investigating the disappearance of 21-year-old Larissa Lonehill, of Manderson, in November. Capt. James Johns says detectives believe Lonehill has died and that "her body may have been disposed of within a 100-mile radius of Rapid City."

The Rapid City Journal (<http://bit.ly/2nEU0S2>) says police have not explained why detectives believe Lonehill is dead. The woman's mother, Lisa Lonehill, says her daughter is a mom to a 2-year-old girl.

The \$5,000 comes from Rapid City's Community Reward Fund.

Information from: Rapid City Journal, <http://www.rapidcityjournal.com>

Warm weather aids South Dakota farmers with spring planting

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A week of warm weather has helped South Dakota farmers make progress with spring planting.

The weekly crop report from the federal Agriculture Department says nearly one-fourth of the spring wheat crop has been seeded, and the crop is starting to emerge.

About 4 percent of the barley crop and 17 percent of the oats crop also is in the ground.

Topsoil moisture supplies statewide are rated 82 percent adequate to surplus, and subsoil moisture is 79 percent in those categories.

South Dakota's winter wheat crop is rated 52 percent in good to excellent condition.

In the ranching community, calving is 53 percent done and lambing is 77 percent complete.

Kremlin says no positive shift yet on Russia-US ties

MOSCOW (AP) — The Kremlin says President Vladimir Putin's meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson hasn't produced any positive shift yet in Russia-U.S. relations.

Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Thursday the Russian leader gave Tillerson his view of the causes of the current "deadlock" in bilateral ties.

President Donald Trump declared Wednesday that U.S.-Russia ties "may be at an all-time low," and Tillerson struck a similar tone after a day of talks in Moscow.

Peskov said Putin's meeting with Tillerson reflected the "understanding of the need to maintain a dialogue to search for solutions." He added that there was no talk Wednesday about a possible Trump-Putin meeting.

Asked if the meeting marked any positive change, Peskov said: "Too early yet."

Defense in Kim Jong Nam murder case fears 'trial by ambush'

By EILEEN NG, Associated Press

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — Handcuffed and facing the judge, two young women accused of poisoning Kim Jong Nam appeared in court Thursday as their lawyers said Malaysian police still have not handed over security camera footage and documents crucial to the defense.

Siti Aisyah, from Indonesia, and Doan Thi Huong of Vietnam are the only suspects in custody in the Feb. 13 killing of Kim, the estranged half brother of North Korea's ruler. Four North Korean suspects fled the country the day of the murder, police say.

"The accused person should not be denied her fundamental right to a fair trial," said Aisyah's attorney Gooi Soon Seng. He said he has been waiting for police to provide surveillance video and statements from three North Korean men who were questioned and released.

"Neither side may seek unfair advantage by concealing weapons behind its back. There should be no trial by ambush," Gooi said.

The judge postponed the hearing until May 30.

National police chief Khalid Abu Bakar said later Thursday that defense lawyers must apply for the evidence through the courts and that police have to get clearance from the attorney general before releasing it.

When asked about lawyers' contention that they had sent requests five times, by fax and by hand, without getting a police reply, Khalid said, "Maybe it did not reach the correct officer. ... There must be some communication breakdown somewhere."

The women are accused of smearing Kim's face with banned VX nerve agent at a crowded airport terminal in Kuala Lumpur. But they say they were duped into thinking they were playing a harmless prank for a hidden-camera show.

The women face the death penalty if convicted.

Gooi said he fears the women will become scapegoats because all the other people believed to have knowledge of the case have left the country.

The four North Koreans who flew out of Malaysia the day of the murder are believed to be back in Pyongyang. And another three who stayed inside their country's embassy in Kuala Lumpur to avoid questioning by police were allowed to fly home late last month after Malaysia struck a surprise deal with Pyongyang to ease tensions.

Malaysian police have said they questioned the three men and found no grounds to hold them. But Gooi said Thursday that at least one of those three men — identified by police as Ri Ji U and known to Aisyah as "James" — was key to her defense.

"This amounts to a miscarriage of justice," Gooi said of Malaysia's decision to allow the men to leave the country. "They (the defendants) are already scapegoats."

Khalid dismissed Gooi's claim.

"They can say anything they like but we have a case with us. I am just waiting for the North Koreans to send back the four (suspects) to us," he said.

Gooi told The Associated Press on Wednesday that James recruited Aisyah in early January to star in his video prank shows. Over the course of several days, he had her rub oil or pepper sauce on a victim's face, "from forehead downwards," which he would film on his phone, the lawyer said.

They practiced at malls, hotels and airports, he said. Aisyah was paid \$100-\$200 for each prank and hoped the income would allow her to stop working as a social escort, Gooi said.

Gooi said Aisyah flew to Cambodia in late January, where James introduced her to Hong Song Hac, one of four North Korean suspects who left Malaysia on the day of the murder. Hong had introduced himself as Chang, a Chinese who produces video prank shows for the Chinese market, he said.

Gooi said Hong asked Aisyah to do several more pranks at the Kuala Lumpur airport a few days before Kim was attacked. He said Aisyah met Hong at the airport on the day of the killing, and that Hong identified Kim to Aisyah and allegedly put the poison on her hand.

Malaysia never directly accused North Korea of carrying out the attack, but speculation is rampant that Pyongyang directed a hit on a long-exiled member of its ruling elite.

Tran Huy Hoang, a cousin of the Vietnamese suspect, said she is doing well in prison and had even gained weight.

"The family and many Vietnamese people believe that she is innocent," he said outside court Thursday. "We believe she was cheated and we hope that the truth will come out."

Uproar over United video imperils Chicago airport police

By DON BABWIN, Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — The video of a passenger being dragged by an officer from a United Express flight shined an unwanted spotlight on the little-known police force that guards Chicago's two main airports and could threaten the agency's future.

Chicago's aviation officers are not part of the regular police force, unlike in many other big cities. They get less training than regular officers and can't carry firearms inside the airports. Three of them were put on leave amid outrage over how they treated the passenger.

Cellphone footage of the confrontation "really has put it at risk," Alderman Chris Taliaferro said Wednesday, a day before aldermen were scheduled to grill United and the Chicago Aviation Department about why a Kentucky physician was yanked out of his seat after he refused to get off the full jetliner at O'Hare Airport.

The City Council is looking for answers about the embarrassing video that has been seen around the world. At the top of the list of questions is whether the airport officers even had the legal authority to board the plane, said Alderman Michael Zalewski, who leads the council's aviation committee.

"They are allowed in the terminal and baggage area, but my understanding is they may not be allowed on a plane," he said. Zalewski also said that he is not sure if the officers have the authority to make arrests or if they are authorized only to write tickets.

An Aviation Department spokeswoman did not respond to questions about the duties of the aviation police force, but Zalewski said the agency's commissioner will be asked that on Thursday.

The department will also be asked about training. Zalewski said airport officers receive four months of training compared with the six months cadets must complete before joining the city's police department.

"We don't know what that two-month gap means," he said, adding that he will ask if the airport officers receive the same kind of training in de-escalating tense situations that city police officers get.

The roughly 300 aviation police officers earn between \$50,000 and \$88,000 a year and cost the city about \$19 million a year. They are city employees but not members of the Chicago Police Department.

The agency's history is a decidedly Chicago story. According to Zalewski, the force was created years ago by the legendary Mayor Richard J. Daley.

"The chief of his bodyguard detail, when he retired, was sent to O'Hare to head up a new security detail ... called gate guards," he said. "In the old days, it was all patronage. It was all clout to get those jobs."

The department grew and became more sophisticated during the tenure of Daley's son, Mayor Richard M. Daley. The "gate guards" became "aviation security officers" whose uniforms closely resembled those of city police officers, Zalewski said.

Today, unlike other airport police forces in Los Angeles, New York and Minneapolis, Chicago's aviation police are not allowed to carry guns.

That fact drew attention earlier this year when, in the wake of a shooting at the airport in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, CNN reported that the officers were told that they would not be dispatched to calls of disturbances in some areas, including baggage claim.

Taliaferro has proposed an ordinance that would allow the officers to carry guns. He acknowledged that Sunday evening's event make passage of that proposal much tougher. Zalewski called it all but impossible.

The city also assigns approximately 200 regular police officers to the two airports, all of them armed. One possibility for reform could be to disband the aviation force in favor of more city police officers, though Taliaferro thinks that is unlikely.

Zalewski said he has talked to Aviation Commissioner Ginger Evans, describing her as "livid" about the passenger's treatment. But he will not say what, if any changes she might recommend when she speaks

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to the committee on Thursday.

One thing has already changed: On Wednesday, United's chief executive said the carrier will no longer ask police to remove passengers from full flights.

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

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

1. HOW BETTER VETTING COULD BENEFIT WHITE HOUSE

Trump boasts that he hires only the best people, but his personnel choices — like Michael Flynn, Paul Manafort and Carter Page — keep coming back to haunt him.

2. TRUMP'S PROMISES FALLING BY WAYSIDE

He hasn't been in the White House for 100 days, yet he's already reversed himself on many of his key campaign promises.

3. IN HOLY CITY, A TANGLE OF CONFLICTING CLAIMS

Fifty years after Israel captured east Jerusalem, Israel and the Palestinians remain as divided as ever over the future of the sensitive area.

4. DEFENSE IN KIM JONG NAM MURDER CASE FEARS 'TRIAL BY AMBUSH'

Two young women accused of poisoning Kim appear in court as their lawyers say Malaysian police still have not handed over security camera footage and documents crucial to the defense.

5. LOOK OUT, CORPORATE AMERICA

The viral video of a ticketed passenger dragged forcefully off a United Express flight is only the latest example of bad behavior exposed in the digital age.

6. BREAK IN 'FAST AND FURIOUS' CASE COMES IN MEXICO

Authorities arrest the suspected shooter in the 2010 killing of a U.S. border agent whose death exposed a bungled gun-tracking operation by the federal government.

7. WHO'S MAKING MILLIONS ON THE SIDE

Teachers selling lesson plans to other teachers online has become a booming business.

8. FRESH QUESTIONS ABOUT BILL O'REILLY'S FUTURE

The embattled TV host says the vacation he's taking was long planned. But it's an unusually lengthy one — and it's fueling speculation that he might never return to his Fox News Channel show.

9. WHERE SEARCH IS ON FOR HOLY GRAIL OF CLIMATE CHANGE

In the jagged red mountains of Oman on the Arabian Peninsula, geologists hunt for an efficient and cheap way to remove carbon dioxide from the air and oceans.

10. NBA PLAYOFF FIELD SET

The Chicago Bulls and Indiana Pacers claim the last two available postseason spots on the final night of the regular season.

Fly the funnier skies: Mideast airlines troll United

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Mideast carriers are having fun at United Airlines' expense.

Dubai-based Emirates released an ad after video went viral of a United passenger being forcefully removed that toyed with the Chicago-based carrier's longtime slogan. "Fly the friendly skies ... this time for real," it read.

Royal Jordanian tweeted a no-smoking picture saying "drugs on our flights are strictly prohibited by passengers and crew."

Now Qatar Airways is getting in on the gag too. An update Wednesday for its iPhone app says it "doesn't support drag and drop. We take care of customers as we unite them with their destinations."

Emirates and Qatar have been criticized by U.S. carriers over their rapid U.S. expansion. All three airlines have been caught up in the U.S. ban on electronics onboard.

Trump declares US-Russia relations may be at 'all-time low'

By VIVIAN SALAMA and JOSH LEDERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Laying bare deep and dangerous divisions on Syria and other issues, President Donald Trump declared that U.S. relations with Russia "may be at an all-time low." His top diplomat offered a similarly grim assessment from the other side of the globe after meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin in Moscow.

"Right now we're not getting along with Russia at all," Trump said flatly during a White House news conference Wednesday. It was stark evidence that the president is moving ever further from his campaign promises to establish better ties with Moscow.

Only weeks ago, it appeared that Trump, who praised Putin throughout the U.S. election campaign, was poised for a potentially historic rapprochement with Russia. But any such expectations have crashed into reality amid the nasty back-and-forth over Syria and ongoing U.S. investigations into Russia's alleged interference in America's U.S. presidential election.

"It'd be a fantastic thing if we got along with Putin and if we got along with Russia," Trump said. But he clearly wasn't counting on it.

"That could happen, and it may not happen," he said. "It may be just the opposite."

Not long before Trump spoke in Washington, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson struck a similar tone after an almost two-hour meeting with Putin, saying the two countries had reached a "low point" in relations.

Trump, who last week ordered airstrikes on a Syrian air base in retaliation for a chemical weapons attack, was asked Wednesday if Syria could have launched the attack without Russia's knowledge. Trump said it was "certainly possible" though "probably unlikely."

The newly hardened view of Moscow comes as the president has tried to shake suspicions about the motives behind his campaign calls for warmer relations. As the FBI and multiple congressional committees investigate possible collusion between Russia and Trump's campaign, the president and his aides can now point to his hard-line stance on Syrian President Bashar Assad as evidence he's willing to stand up to Putin.

More than 80 people were killed in what the U.S. has described as a nerve gas attack that Assad's forces undoubtedly carried out. Russia says rebels were responsible for whatever chemical agent was used, which the Trump administration calls a disinformation campaign.

Not long before Trump spoke, Russia vetoed a Western-backed U.N. resolution that would have condemned the chemical weapons attack and demanded a speedy investigation.

The dim view of U.S.-Russian ties from both Trump and Tillerson reflected the former Cold War foes' inability to forge better relations, as Trump until recently has advocated.

Allegations of collusion between Russian officials and Trump campaign associates also have weakened Trump's ability to make concessions to Russia on any issue, lest he be accused of rewarding bad behavior. Russia wants the U.S. to eliminate sanctions on Moscow related to its 2014 annexation of Ukraine's Crimea region and support for pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine.

Until the chemical attack, the Trump administration had sought to step back from the U.S. position that Assad should leave power. But Tillerson repeated the administration's new belief that "the reign of the Assad family is coming to an end."

Beyond Syria, Russia's alleged meddling in the U.S. presidential election also hovered over what was the first face-to-face encounter between Putin and any Trump administration Cabinet member.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov blasted U.S. claims that it has "irrefutable evidence" of election interference.

"We have not seen a single fact, or even a hint of facts," he said. "I do not know who saw them. No one showed us anything, no one said anything, although we repeatedly asked to produce the details on which these unfounded accusations lie."

He also rejected American claims of certain evidence that Assad ordered the chemical attack.

Still, Tillerson sought to stress the positives from his meetings. He said working groups would be established to improve U.S.-Russian ties and identify problems. He said the two sides would also discuss disagreements on Syria and how to end the country's six-year civil war.

But such hopes appeared optimistic as the diplomats outlined their sharply diverging views on Syria. Tillerson said Syria's government had committed more than 50 attacks using chlorine or other chemical weapons over the duration of the conflict. And he suggested that possible war crimes charges could be levied against the Syrian leader. Russia has never publicly acknowledged any such attacks by Assad's forces and has tried for the past 18 months to help him expand his authority in Syria.

The civil war is separate from the U.S.-led effort against the Islamic State group in the north of the country. While the most immediate U.S.-Russian dispute concerns culpability for the chemical weapons, broader disagreements over everything from Ukraine to Russia's support for once-fringe candidates in European elections are among other sore points.

Tillerson was greeted frostily in the Russian capital as Lavrov began their meeting Wednesday by demanding to know America's "real intentions."

"We have seen very alarming actions recently with an unlawful attack against Syria," Lavrov said, referring to the 59 Tomahawk missiles Trump launched at an air base to punish Assad for using chemical weapons. "We consider it of utmost importance to prevent the risks of replay of similar action in the future."

Trump and others have indeed threatened similar action. But in a Fox Business Network interview, the U.S. president said he wouldn't intervene militarily against Assad unless the Syrian leader resorts to using weapons of mass destruction again. "Are we going to get involved with Syria? No," Trump said. But, he added, "I see them using gas ... we have to do something."

Lederman reported from Moscow.

Reach Josh Lederman on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/joshledermanAP>

Trump reverses himself on NATO, China, Russia and more

By JILL COLVIN and KEN THOMAS, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump hasn't been in the White House for 100 days, yet he's already reversed himself on many of his key campaign promises.

In several interviews this week, the president has forged new positions on topics ranging from NATO to Chinese currency manipulation. They come as other campaign promises lag, including Trump's vow to build a concrete wall along the length of the southern border and have Mexico pay for it.

"One by one we are keeping our promises — on the border, on energy, on jobs, on regulations," Trump tweeted Wednesday evening. "Big changes are happening!"

Here are some of the areas where a president who prides himself on his flexibility has been willing to dispense with past positions:

NATO

Trump cemented his shift in posture toward the 28-nation military alliance as he stood alongside its leader at the White House on Wednesday.

As a candidate, Trump had dismissed NATO as "obsolete," saying the post-World War II organization wasn't focused on combating the growing threat from terrorism and complaining that too many members weren't paying their fair share toward defense.

He struck an entirely different tone Wednesday, one he had been warming up to during frequent telephone conversations with his world counterparts.

"I said it was obsolete. It's no longer obsolete," Trump said of NATO at a news conference with Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg after they met in the Oval Office.

Trump still insists that NATO members meet a 2014 agreement to boost defense spending to 2 percent of gross domestic product within a decade. He has backup on this point from an important ally: Stoltenberg.

Currently, just the U.S. and a handful of other countries are meeting the 2 percent target.

LABELING CHINA A CURRENCY MANIPULATOR

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During his campaign, Trump insisted that one of his first acts as president would be to direct his treasury secretary to label China a currency manipulator. It was part of a "contract" with American voters that he pledged to fulfill.

Only days ago, in an interview with the Financial Times, Trump reiterated that campaign pledge.

"You know when you talk about, when you talk about currency manipulation, when you talk about devaluations, they are world champions," he said of China. "And our country hasn't had a clue, they haven't had a clue."

By Wednesday something had changed. In an interview with The Wall Street Journal, Trump declared point blank, "They're not currency manipulators."

Trump told the paper he'd changed his mind because China hasn't been manipulating its currency for months. He said a U.S. declaration of Chinese manipulation could jeopardize efforts to secure the country's help in containing the threat posed by North Korea.

EX-IM BANK:

Trump also appears to have grown fond of the U.S. Export-Import Bank, which has been a rallying cry for conservatives who consider it a mechanism of crony capitalism. The conservative political network established by billionaires Charles and David Koch has railed against the agency.

Trump opposed the Ex-Im Bank during his campaign. But he said in the Journal interview that he supports the bank, which helps U.S. exporters by making and guaranteeing loans. Congress allowed the Ex-Im bank's charter to expire in 2015, then eventually revived it over the objections of some conservatives. But it still isn't able to conduct major business due to vacancies on its board, hurting top exporters like Boeing and General Electric.

Trump told the newspaper he plans to fill two vacancies on the board, adding, "It turns out that, first of all, lots of small companies are really helped, the vendor companies."

RUSSIAN PRESIDENT VLADIMIR PUTIN

As the U.S. relationship with Russia careens from cozy to frosty, Trump is keeping his distance from Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"I don't know Putin," Trump said Wednesday at the joint press conference with Stoltenberg.

Trump has made conflicting statements about his ties to the Russian leader in the past. At a press conference last July, he said: "I never met Putin, I don't know who Putin is. He said one nice thing about me. He said I'm a genius."

But during the Republican primary he boasted of their ties. He said at a November 2015 primary debate, "I got to know him very well because we were both on '60 Minutes,' we were stablemates, and we did very well that night." The two appeared on the same program, but their segments were taped in different countries.

Trump had also previously said the pair met once, a "long time ago."

For Trump, dealing with investigations into possible contacts between his campaign associates and the Russian officials, keeping Putin at arm's length may be the best political play.

U.S. MILITARY PROWESS

The man who once slammed the U.S. military as a "disaster" is singing its praises now that he's in charge.

In an interview with Fox Business Network's Maria Bartiromo that aired Wednesday morning, Trump talked up U.S. military strength, sounding almost in awe of its prowess.

"It's so incredible. It's brilliant. It's genius. Our technology, our equipment, is better than anybody by a factor of five," he said. "I mean look, we have, in terms of technology, nobody can even come close to competing."

Just a couple of months ago, the president was bemoaning the military's state at rallies across the country.

"We're going to rebuild our military. Our military is in shambles," he said at a rally in Delaware last April.

"We're going to make it so big, so strong, so powerful that nobody, nobody, nobody is gonna mess with us, folks."

FEDERAL RESERVE CHAIR JANET YELLEN

During his campaign, Trump was critical of Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen, accusing her of keeping borrowing rates low to help rival Hillary Clinton and Democrats. Trump said at the time that he would likely replace Yellen when her term as chair ends next year. At the first presidential debate in September, Trump said the Fed was "being more political than Secretary Clinton."

But that was then. Trump, in the Wall Street Journal interview, left open the possibility of re-nominating Yellen for a second four-year term. Asked whether Yellen would be "toast" when her term ends, Trump said, "No, not toast."

"I like her, I respect her," Trump said, adding that they had met in the Oval Office since he became president.

Associated Press writers Darlene Superville and Catherine Lucey contributed to this report.

The best people? Trump's personnel picks haunt him

By JULIE PACE, AP White House Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump likes to boast that he only hires the best people. But his personnel choices keep coming back to haunt him.

One of the people Trump hired for the White House was working as a foreign agent while advising him during the election. His campaign chairman caught the Justice Department's attention for similarly surreptitious work. And a third campaign adviser was reportedly surveilled by the FBI as part of an investigation into whether or not he was a Russian spy.

The tales of Michael Flynn, Paul Manafort and Carter Page — none of whom still work for Trump — have created a steady drip of allegations that have clouded Trump's early presidency and raised persistent questions about his judgment.

At worst, Trump's personnel picks appear to have left his campaign — and perhaps his White House — vulnerable to the influence of foreign powers. At best, they expose the long-term implications of his understaffed and inexperienced campaign organization and undermine his promises to surround himself with top notch talent.

"Vetting new hires is standard procedure for presidential campaigns for exactly this reason," said Alex Conant, who advised Sen. Marco Rubio's 2016 presidential campaign. "Every employee is also a potential liability on a presidential campaign."

Manafort, Flynn and Page have indeed become political liabilities for Trump that he can't shake in the White House. All three are being scrutinized as part of the FBI and congressional investigations into whether Trump associates helped Russia meddle in the 2016 election. The president has denied any nefarious ties to Russia and says he has no knowledge that his advisers were working with Moscow during the election.

The president's culpability appears greatest with Flynn, a retired U.S. Army lieutenant general who traveled with Trump frequently on the campaign and was tapped as national security adviser after the election. Flynn had been lobbying for a company with ties to Turkey during the 2016 election and even wrote an editorial on behalf of his client that was published on Election Day.

"No one expects them to do the equivalent of an FBI background check, but a simple Google search could have solved a lot of these problems," Dan Pfeiffer, who served as senior adviser to President Barack Obama, said of Trump's team.

After Trump's victory, Flynn's lawyers alerted the transition team that he may have to register as a lobbying for a foreign entity, according to a person with knowledge of those discussions. The White House hired him anyway. After the inauguration, Flynn's lawyers told the White House counsel's office that the national security adviser would indeed have to move forward with that filing.

Flynn was fired in February after the White House said he misled Vice President Mike Pence and other top officials about his conversations with Russia's ambassador to the United States.

Foreign lobbying is legal and lucrative. Both Republican and Democratic operatives offer their services to overseas clients. But the Justice Department requires Americans working on behalf of foreign interests to register, disclosing the nature of their work, the foreigners they dealt with and the money they made.

Willful failure to register for foreign lobbying work can carry up to a five-year prison sentence, but the Justice Department rarely brings criminal charges and instead urges violators to register.

On Wednesday, a spokesman for former Trump campaign chairman Manafort said that he, too, under pressure from the Justice Department, would formally file for prior foreign lobbying. Manafort's work for political interests in Ukraine occurred before he was hired as Trump's campaign chairman, spokesman Jason Maloni said, though the U.S. government raised questions about his activities after he was hired by Trump.

"The work in question was widely known, concluded before Mr. Manafort began working with the Trump campaign and was not conducted on behalf of the Russian government," Maloni said.

Manafort was pushed out of Trump's campaign in August after The Associated Press reported that his consulting firm had orchestrated a covert Washington lobbying operation on behalf of Ukraine's ruling political party without disclosing that work to the U.S. government.

The White House did not respond to questions Wednesday about when Trump learned about Manafort's foreign lobbying work and his discussions with the U.S. government about registering as a foreign agent.

The questions surrounding Page are perhaps the most serious. On Tuesday, the Washington Post reported that the Justice Department obtained a highly secretive warrant to monitor his communications because there was reason to believe he was working as a Russian spy.

In March, Trump personally announced Page as part of a newly minted foreign policy advisory team. But as questions began swirling about Page's ties to Russia, the campaign started moving away from the little-known investment banker. Trump has since said he had no relationship with him.

The New York Times reported Wednesday that the Justice Department only obtained the warrant after the campaign distanced itself from Page.

Chris Ashby, a Republican elections lawyer, said that while it's easy to blame Trump for missing red flags about his campaign advisers, it's not always possible to dig up details that potential hires aren't willing to disclose on their own.

"In the ideal world, you could rely on paid background checks, but you'd have to have the money and the time," Ashby said. "The farther down the ranks you go and certainly when you reach the ranks of unpaid advisers, that becomes impractical."

Follow Julie Pace at <http://twitter.com/jpaceDC>

Iowa voters credit GOP lawmaker for opposing health bill

By THOMAS BEAUMONT, Associated Press

SIDNEY, Iowa (AP) — Rebuffing President Donald Trump and Republican leaders on the GOP health care bill seemed like a major political misstep for Iowa Rep. David Young, who quickly was punished by a political action committee linked to Speaker Paul Ryan.

Nearly three weeks later, voters in Young's southwestern Iowa district — Republicans and Democrats — say the GOP congressman made the right move.

Conservatives praised Young for his opposition to the bill that would have undone much of Barack Obama's health care law, casting the GOP measure as far short of a full repeal. Democrats welcomed the legislation's demise, fearful that the measure would have been devastating to the poor.

The Republican bill would have eliminated tax penalties for people who don't buy policies, provided tax credits that would be smaller than Obama's for many lower-earning and older recipients, and cut Medicaid, which helps poorer people afford medical care. In a major setback for the GOP last month, Ryan abruptly withdrew the bill after Trump and the House leadership failed to convince enough Republicans to back

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the legislation.

With Congress on a two-week break, Young faced his constituents in his competitive district and told them the bill's drafting was its key liability. He steered clear of discussing specific provisions he opposes.

"A bad process makes a bad policy. We have to slow down. We have to air this out," he said.

Patrick Spencer, a 54-year-old farmer from far southeast Iowa, agreed with Young. "They rushed it through. They did it in the dark," Spencer said. "I wouldn't be very happy if I were in his position and I'd been left out of it."

Democrat Dale Doudna thanked Young for opposing the bill. "I appreciated your stand on the health care act," said the 69-year-old retired teacher from a north Des Moines suburb.

Trump, Ryan and other top Republicans nevertheless maintain that they want to fulfill the promise they repeatedly made to GOP voters over seven years to repeal and replace former President Barack Obama's health care law, but agreement in the GOP remains elusive.

"We've not been able to get ourselves together to keep our commitment," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., told reporters in Louisville on Wednesday. "I haven't given up."

David Roberts, a 50-year-old farmer from Sidney, told Young in the Fremont County Courthouse on Monday the Obama law has "completely failed" and "needs to be repealed completely." Monthly insurance premiums for Roberts' family of six have already doubled to \$1,500 under the current law, he said.

"I don't know who to fault (for the House bill failure), but they kept changing it toward the end. I was just hoping for a clean repeal," Roberts said. "I just wish they had made it simple."

For Young, it's a balancing act in a politically diverse district and a presidential battleground state that Democrat Obama won in 2008 and 2012, and Trump easily captured in 2012.

Young wants to avoid angering Iowa's older-than-average population and his district's disproportionately low-income residents, both of whom could be hurt by the GOP bill. Thirty-seven percent of Iowa's population is 50 years or older compared to the U.S.'s 34 percent, according to AARP.

Patti McKee, a 60-year-old Des Moines artist, pressed Young to oppose allowing Medicaid, the federally funded state-run health plan for low-income Americans, to be parceled into block grants for states to allocate as they wish. According to Kasier Family Foundation, more Iowans risk losing their coverage proportionally under Medicaid than nationally, considering the state agreed to expand the program under the Obama law, and the federal expansion funding would dry up under the GOP bill.

"That's not the way to do it," she told Young, who supports block grants, during a meeting in Des Moines on Wednesday. "My concern is for those hundreds of thousands on Medicaid in Iowa."

The Congressional Leadership Fund, a political committee linked to House GOP leaders, last month removed a campaign staffer it had sent to Young's district after he came out against the health care bill.

Council Bluffs Republican Jeff Jorgensen said he's been wary of Young, in part because of comments the congressman made supporting aspects of the Affordable Care Act. There's been chatter, but little action, about a potential Republican primary opponent for Young in 2018, he said.

"I'm certainly trying to like the guy," said Jorgensen, a 59-year-old electronics engineer. "His was the position he needed to take. We're satisfied with that. But there can't be any part of Obamacare left in place."

Young's opposition to the bill seemed to have defused some of the tension that marked a suburban Des Moines meeting in February when hundreds shouted at him for an hour. On Wednesday, Trump's budget proposal, gun control, clean water regulations and the looming vote to keep the government running took up a majority of the hour he spent with 50 Des Moines-area constituents in the Iowa State Fairgrounds cattle auction building.

But farmer Spencer made clear voters will be watching on health care.

"Their constituents are not going to let it get away from them," he said.

Is Bannon in peril? Trump comments worry his populist base

By JULIE BYKOWICZ and JILL COLVIN, The Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump has declared: "I am my own strategist." That would seem to bode poorly for his actual strategist, Steve Bannon.

And Trump now appears to be publicly distancing himself.

In an interview with The New York Post, the president said "I like Steve" and called his adviser "a good guy" — but one who wasn't really all that involved with his winning election campaign. He said his warring senior officials, including Bannon, must "straighten it out or I will." In a second interview with The Wall Street Journal, he dismissively called Bannon "a guy who works for me."

The unusual public, lukewarm support from the boss has Bannon's friends and advisers worried he will soon be out of a job. But shedding Bannon would be no simple staff shake-up. More than any other member of Trump's orbit, the former media executive and radio host, known as a bare-knuckle political fighter, has a following all his own. He is viewed by many in the conservative core as the ideological backbone in a White House run by a president who boasts of his flexibility.

"I think it's important to recognize the value of the base. It's important to recognize the base sees their advocate in Steve Bannon," said Michael Caputo, a former Trump campaign adviser who has known the president for decades.

Bannon is not the only Trump official to find himself in the hot seat in a White House divided. Press Secretary Sean Spicer has also come under fire for comments he made about the Holocaust on Tuesday. Spicer has apologized repeatedly, including on Wednesday, and the White House hopes that controversy will pass.

As for Bannon, before joining the campaign last summer as its chief executive officer, he was informally advising Trump. And as leader of the conservative Breitbart News he spent the better part of a year connecting Trump with the populist, nationalist voters who would propel him to victory over 16 Republican opponents and Democrat Hillary Clinton.

In more than half a dozen interviews during the campaign with Bannon on Breitbart's radio show, Trump laid out his vision for leading the country, with Bannon sometimes playing the role of coach.

Bannon, more than any other White House aide, speaks the language of Trump's populist base. He spoke in February of "our sovereignty" as a country and about the new administration's aim for "deconstruction of the administrative state." He also helped write many of Trump's hardest-line speeches.

"It would be a terrible signal if Trump were to either force Bannon out or let him go because he is the face of the national populism that inspired a lot of voter to vote for Trump," said Ned Ryun, founder of the conservative group American Majority and a longtime friend of Bannon's.

"And what makes it even worse right now," Ryun added, "is that people have deep concerns about liberal New York Democrats associated with Goldman Sachs coming in and making strong moves at the White House."

That view cuts to the core of why Bannon might be on the outs at the White House.

He's feuded with Trump's son-in-law-turned-senior-adviser, Jared Kushner, and with economic chief Gary Cohn. Both are New Yorkers who have voted for Democrats. Cohn, the former No. 2 at Goldman Sachs, and fellow Goldman executive Dina Powell, one of Trump's top national security advisers, have been gaining favor with the president.

Last week, Trump removed Bannon from the National Security Council, while Powell appears to be ascendant.

The president's irritation with Bannon could have roots in the adviser's high profile in the early days of the administration. Democrats waged a campaign to brand him as "President Bannon." He appeared on Time magazine's cover and was portrayed on "Saturday Night Live" as the Grim Reaper pulling the president's strings.

Recently, the president has undercut Bannon in front of other senior staffers, including questioning the need for his presence in certain White House meetings.

Bannon is seen as increasingly isolated within the White House, particularly after the health care debacle.

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His hard-line sales pitch to the Freedom Caucus lawmakers — he told the Republicans that the White House-based legislation was not up for debate — was panned inside the West Wing as a major misstep that cost Trump votes. The original travel ban, a Bannon effort, is mired in the courts, and Trump appears to be backing away from some of the economic policies that Bannon championed.

And Bannon's creation of an in-house think tank known as the Strategic Initiatives group has been marginalized. Some staff members initially hired for that project are now part of the Kushner-led Office of American Innovation.

It's Bannon's rift with Kushner that seems to have troubled the president the most.

The 36-year-old and 63-year-old have clashed repeatedly in recent weeks.

Trump has stressed loyalty in his business and political careers and has shown a reluctance to dismiss top aides, even under public pressure. But he also has drawn a line in the past when it comes to his kids.

It's a lesson learned by Trump's first campaign manager, Corey Lewandowski, who was pushed out of his role after clashing with the president's children about the direction of the campaign.

But Bannon's supporters say Kushner's importance doesn't erase Bannon's. Caputo said that Bannon must "fix things" in White House relationships but dismissed as "hype" the belief that he is about to lose his job.

Says Ryun: "Kushner is family. He's not going anywhere," But he adds, "Bannon should not go anywhere either because of what he represents to the voter."

In the end, whoever is advising in the White House, "this will be a Trump presidency," says former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, an informal Trump adviser.

"Trump has been Trump for a long time. And he will continue to be Trump."

AP White House correspondent Julie Pace contributed to this report.

Scientists seek holy grail of climate change in Oman's hills

By SAM McNEIL, Associated Press

WADI ABDAH, Oman (AP) — Deep in the jagged red mountains of Oman, geologists are drilling in search of the holy grail of reversing climate change: an efficient and cheap way to remove carbon dioxide from the air and oceans.

They are coring samples from one of the world's only exposed sections of the Earth's mantle to uncover how a spontaneous natural process millions of years ago transformed CO₂ into limestone and marble.

As the world mobilizes to confront climate change, the main focus has been on reducing emissions through fuel efficient cars and cleaner power plants. But some researchers are also testing ways to remove or recycle carbon already in the seas and sky.

The Hellisheidi geothermal plant in Iceland injects carbon into volcanic rock. At the massive Sinopec fertilizer plant in China, CO₂ is filtered and reused as fuel. In all, 16 industrial projects currently capture and store around 27 million tons of CO₂, according to the International Energy Agency. That's less than 0.1 percent of global emissions — but the technology has shown promise.

"Any one technique is not guaranteed to succeed," said Stuart Haszeldine, a geology professor at the University of Edinburgh who serves on a U.N. climate body studying how to reduce atmospheric carbon.

"If we're interested as a species, we've got to try a lot harder and do a lot more and a lot of different actions," he said.

One such action is underway in the al-Hajjar Mountains of Oman, in a quiet corner of the Arabian Peninsula, where a unique rock formation pulls carbon out of thin air.

Peter Kelemen, a 61-year-old geochemist at Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory, has been exploring Oman's hills for nearly three decades. "You can walk down these beautiful canyons and basically descend 20 kilometers (12 miles) into the earth's interior," he said.

The sultanate boasts the largest exposed sections of the Earth's mantle, thrust up by plate tectonics millions of years ago. The mantle contains peridotite, a rock that reacts with the carbon in air and water to form marble and limestone.

"Every single magnesium atom in these rocks has made friends with the carbon dioxide to form solid

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limestone, magnesium carbonate, plus quartz," he said as he patted a rust-colored boulder in the Wadi Mansah valley.

"There's about a billion tons of CO₂ in this mountain," he said, pointing off to the east.

Rain and springs pull carbon from the exposed mantle to form stalactites and stalagmites in mountain caves. Natural pools develop surface scum of white carbonate. Scratch off this thin white film, Kelemen said, and it'll grow back in a day.

"For a geologist this is supersonic," he said.

He and a team of 40 scientists have formed the Oman Drilling Project in order to better understand how that process works and whether it could be used to scrub the earth's carbon-laden atmosphere. The \$3.5 million project has support from across the globe, including NASA.

Carbon dioxide is the primary greenhouse gas driving climate change, which threatens political instability, severe weather and food insecurity worldwide, according to the United Nations climate body.

Natural CO₂ levels have risen from 280 to 405 parts per million since the Industrial Revolution, and current estimates hold that the world will be 6 C hotter by 2100.

In 2015, 196 nations signed the Paris climate accords, agreeing to curb greenhouse gas emissions to levels that would keep the rise in the Earth's temperature to under 2 C.

That has injected new urgency into the work underway in Oman, where Keleman's team recently spent four months extracting dozens of core samples, which they hope to use to construct a geological history of the process that turns CO₂ into carbonate.

"It's like a jigsaw puzzle," said Nehal Warsi, 33, who oversees the drilling process.

Around 13 tons of core samples from four different sites will be sent to the Chikyu, a state-of-the-art research vessel off the coast of Japan, where Keleman and other geologists will analyze them in round-the-clock shifts.

They hope to answer the question of how the rocks managed to capture so much CO₂ over the course of 90 million years — and to see if there's a way to speed up the timetable.

Kelemen thinks a drilling operation could cycle carbon-rich water into the newly formed seabed on oceanic ridges far below the surface. Just like in Oman's mountains, the submerged rock would chemically absorb carbon from the water. The water could then be cycled back to the surface to absorb more CO₂ from the atmosphere, in a sort of conveyor belt.

Such a project would require years more of testing, but Kelemen hopes the energy industry, with its offshore drilling expertise and deep pockets, will take interest.

"Ultimately, if the goal is to capture billions and billions of tons of carbon, that's where James Cameron comes in," he said, half joking, referring to the "Titanic" and "Avatar" director who has also pioneered undersea technology. Cameron himself piloted a submersible to the deepest point on Earth in 2012 and retrieved samples while filming "Deepsea Challenge."

"He hasn't responded to my messages yet," Kelemen said.

50 years after war, settlements blur future borders

By JOSEF FEDERMAN and KARIN LAUB, Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — For many Israelis, Har Homa is another neighborhood in Jerusalem, served by city bus lines and schools. Its quiet streets are lined with apartment buildings, pizza shops, supermarkets and pharmacies.

But for Palestinians and much of the world, this unassuming neighborhood is far more. It is an illegal settlement in east Jerusalem, and in some ways, the most damaging.

Har Homa lies on one of the last spaces of land linking the Palestinian areas of the West Bank to their hoped-for capital in east Jerusalem. If city planners have their way, Har Homa will soon become one of Jerusalem's largest Jewish neighborhoods, expanding a presence that many believe has already dealt a devastating blow to the Palestinian dream of independence.

"It's a feeling of helplessness," said Aziz Abu Teir, the mukhtar, or community leader, of Umm Tuba, a

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neighboring Palestinian village, as he stared from his balcony at the sprawling rows of apartment buildings across a ravine. "You can do nothing."

This is the first of several stories marking the 50 years since Israel took over the West Bank and east Jerusalem in 1967.

Fifty years after Israel captured east Jerusalem, Israel and the Palestinians remain as divided as ever over the future of the sensitive area, home to major shrines of Judaism, Islam and Christianity. If anything, these conflicting claims are heating up as President Donald Trump has taken office and held talks with Israel about what settlement construction he is willing to tolerate.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, under American pressure to curb some settlement construction in the West Bank, says east Jerusalem will not be included in any understanding with the U.S. In fact, he has vowed to step up settlement activity in east Jerusalem neighborhoods like Har Homa.

"This is our homeland," said Herzl Yechezkel, one of the founding fathers of Har Homa. "And we have to build it up."

Israel captured the West Bank and east Jerusalem from Jordan in the 1967 Mideast war. The Palestinians claim both areas, along with the Gaza Strip, for a future independent state — a position that has wide international backing.

Over the past half century, Israel has built more than 130 settlements throughout the West Bank and more than half a dozen Jewish housing developments ringing east Jerusalem, in moves that many believe are meant to prevent the establishment of a Palestinian state. These settlements today are home to over 600,000 Israelis, roughly one-third of them in east Jerusalem.

While Israel has never staked a formal claim to the West Bank, it says east Jerusalem, home to the city's most important religious sites, is not up for negotiations. It annexed the area, along with neighboring parts of the West Bank, after the 1967 war, and says the entire expanded city is its eternal capital.

In contrast to West Bank Palestinians, those in Jerusalem have Israeli-issued residency documents and can even apply for citizenship. Israel believes that granting these rights bolsters its claim that its Jewish neighborhoods are not settlements.

The Palestinians and international community, however, reject Israel's annexation and say that all land beyond Israel's 1967 boundaries is occupied, and all Israeli communities are illegal settlements. Israel's construction in east Jerusalem has complicated any partition of the city, leaving two unsavory alternatives: no border between Israel and Palestine in a shared future capital, or a border that snakes for great distances around a hodgepodge of Jewish and Arab enclaves.

For the Palestinians, the presence of Har Homa, also known as Homat Shmuel, is especially painful.

Netanyahu, during his first term in office, broke ground on the project in 1997, just four years after a landmark interim peace accord with the Palestinians reached by his more moderate predecessor. He defended the move by citing Israel's claims as the sovereign power and the ancient Jewish connection to Jerusalem. But the project was seen as a sign of bad faith, and led to violent protests and a halt in peace negotiations at the time.

"It was done, on purpose, to prevent a Palestinian capital in Jerusalem," said Menachem Klein, a former Israeli peace negotiator and expert on Jerusalem.

When Israel finally began settling Har Homa in 2002, Yechezkel, a lawyer and community activist, was among the first to move in, ignoring international controversy and a violent Palestinian uprising. Israel has since transformed the once-barren hills of the area into a bustling community of 25,000 people where, like in most east Jerusalem neighborhoods, few people would consider themselves settlers.

Standing proudly on his spacious balcony, Yechezkel pointed across a valley to biblical Bethlehem in the West Bank, neighboring villages and a Christian monastery. If all goes according to plan, he said, that empty valley will soon be covered with hundreds of homes for more Har Homa residents. The goal: to hit

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some 40,000 residents.

"It's a big victory for settling Jerusalem and strengthening Jerusalem. Despite all the screaming and all the demonstrations and all the threats," he said, "at the end of the day, the neighborhood is a big success."

Abu Teir, the mukhtar of Umm Tuba, lives in one of those neighboring Palestinian communities across the ravine. For him, Har Homa's massive presence is a painful sight.

The Palestinians lost more than 150 acres of land to Har Homa. Abu Teir, a 55-year-old British-educated civil engineer, said his village's lands were passed down from generation to generation, and ownership is difficult to document, making it impossible to stop development.

"You feel gutted, and sorrow overwhelms you when you see something like that," he said, as he pointed at apartment buildings he claimed were built on his family's land.

"The land that used to belong to my forefathers suddenly became a settlement specifically for Jewish people. It's not a fair thing," he said. "When did the Israeli government build a housing development for the Arabs?"

After 50 years of Israeli settlement construction, Trump could play a decisive role in determining the future of Jerusalem and any Palestinian state.

Former president Barack Obama took a tough line against the settlements, and just weeks before Trump took office, the U.S. allowed the U.N. Security Council to pass a resolution that declared settlements in the West Bank and east Jerusalem illegal. At the time, Trump condemned the decision.

Throughout his campaign, Trump vowed to take a more sympathetic approach toward Israel and the settlements. His campaign platform made no mention of a Palestinian state, and he vowed to move the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. The family foundation of his son-in-law and close adviser, Jared Kushner, has made donations to settlement causes, and Trump himself donated money to a settlement in the early 2000s, according to U.S. records.

But since taking office, Trump appears to have backtracked. He has said the move of the embassy, which is strongly opposed by the Palestinians, now needs further study. And at a White House meeting with Netanyahu in February, he called for restraint on settlement construction.

Netanyahu, whose governing coalition is dominated by pro-settler hard-line nationalists, recently agreed to limit construction in the West Bank to built-up areas of existing settlements. But the decision did not include east Jerusalem, and earlier, he was quoted by the Haaretz daily saying Jerusalem "does not even enter the equation" in talks with the White House.

Netanyahu often says that settlements are irrelevant to the conflict, claiming that Arab animosity toward a Jewish presence in the Holy Land goes back long before the settlements arrived.

The Palestinians strongly disagree.

"The ones who decided to build these settlements have one thing in mind: ending any possibility for having a Palestinian state in the future," said Samih al-Abed, a former Palestinian border negotiator.

Although the dispute over east Jerusalem is often reduced to tensions surrounding sensitive Jewish and Muslim holy sites in the Old City, the entire area has deep significance for both sides.

For Israelis like Yechezkel, Jerusalem has been the focus of Jewish prayers for thousands of years. Beyond the Temple Mount, the holiest site in Judaism, and the adjacent Western Wall, every corner of the city seems to be connected to an ancient biblical tale. East Jerusalem also serves as an important bridge to the West Bank, known to religious Jews by its biblical name Judea and Samaria.

Yechezkel, like many members of Israel's nationalist right wing, considers east Jerusalem and the West Bank to be one and the same, all part of the biblical Land of Israel promised to the Jews by God.

"I don't differentiate between Judea and Samaria and Jerusalem," he said.

For Palestinians, east Jerusalem is equally important and emotional. They revere the area not only as home to the Al Aqsa Mosque and gold-topped Dome of the Rock, but also see it as a bustling commercial and cultural center. For them, Israel's attempts to separate it from the West Bank, the heartland of any future Palestine, is like robbing the body of a vital organ.

Khalil Tufagji, a Palestinian cartographer and former peace negotiator, believes Har Homa has grown too big to ever evacuate, even if a peace deal is reached.

"When they make facts and reality on the ground, it means that we can't change reality on the ground," he said.

Danny Seidemann, an Israeli expert on Jerusalem who is critical of the settlements, called Har Homa "detrimental" but not necessarily a deal breaker. He said the "doomsday" settlement is the neighboring area of Givat Hamatos — an open area that Israel has made preparations to develop.

"Givat Hamatos would for the first time since 1967 seal a Palestinian area completely, surrounded by Israeli construction," he said.

Yechezkel insists Har Homa has no problems with its Arab neighbors. Its biggest problem, he said, is that the schools and public infrastructure have not been able to keep up with the rapid growth.

Yechezkel, who works as an adviser to Ayelet Shaked, the country's pro-settler justice minister, dreams of expanding Jerusalem's eastern outskirts to nearby Jewish settlements 10 miles (15 kilometers) to the east and putting the idea of Palestinian independence to rest once and for all.

"I think we are only at the beginning of the road," he said. "Our answer to all the critics is construction. We need to build."

Mohammed Daraghmeh contributed reporting.

Michigan capital rescinds calling itself 'sanctuary city'

By JEFF KAROUB and DAVID EGGERT, Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — Michigan's capital on Wednesday reversed a decision to call itself a "sanctuary city" that protects immigrants, bowing to pressure from a business community concerned that the term would draw unwanted attention to Lansing from President Donald Trump's administration and cost the city federal funding.

The City Council voted 5-2 to reverse course just nine days after unanimously deciding to call Lansing a sanctuary. The term "sanctuary city" has no legal definition and varies in application, but it generally refers to jurisdictions that do not cooperate with U.S. immigration officials.

Under Lansing policy set out last week in an order from Mayor Virg Bernero that stays in effect, employees cannot ask about immigration status, except as required by U.S. or Michigan law or a court order. Police also are prohibited from holding immigrants for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement unless federal authorities have a judicial warrant.

"It is not the two words that make this a sanctuary city. We have an executive order right now that protects folks and keeps them and their family intact," said Councilwoman Kathie Dunbar, who opposed dropping the term. The reversal sent a "really sad" message to the community, she said.

"It is a darn shame that after appearing to have a backbone and actually taking a stand on something that really matters, folks have decided to just throw it away," Dunbar said.

The new vote followed 2½ hours of contentious public comment during which more than 70 people spoke for and against the measure. After the vote was taken, immigration advocates shouted "spineless" at the council members. Members of a pro-Trump group also attended and spoke.

Lansing resident Kathy Miles said the 115,000-resident city — the state's sixth-largest — should not declare itself a sanctuary for immigrants in the country illegally.

"How are we going to turn around and tell our citizens to obey our laws yet this portion of people don't have to obey our laws? You're causing chaos," she said.

But Elisabeth Anderson of Lansing urged the council to not "cave to fear" and let down "the most vulnerable of our citizens." She said there is no evidence that Trump will "come for Lansing" or that business interests will be hurt.

After last week's vote, council members received a letter from the Lansing Regional Chamber and Michigan Chamber of Commerce urging them to remove references to "sanctuary city" from its resolution. The

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dispute over the term "sanctuary city" comes as an estimated 200 cities, including New York, Los Angeles and Chicago, have declared such status to protect immigrants. They oppose Trump's crackdown on immigrants who are in the country illegally.

"The term 'sanctuary' in the resolution has become very problematic and distracting — so distracting in my opinion that's it's taken away from the intent of our resolution, which is to protect individuals," said Lansing Councilwoman Judi Brown Clarke, who voted to rescind the measure. "It's basically a 'don't ask' policy."

Before last week, but Lansing called itself a "welcoming city," rather than a "sanctuary city."

Trump has warned that sanctuary cities could lose federal money for refusing to cooperate with immigration authorities. The administration has started publishing weekly reports of local jurisdictions that are not cooperating with federal efforts to find and deport immigrants in the country illegally.

"Recent actions of City Council, whether intended or not, have placed an unnecessary target on the City of Lansing while jeopardizing millions of dollars in federal funding that impacts the city budget," the business groups' letter says.

Of the five members who voted to void the resolution, three switched their stance while two others had missed the vote last week. Some said only the mayor can decide the city's status as a sanctuary. Other concerns included the potential loss of \$6.5 million annually in federal funding and additional city legal fees.

Advocates defend sanctuary policies for fostering a climate in which immigrants without legal status are more willing to report crimes and cooperate with police.

The issue also has touched off debate in the Republican-controlled Michigan Legislature, which is considering banning local governments from enacting or enforcing rules that limit communication and cooperation with federal officials concerning people's immigration status. Similar legislation died in the last session.

Karoub contributed from Detroit.

Online:

Mayor's order: <http://bit.ly/2ouqv4f>

Rescinded resolution: <http://bit.ly/2oZFvZ6>

Conservative group's health ads slam top GOP lawmakers

WASHINGTON (AP) — The conservative Club for Growth is targeting powerful committee chairmen and other top Republicans, part of an aggressive ad campaign to rally support for the GOP's struggling health care overhaul effort.

The television and digital ads, unveiled earlier this week, pressure Republicans to back a revised version of the GOP health care bill that Speaker Paul Ryan abruptly withdrew last month because it lacked the votes. The Trump administration offered a new proposal last week in talks with conservative lawmakers. Under the changes, states could seek federal waivers from requirements under President Barack Obama's health care law that insurers charge healthy and seriously ill consumers the same premiums, and that they cover specified medical services like mental health counseling.

The ads will air in the districts of Rep. Greg Walden, R-Ore., the chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee who was instrumental in pushing for the original health care bill through his panel; Rep. Rodney Frelinghuysen, R-N.J., head of the Appropriations Committee who opposed the GOP bill; and Rep. Patrick McHenry, R-N.C., a chief deputy whip who helps round up votes for leadership.

"President Trump and House conservatives have come together with a new plan," the ad says. "It lowers premiums by giving Illinois the freedom to end Obamacare's costly and ridiculous rules. So, who's standing in the way? Professional politicians like Congressman Greg Walden."

The ad urges viewers to call Walden's office.

Republican moderates and conservatives had mixed reactions to the White House proposal, and Congress left town for a two-week recess without voting on any legislation.

The Republican bill would repeal much of Obama's 2010 law, including tax penalties for people who don't buy policies. It would provide tax credits that would be smaller than Obama's for many lower-earning and older recipients, and would also cut Medicaid, which helps poorer people afford medical care. In a major setback for the GOP, Ryan withdrew the bill after Trump and leadership failed to convince enough House Republicans to back the legislation.

Club officials had said they will spend \$1 million on national ads on television and online.

The ads also will run in the districts of Republican Reps. Chris Collins of New York, Adam Kinzinger of Illinois, Martha McSally of Arizona, Pat Tiberi of Ohio, Charlie Dent and Tim Murphy of Pennsylvania and Evan Jenkins of West Virginia.

Lawmakers try to keep town halls from getting out of control

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI, Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — It was one of the most exclusive tickets in town: Only 800 were made available, and those lucky enough to score one had to show photo ID at the gate, where they were issued a wristband and a number. No signs bigger than a sheet of notebook paper were allowed, so as not to obscure anyone's view.

The rules weren't for a rock concert but for a town hall meeting Wednesday evening between Republican Rep. Mike Coffman and his suburban Denver constituents.

Town halls have become a risky proposition for GOP members of Congress since President Donald Trump's election. Liberal groups and constituents angry about the Trump agenda have flooded public meetings, asking their representatives tough questions, chanting, heckling them and even shouting them down in skirmishes that have made for embarrassing online video.

On Monday, for example, South Carolina Rep. Joe Wilson, who became infamous for yelling "You lie!" at President Barack Obama during a speech to Congress in 2009, was himself confronted at a town hall by constituents chanting, "You lie!"

As a result, some Republicans aren't holding town halls. And some of those who are going ahead with such events are taking steps to keep things from getting out of control.

In Texas, Rep. John Culberson barred signs and noisemakers from a March 24 town hall, required those attending to prove they were constituents by showing utility bills or other documents, and insisted that questions be submitted in advance. He was still shouted down repeatedly by a crowd angry about the GOP push to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

In Arkansas, Rep. French Hill will hold his first town hall of the year on Monday — but in the middle of the afternoon, and with the state's Republican junior senator, Tom Cotton, at his side. Nevada's Dean Heller, one of the more vulnerable GOP senators in 2018, will also hold his first town hall of 2017 on Monday, in the morning. And he, too, is apparently seeking safety in numbers by including Republican Rep. Mark Amodei.

Democrats, for their part, have felt the heat from anti-Trump constituents at town halls and are also taking precautions. Democratic Sen. Kamala Harris of California, for example, is banning signs at her town hall in Los Angeles next week.

Coffman is a politician perennially in the hot seat. His swing district has slightly more Democrats than Republicans, and he is always a top target in elections. For years, he has avoided town halls, instead holding private, one-on-one meetings with constituents during "office hours" at libraries in his district.

In January, one of those events was flooded by hundreds of constituents and activists who filled the library lobby, sang, chanted and demanded Coffman emerge from his private conversations to address them. The congressman ended up slipping out the back.

One of the rules for his Wednesday town hall was no standing in the aisles or blocking entrances and exits.

The contentious town hall was moderated by a local radio host Steffan Tubbs who voted for Coffman and urged hecklers to "respect the guidelines." Coffman earned some cheers when he spoke of his support for rights for gays and immigrants.

But he also got a fair amount of scorn from those who contended he was not standing up enough to Trump.

"When I disagree with the president, I will speak out," Coffman said in response to a pointed question about his support for Trump-backed legislation. "But I'm not going to do it every day.... Those of you on the extreme left will never be satisfied until Trump" leaves office.

Smadar Belkind Gerson, an activist in Coffman's district who was helping to organize protests outside the town hall, said that she was glad Coffman moved to a more open format but that he has a long way to go. The event, she noted, was scheduled to last only an hour -- though Coffman stayed for nearly a second hour -- and Coffman's staff planned to draw numbers to determine which constituent could ask questions.

"Yes, people are upset," Gerson said. "But the more you do this and the more you restrict people, the more they will be upset."

She noted that a Democratic state lawmaker who may challenge Coffman in 2018 planned to hold a town hall on the same campus Wednesday evening with no restrictions on attendance or questions.

Coffman held two town halls via telephone before Wednesday's in-person event. Those appearances are far more controlled, with questions submitted in advance and an operator cutting off the questioner so the politician can respond.

This story has been corrected to show that the Obama speech that was interrupted by Rep. Joe Wilson was not a State of the Union address and that Rep. Culberson's first name is John.

Sculptor of Wall Street's bull wants 'Fearless Girl' moved

By KAREN MATTHEWS, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The sculptor of Wall Street's "Charging Bull" statue on Wednesday demanded the removal of the "Fearless Girl" statue that's faced off against the bull since last month.

Arturo Di Modica said his 11-foot-tall bull is supposed to represent "freedom in the world, peace, strength, power and love" but "Fearless Girl" has turned his work's message into something negative.

"The girl is right in front doing this, 'Now I'm here, what are you going to do?'" Di Modica complained.

An attorney for Di Modica, Norman Siegel, said the 4-foot-tall bronze girl was created as part of an advertising campaign for Boston-based investment firm State Street Global Advisors and its placement opposite the bull exploits the earlier sculpture for commercial gain and negates its positive message.

"The placement of the statue of the young girl in opposition to 'Charging Bull' has undermined the integrity and modified the 'Charging Bull'" Siegel said. "The 'Charging Bull' no longer carries a positive, optimistic message. Rather it has been transformed into a negative force and a threat."

Di Modica's bull has become a familiar icon since he gave it to the city in 1989.

Artist Kristen Visbal's statue of a girl with her hands on her hips was placed on a traffic island facing the bull on March 7.

The work was embraced by tourists and others as a symbol of female empowerment, though some critics questioned the motives of State Street, which said the statue was intended "to celebrate the power of women in leadership and to urge greater gender diversity on corporate boards."

Critics noted that only five members of State Street's 28-person leadership team are women.

"Fearless Girl" was supposed to be a temporary installation celebrating International Women's Day, but given its popularity city officials said it could stay through February 2018.

Siegel, who joined Di Modica and other lawyers at a news conference, said the attorneys sent letters requesting the girl's removal to Democratic Mayor Bill de Blasio and the CEOs of State Street and its advertising firm, McCann Worldgroup.

De Blasio responded on Twitter that men who don't like women taking up space "are exactly why we need 'Fearless Girl.'"

State Street spokeswoman Anne McNally said the firm is reviewing the letter.

McCann spokesman Jeremy Miller said, "We are proud of 'Fearless Girl' and all she stands for in support of women and girls everywhere."

Siegel said he hopes the dispute can be resolved amicably but noted, "We never dismiss the possibility of litigation."

Embattled O'Reilly takes his longest spring break in years

By DAVID BAUDER, AP Television Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Embattled Fox News Channel host Bill O'Reilly, who announced he was going on vacation starting Wednesday and returning April 24, hasn't taken off this much time consecutively in March or April for at least 10 years, an examination of his show's transcripts revealed.

O'Reilly said he likes to take vacation around this time and that he booked this year's break months ago. That would appear to stave off stories that the cable host had been pressured to make himself scarce for a while. His show has seen an advertiser exodus since reports emerged of settlements reached with five women to keep quiet about harassment accusations.

Fox would not discuss whether network executives influenced the duration or timing of his break. O'Reilly's announcement immediately set off speculation about whether cable television's most popular host will return at all.

"I grab some vacation, because it's spring and Easter time," O'Reilly said Tuesday. "Last fall, I booked a trip that should be terrific."

Transcripts over the last decade show O'Reilly has taken at least some time off in March or April every year, although usually they amount to long weekends. He took a week off at the end of March last year. He appeared to be away for six consecutive days in April 2010, although not every night's transcript was available for that time. O'Reilly usually takes vacation time in August, too.

Dana Perino, former White House press secretary under President George W. Bush, substituted for O'Reilly on Wednesday night.

Dozens of advertisers announced they would not run commercials on "The O'Reilly Factor" following a New York Times story on April 2 that the five women have been paid a total of \$13 million in settlements. O'Reilly has denied any wrongdoing.

The amount of ad time by paying customers on his show has since been cut by more than half, an analysis by Kantar Media revealed.

The stories haven't cut into his audience, though. "The O'Reilly Factor" averaged more viewers the week after the report than it did the week before, the Nielsen company said. O'Reilly this year has seen the biggest ratings of his career.

Joe Muto, a former Fox producer who used to work with O'Reilly, said he wouldn't be surprised if the vacation was O'Reilly's idea. The pugnacious O'Reilly is used to political attacks, but is bothered when criticism reaches the broader culture, noting last weekend's "Saturday Night Live" skit with Alec Baldwin impersonating O'Reilly and John Oliver suggesting on HBO that he wanted to buy ad time on O'Reilly's show.

"He has to lay low, and as long as another shoe doesn't drop, it could blow over for him," said Muto, who wrote "An Atheist in the Fox Hole" in 2013 about his experiences as an anonymous "mole" writing his experiences working at Fox.

Since last weekend, Fox's parent 21st Century Fox said it has asked the same law firm that investigated harassment charges against former Fox News chief Roger Ailes last year to look into another woman's claim that spurning O'Reilly's sexual advances slowed her career.

The vacation plans set off a round of palace intrigue. New York magazine reported anonymous sources suggesting some division among the Murdoch family that runs 21st Century Fox. The magazine said that while family patriarch Rupert Murdoch and his son, Lachlan, wanted to keep O'Reilly, son James would like to see him taken off the air. The company declined to comment Wednesday.

The Fox issues have spilled over into Britain, where Murdoch is attempting to gain full control of broadcaster Sky PLC. British media regulator Ofcom is reviewing public interest issues surrounding 21st Century Fox's plan to buy the shares it doesn't already own in Sky. It and the U.K. competition regulator are due to report next month to Culture Secretary Karen Bradley, who will decide whether to approve the takeover.

Fox already owns 39 percent of Sky, a broadcasting and broadband company with operations throughout Europe. An earlier attempt to buy the remaining shares was scuttled by the 2011 phone-hacking scandal that rocked Murdoch's British newspapers.

On Wednesday U.S. online civil liberties group Color of Change wrote to U.K. media regulator Ofcom,

urging it to investigate racial discrimination and sexual harassment at Fox News and 21st Century Fox before allowing the bid for Sky to move forward.

Associated Press writers Hillel Italie in New York, Jill Lawless in London and Lynn Elber in Los Angeles, and researcher Jennifer Farrar in New York contributed to this report.

United to compensate people on flight when man dragged off

By **DON BABWIN, Associated Press**

CHICAGO (AP) — United Airlines sought to quell the uproar over a man being dragged off a plane by announcing on Tuesday that it would no longer ask police to remove passengers from full flights and would compensate customers who were on the flight when the man was removed.

In an interview with ABC's "Good Morning America" aired Wednesday, United parent company CEO Oscar Munoz said he felt "ashamed" watching video of the man being forced off the jet. He has promised to review the airline's passenger-removal policy.

Munoz, who leads United's parent company, apologized again to Kentucky physician David Dao, his family and the other passengers who witnessed him being taken off the flight.

"That is not who our family at United is," he said. "This will never happen again on a United flight. That's my promise."

In the future, law enforcement will not be involved in removing a "booked, paid, seated passenger," Munoz said. "We can't do that."

In an effort to calm the backlash, United also announced that passengers on United Express Flight 3411 would be compensated equal to the cost of their tickets. United spokeswoman Megan McCarthy said Wednesday that the passengers can take the compensation in cash, travel credits or miles.

The flight was loaded and preparing to leave Chicago's O'Hare International Airport on Sunday when the man was dragged off. Video shot by passengers showing the man's bloodied face went viral on social media, prompting a storm of protest.

Also Wednesday, a Chicago alderman said representatives from United and the city's Aviation Department have been summoned before a city council committee to answer questions about the confrontation at O'Hare Airport.

Alderman Mike Zalewski said he did not know who will represent the airline before the Aviation Committee, but Munoz has been notified of the hearing scheduled for Thursday.

Chicago Aviation Commissioner Ginger Evans will also speak.

Munoz called the incident a "system failure" and said United would reassess its procedures for seeking volunteers to give up their seats when a flight is full. United was trying to find seats for four employees, meaning four passengers had to deplane.

It was at least Munoz's fourth statement about the confrontation.

After the video first emerged, he said the airline was reaching out to the man to "resolve this situation."

Hours later on Monday, his tone turned defensive. He described the man as "disruptive and belligerent."

By Tuesday afternoon, almost two days after the Sunday evening events, Munoz issued another apology.

"No one should ever be mistreated this way," Munoz said.

The passenger was identified as Dao, a 69-year-old physician from Elizabethtown, Kentucky.

Attorneys for Dao filed court papers Wednesday asking the airline and the city of Chicago to preserve evidence in the case. Those documents are often the first steps toward a lawsuit. His legal team planned to hold a news conference Thursday to discuss the matter with reporters.

Airport officials have said little about Sunday's events and nothing about Dao's behavior before he was pulled from the jet that was bound for Louisville, Kentucky.

Likewise, the Chicago Aviation Department has said only that one of its employees who removed Dao did not follow proper procedures and has been placed on leave. The department announced Wednesday that two more officers have been placed on leave.

No passengers on the plane have mentioned that Dao did anything but refuse to leave the plane when

he was ordered to do so.

The event stemmed from a common air travel issue — a full flight.

At first, the airline asked for volunteers, offering \$400 and then when that did not work, \$800 per passenger to relinquish a seat. When no one voluntarily came forward, United selected four passengers at random.

Three people got off the flight, but the fourth said he was a doctor and needed to get home to treat patients on Monday. He refused to leave.

That's when three Aviation Department police officers boarded the plane. When Dao refused to leave his seat, one of the officers could be seen grabbing the screaming man from his window seat and dragging him down the aisle by his arms.

Other passengers on Flight 3411 are heard saying, "Please, my God," "What are you doing?" "This is wrong," "Look at what you did to him" and "Busted his lip."

The U.S. Department of Transportation announced Tuesday that it was reviewing Sunday's events to see if United violated rules on overselling flights. The four top-ranking members of the Senate Commerce Committee asked the airline and Chicago airport officials for more information about what happened.

Former Trump campaign chairman to register as foreign agent

By JEFF HORWITZ, CHAD DAY and JULIE PACE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's former campaign chairman Paul Manafort will register with the Justice Department as a foreign agent for lobbying work he did on behalf of political interests in Ukraine, led at the time by a pro-Russian political party, his spokesman said Wednesday.

Manafort is the second Trump campaign adviser to have to register as a foreign agent since the election. The confirmation that he intends to register comes as the Trump administration has been facing heavy scrutiny over the foreign ties of former campaign advisers and other Trump associates.

By registering retroactively, Manafort will be acknowledging that he failed to properly disclose his work to the Justice Department as required by federal law.

The Justice Department rarely prosecutes such violations of the Foreign Agent Registration Act, but Manafort will now have to publicly and specifically detail his foreign agent work. That includes which American government agencies and officials he sought to influence, how he was paid and the details of contracts he signed as part of the work. Before, Manafort had been able to keep much of that information out of public view.

Manafort began discussions with the government about his lobbying activities after Trump hired him in March 2016, Manafort spokesman Jason Maloni said, although it was unclear whether those conversations occurred before or after Trump forced Manafort to resign in August.

Manafort has recently been given guidance by federal authorities related to whether he should register as a foreign agent, Maloni said. Asked by The Associated Press whether Manafort intends to register as a foreign agent, Maloni said: "Yes, he is registering."

Manafort's resignation from the campaign came immediately after the AP had reported that Manafort's consulting firm between 2012 and 2014 orchestrated a covert Washington lobbying operation on behalf of Ukraine's ruling political party without disclosing that it was working as a foreign agent.

Manafort's decision to register as a foreign agent comes about one month after former National Security Adviser Michael Flynn registered with the Justice Department for work he did that could have benefited the Turkish government. The filing came after Trump fired Flynn in February, saying that Flynn had misled administration top officials about his contacts with Russia.

Also this week, the White House has faced questions about the influence of Carter Page, who advised the campaign on foreign policy. The Washington Post reported late Tuesday that the government obtained a secret warrant under the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act last summer to monitor Page's communications.

The White House did not immediately respond to questions about whether Trump was aware that Manafort

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needed to register as a foreign agent.

Earlier Wednesday, one of the Washington lobbying firms that worked on the influence campaign under the direction of Manafort and his former deputy, Rick Gates, itself registered after the fact with the Justice Department as a foreign agent. It acknowledged its work could have principally benefited Ukraine's government. The other firm involved, Mercury LLC, later said it also would register soon as a foreign agent for its work.

Federal prosecutors have been looking into Manafort's work for years as part of an effort to recover Ukrainian assets stolen after the 2014 ouster of Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich, who fled to Russia. No charges have been filed as part of the investigation.

Separately, Manafort is also under scrutiny as part of congressional and FBI investigations into possible contacts between Trump associates and Russia's government under President Vladimir Putin during the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign.

Manafort has said: "I have never been involved with anything to do with the Russian government or the Putin administration or any other issues under investigation," and his spokesman, Maloni, has said there was nothing improper about his political consulting in Ukraine, including how he was paid.

Gates, who has been seen inside the White House on a number of occasions, helped plan Trump's inauguration and until last month was involved in a nonprofit organization, America First Policies, to back the White House agenda. Gates did not respond to text messages left by the AP on Wednesday. His voicemail box was full.

The Podesta Group disclosed details of the lobbying it did from 2012 through 2014 on behalf of a Brussels-based nonprofit, the European Centre for a Modern Ukraine. The lobbying firm, run by the brother of Hillary Clinton presidential campaign chairman John Podesta, reported in its filing that it was paid more than \$1.2 million for its efforts. It cited unspecified "information brought to light in recent months" and conversations with Justice Department employees as the reason for its decision.

Mercury LLC told the AP just hours later that it also intends to file with the Justice Department under the Foreign Agent Registration Act.

In an August interview, Mercury partner Vin Weber told the AP that his firm had never taken guidance from or coordinated with Manafort or Gates about the work. Emails obtained by the AP contradicted that and showed that Gates directly oversaw and guided the lobbying work Mercury conducted.

Asked why Mercury did not consider registering with the Justice Department earlier, Mercury partner Michael McKeon declined to say what had changed.

"I'm not going to get into that," he told the AP. "We relied on our counsel."

The Foreign Agents Registration Act requires people working on behalf of foreign political leaders to disclose their efforts to the Justice Department. Willfully failing to register is a felony, though the department rarely files criminal charges in such cases. It routinely works with lobbying firms to help them get back in compliance by registering and disclosing their work.

The Podesta Group and Mercury had previously disclosed their lobbying work to Congress under the Lobbying Disclosure Act, but neither firm had registered with the Justice Department. A foreign agent registration requires lobbying firms to disclose more details about their work than is required under the congressional registration, including the details of the lobbying contract, individual contacts with American officials and any attempts to influence U.S. public opinion.

In a statement to the AP, Kimberley Fritts, CEO of the Podesta Group, said that the Justice Department's Foreign Agent Registration unit worked with the firm to make sure it was complying with federal law.

"We have, and will continue to have, no hesitation doing so to underscore our commitment to transparency," Fritts said.

Fritts said that the European Centre for a Modern Ukraine had certified to the Podesta Group that it was not a vehicle of a foreign government or political party, which is why the lobbying firm only previously registered with Congress. Fritts did not say what information had been brought to light to change that determination.

The Podesta Group has previously acknowledged to AP that Manafort's firm, DMP International, had

provided guidance about the lobbying effort. It said officials there did not understand that Manafort and Gates were simultaneously being paid by the Party of Regions.

As the AP reported in August, the lobbying effort included not only traditional outreach to politicians in Washington but attempts to influence American public opinion and gather political intelligence on competing lobbying efforts in the U.S. The details of the lobbying effort were detailed in emails obtained by the AP last year.

The new paperwork identified Obama administration officials, legislators, reporters and editorial writers whose offices the lobbyists contacted. They included contacts with congressional leaders including emails and calls to staffers for Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., and Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., both strong supporters at the time of sanctions against Yanukovich's government.

By October 2013, as relations deteriorated between the Obama administration and Yanukovich, the lobbying effort appeared to intensify. Three times that month, for example, Podesta lobbyists contacted staffers for Rep. Eliot Engel, D-N.Y., who had sponsored sanctions legislation.

One of them was Dan Harsha, now associate director of communications at Harvard University's Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation. Harsha said he did not recall specific lobbying conversations but said congressional staffers were aware that the European Center was a pro-Yanukovich entity.

"How many obscure European think tanks were able to hire sophisticated A-list lobbyists?" he said. "It was widely assumed the think tank was a conduit for Yanukovich and it was treated as such on the Hill."

The European Centre did not immediately respond to phone messages and emails from the AP.

Associated Press writer Stephen Braun contributed to this report.

France election: Far-left Melenchon enjoys late poll surge

By ANGELA CHARLTON, Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — With a bleed-the-rich video game and suggestions of a "Frexit," French far-left candidate Jean-Luc Melenchon is rattling financial markets by rising in polls just 11 days before the country's presidential vote.

Melenchon's surge is the latest surprise in a roller-coaster campaign that's being closely watched around Europe and has featured a strong dose of anti-establishment populism.

Most polling agencies still show that centrist Emmanuel Macron and far-right candidate Marine Le Pen are leading ahead of the April 23 first round presidential vote, with the top two vote-getters advancing to the May 7 presidential runoff. Yet Melenchon, once a distant fifth, has risen in recent polls to roughly third, about even with conservative presidential candidate Francois Fillon.

Melenchon's sharp-tongued wit and eloquent anti-capitalist rhetoric during the two presidential debates helped boost his standing among an electorate frustrated with France's traditional left and right parties, which have failed to create jobs or pull the country out of its economic stagnation.

Promising to heavily tax the rich and renegotiate France's role in the EU and trade pacts, Melenchon is also giving financial markets a new reason to worry. A possible French departure from the EU — a "Frexit" — would be devastating to the bloc.

Investors are growing more cautious ahead of the presidential election in the eurozone's second-biggest economy. The difference between the 10-year bond yields of France and Germany has risen to its widest in six weeks, as investors flock to the perceived safety of German debt.

"With the growing threat of Euroskeptic parties destabilizing the eurozone's unity weighing heavily on sentiment, the euro may be in store for further punishment," Lukman Otunuga of FXTM said Wednesday.

Melenchon, 65, is an unlikely iconoclast. He spent decades in mainstream politics, serving in a Socialist government and in parliament. He now leads a far-left alliance that includes the Communist Party.

Yet Melenchon tapped into the populist zeitgeist — and the social media revolution — years ago.

An early Twitter user, he has mastered tweets targeting the world of finance. His YouTube channel — started for the 2012 presidential campaign, where he finished fourth — has garnered 21 million views.

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He's using holograms to broadcast election rallies to multiple cities at once.

And his campaign has generated new attention in recent days thanks to a goofy online game called Fiscal Kombat created by his supporters. The player — represented by a rudimentary caricature of Melenchon — grabs leading politicians and shakes them until money falls from their pockets. The money, presumably stolen from the masses, can then be used to build a more egalitarian economy.

His anti-EU, anti-globalization rhetoric echoes that of Marine Le Pen, his rival on the far right. But on immigration and Islam — key campaign issues — Melenchon is staking out the opposite ground from Le Pen.

At a Mediterranean Sea rally on Sunday, Melenchon held a moment of silence for the thousands of migrants killed trying to cross the sea in hopes of a better life in Europe.

"Listen - it's the silence of death," he told the crowd. "It is up to us to say that emigration is always forced exile, a suffering."

Calling himself the "candidate of peace," he's lobbying to quit NATO and denounced U.S. President Donald Trump's retaliatory missile strikes in Syria as a "criminal, irresponsible act." He's also campaigning hard for renewable energy — and wants French voters to eat more quinoa.

Thanks to his poll surge, Melenchon's rivals are increasingly attacking him instead of each other, saying he'd lead the economy to collapse.

At a rally Wednesday in Lille, Melenchon shot back at his three main rivals, far-right candidate Marine Le Pen, independent centrist Emmanuel Macron — who share the top spot in most polls — and conservative Francois Fillon.

"If you elect those three, you'll be spitting blood," Melenchon told a full house.

Macron, an economy minister who bailed out of his job in the Socialist government, said at a rally in Paul, in southwest France, that only he can unify the nation. "We are the only binding force today for the country because we are the only ones who don't want to break it up."

Some fellow leftists are frustrated that Melenchon and Socialist presidential candidate Benoit Hamon didn't join forces; together they enjoy more poll support than anyone else.

Melenchon's rise is also worrying French President Francois Hollande, a moderate Socialist who's so unpopular that he is not running for re-election.

"This campaign smells bad," Hollande is quoted as saying in an interview being published Thursday in Le Point magazine, warning of the danger of "Melenchon-style" irresponsible populism.

While clearly enjoying the attention, Melenchon is also playing it down.

"I'm doing the work that needs to be done," he told reporters. "It's the voters who will decide."

Comedian Charlie Murphy, brother of Eddie, dies at 57

NEW YORK (AP) — Charlie Murphy, the older brother of Eddie Murphy and a comic performer in his own right who turned encounters with Rick James and Prince into standout sketches on "Chappelle's Show," has died. He was 57.

Murphy died Wednesday in New York of leukemia, according to his representative, Domenick Nati.

He was perhaps best-known for his appearances on Dave Chappelle's Comedy Central show. In the recurring segment "Charlie Murphy's True Hollywood Stories," Murphy would recount how his brother's fame brought him into the orbit of the biggest stars. His versions of the experiences, played out by him, Chappelle and others, became enduring hits.

In one sketch, James is shown as an impulsive big-mouth who keeps spouting, "I'm Rick James, (expletive)!" and trades punches with Murphy. In another, Prince is at first mocked for his frilly shirt but then shows his slick moves on the basketball court. The music legend then serves everyone pancakes.

"Who the (expletive) could make up" those events, Murphy asked at the end of the sketch.

He collaborated with writing his brother's starring films "Norbert" and "Vampire in Brooklyn." He voiced a role in the animated TV series that includes "The Boondocks" and also appeared in the comedy series "Black Jesus."

Fellow celebrities mourned his death.

Comedian Chris Rock tweeted, "We just lost one of the funniest most real brothers of all time." Former

basketball great Magic Johnson tweeted that "I haven't seen anything as funny as Charlie Murphy & Dave Chappelle's skits on the Chappelle's Show!" and "Hamilton" playwright Lin-Manuel Miranda tweeted that Murphy's "storytelling was hilarious and unforgettable."

DL Hughley, who toured with Murphy and other comedians recently, tweeted: "After every gig, he rushed home to be with his kids. He died with gigs on the books."

Murphy's feature films include "Our Family Wedding," "King's Ransom" and "CB4."

He is credited with appearances to air later this year on the Starz TV drama series "Power."

"He joined 'Power' for our upcoming season, and his talent shines in every scene," the channel said in a statement.

Trump says China won't be labeled a currency manipulator

By MARTIN CRUTSINGER, AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Backing away from a campaign pledge, President Donald Trump said Wednesday that his administration won't label China a currency manipulator in a report due this week, though he does think the U.S. dollar "is getting too strong."

Trump also said in an interview at the White House with The Wall Street Journal that he would prefer that the Federal Reserve keep interest rates relatively low.

The president also left open the possibility of re-nominating Janet Yellen for a second four-year term as Fed chair. That would mark another shift from his campaign position that he would likely replace Yellen when her term as chair ends in February next year.

In the interview, Trump said, "I do like a low-interest rate policy, I must be honest with you."

The decision not to label China a currency manipulator represents one of the sharpest reversals of Trump's brief presidency. Trump began to bash China in the 2015 speech that began his campaign, saying Beijing kept its currency artificially low to give its manufacturers an unfair advantage in global trade.

A weaker Chinese currency, relative to the dollar for example, makes Chinese goods more affordable for American consumers and U.S. goods more expensive in China.

"China is killing us," Trump had complained on the campaign trail. "They're devaluing their currency to a level that you wouldn't believe. It makes it impossible for our companies to compete."

As a candidate, Trump pledged to instruct his Treasury secretary to label China a currency manipulator immediately after he took office.

But in Wednesday's published interview with the Journal, Trump said he had changed his mind because he now believes that China hasn't been manipulating its currency for months and because labeling Beijing a manipulator might jeopardize his talks with the Chinese on confronting the threat of North Korea.

"They're not currency manipulators," Trump said.

On the dollar's overall value against major trading partners, Trump said: "I think our dollar is getting too strong, and partially that's my fault because people have confidence in me. But that's hurting — that will hurt ultimately."

"It's very, very hard to compete when you have a strong dollar and other countries are devaluing their currency," the president said.

The dollar began rising in value in mid-2014, a trend that has exerted a drag on U.S. exports.

Trump was highly critical of Yellen during the fall campaign, accusing her of keeping borrowing rates low to help Democrats.

But asked during the Journal interview whether Yellen would be "toast" when her term ends next year, Trump said, No. not toast."

"I like here, I respect her," Trump said, noting that the two have met since he took office for an Oval Office discussion.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, who sat in on part of the Journal interview, said Trump was "very close" to nominating a Fed vice chairman to oversee bank supervision and filling another seat that will go to a community banker.

"We think it is very important," to have a community banker on the Fed board, Mnuchin said. With the departure last week of Daniel Tarullo, a Fed board member, Trump now has the chance to fill three of the seven seats of the board. Two seats have been vacant for over a year because the Republican-led Senate had refused to take up the two nominees during Barack Obama's presidency.

Russia vetoes UN resolution to condemn Syria chemical attack

By EDITH M. LEDERER, Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Russia vetoed a Western-backed U.N. resolution Wednesday that would have condemned the reported use of chemical weapons in a town in northern Syria and demanded a speedy investigation into the attack that killed nearly 90 people.

The vote on the Security Council resolution drafted by Britain, France and the United States was 10 in favor, Russia and Bolivia against, and China, Kazakhstan and Ethiopia abstaining.

Russia's U.N. Ambassador Vladimir Safronkov told the council before the vote that during talks in Moscow Russia asked for an independent international investigation to examine the April 4 attack on Khan Sheikhoun. He said U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson is considering the request.

Russia has criticized previous investigations carried out by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and the United Nations which blamed the Syrian government for at least three chemical weapons attacks. Safronkov has repeatedly called for an independent investigation with experts drawn from a much broader group of countries.

"We are convinced that we need to have a full and immediate investigation, and the possibilities for that have not been exhausted," Safronkov said after the vote, accusing the resolution's sponsors of jumping to conclusions about responsibility before a full-fledged investigation.

The United States, Britain and France have pointed a finger at the Syrian government saying their experts have found that nerve agents were used in the April 4 attack.

Looking at the resolution's supporters sitting around the horseshoe-shaped table in the Security Council, Safronkov said: "You are afraid of an impartial investigation."

Britain's U.N. Ambassador Matthew Rycroft said it was Russia's eighth veto in support of President Bashar Assad's regime and asked: "How could anyone look at the faces of lifeless children" and yet veto this resolution?

France's U.N. Ambassador Francois Delattre said "with this attack, the Syrian regime has plumbed new depths of horror."

Russia's Safronkov called the U.S. strikes on a Syrian air base in retaliation for the Khan Sheikhoun a provocation, but Delattre said they were "a legitimate response to a mass crime which could not go unpunished."

China typically sides with Russia in the Security Council, including in opposing U.S.-backed measures to punish Syria for its use of chemical weapons. So China's decision to abstain rather than join Russia in vetoing the resolution at this time was a significant shift for Beijing.

It came days after Chinese leader Xi Jinping held his first meeting with President Donald Trump at a summit in Florida last week.

In an interview with Fox News aired Wednesday, Trump said he broke the news of the U.S. missile strike on Syria during a dinner with Xi and that the Chinese leader "was OK with it" because it was in response to the use of "gases" and victims had included young children and babies.

Jennifer Peltz at the United Nations and Matthew Pennington in Washington contributed to this report

Police probe terror in Dortmund; team loses 3-2 after attack

By MIKE CORDER and GEIR MOULSON, Associated Press

DORTMUND, Germany (AP) — German authorities arrested a suspected Islamic extremist Wednesday in their investigation into a bomb attack on a top German soccer team, while the team — missing a defender

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wounded in the blasts — lost 3-2 to Monaco in a hastily rescheduled Champions League match.

Amid heightened security, the defeat for Borussia Dortmund in Europe's top club competition came less than 24 hours after three explosions shattered a window of the team's bus and rattled nerves across the gritty city in western Germany.

Dortmund coach Thomas Tuchel said after the loss that he felt European soccer's governing body, UEFA, had not taken the attack seriously enough as it swiftly rescheduled the match.

"We weren't asked at all at any time," Tuchel said. "Basically, we had the feeling that we were being treated as if a beer can had hit our bus, and half an hour later the decision was there that (it would be) tomorrow at 6.45 p.m. ... That gives you a feeling of powerlessness."

Armed police officers in body armor patrolled the streets around Dortmund's stadium Wednesday night as locals and visiting fans mingled in a subdued atmosphere.

Supporters were banned from bringing backpacks to the match and some were frisked — with security officials even checking under their hats. During the match, small knots of armed police guarded access to the stands.

Earlier in the day, Frauke Koehler, a spokeswoman for German federal prosecutors, said investigators are focusing on two suspected Islamic extremists in the bus attack and searched their homes, arresting one of them. But authorities said other motives are possible.

Investigators are still trying to determine how the metal-packed devices were detonated and what explosive substance was used.

They also found three copies of a note at the scene of the blasts, which demanded the withdrawal of German Tornado reconnaissance jets that are assisting the fight against the Islamic State group and the closure of the U.S. Ramstein Air Base in Germany, Koehler said.

But the region's top security official raised the possibility the note could be "an attempt to lay a false trail."

"We are investigating in every direction," said Ralf Jaeger, the interior minister of North Rhine-Westphalia state.

Tobias Plate, a spokesman for Germany's Interior Ministry, said notes claiming responsibility haven't been a feature of past Islamic extremist attacks.

Koehler also said there were "significant doubts" about a second claim of responsibility on the internet suggesting a left-wing extremist motive.

As the investigation continued, the match delayed by the blasts got underway.

Dortmund was without Spanish central defender Marc Bartra, who underwent surgery for injuries to his wrist and arm after the three devices packed with metal pins detonated close to the team bus Tuesday night.

Before kickoff, his teammates honored Bartra by wearing yellow T-shirts bearing his image and the message in Spanish: "A lot of strength — we are with you." The stadium announcer called out the Spanish defender's first name three times and the crowd roared "Bartra!" in response.

Clearly missing Bartra in defense and possibly still shocked by the attack on their bus, Dortmund conceded two goals in the first 35 minutes.

The team fought back after the break, to make it 2-1 in the 57th minute before Kylian Mbappe scored his second of the evening in the 79th minute for Monaco. Shinji Kagawa cut the deficit in the 84th minute, but it was not enough to save Dortmund from defeat.

"It was very difficult for the team to focus on the game. We let the players decide if they wanted to play today. But we noticed that training did us good," Dortmund coach Tuchel said.

"Up until kickoff, I had everything in my head, just not soccer," Dortmund midfielder Nuri Sahin said. "I know soccer is important, but we are only human."

Chancellor Angela Merkel branded the attack "a repugnant act" and praised the "great solidarity" shown by both teams' fans. German Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere attended Wednesday's match.

UEFA, European soccer's governing body, increased security for all three Champions League games on Wednesday.

Dortmund's compact stadium, packed with raucous home fans dressed in the team's distinctive black and

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yellow colors, is usually an intimidating venue for visiting teams, but both sets of supporters were united in their disgust at the attack. Some Monaco fans bunked down Tuesday night at the homes of strangers in Dortmund who offered them a place to sleep after the match was postponed.

Monaco fan Olivier Pourcel used the hashtag "Bedforawayfans" to find a place to sleep and in the process made a new friend.

"One of the Dortmund supporters sent me his message and invited me to his place, so we had a beer together. We had fun, and it was really nice, a good experience," Pourcel said. "I have his number, he has mine, and when he will visit me in France, I will welcome him at my place."

Before the match, Monaco fans even cheered Dortmund players as they checked out the pitch — and Dortmund fans responded by applauding rival supporters.

Dortmund is one of Germany's most popular soccer teams and a regular contender for the Bundesliga title, which it last won in 2012. It is in fourth place with six games left to play this season, 18 points behind leader Bayern Munich, Germany's dominant club of recent years.

Team flags flapped throughout the city Wednesday and dozens of fans gathered in a wind-swept parking lot outside the team's training complex in the morning, where four young women drew "You'll Never Walk Alone" in black markers.

Moulson reported from Berlin. Mark Carlson in Dortmund and David McHugh in Frankfurt contributed to this report.

Hydrogen fuel cell cars creep up _ slowly _ on electrics

By DEE-ANN DURBIN, AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — Hydrogen fuel cell cars could one day challenge electric cars in the race for pollution-free roads — but only if more stations are built to fuel them.

Honda, Toyota and Hyundai have leased a few hundred fuel cell vehicles over the past three years, and expect to lease well over 1,000 this year. But for now, those leases are limited to California, which is home to most of the 34 public hydrogen fueling stations in the U.S.

Undaunted, automakers are investing heavily in the technology. General Motors recently supplied the U.S. Army with a fuel cell pickup, and GM and Honda are collaborating on a fuel cell system due out by 2020. Hyundai will introduce a longer-range fuel cell SUV next year.

"We've clearly left the science project stage and the technology is viable," said Charles Freese, who heads GM's fuel cell business.

Like pure electric cars, fuel cell cars run quietly and emission-free. But they have some big advantages. Fuel cell cars can be refueled as quickly as gasoline-powered cars. By contrast, it takes nine hours to fully recharge an all-electric Chevrolet Bolt using a 240-volt home charger. Fuel cells cars can also travel further between fill-ups.

But getting those fill-ups presents the biggest obstacle. Fueling stations cost up to \$2 million to build, so companies have been reluctant to build them unless more fuel cell cars are on the road. But automakers don't want to build cars that consumers can't fuel.

The U.S. Department of Energy lists just 34 public hydrogen fueling stations in the country; all but three are in California. By comparison, the U.S. has 15,703 public electric charging stations, which can be installed for a fraction of the cost of hydrogen stations. There are also millions of garages where owners can plug their cars in overnight.

As a result, U.S. consumers bought nearly 80,000 electric cars last year, but just 1,082 fuel cell vehicles, according to WardsAuto.

That's why automakers will keep hedging their bets and offer electric vehicles alongside hydrogen ones.

Honda began leasing the 2017 Clarity fuel cell sedan earlier this year; about 100 are already on the road. At this week's New York Auto Show, the company also introduced electric and plug-in hybrid versions of the Clarity.

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The plug-in hybrid can go 42 miles in electric mode before a small gas engine kicks in, Honda says. The all-electric Clarity can go 111 miles on a charge. Both will go on sale later this year.

"We think going forward the powertrain market is going to be very diverse," said Steve Center, vice president of the environmental business development office at American Honda.

Fuel cell cars create electricity to power the battery and motor by mixing hydrogen and oxygen in the specially treated plates that combine to form the fuel cell stack.

The technology isn't new. GM introduced the first fuel cell vehicle, the Electrovan, in 1966. It only seated two; the back of the van housed large steel tanks of hydrogen and oxygen. It went about 150 miles between refuelings, and its hydrogen tank exploded on at least one occasion.

Advances in hydrogen storage, fuel cell stacks and batteries have allowed engineers to significantly shrink those components to fit neatly inside a sedan. Oxygen is now collected from the air through the grille, and hydrogen is stored in aluminum-lined, fuel tanks that automatically seal in an accident to prevent leaks. Reducing the amount of platinum used in the stack has made fuel cell cars less expensive.

Honda's new Clarity can go 366 miles between fuelings, the longest range in the industry.

The Clarity leases for \$369 per month for 36 months. That's more than the \$354 monthly lease payment for the Chevrolet Bolt electric. But Honda, Toyota and Hyundai are all throwing in free hydrogen refueling. It costs between \$13 and \$16 per kilogram for hydrogen, or up to \$80 to fill the Clarity's 5-kilogram capacity, according to the U.S. Energy Department.

Even with that perk, analysts think sales of fuel cell vehicles will be limited until more fueling stations are built. But carmakers will still invest in fuel cells. GM's Freese says there are many applications beyond cars, including unmanned, deep-sea vehicles or backup home power systems.

"One of the reasons global car companies do something like this is they want to have a finger in the pie. Should we suddenly have to shift over, they want to be able to do it," said Jack Nerad, an executive market analyst with Kelley Blue Book.

The number of fueling stations could also grow quickly if automakers partner with governments and energy companies, as they have done in California. Earlier this year, 13 companies — including Shell and BMW — formed a council to accelerate the adoption of hydrogen as a transportation fuel.

Heather McLaughlin of San Ramon, California, was one of the first customers to lease a 2017 Clarity. She says she prefers a fuel cell car over an electric because she can refuel it in minutes. And one fill-up a week more than covers her 50-mile daily commute to Benicia, where she serves as the city attorney.

She recently drove the Clarity to Southern California and found plenty of stations along her route.

"I like the innovation," said McLaughlin. "It helps if we can have more of these on the road."

Phones and social media turn consumers into whistleblowers

By MAE ANDERSON, AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Look out, Corporate America. Customers armed with smartphones and video cameras are watching when you screw up.

The viral video of a ticketed passenger dragged forcefully off a United flight is only the latest example of bad behavior exposed in the age of social media.

In February, Uber came under fire after a driver posted video of CEO Travis Kalanick berating him. Earlier, a Comcast technician was shown in a video sleeping on a customer's couch, and an audio recording chronicled one man's herculean efforts to drop Comcast service; they are among the embarrassing customer complaints that ultimately forced improvements. FedEx had to respond after video showed a driver carelessly throwing a package with a computer monitor over the front gate. Beyond the corporate sphere, smartphone videos of police brutality have prompted protests and investigations.

Not long ago, such incidents might have gotten a mention on the local news at most, and quickly disappeared. But smartphone cameras and social media have democratized information and shifted power to consumers. Companies can no longer sweep complaints under the rug.

"That's something a lot of companies just don't get," said Paul Argenti, a professor of corporate com-

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munications at Dartmouth's Tuck School of Business. "Companies still operate as if they can hide things and make believe something didn't happen."

REWRITING THE PLAYBOOK

Companies can't eliminate embarrassing gaffes entirely, but can learn from past blunders to minimize the damage.

It starts with training. Employees need to be ready to react when a situation gets dramatic — and companies should emphasize that anything employees do could be recorded. That's especially true for transportation, fast-food and other companies with a lot of employees who interact directly with large numbers of customers.

Running through hypothetical scenarios helps.

"Have a couple things planned, what we should do if 'x' happens and what we should do if 'y' happens," said Lakshman Krishnamurthi, a Kellogg School of Management marketing professor.

On-site employees need to be given more power to respond to avoid escalating an incident, especially one that might be recorded. In United's case, for instance, even if employees were following the rules for seeking volunteers to give up seats, they should have been able to read the situation and increase the financial incentives for volunteers rather than drag a passenger off a flight.

"You need rules, but you need to be flexible and adapt," Argenti said.

BLOCK AND TACKLE

Once a video is out there, the standard PR-crisis response remains the same as it always has: Work swiftly to correct the situation in the eyes of the public.

"Apologize, talk about why it happened, and say it will never happen again," Argenti said.

United CEO Oscar Munoz eventually apologized, but not for two days and after first blaming the customer and airport security. And once a video goes viral, companies have to cede control of the narrative. "When the video is out there, don't try to countermand what the video says," said Herman Leonard, a professor of business administration at Harvard.

In the past, companies had hours or days to respond to a crisis. Now, companies must respond immediately, before a scandal spins out of control on social media.

For example, when Domino's Pizza employees posted a YouTube video of workers defacing sandwiches in 2009, the employees were quickly fired, the store was inspected and the CEO apologized. That helped mitigate some, if not all of the damage.

Similarly, after TV cameras shot video of rats scurrying through a KFC/Taco Bell in Manhattan, parent company Yum closed 10 of its New York City restaurants and hired a leading rat expert to review the company's standards.

LESSONS (NOT) LEARNED

In 2009, musician Dave Carroll had a guitar he checked destroyed during a flight. At first United said Carroll wasn't eligible for compensation, which caused a frustrated Carroll to write a song and book about it, both called "United Breaks Guitars." Carroll's online video of his song was so popular that "Time" named it one of the top viral videos of 2009. It became a business case study of how social media can harm a company's image.

If the lesson from that episode was to be more responsive to customers, United didn't learn it.

"It was 'United Breaks Guitars,' now it's 'United Breaks People,'" said Richard Levick, a crisis management consultant.

Despite the newfound empowerment from social media, however, consumers have one thing against them: a short memory. They may remember the incident, but brand names fade and consumers will soon move on to the next PR flap, branding consultant Laura Ries said. This limits the changes companies must really make before moving on.

"Soon people won't remember which company was the offender. They'll think, 'Was it Delta, or American? I'm not sure. It was one of the airlines,'" she said. "People do tend to have short memories. There's going to be another company that has some disaster like this."

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Million-dollar teachers: Cashing in by selling their lessons

By CAROLYN THOMPSON, Associated Press

Miss Kindergarten is in the million-dollar club. So are Lovin Lit, the Moffatt Girls and about a dozen other teacher-entrepreneurs who are spinning reading, math, science and social studies into gold by selling their lesson plans online to fellow teachers around the world.

Despite worries from some educators, such online marketplaces are booming, driven by rising standards and the willingness of teachers to pay out of their own pockets for classroom-tested materials.

"I am so thankful and blessed that it came into my life and that my passion and career can kind of mesh into one," says Miss Kindergarten, aka 32-year-old Hadar Hartstein, of Lake Forest, California, who says she has earned more than \$1 million in sales over the past six years, enough to take this year and maybe the next few off from her teaching job to be with her newborn daughter.

Her more than 300 offerings on the popular Teachers Pay Teachers site range from free alphabet flash cards and a \$1.50 Popsicle party counting activity to a \$120 full-year unit on math and literacy, all of them widely promoted on her blog and social media accounts.

"You definitely have to look at it as another full-time job," she says. "You have to put a lot of effort into it."

Teachers Pay Teachers contends that it hit a milestone last year, when its 80,000 contributors earned more than \$100 million, and that at least a dozen have become millionaires since the site launched a decade ago. Other major sites including Teachwise and Teacher's Notebook, and recently such corporate players as Houghton Mifflin Harcourt and Amazon, have launched sites of their own.

But some educators worry the increasing monetizing of lessons will stifle the longstanding practice of teachers freely sharing their ideas. And legal experts question whether teachers actually have ownership of the lessons they are selling.

For teachers buying the materials, however, it's a major time saver, allowing them to reclaim the nights and weekends otherwise spent starting lessons from scratch, often for no more than the price of their morning coffee.

Ann Arbor, Michigan, middle school teacher Samantha Cucu said that when she first started teaching three years ago, she created her own materials but was swayed by colleagues who made a compelling argument: "Why are you reinventing the wheel?"

She has since bought about 120 resources and gotten 132 others from Teachers Pay Teachers' free offerings.

"Sometimes they're super-easy small purchases, like \$1.20 here, \$2.50 there, and sometimes they're larger. I try not to spend over \$15," says Cucu who estimated that her prep time for school plummets from 20 to 30 hours a week to two hours if she can find what she needs online.

"It's huge," says Cucu, who has a year-old baby.

At Teachers Pay Teachers, teachers set their own prices for 2.5 million resources and give a commission to the site. With a \$59.95 premium membership, the commission is 15 percent. With a free basic membership, it's 40 percent.

"My first sale was 80 cents. It was the best 80 cents I've made in my entire life!" says Mary Beth Nerone, who has been stocking her online store, Brain Waves Instruction, on the site with writing, poetry and other exercises for three years after budget cuts eliminated her job as a middle-school language arts teacher near Rochester, New York.

"Some people are psyched and say I get Starbucks money each week ... some people get to a space where they can meet or surpass their teaching income," Nerone says. "And some people get to a space beyond their wildest dreams of income."

Teachers trust and support other teachers, says Hanna Hudson, editorial director of the We Are Teachers online bulletin board, and accessing individual resources from the web is less expensive and easier than going to the district for new textbooks or resources.

"Honestly, it's going after the money that teachers are spending out of their own pockets on their classroom," Hudson says.

But Bob Farrace, spokesman for the National Association of Secondary School Principals, says taking

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"proprietary rights over ideas and lessons" could disrupt the traditional collaborative atmosphere of schools. "You want teachers to collaborate and share ideas freely."

In fact, some school districts have language in their teaching contracts that bar teachers from selling their lesson plans.

Some legal experts argue that the resources teachers produce while working for a school district may actually be the property of the school district.

Mark Bartholomew, who teaches copyright law at the University at Buffalo, says that without explicit contract language, the law looks at factors such as whether products were created within the scope of employment or on a person's own time.

A federal court in New York sided with the Cherry Valley-Springfield school district in 2004 after a suspended teacher tried to claim ownership of tests, quizzes and homework problems left behind in his classroom that he said were prepared outside normal hours. The U.S. Court of Appeals agreed the district owned the materials because the teacher made them for his job.

"I never created anything that I was selling while in the classroom," says "Miss Kindergarten" Hartstein. "As a kindergarten teacher, I rarely even had time to sit down and take a breath."

Hartstein says she never looked at selling lessons as a path to riches but as a way for others to learn and benefit from her experience.

"If a teacher is already making a resource for her students and it's super successful in her classroom, then why not post it for other students to use? And if you make something off of it, awesome."

Thompson reported from Pittsford, New York. Associated Press video journalist Amanda Lee Myers in Los Angeles contributed.

Asian shares mixed as Trump talks down US dollar

By **JOE McDONALD, AP Business Writer**

BEIJING (AP) — Asian stock markets were mixed Thursday after U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew a threat to declare China a currency manipulator. Trump's comment that the U.S. dollar was getting too strong helped push the yen higher, hurting Japanese exporters' shares.

KEEPING SCORE: Tokyo's Nikkei 225 fell 1.0 percent to 18,362.43 and Hong Kong's Hang Seng lost 0.1 percent to 24,296.85. The Shanghai Composite Index edged 0.1 percent higher to 3,277.88. Sydney's S&P-ASX 200 retreated 0.8 percent to 5,885.50 while Seoul's Kospi added 0.4 percent to 2,137.05. Benchmarks in Taiwan and Jakarta gained, while Singapore and New Zealand slipped.

WALL STREET: Industrial, materials and energy companies led U.S. stocks modestly lower before markets were due to be closed Friday for a holiday. That extended losses for the month as investors waited for a round of earnings reports to start this week. Utilities, phone companies and other high-dividend stocks were among the biggest gainers. The Dow Jones industrial average fell 0.3 percent to 20,591.86 and the Nasdaq composite index lost 0.5 percent, to 5,836.16. The Standard & Poor's 500 index slid 0.4 percent, to 2,344.93.

TRUMP WATCH: U.S. President Donald Trump said he won't declare China a currency manipulator, dropping a key campaign promise. In a newspaper interview and a White House news conference, Trump hailed the rapport he developed with his Chinese counterpart, Xi Jinping, in meetings last week that seem to have eased trade tensions. A declaration that China manipulates the exchange rate of its yuan to gain a trade advantage could have opened the way to sanctions. "They're not currency manipulators," Trump told The Wall Street Journal, saying Beijing hadn't been cheating on its currency for months.

DOLLAR TALK: On the dollar's overall value against major trading partners, Trump said: "I think our dollar is getting too strong, and partially that's my fault because people have confidence in me." He added that "It's very, very hard to compete when you have a strong dollar and other countries are devaluing their currency." Those remarks helped push the yen to its highest level since mid-November, just after the presidential election.

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ANALYST VIEWPOINT: "After a few weeks of relative calm, the 'Trump hurricane' is back to disrupt the tranquility in the currency markets," Margaret Yang of CMC Markets said in a commentary. "I describe Trump's influence on currencies as a hurricane as it's both harmful and unpredictable. It is debatable whether Trump can have both a weak currency and massive fiscal stimulus at the same time."

CHINA TRADE: China's export growth accelerated in March while import growth moderated to still-robust double-digit levels in upbeat news for Chinese economic growth and global demand. Customs data show exports rose 16.4 percent from a year earlier to \$180.6 billion, up from 4 percent growth in the first two months of the year. Imports rose 20.3 percent to \$156.6 billion, down from the January-February rate of 26.4 percent.

ENERGY: Benchmark U.S. crude sank 7 cents to \$53.04 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract fell 29 cents on Wednesday to \$53.11. Brent crude, used to price international oils, shed 5 cents, to \$55.81. It lost 37 cents the previous session to \$55.86.

CURRENCY: The dollar declined to 108.84 yen from Wednesday's 109.03 yen. The euro edged up to \$1.0670 from \$1.0665.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Thursday, April 13, the 103rd day of 2017. There are 262 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 13, 1742, "Messiah," the oratorio by George Frideric Handel featuring the "Hallelujah" chorus, had its first public performance in Dublin, Ireland.

On this date:

In 1613, Pocahontas, daughter of Chief Powhatan, was captured by English Capt. Samuel Argall in the Virginia Colony. (During a yearlong captivity, Pocahontas converted to Christianity and ultimately opted to stay with the English.)

In 1743, the third president of the United States, Thomas Jefferson, was born in Shadwell in the Virginia Colony.

In 1861, at the start of the Civil War, Fort Sumter in South Carolina fell to Confederate forces.

In 1917, American business tycoon James "Diamond Jim" Brady, known for his jewelry collection as well as his hearty appetite, died in Atlantic City, New Jersey at age 60.

In 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt dedicated the Jefferson Memorial in Washington, D.C. on the 200th anniversary of the third American president's birth.

In 1953, "Casino Royale," Ian Fleming's first book as well as the first James Bond novel, was published in London by Jonathan Cape Ltd.

In 1964, Sidney Poitier became the first black performer in a leading role to win an Academy Award for his performance in "Lilies of the Field."

In 1967, the movie "Casino Royale," a star-studded James Bond spoof very loosely based on the Ian Fleming novel, had its world premiere in London.

In 1970, Apollo 13, four-fifths of the way to the moon, was crippled when a tank containing liquid oxygen burst. (The astronauts managed to return safely.)

In 1986, Pope John Paul II visited the Great Synagogue of Rome in the first recorded papal visit of its kind to a Jewish house of worship.

In 1992, the Great Chicago Flood took place as the city's century-old tunnel system and adjacent basements filled with water from the Chicago River. "The Bridges of Madison County," a romance novel by Robert James Waller, was published by Warner Books.

In 1997, Tiger Woods, at age 21 years and 3½ months, became the youngest player to win the Masters Tournament by a record 12 strokes at Augusta National Golf Club.

Ten years ago: A day after a dining hall suicide bombing claimed by al-Qaida, Iraq's parliament met in

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an extraordinary session on a Friday, the Muslim day of prayer, to declare it would not bow to terrorism; a bouquet of red roses and a white lily sat in the place of a lawmaker who was killed in the attack.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama arrived in Cartagena, Colombia, to attend the Summit of the Americas; however, the visit was overshadowed by a prostitution scandal involving a group of Secret Service agents and officers who had gone to Cartagena to prepare for the president's trip. North Korea's much-touted satellite launch ended in a nearly \$1 billion failure. (The North succeeded in launching a satellite eight months later.) Jennifer Capriati was elected to the International Tennis Hall of Fame.

One year ago: President Barack Obama visited CIA headquarters, where he claimed progress in the U.S.-led fight against the Islamic State group. U.S. officials accused Russian attack planes of buzzing a U.S. Navy destroyer in the Baltic Sea multiple times during the previous two days. A task force issued a report which said that Chicago police had "no regard for the sanctity of life when it comes to people of color." A judge in Fort Worth, Texas ordered 19-year-old Ethan Couch, who had used an "affluenza" defense in a fatal drunken-driving wreck, to serve nearly two years in jail. The Golden State Warriors became the first 73-win team by beating the Memphis Grizzlies 125-104, breaking the 1996 72-win record of the Chicago Bulls. Kobe Bryant scored 60 points in his final game, wrapping up 20 years in the NBA in Los Angeles' 101-96 victory over Utah.

Today's Birthdays: Movie director Stanley Donen (DAH'-nehn) is 93. Former Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, R-Colo., is 84. Actor Lyle Waggoner is 82. Actor Edward Fox is 80. Actor Paul Sorvino is 78. Rhythm-and-blues singer Lester Chambers is 77. Movie-TV composer Bill Conti is 75. Rock musician Jack Casady is 73. Actor Tony Dow is 72. Singer Al Green is 71. Actor Ron Perlman is 67. Actor William Sadler is 67. Singer Peabo Bryson is 66. Bandleader/rock musician Max Weinberg is 66. Bluegrass singer-musician Sam Bush is 65. Rock musician Jimmy Destri is 63. Singer-musician Louis Johnson (The Brothers Johnson) is 62. Comedian Gary Kroeger is 60. Actress Sandra Santiago is 60. Sen. Bob Casey Jr., D-Pa., is 57. Rock musician Joey Mazzola (Sponge) is 56. Chess grandmaster Garry Kasparov is 54. Actress Page Hannah is 53. Actress-comedian Caroline Rhea (RAY) is 53. Rock musician Lisa Umbarger is 52. Rock musician Marc Ford is 51. Reggae singer Capleton is 50. Actor Ricky Schroder is 47. Rock singer Aaron Lewis (Staind) is 45. Actor Bokeem Woodbine is 44. Singer Lou Bega is 42. Actor-producer Glenn Howerton is 41. Actor Kyle Howard is 39. Actress Kelli Giddish is 37. Actress Courtney B. Vance is 36. Pop singer Nellie McKay (mih-KY') is 35. Rapper/singer Ty Dolla \$ign is 35. Actress Allison Williams is 29. Actress Hannah Marks is 24.

Thought for Today: "The excursion is the same when you go looking for your sorrow as when you go looking for your joy." — Eudora Welty, American author (born this date in 1909, died 2001).