

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 274 ~ 1 of 40

- 1- Recycling trailers
- 1- Midwest Masonry Ad
- 1- Andover house for sale
- 2- Elementary addition torn down
- 3- Grant for StoryBook Land Festival
- 5 - Noem's Weekly Column
- 6- The power of the arts: one South Dakota's story
- 7- Deer Management Plan
- 8- Today in Weather History
- 9- Local Weather Forecast
- 10- Yesterday's Groton Weather
- 10- Today's Weather Climate
- 10- National Weather map
- 11 - Daily Devotional
- 12 - News from the Associated Press

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

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**

© 2017 Groton Daily Independent

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.

Sunday, April 16

EASTER SUNDAY

St. John's Lutheran: Worship with Communion at 9 a.m. (No Sunday School)

Emmanuel Lutheran: Sunrise service at 7 a.m., Breakfast by League at 8 a.m., Worship with communion at 10:15 a.m., Sunday School serves at nursing home at 3 p.m.

Heaven Bound Ministries, Pierpont: Worship at 10 a.m.

United Methodist: Sunrise service at 7 a.m., Easter Egg Hunt after lunch at 8 a.m., UMW Easter Brunch at 8 a.m., Conde Worship at 9 a.m., Coffee Fellowship at 10 a.m., Groton worship at 11 a.m.

Catholic Parish: Mass at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church at 9 a.m., then at St. Joseph in Turton at 11 a.m.

Monday, April 17

EASTER MONDAY - NO SCHOOL

Midwest Masonry & concrete Pumping

Greg Heilman, owner

405 E 1st Ave., Groton

Greg: 253/929-9137

Mike: 605/492-7041

midwestmasonry1@yahoo.com



Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 274 ~ 2 of 40



The garage area on the south side of the Groton Area Elementary School was demolished this week. A safety fence has been installed separating the playground area from the work site. These are the before and after photos. (Photos by Paul Kosel)



Aberdeen Arts Council Receives Grant for Storybook Land Festival \$2,000 Grant Will Support Annual Summer Event

BROOKINGS, SD – The Aberdeen Area Arts Council received a \$2,000 grant from the South Dakota Humanities Council in support of the annual Storybook Land Festival.

The statewide non-profit's board of directors approved 13 major grants at its most recent meeting, held in Yankton in April, for programs occurring after May 1.

This year's Storybook Land Festival will take place in Aberdeen July 21-22. The two-day festival for children of all ages promotes children's literature and the importance of reading. It features musical entertainment, hands-on art and craft opportunities, costume characters and a movie showing.

The Aberdeen Arts Council was among a group of organizations that received a total of \$30,000 in major grant funding from the South Dakota Humanities Council, whose sole purpose is to provide humanities programming to South Dakotans.

Eight of the awarded grants support the SDHC's 2017 "Race and Civility theme," which promotes public programming that addresses "persistent social, economic, cultural, and racial issues that divide our communities."

*Lakota Language Consortium received \$2,500 for the "Lakota Children's Book Project" that will publish five Lakota children's books to increase Lakota youth literacy on all nine South Dakota American Indian reservations. The books will be presented at the 2017 Lakota Dakota Nakota Language Summit in Rapid City.

*Crazy Horse School received \$2,000 for "Lakota Culture Week," a weeklong celebration of Lakota culture from May 1-5 in Wanblee, S.D. featuring workshops for students to learn traditional skills and values from tribal experts such as Joseph Marshall, author of "The Lakota Way," and Kevin Locke, traditional hoop dancer and flute-maker.

*The Shamus Project/Hopa Mountain Foundation received \$2,000 to help fund the inaugural "Indigenous Book Writers Book Festival" June 24, 2017 in Rapid City. The event will highlight an often-overlooked segment of the literary community, inspire other indigenous authors and make their work accessible to more Native and non-Native people. The event, part of SDHC's Race and Civility Initiative, will focus on building community and discussing issues. It will feature presentations, readings, panel discussions and book signings.

Dahl Arts Center in Rapid City received \$2,468 for the "History of Zephyr Rencontre" project, which includes a book and film on the history of Zephyr Rencontre, who was a South Dakota guide and fur trader in the 1800s.

Dakota Western Heritage Festival in Fort Pierre received \$2,000 for its annual event in Fort Pierre, which this year will be held Sept. 15-17 at the Stanley County Fairgrounds. The Festival celebrates Western traditions and lifestyle through education and entertainment, including speakers on the history of Ft. Pierre, cowboy poetry and music, demonstrations by a saddle maker, and much more.

South Dakota Discovery Center received \$1,000 for "SD History Adventures: Fort Pierre Bicentennial Edition," celebrating the historic river city's 200-year anniversary. The Discovery Center and its partners will

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 274 ~ 4 of 40

invite 500 South Dakota fourth- through sixth-graders to Fort Pierre to participate in adventures such as a tour of the Missouri River on a steam-powered paddleboat (new to the area), a Lakota star knowledge planetarium program, and more.

*Lutheran Social Services of South Dakota was granted \$3,000 in support of the "Closer Connections Conference," which will feature Amer F. Ahmed, Ed. D. as the keynote speaker and discussion leader in Sioux Falls in November. Dr. Ahmed will discuss prevailing myths and attitudes in the Dakotas and how community leaders can help increase their communities' acceptance and welcoming of Muslim residents.

*Sinte Gleska University received \$2,000 in support of "NPIAM Juror's Forums," a project featuring discussions in Brookings, Vermillion and Sioux Falls Sept. 21. Three nationally-renowned scholars will speak to a diverse audience about Native American Northern Plains Art history and how changing art forms produced by native artisans contribute to the promotion of cross-cultural understanding. The project is part of the SDHC Race and Civility Initiative.

Laura Ingalls Wilder Memorial Society, Inc. received \$2,000 to celebrate 150 years of the legacy of Laura Ingalls Wilder in honor of Laura's birth. The free event, July 14-16 in De Smet, is open to the public and will feature authors, illustrators, and actors who will discuss their connection with Laura and her "Little House" books. It will be held at the Laura Ingalls Wilder Memorial Society Park, offering visitors an opportunity to attend presentations, demonstrations and autograph signings.

Laura Ingalls Wilder Pageant Society was awarded \$1,000 in support of the "Laura Ingalls Pageant" in De Smet, which will feature a rotation of four different Laura Ingalls Wilder themed shows this summer for community members and visitors.

*The Books 4 Kids Program, which provides character-building books to pre-kindergarten through eighth grade students across South Dakota for free, received \$3,000 in support of its programming. Books 4 Kids, based in Hayti, S.D., brings authors into the classroom, in person or electronically, to read their books to students. During live events, the author will facilitate a discussion about what was learned from the story and answer student questions. At the end of the discussion, students are surprised with the gift of a free book. The program has provided 16,000 students with free books.

*South Dakota Symphony Orchestra in Sioux Falls received \$5,000 to support Phase Three of the "Lakota Music Project." In partnership with a New Music USA Residency, American Indian composer Jerod Tate will work with Native youth in locations including Sisseton, Pine Ridge and the Crazy Horse Memorial near Custer. A music collaboration featuring the SDSO and a traditional Lakota drum group, the Lakota Music Project was designed to address the long history of racial tensions, advance cultural understanding and create an environment of openness and collaboration through the universal language of music.

Major grant applications must involve humanities professionals and include the humanities as a central focus of the program for which funding is sought. The South Dakota Humanities Council is a statewide non-profit organization whose sole purpose is to provide humanities programming for South Dakotans. More information on the Race and Civility Initiative can be found in the SDHC Program Catalog.

SDHC is accepting major grant applications (more than \$1,000) for programs occurring after Dec. 1. The fall deadline is Oct. 15. Applications for mini grants (under \$1,000) are being accepted on a rolling basis. Apply at <http://sdhumanities.org/participate/grants/>.

For more details, visit the SDHC online at sdhumanities.org or call (605) 688-6113.



Battling the Beetle

As the temperature ticks upward and the last day of school inches closer, many are starting to think about their summer vacation plans. While schedules only seem to get busier, our family still tries to make it out to the Black Hills many times throughout the year, although we especially love those summer months and their longer days. There's just nothing like the hiking, the serenity, and – of course – the faces that a person finds in the Hills. Over the years, however, we've seen the landscape change. Year after year, our family pictures show a slowly dying forest.

For more than two decades, the Mountain Pine Beetle has devastated much of the Black Hills and turned portions of this once-healthy forest into a tinder box. In total, more than 30 percent of the 1.2 million acre forest was impacted to some degree by the beetles, increasing the area's potential for a dangerous wildfire and jeopardizing the tourism and forestry industries that our state relies on.

This April, however, the U.S. Forest Service announced the beetle had finally been beat. While work remains to repair the damage and make the forest more resilient against future outbreaks, getting to this point is a long-sought success.

The epidemic had been ongoing for around a decade before I was elected to represent South Dakota. When I brought U.S. Forest Service Chief Tom Tidwell to view the damage firsthand in November 2013, it was clear we had the tools to combat the pine beetle, but we weren't able to apply them on a large enough scale. Reforms on the federal level were needed.

Months later, we saw those reforms become law through provisions I helped write and fought to include in the 2014 Farm Bill. As a result, we were able to cut through environmental red tape, get boots on the ground faster, and allow the Forest Service to work on the scale this epidemic required. Around one million acres of the Black Hills National Forest benefited from the provisions.

Additionally, I fought to make sure we prioritized the funding needed to help beat the beetle. The financial support promised a trifecta of benefits. Of course, it helped us care for one of South Dakota's most beautiful resources, but it also served to protect our state's thriving tourism industry. According to a recent report from South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks, outdoor recreationists support more than 18,000 jobs, add \$85.5 million to state and local bank accounts through taxes, and offer \$534 million worth of income to South Dakotans. The Black Hills is a critical piece of that industry. Maybe most importantly, however, I fought for support as a matter of public safety. Simply put, an unhealthy forest carries the potential for a deadly wildfire.

We are fortunate to have so many dedicated foresters working in the Black Hills throughout this time and I'm proud to have been able to score some victories in support of their efforts. Nonetheless, while the Forest Service has ruled the epidemic over, years of damage left behind thousands of acres of dead and dying trees. There's work to do, but I'm committed to turning the Black Hills green again.

I count the Hills among South Dakota's many treasures, which means keeping the forest healthy is a top priority. So, check out the progress this summer. Plan a visit – maybe we'll see you out there.

The power of the arts: one South Dakotan's story

By Jim Speirs, Executive Director, Arts South Dakota

As I think about the deep and lasting impact of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and South Dakota Arts Council in our state, friend and fellow musician Jami Lynn immediately comes to mind. I've worked with Jami on many occasions and she has often talked about her love of being a South Dakotan and joy in sharing her art "at home."

Folk singer/songwriter Jami Lynn Buttke first gained an appreciation for music in a small South Dakota elementary school. Today she is a professional performer of bluegrass and folk music, and brings her exuberance and musical talent into state classrooms as a roster artist with the South Dakota Arts Council's Artists in Schools & Communities program. She believes in the power of the arts because of her own story of discovery.

"My personal experience with the Arts Council's impact on our rural schools began at Koch Elementary in Milbank. I had probably seen a cello and violin on television because, although we only had four channels on the farm, one of them was PBS," Buttke said. "But I had never seen or heard orchestra instruments in person until the South Dakota Arts Council helped bring a string quartet to our school for a lyceum. I was enamored with the sound, the style of playing and the music that echoed around our packed gymnasium. I had never experienced anything like it. The resonance of the strings, and how their sound vibrated in my chest, was life-changing. I didn't know it yet but I was going to be a string player, and that experience in fourth grade was pivotal."

Buttke finds that the magic and power of artists traveling to South Dakota communities is as strong today as when she was a grade school kid.

"The sound that comes out of elementary school kids when they see a banjo in person for the first time is excellent," she said. "It's one of those sharp inhalations of disbelief, like I've just done three back flips in a row. The sound kids make when they hold a banjo for the first time is silence. Most of them haven't had the opportunity to see, hear or hold a banjo before, and it's cool to see how it affects them. We need to make sure South Dakota students continue to discover music in this very personal way."

Your advocacy for this critical federal-state partnership that brings the arts and artists to young audiences across South Dakota is needed now! Let our leaders know that the NEA is vital to a creative South Dakota. To connect with our Congressional delegation or learn more about Arts South Dakota programs, join us online at www.ArtsSouthDakota.org.



South Dakota's Deer Management Plan Available for Review until May 5

PIERRE, S.D. – The public still has time to review the draft South Dakota White-Tailed Deer and Mule Deer Management Plan for 2017-2023. South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) has extended the public comment period until May 5.

“Due to the overwhelming response and interest by the public, the GFP Commission has provided this additional time for public review and comment,” stated Chad Switzer, wildlife program administrator. “In addition, an overview of the draft plan including highlighted strategies and a summary of the public input process has been made available on online.”

The plan will be considered for adoption by the GFP Commission at their June meeting in Chamberlain.

This draft plan overview, an abbreviated and full version of the draft management plan, and information from the stakeholder group meetings can be found online at <http://gfp.sd.gov/hunting/big-game/deer/deer-management-plan.aspx>. Written comments on the draft plan can be sent to 523 E. Capitol Ave., Pierre, S.D. 57501, or emailed to DeerPlan@state.sd.us. Comments must be received by May 5, 2017, and need to include your full name and city of residence.

Seeking Comments on Draft Prairie Grouse Management Plan 2017-2021

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) is seeking comments on the draft Prairie Grouse Management Plan for South Dakota, 2017-2021.

“The draft prairie grouse management plan focuses on fostering a partnership-driven approach for grassland habitat conservation and management,” stated Travis Runia, senior upland game biologist.

All individuals interested in prairie grouse management in South Dakota have through May 7, to provide suggestions and comments on the revised plan.

The draft prairie grouse management plan can be found online at: <http://gfp.sd.gov/wildlife/management/plans/default.aspx>. Written comments on the plan can be sent to 523 E. Capitol Ave., Pierre, S.D. 57501, or emailed to prairiegrouseplan@state.sd.us. Comments must be received by May 7, and include your full name and city of residence. To request a printed copy of the plan, call 605.353.7145.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 274 ~ 8 of 40

Today in Weather History

April 14, 1991: Thawing ice on top of a television tower fell onto buildings below in Garden City, Clark County. The ice had accrued during a freezing rain event on the 11th and 12th. No one was injured, but damage estimates ranged from \$35,000-\$40,000.

April 14, 2005: A dust devil developed on the west side of Bison as a dry cold front passed through the area. As it moved east across town, it blew out windows on several automobiles, damaged a 160 square foot section of roof from a house, and tore shingles off several buildings. The dust devil also pulled a flagpole out of the ground. No one was injured. The dust devil was approximately 20 feet wide, and the path length was one and a half miles.

1873 - A famous Easter blizzard raged across Kansas, Nebraska and South Dakota. Gale force winds blew the wet snow into massive drifts, however there were few deaths due to the sparse population and due to the gradual increase of the storm. (David Ludlum)

1886 - A devastating tornado, 800 yards in width at times, cut a twenty mile path through Saint Cloud MN killing 74 persons. The bottom of the Mississippi River was said to have been seen during the tornado's crossing. Eleven persons were killed at a wedding party near the town of Rice. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1912: On her maiden voyage, the RMS Titanic rammed into an iceberg just before midnight. The "unsinkable ship" sank two hours and forty minutes later into the icy water of the Atlantic Ocean near Newfoundland, Canada. Tragically, 1,517 passengers including the crew were lost. A nearby ship, the Carpathia, rushed to the Titanic and was able to save 706 people.

1922: The Mississippi River reached a record height of 21.3 feet at New Orleans, Louisiana, and the river was still rising, with the crest still a week away. Understandably, the City of New Orleans was nervous as reports of levees failing upriver reached the city. A crevasse below New Orleans would relieve the pressure on the town's strained levees on the 27th, spared the city a major disaster.

1935: Black Sunday refers to a particularly severe dust storm that occurred on April 14, 1935, as part of the Dust Bowl. During the afternoon, the residents of the Plains States were forced to take cover as a dust storm, or "black blizzard", blew through the region. The storm hit the Oklahoma Panhandle and Northwestern Oklahoma first and moved south for the remainder of the day. It hit Beaver around 4:00 p.m., Boise City around 5:15 p.m., and Amarillo, Texas, at 7:20 p.m. The conditions were the most severe in the Oklahoma and Texas panhandles, but the storm's effects were felt in other surrounding areas.

1987 - A storm system moving slowly northeastward across the Middle Mississippi Valley produced severe thunderstorms which spawned three tornadoes around Ottumwa IA, and produced up to four inches of rain in southeastern Nebraska, flooding rivers and streams. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A weather disturbance off the southern coast of California brought parts of southern California their first rain in six weeks. Rain-slickened roads resulted in numerous accidents in southern California, including a ten car pile-up at Riverside. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)


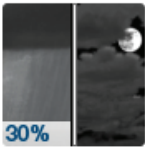





1989 - Late afternoon thunderstorms in northern Florida soaked the town of Golden Gate with 4.37 inches of rain in about two hours, resulting in local flooding. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Thunderstorms developing along a cold front produced severe weather in southeastern Texas during the mid morning hours. Thunderstorms produced dime size hail at Galveston, and wind gusts to 59 mph at Port Arthur. Afternoon thunderstorms over southeast Louisiana spawned tornadoes south of Bogalusa and at Rio. (Storm Data)

1999: In Sydney, Australia, a hailstorm causes \$1.6 billion in damage, making it the costliest hailstorm to strike a populated city in the country. The hail damaged some 22,000 homes and more than 60,000 vehicles. Also, aircraft damage at Sydney Airport was extensive.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 274 ~ 9 of 40

Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
						
Breezy. Mostly Cloudy then Slight Chance T-storms	Chance Showers then Mostly Cloudy	Slight Chance Showers	Mostly Clear	Sunny then Mostly Sunny and Breezy	Partly Cloudy	Partly Sunny then Chance Rain
High: 71 °F	Low: 46 °F	High: 67 °F	Low: 36 °F	High: 62 °F	Low: 32 °F	High: 56 °F



Chance for
Showers this
Afternoon



Windy, But
Warm Today

Highs: 60s and 70s

 National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD   Updated: 4/14/2017 4:55 AM Central

Published on: 04/14/2017 at 5:06AM

A weak storm system will cross the eastern portion of the region today with showers possible. Another system will cross North Dakota later this afternoon. This system will have the potential to bring additional showers, along with a few thunderstorms. Eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota will have the best potential of seeing precipitation today. All areas will see windy conditions today.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 274 ~ 10 of 40

Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 58.1

Low Outside Temp: 32.8

High Gust: 28

Snow: Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 86° in 1942

Record Low: 9° in 1928

Average High: 57°F

Average Low: 31°F

Average Precip in April.: 0.69

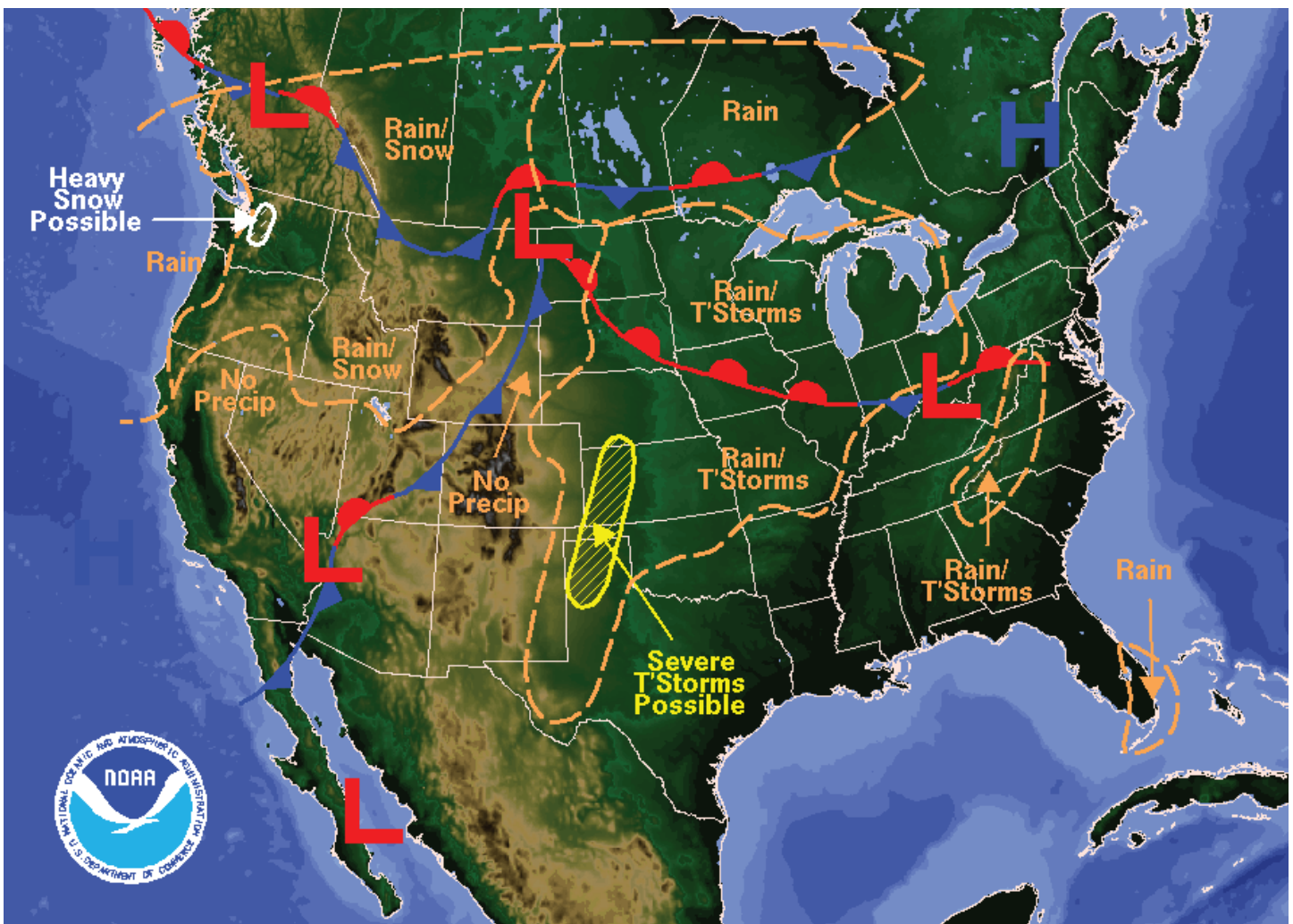
Precip to date in April.: 0.13

Average Precip to date: 2.87

Precip Year to Date: 0.72

Sunset Tonight: 8:18 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:47 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Fri, Apr 14, 2017, issued 4:36 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McReynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 274 ~ 11 of 40



"WHY DO SOMETHING FOR OTHERS?"

Alfred Adler is known as one of the "founding fathers" of modern psychology. He is remembered mostly for his analysis of the impact of birth order on personality and what he called his "Fourteen-Day Cure Plan."

He claimed that his plan could cure anyone of mental illness in just fourteen days if they would just do exactly as he told them to do. One day a woman who was extremely depressed came to see him. He told her, "I can cure you of your depression in just fourteen days if you will follow my advice."

"What do you want me to do?" she asked.

"If you will do one thing for someone else every day for fourteen days, at the end of that time your depression will be gone," he told her.

She objected, "Why should I do something for someone else when no one ever does anything for me?"

Jokingly he responded, "Well, maybe it will take you twenty-one days." He knew that if she did something for someone she would be on her way toward improving her mental condition and "curing" her depression.

Paul said that we are to "share each other's problems and troubles." Christians must never develop an attitude that entertains the idea that we are excused from the task of helping others. It is sometimes difficult to think of "service before self." But that is the way Jesus lived and died. As His disciples, can we do less?

Prayer: Lord, may we move from an attitude of self-centeredness to one of other-centeredness and see, hear, feel and meet the needs of others as You did. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Galatians 6:2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

News from the Associated Press

Panel sets date to rule on Whiteclay beer store licenses

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Four Nebraska beer stores on the border of South Dakota's Pine Ridge Indian Reservation will learn next week whether state regulators will allow them to stay in business.

The Nebraska Liquor Control Commission says it will issue a ruling Wednesday on whether the stores in Whiteclay can renew their liquor licenses.

The commission denied the stores' requests to renew their licenses automatically amid concerns over whether law enforcement in the area is adequate.

The stores sold the equivalent of 3.5 million cans of beer in 2015 even though Whiteclay only has nine full-time residents. Whiteclay is known as a gathering place for Native Americans who loiter, beg for change and sometimes get into fights. The problem has persisted for decades.

The commission's ruling is likely to be appealed.

New law allows South Dakota to sell unclaimed stocks sooner

By JOHN HULT, Argus Leader

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — There's a chance the state of South Dakota is about to sell your stocks.

If you've ever invested in a company or mutual fund and then completely ignored your quarterly statements, you might want to watch your mailbox.

When banks or fund managers lose contact with an investor — meaning the owner doesn't buy, sell, move or otherwise communicate with the institution for three years — those assets are considered unclaimed property and get transferred to the state. (The rule doesn't apply to retirement savings such as 401(k)'s.)

The state holds onto those investments until the rightful owner is found, but a new law lets the state cash out more quickly.

The rightful owner can always collect the proceeds, but they'll lose any gains that might have occurred after the liquidation.

Speedier sales can be a boon to state budgets, letting states use the cash until an owner comes forward, but they could burn investors, said Tami Salmon, general council for the Investment Company Institute, a Washington, D.C., association that represents mutual fund managers.

"The states are becoming more aggressive in claiming this property," Salmon told the Argus Leader (<http://argusne.ws/2o5FX3h>).

A new law signed by Gov. Dennis Daugaard last month allows the state to sell unclaimed securities after 90 days. Previously the state's budget office had to wait three years before liquidating such investments.

State Treasurer Rich Sattgast said he'd rather return unclaimed securities to their owners. His office began sending letters to the last known addresses of the securities' owners in hopes of getting their attention before the sale.

"We don't want people getting our notices in the mail to think it's a scam," Sattgast said.

The sales would be initiated May 1 and finalized by June 9 unless the office finds a valid address from the named owner or hears from the owner online or over the phone.

The sale of approximately \$6 million in securities will be the second mass sell-off in Sattgast's six-year term. Moving forward, sales will happen more regularly.

Until the recent change, state law said merely that the treasurer "may" sell securities after three years, which Sattgast felt left the state open to lawsuits by those whose securities were sold and transferred to state coffers.

"I didn't want to act as financial adviser," Sattgast said.

The reasons for losing track of securities vary. A grandparent might buy stock in Disney for a grandchild, for example, but never tell the child. If the grandparent dies without passing along the child's address, the

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 274 ~ 13 of 40

stock might end up in the state's hands before the child even realizes they have it.

Securities are only a small piece of the state's collection of unclaimed property. The Unclaimed Property Division has \$392 million in dormant checking and savings account balances, unpaid wages, utilities deposits, life insurance payouts and securities.

The Bureau of Finance and Management urged the sale of \$7 million in securities last fall, saying their ever-changing value made it difficult to accurately report the state's assets and liabilities under federally-required Comprehensive Annual Financial Report.

"When the state treasurer holds these securities, it makes it problematic to report the values of those funds," said state economist Jim Terwilliger of the Bureau of Finance and Management, which supported the change in how the state manages unclaimed investments.

While no one testified against the bill in Pierre, the Investment Council Institute sent Daugaard a letter on March 9 urging a veto. A mass sell-off robs the rightful owners of the property of any gains their funds might earn after it, the letter explained.

Salmon said the new 90-day waiting period is a disservice to mutual fund and stock holders to benefit the state's general fund. She also expressed concern about how the state defines dormancy.

Dormancy means the owner stops interacting with an account for at least three years. Transferring funds into an account qualifies as interaction in South Dakota, and retirement accounts like 401(k)s are excluded from dormancy periods until the holder reaches age 70.

Even so, Salmon said, plenty of investors could be at risk.

There are 150,000 South Dakotans with mutual funds, she said, at risk of having their property declared unclaimed if they stop interacting for three years. People don't call their fund managers every time they get a quarterly statement unless something's amiss, Salmon said.

"Most of us who get into mutual funds are in it for the long term. There's no need for us to check in," she said.

Salmon encouraged people to check in with their fund managers at least once a year to prevent dormancy.

The Securities Transfer Association and Shareholder Services Association wrote a similar letter on March 8, saying the new law would "eviscerate" due process rights of the securities' owners. A security's value is not in its immediate sale price, but in the rights it conveys to the holder: Proxy voting, dividends and the right of appreciation.

"The prompt liquidation of securities contained in (the bill) terminates all of these property interests," wrote STA council Jennifer Borden.

Sattgast said he's going to work to find property owners prior to the sale by publishing legal notices in newspapers and sending letters to the last known addresses of the owners. The three employees use nationwide search software to find addresses and will stop the sale of any security if a valid address appears in the search.

"We're going to work very diligently to find these people," Sattgast said.

The only candidate who's announced an intention to run for Sattgast's position in 2018, Josh Haeder, says he hopes to see more significant outreach on unclaimed property.

The Huron-area property manager and staffer for Sen. Mike Rounds says the state should be using social media to reach out to unclaimed property owners, and that extending its outreach beyond newspapers, booths at public events and letters will be more important now that the law has changed.

"As we move forward with this law, we'll need to find those more effective ways of reaching out to people," Haeder said.

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

Northern State University to change brand

KATHERINE GRANDSTRAND, Aberdeen American News

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — Northern State University is looking for some help to define the school's brand. It's asking students, faculty and staff and community members to answer a 19-question survey to gauge familiarity with the university as a whole and with its many parts.

"I don't think we're looking to rebrand the institution, as far as the logos go," said Justin Fraase, director of communications and marketing at Northern. "I think the bigger issue we have as a university is we have maybe too many logos, maybe too many logo combinations."

It is part of an effort to better market Northern as a regional university, Fraase said, who started his job at the beginning of the semester.

"We're calling it a brand refresh because we want to refresh what's going on," he told the Aberdeen American News (<http://bit.ly/2o5ysti>).

One of the major things the communications and marketing department wants to change is the university's tag line: Be you. Be us. Be Northern.

"I can't guarantee that it will change, but that is definitely one thing that we've circled as something that we'd like to just refresh," Fraase said. "I think it's been around for almost a decade. For tag lines, that's a bit long."

One thing that won't change is the school's wolf logo or mascot.

However, there will be work to create guidelines for the school's logos and mascots, and the school has entered licensing agreement with Learfield Licensing Partners. Learfield is a trademark management company specializing in collegiate licensing and branding.

The partnership will give Northern more control over who sells branded merchandise and what it looks like, Fraase said. Northern will also collect royalties on the merchandise.

"I don't necessarily think we're going to be cash rich because of this," Fraase said. "It's more important for us to get a firmer grasp of the colors and the logos."

Standards will be introduced for other branded items, like business cards, envelopes and even email signatures, Fraase said. There will also be use guidelines for the different logos. The university seal won't show up on T-shirts, but will be on diploma frames.

The standards also specifically define Northern's maroon and gold tones so they are consistent whether they are used for a T-shirt, in print or on a computer screen.

"With today's technology, you can do a lot of print, even in cloth and shirts and stuff, that ensures that your maroon is your maroon and your gold is your gold," Fraase said.

Whether or not community members are alumni, they're still affected by Northern, Fraase said. That's why it's important to get feedback from across the Aberdeen area and not just from those directly involved with the university.

"The community plays a tremendous part in what goes on here at Northern," Fraase said.

People who don't attend events or visit campus regularly are still hearing about Northern and campus events.

Any changes will be launched in the fall 2017 semester, with full implementation expected July 2018.

"This is the time for the feedback," Fraase said. "It's not gonna be in July when we come out with something new."

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

South Dakota man takes on task of finding detection dogs

By TIFFANY TAN, Rapid City Journal

STURGIS, S.D. (AP) — Every month, Tim Matthews visits animal shelters in various states in a search for dogs that can do law enforcement or emergency work. He is looking for dogs that can be trained to detect prohibited items such as explosives and drugs, or help in search and rescue operations.

The key, apparently, is to spot the dogs that are obsessed with “toys,” whether it’s a ball, a pine cone or a rock. Toys become the animals’ reward for a job accomplished.

A fixation with chasing down toys also reflects the high drive and energy needed to become a successful detection dog, said Matthews, who entered the “recruitment” business with his wife, Kellee Matthews, in 2013. That same year, the couple opened the South Dakota Canine Center in Sturgis, which also offered pet training and boarding.

The country’s need for detection dogs is growing, Tim Matthews told the Rapid City Journal (<http://bit.ly/2o5Ofbb>), citing as an example the increasing number of bomb sniffers at airports. It’s important to identify shelter dogs that are suitable for the job to prevent backyard breeders from filling the demand, he said.

“Backyard breeders aren’t quality breeders most of the time. They’ll breed with bad hips, they’re not aware of a lot of issues,” said Tim, 59, a licensed guide dog instructor. “The dogs that don’t make it, they’ll only end up in the pound.”

Shelters are already home to some very talented dogs, the couple said, including those that can go into the detection business. These animals end up in the pound because the very nature that makes them excellent detectors — such as great athleticism and compulsive behavior — also makes them unsuitable as family pets, said Kellee, 49.

But finding detection dogs in shelters is not easy.

The Matthews said that for every 2,000 dogs Tim sees, only one will end up with a career in detection. In the past three years, Tim said he has found 200 candidates after scouring 200 animal shelters in 10 states, including the Humane Society of the Black Hills in Rapid City.

About 10 percent of the recruits did not make it through the couple’s screening process, and the dogs were matched with families after undergoing pet training.

Some candidates lose their drive during the Matthews’ two-month evaluation period at their training center, a 19-acre property in southern Sturgis. Others do not get the necessary medical clearances that ensure a dog has the build and stamina for years on the job.

Those that pass this point are then matched with various law enforcement and emergency agencies nationwide, which train the dogs for specific assignments. Most of them, Kellee said, are Labrador retrievers and mixes of Labrador, Border collies, golden retrievers, German shepherds and English pointers.

The Matthews say their recruits have gone on to work around the country and around the world, including as explosives detectors at the U.S. Embassy in Iraqi and with a New York law enforcement agency, as well as one that helped with search and rescue after the 2015 earthquake in Nepal.

“The Matthews have been one of the best couples to provide those dogs,” said Wilma Melville, founder of the National Disaster Search Dogs Foundation in California. “They’re just very good at screening dogs and Tim is very good at locating them in shelters.”

Another business associate commended the couple’s dedication to their recruitment work.

“They’re saving a dog, but they’re also saving many lives,” said Julie Case of the Ultimate Canine training center in Indiana. She described their work as selfless, especially since the Matthews don’t get paid much.

When the dogs have found their work assignments, only then are Tim and Kellee paid for their work. They receive an average of \$1,500 per dog, an amount that covers two months of boarding and training, veterinary expenses, as well as Tim’s travel expenses for hotels, gas and food.

Next, Tim is heading to four towns in Wyoming to do his monthly round of animal shelters. The trip might not produce any detection dogs, but such is the work required to find what Kellee describes as “diamonds in the rough.”

South Dakota farmers fear uncertain ethanol future

By PATRICK ANDERSON, Argus Leader

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — When he learned about the first ethanol pump opening up in Milbank, Orrie Swayze hopped off his tractor, drove his 1974 Ford to the station and filled its tank with fuel made mostly from corn.

"It ran as good or better on straight E85," Swayze said.

Swayze, now 73 and retired, has been an advocate ever since for corn-based fuel. Ethanol came to the rescue of growers like Swayze, injecting a new value into crops, driving prices higher and boosting the state's economy. Much of the industry's expansion since the 1990s depended on federal policies, including new rules to ensure clean air, fuel economy and a marketplace for renewable fuels.

But like many of his peers in corn and ethanol, the next four years leave Swayze with questions.

A Donald Trump White House means a new, uncertain political landscape. Some of the Trump administration's leaders have deep ties to the oil industry. The seismic political transition raises questions and concerns for the benefactors of a multi-billion dollar industry that also happens to drive South Dakota's economy.

Ethanol was far from a major talking point for Trump on the campaign trail. Even after touring a Poet plant in Iowa, he uttered just a few sentences about renewable fuel and its impact on Midwestern jobs.

"I went out to see some of the folks on the ethanol," Trump said at the 2015 rally in Fort Dodge. "And good stuff and great people. Put a lot of people to work out here too, I want to tell you. I just want to tell you that."

The president never mentioned ethanol on Twitter. He has since expressed support for upholding the renewable fuel standards. But people on his team have allegiances elsewhere. Some have been outspoken critics of ethanol and federal biofuel regulations.

Appointments of naysayers doesn't necessarily mean dark days ahead for ethanol policy, which is also shaped by Congress, said Jon Schaff, a political scientist at Northern State University in Aberdeen.

It just means the next four years will be less than predictable.

"It's always difficult to make a definitive statements about, 'this is what the Trump administration thinks,'" Schaff told the Argus Leader (<http://argusne.ws/2o5A71M>). "There seems to be a lack of discipline."

It didn't take long for new players in seats of power to raise the hackles of corn growers and the ethanol industry.

Early signs of turbulence have since died down thanks to assurances from Trump that he supports federal biofuel standards as written, but those in the industry are making trips between South Dakota and Washington, D.C., just to make sure they're heard.

Corn-based fuel depends on regulations such as the Congress-approved renewable fuel standards, which have historically driven demand and lifted commodity prices.

South Dakota's economy depends on its corn crop. The corn crop depends on ethanol production, which depends on federal mandates.

It's a confusing reliance on federal regulations for a red state. But as much as most South Dakotans sniff at the idea of big government, the state's economy rises and falls with the listed value of a bushel.

That value has been plummeting in recent years. Steady decreases have resonated across the state and in Sioux Falls as sales tax revenues fell short of expectations.

Ethanol producers and corn growers look to federal policymakers for answers. As Scott VanderWal, president of the right-leaning South Dakota Farm Bureau said, mandates supporting ethanol are fair because of the petroleum industry's reluctance to accept biofuels.

"You have to take into account that the oil industry is subsidized," VanderWal said. "Until that would go away, then it's probably appropriate to keep doing things the way we have been."

Ethanol plays a major role in the state's economy in its own right. There are 15 ethanol plants in South Dakota, each employing dozens people. Plants in the state produce more than one billion gallons of ethanol and 2.4 million metric tons of byproduct, according to South Dakota State University.

The American Coalition for Ethanol, based in Sioux Falls, represents more than 500 members, including growers, producers and other industry stakeholders. Like some of its members, the group bases faith in

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 274 ~ 17 of 40

the White House on comments made by the president during his campaign.

It's the same faith rural voters placed in the president when they voted for him last November, said Brian Jennings, executive vice president of the nonprofit.

"Rural America is credited with helping lift him to victory," Jennings said. "One of the key issues in rural America in terms of the economy is demand for crops to make biofuels."

The coalition encouraged members to be politically active during the White House transition. Others in the state have joined in the activity since January, including South Dakota farmers, advocacy groups and ethanol producers. Leaders from the state's biggest ethanol producer visited the White House last month.

"We met with several of President Trump's key people," said Jeff Broin, founder and CEO at Poet. "Poet is always involved in the politics surrounding biofuels, as are our competitors in the oil industry."

South Dakota's congressional delegation is also protective of the industry driving the state's economy.

U.S. Sen. John Thune said he asked Trump's environmental and agricultural appointees whether they were committed to the federal government's renewable fuel standards, which, among other rules, mandate a minimum usage each year for ethanol. Both assured him and others they would uphold the rules as written.

"We will be holding them to that," Thune said. "We'll be paying close attention."

The head of the state's biggest ethanol producer said his industry has a history of helping to drive demand in times when prices are low and there is more corn than demand.

The history of the U.S. agriculture industry is dotted with periods of high supply and low land values.

Ethanol has long been an answer to flagging grain prices, going back to the emergence of the industry in the late 1980s.

"Ethanol was really born at a time when ag commodities were in major oversupply in this country," Broin said. "We entered the industry literally at the bottom of the land value era."

Ethanol created new demand for corn. The number of bushels going to livestock feed or for international trade has remained mostly flat, while demand for ethanol and ethanol byproducts such as feed supplements grew after the first few years after the current renewable fuel standards were passed, but flattened out in 2010. The easing of demand, along with increased activity from corn growers, led to what Broin calls an "ag crisis."

Keith Alverson, a 37-year-old farmer in Chester, said ethanol is vital to growers. He grows corn and soybeans on about 2,500 acres.

"That is the most important thing that we've seen in South Dakota as far as a driver of our state's ag economy," Alverson said.

Carl Icahn: Weeks into the new administration, one of Trump's special advisers ruffled feathers with a rumored deal to tweak the EPA's renewable fuel standards.

Billionaire investor Carl Icahn was involved in an effort shift the burden of meeting federal biofuel minimums from oil refineries to blenders. Moving the so-called "point of obligation" would free oil producers and importers from the requirements, shifting it to a larger number of smaller entities, including some gas retailers.

Icahn is majority owner of a Texas-based oil company, CVR Energy Inc. A New York native like Trump, Icahn was an active supporter of the president during the campaign. He was named the president's special adviser on regulation in December, even as members of the outgoing administration pointed to potential conflicts of interest because of his ties to oil.

He ducked conflict-of-interest claims last month by saying he wasn't a paid government employee.

Scott Pruitt: The new head of the EPA blasted biofuels when he was attorney general of Oklahoma. His ties to the oil industry are well documented by national news outlets and in thousands of emails that have since been published online.

His office regularly corresponded with the American Fuel and Petrochemical Manufacturers, including emails about the "obvious shortcomings" of the renewable fuel standards.

The group sent Pruitt's office a template for a waiver petition against the "economic harm (caused) by the ethanol blend wall." Pruitt later filed a legal brief as part of a lawsuit against federal ethanol mandates, saying ethanol is harmful to cars and diverts corn from the U.S. food supply. Icahn celebrated the presi-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 274 ~ 18 of 40

dent's decision to nominate Pruitt as EPA chief in December.

Point of obligation: Evidence of the administration's unpredictability is clear in a letter Sen. John Thune, R-S.D., and others sent the president last month in response to billionaire investor and President Donald Trump special adviser Carl Icahn's efforts to change the biofuel standards.

The White House has since indicated it wasn't considering the deal proposed by Icahn. Word of the agreement was enough to prompt stern language from Thune and 22 other U.S. senators in a letter to Trump.

The bipartisan group said moving the responsibility of meeting biofuel requirements to smaller vendors would eliminate incentives for oil refineries for making ethanol blends and put more of a regulatory burden on small businesses in rural areas.

Volume Obligation: Another federal rule on the radar of South Dakota's corn growers and ethanol producers is the required volume of renewable fuel produced annually.

Congress set the target at 15 billion gallons annually in 2007 with the approval of the renewable fuel standards. The Environmental Protection Agency pulled back the obligation in November, prompting concern in the industry, and the White House placed a regulatory freeze on the requirement in January, lifting the freeze last month.

Waiver for E15: Jeff Broin at Poet would like to see the federal government remove some of the red tape around a higher blend of ethanol. Some parts of the U.S. block certain blends during the summer months based on vapor pressure, but lower percentage blends such as E10, or 10 percent ethanol, have a waiver from the EPA.

The federal agency has not granted such a waiver to 15 percent blends, which creates extra work for station owners who pump it year-round, Broin said. Stations selling E15 to all drivers during the cooler months must swap to a flex fuel rig during the summer, then back to a standard rig in the winter.

Fuel economy and clean air: Ethanol has traditionally benefited from clean air regulations because of its reduced emissions, said Keith Alverson, a corn grower near Chester. The same goes for recent efforts to improve how much cars get out of each gallon of gas.

Ethanol has more octane, allowing it to improve mileage for appropriately designed engines. President Barack Obama set a goal of 54.5 miles per gallon by 2025 as part of his federal fuel economy standards, which would penalize American car manufacturers for fleets that fall short of targeted averages.

The president announced plans last month to review the so-called Corporate Average Fuel Economy Standards, which have been around since the 1970s.

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

South Dakota track coach Derek Miles to get Olympic bronze

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — University of South Dakota assistant track and field coach Derek Miles will be presented an Olympic bronze medal after a Ukrainian pole vaulter was disqualified from the 2008 Olympics for violating anti-doping rules, the school said Thursday.

The ceremony for Miles, who originally placed fourth in the event, will be held Monday, the university said in a statement. The International Olympic Committee announced in November that re-analysis of Ukrainian pole vaulter Denys Yurchenko's samples from Beijing 2008 resulted in a positive test for a banned substance. Yurchenko lost his bronze medal.

Miles, South Dakota U.S. Sen. John Thune and U.S. Olympic Committee CEO Scott Blackmun are set to speak at the event. Thune in March wrote to the president of the International Olympic Committee and called on the committee to take all appropriate measures to award a bronze medal to Miles.

"It's an unbelievable honor to play a small part in helping Derek receive the overdue recognition he deserves," Thune said in a statement. "While nothing can replace standing on the podium in Beijing, I think Derek would agree that getting to share this moment with friends, family, and the students at USD will be a memory not soon forgotten."

Miles is a three-time Olympian, competing in 2004, 2008 and 2012. He lives in Tea, South Dakota, and has been with the University of South Dakota track and field program for 14 years.

Students go deep underground to learn about science

LEAD, S.D. (AP) — Students from across South Dakota are going deep underground to learn answers to some of the most challenging science questions.

The Sanford Underground Research Facility in Lead has a Dakota Digital Network connection so researchers and others can connect with classrooms from deep beneath the earth's surface.

"We want to be sure that this opportunity is open to students in big districts and medium districts and little tiny, tiny districts," said June Apaza, director of education and outreach at the Sanford underground lab. "Whatever size school that you go to, it's great to have opportunities available for all students."

The Sanford lab is a former gold mine that closed in 2001. Five years later, owner Barrick Gold Corporation donated the property to the state for use as an underground laboratory. That same year, philanthropist T. Denny Sanford donated \$70 million to the underground science lab.

Through the facility's education and outreach program and the lab's digital connection, educators are able to take students to rooms where experiments are being conducted in a way that wouldn't be possible if a whole classroom was physically on site, according to Aberdeen American News (<http://bit.ly/2or0a8y>).

The lab's resources are also a recruiting tool for the lab and science, technology, engineering and math careers, Apaza said.

"The students that we are working with today are going to be the workforce of tomorrow," she said. "And if you look at the needs of the workforce of tomorrow, we're looking for an entirely different worker ... and those students need to have very strong science, technology and mathematics skills."

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

City violating federal law by poaching water customers

WATERTOWN, S.D. (AP) — A judge has ruled a city in eastern South Dakota is violating federal law by encroaching on the Sioux Rural Water System's territory.

The decision could expose the Codington County community of Watertown and its municipal water utility to monetary damages, among other things. The Sioux Rural Water System's lawsuit says Watertown has been taking existing and potential customers by expanding into its service area.

Watertown argues the rural water system doesn't have adequate water supplies or pressure to provide fire protection to customers.

The Argus Leader (<http://argusne.ws/2nIylrX>) reports Judge Charles Kornmann says federal law gives rural water systems an exclusive right to provide water in their service area when they have loans with the United States Department of Agriculture.

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

Is this a new Trump? Abrupt reversals may reflect experience

By JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is abruptly reversing himself on key issues. And for all his usual bluster, he's startlingly candid about the reason: He's just now really learning about some of them.

"After listening for 10 minutes, I realized it's not so easy," the president said after a discussion with Chinese President Xi Jinping that included his hopes that China's pressure could steer North Korea away from its nuclear efforts.

"I felt pretty strongly that they had a tremendous power" over North Korea, he said in an interview with The Wall Street Journal. "But it's not what you would think."

That's just one of several recent comments offering insight into what looks like a moderate makeover for an immoderate president. As he approaches 100 days in office Trump appears to be increasingly embracing what he describes as his "flexibility" — acknowledging he may not have thought deeply about some

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 274 ~ 20 of 40

of the issues he shouted about throughout his political campaign.

Over the past 48 hours, the outsider politician who pledged to upend Washington has:

- Abandoned his vow to label China a currency manipulator.
- Rethought his hands-off assessment of the Syrian conflict — and ordered a missile attack.
- Turned his warm approach toward Vladimir Putin decidedly chilly and declared U.S.-Russia relations “may be at an all-time low.”

- Decided NATO isn’t actually obsolete, as he had claimed.

- Realized the U.S. Export-Import Bank is worth keeping around.

“Instinctively, you would say, ‘Isn’t that a ridiculous thing,’” he said of the bank he once panned as “featherbedding” and pledged to eliminate. He now says of the bank, which supports U.S. exports, “Actually, it’s a very good thing. And it actually makes money.”

Allies describe Trump as merely growing in the job, taking what he’s learning and adapting. The White House, however, is struggling to explain some of the changes.

Asked about the growing list of reversals on Wednesday, spokesman Sean Spicer argued that NATO actually is “evolving toward the president’s position,” not the other way around, by focusing more on terrorism and encouraging nations to pay more toward defense.

What about flip-flops besides NATO? Spicer was asked.

NATO is actually moving toward Trump, he responded again. Next question.

Trump, who seemed to remain in campaign mode for months after the election, appears to be listening to different advisers now. His onetime campaign guru, Steve Bannon, has been somewhat marginalized while moderate voices grow louder.

It may also be that Trump is merely looking for a way to improve his low approval rating, acknowledging his best tactic could be switching to a less dogmatic, more pragmatic approach.

“Candidates are always bombastic on the campaign trail — and Trump especially. But there is some growing into the office and dealing with the real effects of some of the policies,” said Stephen Moore, a conservative economist who helped craft Trump’s economic plans.

On the other hand, he warned that “if he starts just abandoning his promises, then I think it’s going to exact a political toll.”

In many cases, Trump’s campaign talk appeared born from instinct and little else. He was known as a candidate who rarely dug deep, and he employed few policy experts to inform his views. He’s also long boasted of his flexibility, describing his positions as starting points for negotiation — though many of his core ideas, including frustrations over the U.S. trade imbalance, have held steady for years.

Trump, for instance, vowed to label China a currency manipulator,

“They’re not currency manipulators,” he conceded in the Wall Street Journal interview, adding that he was concerned that officially branding them as such could jeopardize his talks with Beijing on confronting North Korea.

Trump’s evolution also reflects changing power dynamics within the White House, including the rise of Gary Cohn, his economics chief and the former president of Goldman Sachs, and other more moderate business leaders. Cohn has been looking for ways to fulfill Trump’s campaign promises in ways that are practical and achievable — as opposed to doing things precisely the way the candidate outlined.

That’s an attractive prospect for a president eager for the wins he promised — after a difficult first few months that saw much of his agenda, including his signature travel ban and high-profile attempt at overhauling health care, blocked by Congress and the courts.

Trump has also been turning to outside business leaders, including many he’s known for years, for guidance. They include billionaire real estate developers Richard LeFrak and Steven Roth, who are informally advising him on infrastructure, and billionaire investor Stephen Schwartzman, the chairman and CEO of the Blackstone Group, who helped organize two major business panels this month to weigh in on possible regulatory and tax changes.

Trump has also won praise for his decision to bomb an air base in Syria, despite his campaign promise

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 274 ~ 21 of 40

to stay out of conflicts in the Middle East. While many in his conservative base were furious about the move, the bombing after a Syrian chemical weapons attack was widely applauded on the cable networks Trump voraciously consumes.

And it changed the subject from the investigations into Russian interference — and possible collaboration with his campaign — in the U.S. election.

Some things don't change. Bruce LeVell, a Georgia congressional candidate and Trump campaign backer who met with him several times this week, said, "We don't want his Twitter to go away. That's his pipeline to supporters, and he still has it."

Associated Press writers Julie Pace and Josh Boak contributed to this report. Follow Colvin on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/colvinj>

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. PYONGYANG TO TRUMP: PIPE DOWN

North Korea's vice foreign minister tells the AP that the president's "aggressive" tweets are building up a "vicious cycle" of tensions on the Korean Peninsula.

2. TOLL FROM 'MOTHER OF ALL BOMBS' PUT AT DOZENS

The attack in eastern Afghanistan with the largest non-nuclear weapon ever used in combat by the U.S. military killed 36 Islamic State fighters but harmed no civilians, Afghan officials say.

3. PLANNED EXECUTIONS DRAW OUTRAGE ONLINE

Social media protests grow over Arkansas' unprecedented plan to put seven inmates to death before the end of the month.

4. EVACUATIONS UNDER WAY IN SYRIA

The Assad government and the opposition begin a coordinated population swap of tens of thousands of people from four besieged towns.

5. WHERE FEAR IS RISING ABOUT POSSIBILITY OF ONE-MAN RULE

Turkey is a country divided as it heads toward a historic referendum on a new political system that would expand the powers of President Erdogan.

6. HOW US ACTIVISTS PLAN TO USE TAX DAY

They'll hit the streets Saturday around the country and demand Trump release his tax returns.

7. [a href='https://apnews.com/f8c8542b1ab345519f51ff5171bcbce5/Nigeria-marks-3-years-since-school-girls'-mass-abduction'](https://apnews.com/f8c8542b1ab345519f51ff5171bcbce5/Nigeria-marks-3-years-since-school-girls'-mass-abduction) NIGERIA MARKS GRIM ANNIVERSARY/a

Three years ago, Boko Haram extremists swept up nearly 300 Chibok schoolgirls in a brazen mass kidnapping that shocked the world. Nearly 200 remain captive.

8. [a href='https://apnews.com/2f89745db7a94cd086fb16da667ba578/Lawyer:-Dragged-passenger-'poster-child'-for-airline-abuses'](https://apnews.com/2f89745db7a94cd086fb16da667ba578/Lawyer:-Dragged-passenger-'poster-child'-for-airline-abuses) AIR PASSENGER'S CASE COULD SHINE LIGHT ON LARGER PROBLEM/a

A lawyer for a man who was dragged off a United Express flight hopes the 69-year-old becomes "a poster child" for the mistreatment passengers can suffer at the hands of the airline industry.

9. WHICH TINSELTOWN UNION IS COMING UNDONE

Jennifer Garner and Ben Affleck are formally ending their marriage with divorce petitions that seek joint custody of their three children.

10. DAN ROONEY DIES AT 84

The powerful and popular Pittsburgh Steelers chairman saw his name attached to the NFL's landmark initiative in minority hiring.

N. Korean official: US more vicious, aggressive under Trump

By ERIC TALMADGE, Associated Press

PYONGYANG, North Korea (AP) — President Donald Trump's tweets are adding fuel to a "vicious cycle" of tensions on the Korean Peninsula, North Korea's vice foreign minister told The Associated Press in an exclusive interview Friday. The official added that if the U.S. shows any sign of "reckless" military aggression, Pyongyang is ready to launch a pre-emptive strike of its own.

Vice Minister Han Song Ryol said Pyongyang has determined the Trump administration is "more vicious and more aggressive" than that of his predecessor, Barack Obama. He added that North Korea will keep building up its nuclear arsenal in "quality and quantity" and said Pyongyang is ready to go to war if that's what Trump wants.

Tensions between Pyongyang and Washington go back to President Harry Truman and the 1950-53 Korean War, which ended in an armistice, not a peace treaty. But the heat has been rising rapidly since Trump took office in January.

This year's joint war games between the U.S. and South Korean militaries are the biggest ever; the USS Carl Vinson aircraft carrier has been diverted back to the waters off Korea after heading for Australia; and U.S. satellite imagery suggests the North could conduct another underground nuclear test at any time. Pyongyang recently tested a ballistic missile and claims it is close to perfecting an intercontinental ballistic missile and nuclear warhead that could attack the U.S. mainland.

Many experts believe that at its current pace of testing, North Korea could reach that potentially game-changing milestone within a few years — under Trump's watch as president. Despite reports that Washington is considering military action if the North goes ahead with another nuclear test, Han did not rule out the possibility of a test in the near future.

"That is something that our headquarters decides," he said during the 40-minute interview in Pyongyang, which is now gearing up for a major holiday — and possibly a big military parade — on Saturday. "At a time and at a place where the headquarters deems necessary, it will take place."

The North conducted two such tests last year alone. The first was of what it claims to have been a hydrogen bomb and the second was its most powerful ever.

The annual U.S.-South Korea military exercises have consistently infuriated the North, which views them as rehearsals for an invasion. Washington and Seoul deny that, but reports that exercises have included "decapitation strikes" aimed at the North's leadership have fanned Pyongyang's anger.

Han said Trump's tweets have also added fuel to the flames.

Trump posted a tweet Tuesday in which he said the North is "looking for trouble" and reiterated his call for more pressure from Beijing, North Korea's economic lifeline, to clamp down on trade and strengthen its enforcement of U.N. sanctions to persuade Pyongyang to denuclearize.

Trump has threatened that if Beijing isn't willing to do more to squeeze the North, the U.S. might take the matter into its own hands.

"Trump is always making provocations with his aggressive words," Han said. "It's not the DPRK but the U.S. and Trump that makes trouble."

North Korea's official name is the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Han said the sanctions approach is misguided and cited the opening ceremony of a sprawling new high-rise residential area in Pyongyang on Thursday as evidence that sanctions have failed to ruin the country's economy. Leader Kim Jong Un presided over the ceremony before about 100,000 residents and a large contingent of foreign journalists who have been allowed in to cover the holiday.

Han dismissed the suggestion Trump made last year during his presidential campaign that he was willing to meet Kim Jong Un, possibly over hamburgers.

"I think that was nothing more than lip service during the campaign to make himself more popular," Han said.

"Now we are comparing Trump's policy toward the DPRK with the former administration's and we have concluded that it's becoming more vicious and more aggressive," Han said.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 274 ~ 23 of 40

"Whatever comes from U.S. politicians, if their words are designed to overthrow the DPRK system and government, we will categorically reject them," he said.

Han said North Korea changed its military strategy two years ago, when the reports of "decapitation strike" training began to really get attention, to stress pre-emptive actions.

"We've got a powerful nuclear deterrent already in our hands, and we certainly will not keep our arms crossed in the face of a U.S. pre-emptive strike," he said. "Whatever comes from the U.S., we will cope with it. We are fully prepared to handle it."

How much such comments are bluster, or how realistic they are, is hard to gauge.

Later Friday, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said all sides must stop provoking and threatening and start taking a flexible approach to resuming dialogue. He said China is willing to support any such effort.

"Once a war really happens, the result will be nothing but multiple-loss. No one can become a winner," Wang said. "No matter who it is, if it wants to make war or trouble on the Korean Peninsula, it must take the historical responsibility and pay the due price."

South Korea's Foreign Ministry said Han's remarks on the North's readiness to conduct a nuclear test and even go to war reveal the "true colors of North Korea's government that is bellicose and a breaker of regulations."

The ministry issued a statement saying North Korea will face strong punishment it will find hard to withstand if it makes a significant provocation, such as another nuclear test or an ICBM launch.

Military experts generally agree a shooting war with North Korea would likely be far more costly than something along the lines of the recent targeted strike Trump ordered against a Syrian air base believed to be linked to a chemical weapons attack by the regime of Bashir Assad. That attack alarmed the North and was condemned as "unpardonable" by Pyongyang, which counts Syria as an ally.

Even without nuclear weapons, the North could cause severe damage and casualties with its conventional artillery batteries aimed at the South Korean capital of Seoul. North Korea's military is also heavily dug in, meaning it could be hard to find and destroy key targets, or to secure the North's nuclear weapons even if its leadership were attacked.

Despite talk of conflict in the halls of power, life in Pyongyang has been pretty much normal over the past week as the country gears up for its biggest holiday of the year: the 105th anniversary of the birth of the late Kim Il Sung, the country's founder and leader Kim Jong Un's grandfather.

The Saturday anniversary may provide the world with a look at some of its arsenal. Expectations are high the North may put its newest missiles on display during a military parade that could be held to mark the event.

Another big military holiday comes on April 25, when its army marks its anniversary.

Syrian deal to evacuate tens of thousands of people begins

PHILIP ISSA, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — The Syrian government and rebels began a coordinated population transfer Friday of about 10,000 people from four towns besieged for years amid the country's bloody, six-year civil war.

About 5,000 people were evacuated on 75 buses from two pro-government towns in northern Syria to the nearby city of Aleppo, said Abdul Hakim Baghdadi, who helped negotiate the arrangement.

The predominantly Shiite Foua and Kfraya have remained loyal to the Syrian government while the surrounding Idlib province has come under hard-line Sunni, rebel rule.

Near the capital of Damascus, some 60 buses carrying 2,350 opposition fighters, activists and their families departed from two opposition-held towns in the direction of Idlib, according to the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group and Syrian state media.

If the evacuations are completed, they would be the first in number of rounds stretching over two months to evacuate some 30,000 Syrians from besieged areas. Another 3,000 people are expected to be bused out of Foua and Kfraya on Friday evening, according to Baghdadi.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 274 ~ 24 of 40

Madaya and Zabadani are the latest in a constellation of towns once held by the opposition around Damascus to submit to government rule. Pro-government forces have held the two towns under twin sieges for nearly two years, leading residents to hunt rodents and boil grass to stave off hunger in the winter months. Photos of children gaunt with hunger shocked the world and gave new urgency to U.N. relief operations in Syria.

"We've moved. We're at the outskirts of the towns," said Muhammad Darwish, who provides medical care in Madaya. He was forced to leave his university in the final year of his dentistry studies when he joined the popular movement to unseat President Bashar Assad six years ago. The country has since descended into a harsh civil war.

Critics have denounced the deal as the forced rearrangement of the country's population, and the United Nations is not supervising the evacuations.

In Madaya, residents were given the option to stay and "reconcile" their status with government authorities. They will have to pledge allegiance to President Assad's government and swear off any dissent. Military defectors, draft-dodgers and reservists called up for duty will have between six months to a year to return to the armed services, or to apply for an exemption. Most of the estimated 40,000 residents will stay and accept the terms.

But at least 2,000 will not, according to Darwish. They include former fighters, activists and medical workers who say they cannot redeploy with the military that once shelled their homes, and who are wary of the treatment they will receive at the hands of the government's notorious security services.

"I can't stay," Darwish told The Associated Press when it became clear the evacuations would occur. The government has targeted medical workers with detention, torture and bombardment throughout the conflict, according to local medical workers, as well as reports from Physicians for Human Rights and Doctors Without Borders.

"It's more dangerous for a doctor than it is for a fighter to stay," he said.

Similar offers were extended to other areas that have surrendered to the government, including Moadamiyeh, Hameh, Qudsaya and the Barada Valley around the capital, and formerly rebellious neighborhoods in Aleppo and Homs, Syria's first and third largest cities, respectively.

Zabadani, however, is to be depopulated. The arrangement has the town's last 160 hold outs — all believed to be fighters or medical workers — bussed out. In doing so, it faces a similar fate to the much larger Darayya, another Damascus suburb, which was depopulated following years of crushing government siege and bombardment last August.

Most of eastern Aleppo was depopulated through force, as well. A U.N. inquiry said the evacuation of east Aleppo amounted to a war crime because it was coerced through the joint Russian and Syrian government campaign against the city's civilian infrastructure. More than 20,000 people were bussed out of Aleppo at the end of last year, to rebel-held provinces in the northwest.

Overall, tens of thousands of people have been uprooted to Idlib and Aleppo province, where they fear they are being gathered for a final government offensive to defeat them all.

Amer Burhan, the director for Zabadani's field hospital, said he expects the young fighters in Zabadani to join the fronts in northern Syria to fight the government some more.

The fates of Fuoua and Kfraya are less clear. Baghdadi, the negotiator, says conscripts will stay and fight to defend the towns. But Yasser Abdelatif, a media official for the ultraconservative rebel group Ahrar al-Sham, said the towns will be depopulated completely.

The evacuation deal brokered by Qatar, negotiating on behalf of the rebels, and Iran, on behalf of the government, in March.

Government: 36 Islamic State fighters killed by massive bomb

By AMIR SHAH, Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — The attack on a tunnel complex in remote eastern Afghanistan with the largest non-nuclear weapon ever used in combat by the U.S. military left 36 Islamic State group fighters dead and no civilian casualties, Afghanistan officials said Friday.

The Ministry of Defense said in a statement that several IS caves and ammunition caches were destroyed by the giant bomb, which terrified villagers on both sides of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border with its “earsplitting blast.”

The U.S. military headquarters in Kabul said the bomb was dropped at about 7:30 p.m. local time Thursday on a tunnel complex in Nangarhar province, where the Afghan affiliate of the Islamic State group has been operating. The target was close to the Pakistani border.

“I want a hundred times more bombings on this group,” said Hakim Khan, 50, a resident of Achin district, the site of the blast.

Pakistani villagers living near the Afghan border said the explosion was so loud they thought a bomb had been dropped in their village by U.S. warplanes targeting terrorists in Pakistan.

“I was sleeping when we heard a loud explosion. It was an earsplitting blast,” said Shah Wali, 46, who lives in the village of Goor Gari, 15 kilometers (9 miles) from the border with Nangarhar. “I jumped from my bed and came out of my home to see what has gone wrong in our village.”

Wali said dozens of other villagers also came out of homes and later he went near the border, where he met with other residents. He said he could see smoke in the sky.

The U.S. estimates 600 to 800 IS fighters are present in Afghanistan, mostly in Nangarhar. The U.S. has concentrated heavily on combatting them while also supporting Afghan forces battling the Taliban. President Donald Trump called Thursday’s operation a “very, very successful mission.”

The bomb, known officially as a GBU-43B, or massive ordnance air blast weapon, unleashes 11 tons of explosives.

Inamullah Meyakhil, spokesman for the central hospital in eastern Nangarhar province, said the facility had received no dead or wounded from the attack.

District Gov. Ismail Shinwari said there is no civilian property near the airstrike location.

There was no immediate comment from the Islamic State group or other militants regarding the U.S. bomb attack.

Associated Press writers Anwarullah Khan in Khar, Pakistan, Munir Ahmed in Islamabad, and Maamoun Youssef in Cairo contributed to this report.

Insurers say Trump must do more to stabilize ‘Obamacare’

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR and TOM MURPHY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — “Obamacare” is proving more of a challenge than the Trump administration bargained for.

With the “repeal and replace” effort at an impasse on Capitol Hill, the administration released on Thursday a set of fixes to stabilize the Affordable Care Act’s shaky insurance markets for next year. But the insurance industry quickly said the changes don’t go far enough.

While calling the administration action a step in the right direction, the industry is looking for a guarantee that the government will also keep paying billions in “cost-sharing” subsidies that help consumers with high deductibles. President Donald Trump says he hasn’t made up his mind on that.

Republicans contend that the Affordable Care Act, or ACA, is beyond repair, but their “repeal and replace” slogan hasn’t been easy to put into practice, or politically popular. So the administration is trying to keep the existing system going temporarily as it pursues a total remake.

Many of the changes follow recommendations from insurers, who wanted the government to address

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 274 ~ 26 of 40

shortcomings with HealthCare.gov markets, including complaints that some people are gaming the system by signing up only when they get sick, and then dropping out after being treated.

But the White House remained mum on the biggest concern. Insurers, doctors, hospitals and the business community have asked Trump to preserve ACA cost-sharing subsidies that pare down high deductibles and copayments for consumers with modest incomes. They're separate from the better-known premium subsidies that most customers receive.

"There is still too much instability and uncertainty in this market," Marilyn Tavenner, president of America's Health Insurance Plans and the industry's top lobbyist, said in a statement. "Health plans and the consumers they serve need to know that funding for cost-sharing reduction subsidies will continue uninterrupted."

Estimated at \$7 billion this year, the subsidies are under a legal cloud. Without the payments, experts say, the government marketplaces that provide private insurance for about 12 million people will be overwhelmed by premium increases and insurer departures.

In a Wall Street Journal interview this week, Trump raised the possibility of shutting off the money if Democrats won't bargain on health care. But the president also said he hasn't made up his mind, and that he doesn't want people to get hurt.

House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi of California called that an "appalling threat." Democrats are now demanding that the issue be addressed in a must-pass spending bill due at the end of the month. The new administration has continued to make cost-sharing payments to insurers as it weighs options.

The changes announced Thursday include:

—A shortened sign-up window of 45 days, starting with coverage for 2018. That's about half as long as the current open enrollment season.

—Curbs on "special enrollment periods" that allow consumers to sign up outside the normal open enrollment window. Insurers say these have been too easily granted, allowing some people to sign up only when they need costly treatment.

—Allowing an insurer to collect past debt for unpaid premiums from the prior 12 months before applying a consumer's payments to a new policy.

—Giving insurers more flexibility to design low-premium plans that can be tailored to young adults.

"The bottom line is that while the final rule addresses some of the challenges in the market, I think the reaction will be that it doesn't go far enough," said Cara Kelly, a vice president at the consulting firm Avalere Health.

The changes come as insurers are figuring out their plans for 2018.

Consumers likely won't know for certain what sort of choices they will have until late summer or early fall, a couple of months before open enrollment begins.

This year saw premium increases averaging 25 percent for a standard plan in states served by HealthCare.gov. Some insurers say they've lost hundreds of millions of dollars, and many have pulled back or are considering it.

Most communities will have competing insurers on the public marketplace next year, but a growing number will be down to one, and some areas may face having none.

All eyes are now on Anthem, a big Blue Cross-Blue Shield insurer operating in several states that has yet to announce its intentions for 2018. CEO Joseph Swedish has said his company would not commit to participating next year. Swedish and other insurance officials have said the government has to stabilize the marketplaces.

Dave Dillion of the Society of Actuaries says growth in underlying medical expenses could drive coverage prices up another 10 percent or more.

Nonetheless, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office says the ACA markets will be stable next year in most areas.

In Washington, Republicans are trying to resolve an impasse between hard-liners and moderates that has prevented them from getting their own health care bill through the House.

Meanwhile, the legal issue over the cost-sharing subsidies remains in limbo. A U.S. District Court judge

found that Congress did not specifically authorize the payments, making the expenditure unconstitutional. The case is on hold. Congress could approve the money, but that would be a politically difficult vote for Republicans.

Murphy reported from Indianapolis.

N. Korean official blames Trump for region's 'vicious cycle'

By ERIC TALMADGE, Associated Press

PYONGYANG, North Korea (AP) — North Korea's vice foreign minister on Friday blamed President Donald Trump for building up a "vicious cycle" of tensions on the Korean Peninsula, saying that his "aggressive" tweets were "making trouble."

In an exclusive interview with The Associated Press in Pyongyang, Vice Minister Han Song Ryol also warned the U.S. against provoking North Korea militarily, saying, "We will go to war if they choose."

"If the U.S. comes with reckless military maneuvers then we will confront it with the DPRK's pre-emptive strike," Han said, referring to North Korea by its official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. "We've got a powerful nuclear deterrent already in our hands, and we certainly will not keep our arms crossed in the face of a U.S. pre-emptive strike."

Speaking through an interpreter provided by the foreign ministry, Han was calm and polite but forceful throughout the 40-minute interview.

Tensions are deepening as the U.S. has sent an aircraft carrier to waters off the peninsula and is conducting its biggest-ever joint military exercises with South Korea. Pyongyang, meanwhile, recently launched a ballistic missile and some experts say it could conduct another nuclear test at virtually anytime.

"That is something that our headquarters decides," Han said of what would be North Korea's sixth nuclear test. "At a time and at a place where the headquarters deems necessary, it will take place."

Many North Korea watchers believe North Korea could have a viable nuclear warhead and a ballistic missile capable of hitting the U.S. mainland on Trump's watch as president — within the next few years.

Han, however, said North Korea blames Trump and the U.S. for the rising tensions. He cited not only the U.S.-South Korean wargames and the deployment of the aircraft carrier, the USS Carl Vinson, but also a tweet Trump posted Tuesday in which he said the North is "looking for trouble." Trump also tweeted that if China doesn't do its part to rein in Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions, the U.S. can handle it.

"Trump is always making provocations with his aggressive words," Han said. "So that's why. It's not the DPRK but the U.S. and Trump that makes trouble."

The annual military exercises have consistently infuriated the North, which views them as rehearsals for an invasion. Washington and Seoul deny that, but reports that exercises have included "decapitation strikes" aimed at the North's leadership have fanned Pyongyang's anger.

"As long as the nuclear threats and blackmail go on with the military exercises, we will carry forward with our national defense buildup, the core of which is the nuclear arms buildup," Han said.

"Whatever comes from the U.S., we will cope with it. We are fully prepared to handle it."

Outwardly, there are few signs of concern in North Korea despite the political back and forth. Instead, the country is gearing up for its biggest holiday of the year, the 105th anniversary of the birth of the late Kim Il Sung, the country's founder and leader Kim Jong Un's grandfather.

The Saturday anniversary may provide the world with a look at some of that arsenal. Expectations are high the North may put its newest missiles on display during a military parade that could be held to mark the event.

US drops 'mother of all bombs' on Islamic State tunnel

By ROBERT BURNS, AP National Security Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. forces in Afghanistan on Thursday struck an Islamic State tunnel complex in eastern Afghanistan with "the mother of all bombs," the largest non-nuclear weapon ever used in combat

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 274 ~ 28 of 40

by the U.S. military, Pentagon officials said.

The bomb, known officially as a GBU-43B, or massive ordnance air blast weapon, unleashes 11 tons of explosives. When it was developed in the early 2000s, the Pentagon did a formal review of legal justification for its combat use.

The Pentagon said it had no early estimate of deaths or damage caused by its attack, which President Donald Trump called a "very, very successful mission."

The U.S. military headquarters in Kabul said in a statement that the bomb was dropped at 7:32 p.m. local time Thursday on a tunnel complex in Achin district of Nangarhar province, where the Afghan affiliate of the Islamic State group has been operating. The target was close to the Pakistani border.

The U.S. estimates 600 to 800 IS fighters are present in Afghanistan, mostly in Nangarhar. The U.S. has concentrated heavily on combatting them while also supporting Afghan forces battling the Taliban. Just last week a U.S. Army Special Forces soldier, Staff Sgt. Mark R. De Alencar, 37, of Edgewood, Maryland, was killed in action in Nangarhar.

The MOAB is a custom-made Air Force weapon that has been in the arsenal for more than a decade but never used on the battlefield, although it was available throughout the Iraq war. It is designed to hit softer targets such as surface facilities, tunnel entrances and troop concentrations. It is pushed out the rear of the launching aircraft, guided to its target by GPS and slowed by a parachute.

A separate non-nuclear weapon known as the Massive Ordnance Penetrator, or MOP, which is larger in its physical dimensions but carries a smaller load of conventional explosives, is designed to take out deeply buried targets like reinforced bunkers. The MOP has never been used in combat.

In its 2003 review of the legality of using the MOAB, the Pentagon concluded that it could not be called an indiscriminate killer under the Law of Armed Conflict.

"Although the MOAB weapon leaves a large footprint, it is discriminate and requires a deliberate launching toward the target," the review said. It added: "It is expected that the weapon will have a substantial psychological effect on those who witness its use."

Adam Stump, a Pentagon spokesman, said the bomb was dropped from a U.S. MC-130 special operations transport. He said the bomb had been brought to Afghanistan "some time ago" for potential use.

Army Gen. John W. Nicholson, commander of U.S. forces in Afghanistan, said in a written statement that the strike was designed to minimize the risk to Afghan and U.S. forces conducting clearing operations in the Achin area "while maximizing the destruction" of IS fighters and facilities. He said IS has been using improvised explosive devices, bunkers and tunnels to strengthen its defenses.

"This is the right munition to reduce these obstacles and maintain the momentum of our offensive against ISIS-K," he added, using the U.S. military's acronym for the IS affiliate.

Ismail Shinwari, the governor of Achin district, said the U.S. attack was carried out in a remote mountainous area with no civilian homes nearby and that there had been no reports of injured civilians. He said there has been heavy fighting in the area in recent weeks between Afghan forces and IS militants.

White House spokesman Sean Spicer said IS fighters had used the tunnels and caves in Achin to maneuver freely.

"The United States takes the fight against ISIS very seriously and in order to defeat the group we must deny them operational space, which we did," Spicer said.

Associated Press writer Amir Shah in Kabul, Afghanistan, contributed to this report.

Ben Beach eyeing record 50th straight Boston Marathon finish

By KYLE HIGHTOWER, AP Sports Writer

BOSTON (AP) — Ben Beach was a scrawny 18-year-old who had never run more than 5 miles before he started training for his first Boston Marathon in 1968.

A half-century later, at age 67, the Bethesda, Maryland, resident has a chance to set a standard by becoming the first person to complete 50 consecutive trips down the city's hallowed course.

The current Cal Ripken of the Boston race is one of just 81 people who have current streaks of at least

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 274 ~ 29 of 40

25 consecutive trips down the 26.2-mile Boston route. Only nine have a streak of at least 40.

But Beach's love affair with the event actually began on a whim. He was a high school senior flipping through radio stations in his bedroom at a Massachusetts boarding school when he came across a broadcast of the 1967 marathon. The race was run in low 30-degree weather and sleet. Set to attend Harvard the following year, he perked up.

"The whole idea of running 26 miles in that kind of weather just kind of appealed to my senses — the bizarre," he said. "I just said to myself that day ... I'm gonna run that."

He signed up in 1968.

He walked inside the staging area "that reeked of Bengay." The field of 1,014 that year was mostly men, plus a handful of women who had signed up a year after Katherine Switzer became the first woman to officially enter.

Beach, who had consumed a steak the night before and run 20 miles only two days prior, said he was naive about marathon prep back then.

"You got in line for the doctor and when you got up to the front ... the doctor puts a stethoscope to try to determine if you could make it to the Prudential Building (finish line)," Beach said. "I don't know if anybody got turned down or what."

He did finish, in 3 hours, 23 minutes, and after waiting in line to use the only available shower went up to the cafeteria for a bowl of beef stew. He didn't finish that, but did get down four glasses of milk.

"I was lucky that I didn't collapse in a heap," he said.

He wasn't sure he'd ever do it again.

"In fact, my initial feeling was 'I've done it, that's it,'" he said. "But at some point over the next few weeks or months I think I decided I ought to go back... It went better than anything I could have imagined."

James Fallows, a friend of Beach's at Harvard, ran the race with him the following year and again in 1970.

"I had no idea that I was witnessing the beginnings of something historic," Fallows said. "It was like having been on hand to see the planting of the seed that became a giant sequoia."

It was around Year 10 that Beach said it really started to become a streak. It was also around the time — in 1977 — that he met Carol, his future wife, at a road race.

She said his drive to run was an instant attraction.

"He makes it easy," Carol Beach said. "You'd think I was dating a professional football player back then. I was so psyched to date a guy that's run the Boston Marathon."

Now 37 years of marriage later, he counts her as the streak's sustainer.

"She's always understood how important it is to me," Beach said. "She understands something about the mind of a marathoner ... I'm sort of a creature of habit."

There have been both early and recent challenges to the streak continuing.

The first time was on just his fourth race in 1971. He had a knee injury and was just passing the third mile when it started to give him trouble.

But he was able to push through it and finish.

But the last 10 years have become particularly challenging following his diagnosis for a movement disorder called Dystonia in 2002. The ailment causes involuntary and uncontrollable muscle contractions and cramping.

At first it wasn't too debilitating because of the large mileage base he had built up over the years. But 10 years ago as he aged and his training began to tail off, it finally caught up with him.

In 2002, he finished the course in 3:07:50. By 2012, his time had ballooned to 5:55:22. That was twice his best time ever in Boston of 2:27:26 in 1981.

The 2012 finish was also the start of five straight years of finishing times above five hours. That included the 2013 bombing year, when he surpassed former record-holder Neil Weygandt's streak of 45. Beach had just passed the 21-mile mark when the bombs halted the more than 5,000 runners still on the course. He was later given an extrapolated finish of 5:39:32. He crossed the finish line on Boylston Street last year in 5:31:21.

Those flirtations with the six-hour mark are more relevant after race officials notified runners in 2015 of

a change in streak recognition. Beginning with the 2016 race, only participants who completed the course before the official clock cutoff at six hours would have the continuation of their streaks recognized by the Boston Athletic Association.

That policy was relaxed for 2016, but it's back in effect for this year.

"Last year went better and I'm hoping this year will as well. But you never know," Beach said. "A lot can happen between Hopkinton and the Hancock building."

Though his health will certainly play a role in where the streak goes from here, he said Johnny Kelley's record of 58 total Boston finishes has always been in the back of his head.

"As long as I'm physically able I'd go back the next year because again it's in my blood," he said. "I'm not on a suicide mission here, though. If it really looks like I'm putting myself in serious risk, then I think I'll have the common sense to say it's been great, but all good things must come to an end."

Follow Kyle Hightower on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/khightower>

Lawyer: Dragged passenger lost 2 teeth and broke his nose

By DON BABWIN and SARA BURNETT, Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — The passenger dragged from a United flight lost two front teeth and suffered a broken nose and a concussion, his lawyer said Thursday, accusing the airline industry of having "bullied" its customers for far too long.

"Are we going to continue to be treated like cattle?" attorney Thomas Demetrio asked.

The passenger, Dr. David Dao, has been released from a hospital but will need reconstructive surgery, Demetrio said at a news conference, appearing alongside one of Dao's children. Dao was not there.

The 69-year-old physician from Elizabethtown, Kentucky, was removed by police from the United Express flight Sunday at Chicago's O'Hare Airport after refusing to give up his seat on the full plane to make room for four airline employees.

Cellphone video of him being pulled down the aisle on his back and footage of his bloody face have created a public-relations nightmare for United.

One of Dao's five children, Crystal Pepper, said the family was "horrified, shocked and sickened" by what happened. She said it was made worse by the fact that it was caught on video.

For Dao, who came to the U.S. after fleeing Vietnam by boat in 1975 when Saigon fell, being dragged off the plane "was more horrifying and harrowing than what he experienced in leaving Vietnam," Demetrio said.

Demetrio, who indicated Dao is going to sue, said the industry has long "bullied" passengers by over-booking flights and then bumping people, and "it took something like this to get a conversation going."

"I hope he becomes a poster child for all of us. Someone's got to," the lawyer said.

Early on, United CEO Oscar Munoz added to the furor when he apologized for the incident but accused Dao of being belligerent. Later, Munoz offered a more emphatic mea culpa, saying, "No one should ever be mistreated this way."

He promised to review the airline's policies to make sure something like that never happens again, and said United will no longer use police to remove bumped passengers. The airline also said all passengers on the flight would get a refund.

In a statement issued immediately after Thursday's news conference, United insisted that Munoz and the airline called Dao numerous times to apologize. Munoz himself said on Wednesday that he had left a message for Dao.

But Demetrio said neither Dao nor his family had heard from United.

Demetrio said his client accepts the apology. But the attorney questioned its sincerity, suggesting United acted because it was taking a PR "beating."

The attorney was unable to say precisely how Dao was injured. Dao didn't remember exactly what occurred because of the concussion he suffered, Demetrio said.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 274 ~ 31 of 40

Pepper said her father and mother had been traveling from California to Louisville, Kentucky, and had caught a connecting flight at O'Hare. After what happened, Dao "has no interest in ever seeing an airplane" and will probably be driven to Kentucky, Demetrio said.

United had selected Dao and three other passengers at random for removal from the plane after unsuccessfully offering \$800 in travel vouchers and a hotel stay to customers willing to give up their seats.

The three officers who removed Dao have been suspended from their jobs at the Chicago Aviation Department.

At a City Council committee hearing Thursday, aldermen ripped officials from United and the department about the episode.

"There are no excuses," Alderman Michael Zalewski said.

John Slater, a United vice president, said that bumping passengers to accommodate airline employees happens infrequently, and that federal guidelines requiring rest for crew members made it necessary to get the employees on the Sunday flight to Louisville.

The Aviation Department's roughly 300 officers guard the city's two main airports but are not part of the regular Chicago police force, receive less training and cannot carry guns inside the terminals.

"To be quite frank, Chicago employees should not be doing the dirty work for the friendly skies airline," said Alderman Ed Burke, who played video of Dao being removed.

Aviation Commissioner Ginger Evans told the committee that the officers had the authority to board the flight but that what happened on the plane is being investigated.

Misdirected US strike killed 18 allied fighters in Syria

By PHILIP ISSA and BASSEM MROUE, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — A misdirected airstrike by the U.S.-led coalition earlier this week killed 18 allied fighters battling the Islamic State group in northern Syria, the U.S. military said Thursday.

U.S. Central Command said coalition aircraft were given the wrong coordinates by their partner forces, the predominantly-Kurdish Syrian Democratic Forces, for the strike on Tuesday that was intended to target IS militants south of their Tabqa stronghold, near the extremists' de facto capital, Raqqa. The strike hit an SDF position instead.

Several nations have lent their air power to the U.S.-led coalition to defeat the Islamic State group, and it wasn't clear which air force was behind the errant strike.

The SDF acknowledged the strike, saying a number of its fighters were killed and wounded. On Thursday, the group held funerals for 17 of its fighters in the border town of Tal al-Abyad, the SDF-linked Hawar news agency said, though it did not say whether they were killed in the friendly fire incident.

An activist-run group, Raqqa is Being Slaughtered Silently, said three days of mourning had been declared for the town. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said 25 SDF fighters were killed in the last two days of battle.

The SDF, meanwhile, announced the launch of a new phase of its campaign to retake Raqqa. The Kurdish fighters, with U.S.-led air and ground support, have surrounded Tabqa, some 40 kilometers (25 miles) southwest of the city and are working to clear Islamic State militants out of Jalab Valley, north of Raqqa.

The SDF says it wants to isolate Raqqa before attacking it. Its closest position is less than eight kilometers (five miles) northeast of the city. But the countryside south of Raqqa is still under IS control.

Meanwhile, President Bashar Assad said a chemical weapons attack on a rebel-held town in northern Idlib province last week that was widely blamed on his forces was a "fabrication."

"Our impression is that the West, mainly the United States, is hand-in-glove with the terrorists," Assad told Agence France-Presse in his first comments since a U.S. missile strike on a Syrian air base in retaliation for the chemical attack.

"They fabricated the whole story in order to have a pretext" to attack the air base, Assad said in the interview, a video of which was released by his office.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 274 ~ 32 of 40

In Washington, State Department spokesman Mark Toner called Assad's comments "an attempt by him to throw up false flags, create confusion."

"There can be little doubt that the recent attacks and the chemical weapons attack in Idlib was by the Syrian government, by the Syrian regime and that it wasn't only a violation of the laws of war but it was, we believe, a war crime," Toner said.

Syria strongly denies it was behind the April 4 chemical attack on the town of Khan Sheikhoun, which killed 87 people, including more than a dozen children. The government says Syrian warplanes struck an al-Qaida arms depot that contained chemical weapons.

The international chemical weapons watchdog is testing samples from the suspected nerve gas attack and could produce a report on the matter within three weeks, the British delegation to the commission said Thursday.

The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons has a standing fact-finding mission on Syria to investigate alleged chemical weapons attacks, but does not apportion blame. During a meeting of its executive council called to discuss the Khan Sheikhoun attack, the U.S. ambassador, Kenneth D. Ward, said Syrian authorities "abetted by Russia's continuing efforts to bury the truth" still possess and use banned chemical weapons.

On Wednesday, Russia vetoed a U.N. Security Council resolution demanding a speedy probe into the Khan Sheikhoun attack. U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Nikki Haley said the veto left Moscow, a key ally of the Syrian government, with "a lot to prove."

Meanwhile, preparations were underway for the planned evacuation of more than 10,000 residents from two pro-government Shiite villages in northern Syria, Foua and Kfarya, and the rebel-held towns of Madaya and Zabadani near Damascus.

Dozens of buses entered the areas Wednesday but by late Thursday people had not boarded them, according to opposition activists in the rebel-held towns.

If the evacuations go through, they would be the first in number of rounds stretching over two months to evacuate some 30,000 Syrians from besieged areas, in a deal struck by rebels and the government. It is unclear whether they will ever be able to return to their homes.

Civilians are being given the option to stay, but activists and doctors said it's too dangerous for medical workers to do so. Since the beginning of the conflict, the government has targeted medical workers with detention, torture, and bombardment.

Associated Press writers Sylvia Hui in London and Vladimir Isachenkov in Moscow contributed to this report.

'Survivor' contestant outs fellow competitor as transgender

By The Associated Press

"Survivor" contestant Zeke Smith was outed as transgender by fellow competitor Jeff Varner on Wednesday night's episode of the CBS reality competition. The move has prompted online criticism and condemnation by a major LGBT rights group.

Varner made accusations of "a deception" before revealing that Smith is transgender on the episode. Varner was immediately criticized by other players. He repeatedly apologized, but was voted out of the competition.

In the tense tribal council, which was taped last year, Smith explained that he didn't mention that he was transgender because he didn't want to be known as "the trans 'Survivor' player. I wanted to be Zeke the 'Survivor' player."

On the contrary, he now says appearing on "Survivor" was a step toward becoming the man he wants to be. He writes in The Hollywood Reporter that by calling him deceptive, Varner invoked "one of the most odious stereotypes of transgender people, a stereotype that is often used as an excuse for violence and even murder.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 274 ~ 33 of 40

"In proclaiming 'Zeke is not the guy you think he is' and that 'there is deception on levels y'all don't understand,' Varner is saying that I'm not really a man," Smith continues, "and that simply living as my authentic self is a nefarious trick. In reality, by being Zeke the dude, I am being my most honest self — as is every other transgender person going about their daily lives."

In a statement Thursday, CBS said "we have always been guided by the principle that this is his (Smith's) story to tell, and it remains so."

The network lauded his grace and said it also had "respect for how Jeff Varner expressed remorse for his mistake" on the episode and in interviews.

"In the end, we believe this episode, accompanied by Zeke's own remarkable writing and speaking on the subject, has provided an unexpected but important dialogue about acceptance and treating transgender people with respect," CBS said.

GLAAD criticized the outing of Smith.

"Zeke Smith, and transgender people like him, are not deceiving anyone by being their authentic selves," said Nick Adams, director of GLAAD's Transgender Media Program, "and it is dangerous and unacceptable to out a transgender person."

Adams noted the show of support Smith had received since the episode's airing.

"Moments like this prove that when people from all walks of life get to know a transgender person, they accept us for who we are," he said.

GLAAD said it worked with Smith and CBS "for several months" to prepare Smith for the publicity blitz that would accompany the episode's airing.

"Survivor" host Jeff Probst added to the opprobrium against Varner.

"I cannot imagine anyone thinking what was done to Zeke was OK on any level, under any circumstances, and certainly not simply because there was a million dollars on the line," he told Entertainment Weekly. "You just don't do that to someone."

Varner calls his actions a "mistake" and says he's "deeply saddened."

"Let me be clear, outing someone is assault," he says in his tweet. "It robs a strong, courageous person of their power and protection and opens them up to discrimination and danger. It can leave scars that haunt for a lifetime."

Online sentiment was unforgiving.

"Jeff Varner outing Zeke is so wrong," tweeted Joethegreat in a typical post. "Took it to another level by connecting trans to deception."

4 dead of injuries consistent with methods used by gang

By FRANK ELTMAN, Associated Press

CENTRAL ISLIP, N.Y. (AP) — Four young men found dead in a park from injuries inflicted by a sharp-edged object were killed in a way that is consistent with the methods of the MS-13 street gang, according to police, who declared war against gang violence in the suburbs of Long Island.

The victims, ranging in age from 16 to 20, were discovered in a wooded area near a soccer field in Central Islip, Suffolk County Police Commissioner Timothy Sini said. He said the bodies had "significant trauma" wounds, and he believes all the victims were killed there.

He did not definitively say the killings were the work of the MS-13 gang but said the tactics — using sharp instruments and extreme violence — were consistent with the gang, which has been gaining a foothold on Long Island for years.

"This is a long-term war and make no mistake about it it's a war," Sini told reporters, announcing a \$25,000 reward for information about the killings. "Today is a sad day in Suffolk County, particularly for the loved ones and the family members and the friends of those who were murdered, but we maintain our resolve."

William Tigre told reporters near the scene that an acquaintance told him Wednesday night that his 18-year-old brother, Jorge, was among those killed. The acquaintance also indicated he knew of the kill-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 274 ~ 34 of 40

ings because he had been there.

The acquaintance "called saying that my brother was here, dead," Tigre, 21, said. "He just said, 'I saw your brother dying, and I escaped.' That's the only thing he said. He didn't say nothing else."

Sini confirmed to The Associated Press that police had begun a missing-person's investigation for Jorge Tigre on Tuesday. He would not comment on whether the teenager was among those killed.

The discovery of the bodies comes about a month after the arrest of eight MS-13 gang members in connection with the September killings of two teenage girls in nearby Brentwood.

Gang violence has been a problem in Central Islip, Brentwood and other Long Island communities for more than a decade, but Suffolk County police and the FBI began pouring resources into a crackdown after the killings of the girls, along with two other Brentwood High School students.

Prosecutors said Kayla Cuevas, 16, was targeted last summer by a group of four gang members because she had been feuding with MS-13 members at school and on social media. The group, which had been driving around looking for gang enemies, attacked when they came across her walking with Nisa Mickens, 15, in the street. The inseparable best friends were attacked with a machete and baseball bats, officials said.

Nisa "was simply at the wrong place at the wrong time, hanging out with her childhood friend," former U.S. Attorney Robert Capers said in announcing the arrests. The site where the bodies were found Wednesday is near the federal courthouse where the killing suspects are being prosecuted.

Anthony Rubenstein, a 29-year-old electrician who graduated from Brentwood High School and lives near where the bodies were found, shook his head in frustration about the killings.

"It's definitely something that's becoming, unfortunately, normal," he said. "We had violence back then when I was in high school but never like this. I don't know what it is, but it's definitely getting worse."

The MS-13 gang, also called Mara Salvatrucha, is believed to have been founded as a neighborhood street gang in Los Angeles in the mid-1980s by immigrants fleeing a civil war in El Salvador. It grew after some members were deported to El Salvador, helping turn that country into one of the most violent places in the world. It's now a major international criminal enterprise with tens of thousands of members in several Central American countries and many U.S. states.

In December, President Donald Trump referenced the slayings in Brentwood during a profile for his Time magazine Person of the Year award.

One of his priorities is cracking down on immigrants who are in the country illegally and have committed crimes. He promised as much in a Time interview, referencing a Newsday story about the killings.

"They come from Central America. They're tougher than any people you've ever met," he said. "They're killing and raping everybody out there. They're illegal. And they are finished."

Follow Eltman on Twitter at @feltman41

Russia reset redux? Trump tries where predecessors failed

By MATTHEW LEE, AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — It's a familiar refrain: A new American president seeks improved relations with Russia. And like his predecessors, Donald Trump is running into a thicket of obstacles, new and old, to even maintaining a functioning relationship with Moscow.

For Trump, the grievances inherited from Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama have been compounded by Russian-backed Syria's chemical weapons attacks, retaliatory U.S. missile strikes, election meddling allegations and Ukraine's unsolved crisis. At the center of each problem is an energized and uncompromising force: Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"Things will work out fine between the U.S.A. and Russia," Trump nevertheless tweeted Thursday, as his top diplomat departed Moscow empty-handed after discussions with Putin and other Russian officials. "At the right time everyone will come to their senses & there will be lasting peace!"

Trump's optimistic prognosis followed his declaration Wednesday that U.S.-Russia relations "may be at an all-time low," and that "right now we're not getting along with Russia at all." The sudden U-turn un-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 274 ~ 35 of 40

derscored long-standing difficulties that have plagued the two nations' attempts at greater understanding since the days of their World War II alliance. The Cold War may be over, but from Eastern Europe to the Middle East, Washington and Moscow don't see the world the same way.

"The Trump administration came in with a set of problems and a level of disagreement that are more difficult to just put aside in the way the Bush and Obama administrations had been able to do," said Stephen Sestanovich, a Council on Foreign Relations expert who was U.S. ambassador-at-large for the former Soviet Union from 1997 to 2001. "The obstacles in the way of a reset now are more serious than you had at the outset of any other administration since the end of the Cold War."

The list of complaints is long, particularly on the Russian side. They range from NATO's expansion and European missile defense systems to a fear the U.S. is promoting opposition to pro-Russian leaders and even Putin himself. Trump's order last week to fire 59 Tomahawk missiles at a Syrian government-controlled air base adds to Moscow's overriding suspicion that Washington is willing to use force to promote regime change, regardless of who is in the White House.

America's anger is no less palpable. It sees Russia attempting to undermine NATO and European Union unity, supporting violent separatist insurgencies in Georgia and Ukraine, and propping up a leader in Syrian President Bashar Assad who is responsible for a civil war that has killed hundreds of thousands of people. The accusation that the Kremlin tampered with the U.S. democratic process only buttresses those who see Russia as America's greatest geopolitical foe.

As Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said after emerging from a nearly two-hour meeting with Putin, "there is a low level of trust between our two countries." He added ominously, "The world's two foremost nuclear powers cannot have this kind of relationship."

For Trump, it's a dramatic reversal from his repeated campaign pledges to forge a new U.S.-Russian relationship. Likewise, Obama's first secretary of state, Hillary Clinton, officially offered Russia a symbolic "reset" button. After his first meeting with Putin, Bush said he "looked the man in the eye" and "found him very straightforward and trustworthy," getting a "sense of his soul."

While Bush and Putin shared sentiments about cracking down on terrorism, they soon clashed. Putin chafed over Bush's support for popular revolutions against pro-Moscow leaders on Russia's borders, and strongly opposed America's 2003 Iraq invasion. Bush became troubled by Putin's increased authoritarianism and assertiveness, culminating in Russia's 2008 war with Georgia.

Obama had some initial successes, dealing with President Dmitry Medvedev, while Putin spent four years as prime minister. But once Putin returned to the presidency, Obama's reset crumbled speedily, especially after Russia's 2014 annexation of Ukraine's Crimea region and support for pro-Russian separatists in eastern Ukraine.

For Trump, the crises have come quicker and the learning curve has been faster. Beyond the expanding ledger of disagreements, Trump has limited ability to offer Moscow concessions at a time U.S. investigators are examining if Russian agents and Trump campaign associates colluded to help the billionaire businessman win last year's presidential election.

"Every administration tries to improve relations, but there is a very basic fundamental fact: Across the geopolitical chessboard the U.S. and Russia have fundamentally very different interests," said Harry Kazianis, a senior fellow for defense policy at the Center for the National Interest, a Washington think tank advocating "realistic" foreign policy.

"There is not a common enemy on the scale of the Nazis," Kazianis said, "but to be in a constant combative mode just doesn't work. Relations have gotten so bad, it's important for both sides to take a step and look at what happens if it gets worse." A pragmatic, transactional relationship, he added, "is the best we can hope for."

In Moscow, Tillerson and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said they'd create working groups to smooth over differences on issues where the two countries share common goals. Similar attempts have failed previously.

Sestanovich said new U.S. policies will be needed to prompt new Russian responses.

"You can't just ask Russia to redefine its interests," he said, adding that "Putin doesn't do favors."

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 274 ~ 36 of 40

Harrison Ford visit, Fisher tribute launch Star Wars event

By LINDSEY BAHR, AP Film Writer

How do you celebrate 40 years of "Star Wars" in 90 minutes?

With a surprise Harrison Ford appearance, a touching Carrie Fisher tribute, a John Williams performance and a fair amount of jokes about George Lucas' dialogue, of course.

Attendees at Star Wars Celebration were treated to that and more Thursday in Orlando, Florida, at the kick-off of the four-day fan event marking the anniversary of Lucas' space saga.

Actor Warwick Davis moderated the sprawling look-back at the four decade legacy, featuring appearances by Lucasfilm chief Kathleen Kennedy, Mark Hamill, Billy Dee Williams, Anthony Daniels, Peter Mayhew and Hayden Christensen.

There were also video messages from Liam Neeson, who joked that a film was being made about Jar Jar Binks going to the dark side, and from Samuel L. Jackson, who cheekily suggested that his prequel character Mace Windu is not dead.

"Let's make it happen," Jackson said directly to Kennedy. "All you gotta do is say the word."

Ford's unexpected appearance garnered the most enthusiastic response from the thousands of fans in the convention center.

"I can't believe we managed to keep it a secret considering you landed your plane" on Interstate 4, Davis joked when the applause died down.

"It was a good landing," Ford said, smiling.

The actor has historically had a tenuous relationship with the fandom around his character Han Solo, but he appeared genuinely happy to reminisce Thursday about the lasting legacy of Lucas' creation.

Lucas said he had already worked with Ford on "American Graffiti" when he gave Ford the part because it was about "spaceships and flying" and he could fly.

Ford, quoting another of his iconic characters, Indiana Jones, quipped back, "Fly? Yes. Land? No."

For "Star Wars" super fans, most of the behind the scenes stories told were as well-known as the stories in the actual films — from the fact that Lucas' inspiration for Chewbacca was his dog Indiana to the actors' problems with Lucas' fanciful and technical dialogue.

"How can you make it sound like it's spontaneous dialogue rolling off the tongue?" Hamill asked.

"He was right. It was a bit much," Lucas responded.

Ford laughed.

"I said to George, 'You can type this stuff but you can't say it. Move your mouth when you're typing,'" Ford said.

Missing, of course, was Carrie Fisher, who died late last year at 60. Lucas and Kennedy saved their words about Fisher for the end.

"She was very strong, very smart, very funny, very bold and very tough. There were not very many people like her. They're one in a billion," Lucas said, recalling Fisher's willingness to tell him when his dialogue was too difficult to say in portraying Princess Leia. "We'll all love her forever and ever."

Fisher's daughter Billie Lourd, who acted alongside her mother in "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," appeared on stage decked in Princess Leia white to remember her mother and grandmother Debbie Reynolds. Hamill also has planned a Fisher tribute for Friday.

Star Wars composer John Williams closed out the session, conducting the Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra in a performance of his score, from the Imperial March to the Main Title.

Star Wars Celebration runs through Sunday and includes a myriad of events for fans, many of which can be streamed online. Perhaps the most anticipated is a talk with "Star Wars: The Last Jedi" director Rian Johnson on Friday in advance of its December release.

Follow AP Film Writer Lindsey Bahr on Twitter: www.twitter.com/lbahr

UN votes to end to Haiti peacekeeping mission in mid-October

By EDITH M. LEDERER, Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The Security Council voted unanimously Thursday to end the U.N. peacekeeping mission in Haiti in mid-October after 13 years, sending a strong signal that the international community believes the impoverished Caribbean nation is stabilizing after successful elections.

The peacekeepers helped normalize a country in chaos after political upheaval in 2004 and a devastating 2010 earthquake that killed as many as 300,000 people — including the head of the U.N. mission itself — as well as Hurricane Matthew, which caused widespread devastation in October.

But they also leave under a cloud. U.N. troops from Nepal are widely blamed for introducing cholera that has killed at least 9,500 people in Haiti since 2010. And some troops also have been implicated in sexual abuse, including of hungry young children, an issue reported on Wednesday by The Associated Press.

The resolution approved by the U.N.'s most powerful body extends the mandate of the mission, known as MINUSTAH, for a final six months during which the 2,370 military personnel will gradually leave.

It creates a follow-on peacekeeping mission for an initial period of six months comprising 1,275 police who will continue training the national police force. The new mission will also assist the government in strengthening judicial and legal institutions "and engage in human rights monitoring, reporting and analysis."

Britain's U.N. Ambassador Matthew Rycroft said the resolution sends a signal that once peacekeepers aren't needed, U.N. missions should close or transform to focus on other challenges.

"We are at the end of an important phase in Haiti," he said. "What we now need is a newly configured mission which is focused on rule of law and human rights."

The United Nations has been involved in Haiti on and off since 1990. A 2004 rebellion had the country on the brink of collapse, leading to deployment of the U.N. force, and Haiti has been trying to get its shaky democracy on a firmer foundation ever since.

A political crisis and ensuing street protests stemming from a repeatedly derailed 2015 electoral cycle again threatened the stability of the country but an elected president and lawmakers are now in place.

The United States has launched a review of all 16 peacekeeping missions to assess costs and effectiveness, and U.S. Ambassador Nikki Haley told the Security Council that Haiti is "a success story when it comes to drawing down a peacekeeping mission."

With the new mission, she said, "the Haitian people will be set on the path of independence and self-sufficiency."

But citing the AP story, Haley said after the vote that while the departure of the peacekeepers "is seen as a success, unfortunately it's a nightmare for many in Haiti who will never be able to forget and live with brutal scars."

At least 134 Sri Lankan peacekeepers exploited nine Haitian children in a sex ring from 2004 to 2007, according to an internal U.N. report. It was part of a larger AP investigation of U.N. missions during the past 12 years that found an estimated 2,000 allegations of sexual abuse and exploitation by peacekeepers and U.N. personnel around the world.

"These peacekeepers are sent into vulnerable communities to protect the innocent, not to exploit or rape them," Haley said. "Countries that refuse to hold their soldiers accountable must recognize that this either stops or their troops will go home and their financial compensation will end."

She said the United States and the international community are committed to Haiti's "democratic development, independence and economic growth" and will also continue to push for accountability of U.N. peacekeeping missions accused of sexual abuse.

The Security Council resolution recognized the recent elections as a "major milestone towards stabilization." But it also said international support is needed to strengthen, professionalize and reform the police, promote economic development and face the "significant humanitarian challenges" following Hurricane Matthew, which struck in October.

The new mission authorized Thursday by the council, to be known as MINUJUSTH, is also authorized "to protect civilians under imminent threat of physical violence."

The council's decision was met with conflicting emotions in Haiti, where many fear that dark days of

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 274 ~ 38 of 40

instability will return after the foreign soldiers depart.

"The reason why we don't have a lot of trouble these days is because the U.N. people are still around. But once they take off, opportunities will open up for Haitians with guns to make things crazy again," said Gary Guerre, a 27-year-old bank clerk.

Some Haitians are anxious that the chronically dismal economy will get even worse.

"All I know is that having the U.N. people around helps Haiti's economy a little bit. They buy stuff and it makes the foreigners feel like there's order here," said Jivenson Arisme, a 24-year-old entrepreneur who set up a small roadside business selling kites and other items for the Easter holiday.

But many Haitian citizens have always seen the multinational peacekeepers as an occupying force and an affront to national sovereignty.

"They should have been out of here a long time ago. I don't see how they've been helping Haiti at all. I just see them drive by here like they are on a holiday," said Jean Wilnive, who sells live poultry from a perch near a bustling Port-au-Prince intersection.

Aditi Gorur, who researches peacekeeping issues as a director of the Washington-based Stimson Center think tank, said that a 13-year year stabilization mission may seem like a long time, "but creating a stable peace with an inclusive government is a decades-long endeavor" in troubled countries.

"If missions don't stay long enough to secure the gains they make and ensure that the host government is truly ready to manage security, U.N. member states will pay a much bigger price in the long-term," she said in an email.

Associated Press writers David McFadden in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, and Paisley Dodds in London contributed to this report.

Researchers name loud shrimp after Pink Floyd

OXFORD, England (AP) — A newly discovered species of shrimp that uses a bright pink claw to create a sound loud enough to kill small fish has been named for Pink Floyd.

The shrimp found on Panama's Pacific coast has been dubbed *Synalpheus pinkfloydi* in the peer-reviewed journal *Zootaxa*. Oxford University Museum of Natural History researcher Sammy De Grave is one of three researchers credited with discovering the creature. He says the description of the shrimp was "the perfect opportunity to finally give a nod to my favorite band."

According to Oxford, pistol or snapping shrimps close their enlarged claws at a rapid speed to create an imploding bubble. The result is a sound so loud it can kill or stun a fish.

Pink Floyd is also honored in nature with a damselfly named after its 1969 album "Ummagumma."

Asian markets lower amid concerns over tensions in Korea

By **YOUKYUNG LEE, AP Business Writer**

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Asian stocks were lower on Friday as investors in the region had many reasons to worry about rising geopolitical tensions and the situation on the Korean Peninsula. Many markets were closed for public holidays.

KEEPING SCORE: Tokyo's Nikkei 225 fell 0.3 percent to 18,364.68 and South Korea's Kospi slipped 0.5 percent to 2,137.07. Shanghai Composite index dropped 0.6 percent to 3,254.97. Hong Kong markets were closed and so were markets in Singapore and other Southeast Asian countries.

NORTH KOREA: Analysts said investors sought safe havens as North Korea was believed to be planning a nuclear test and the U.S. sent an aircraft carrier toward the region. Pyongyang is preparing for the 105th anniversary of the birth of its founder Kim Il Sung on Saturday. North Korean has intensified rhetoric warning it would retaliate strongly against any aggression as U.S.-South Korea hold military exercises.

ANALYST'S VIEWPOINT: "Geopolitics seemed to dominate over the past week with the ramifications of the U.S.' missile strike on Syria still reverberating and tensions around North Korea steadily building," Shane

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 274 ~ 39 of 40

Oliver, chief economist at AMP Capital, said in a daily commentary. "The issues around Syria are likely to settle down assuming U.S. involvement does not escalate, but North Korea is more risky."

WALL STREET: U.S. stocks finished lower for the third straight day on Thursday as energy stocks led the decline. The Standard & Poor's 500 index slid 0.7 percent to 2,328.95. The Dow Jones industrial average fell 0.7 percent to 20,453.25. The Nasdaq composite index lost 0.5 percent to 5,805.15. U.S. markets will be closed Friday for the Good Friday holiday.

OIL: On Friday, the New York Mercantile Exchange and the London Metal Exchange were closed for a holiday. On Thursday, benchmark U.S. crude rose 7 cents to close at \$53.18 per barrel in New York. Brent crude, used to price international oils, added 3 cents to close at \$55.89 per barrel in London.

CURRENCIES: The dollar bounced back after weakening against major currencies following President Donald Trump's comment in an interview with The Wall Street Journal that the dollar was "getting too strong." The dollar strengthened to 109.18 yen from 109.12 yen. The euro rose slightly to \$1.0617 from \$1.0616.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Good Friday, April 14, the 104th day of 2017. There are 261 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 14, 1865, President Abraham Lincoln was shot and mortally wounded by John Wilkes Booth during a performance of "Our American Cousin" at Ford's Theater in Washington.

On this date:

In 1775, the first American society for the abolition of slavery was formed in Philadelphia.

In 1828, the first edition of Noah Webster's "American Dictionary of the English Language" was published.

In 1912, the British liner RMS Titanic collided with an iceberg in the North Atlantic at 11:40 p.m. ship's time and began sinking. (The ship went under two hours and 40 minutes later with the loss of 1,514 lives.)

In 1935, the "Black Sunday" dust storm descended upon the central Plains, turning a sunny afternoon into total darkness.

In 1939, the John Steinbeck novel "The Grapes of Wrath" was first published by Viking Press.

In 1949, the "Wilhelmstrasse Trial" in Nuremberg ended with 19 former Nazi Foreign Office officials sentenced by an American tribunal to prison terms ranging from four to 25 years.

In 1956, Ampex Corp. demonstrated the first practical videotape recorder at the National Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters Convention in Chicago.

In 1965, the state of Kansas hanged Richard Hickock and Perry Smith for the 1959 murders of Herbert Clutter, his wife, Bonnie, and two of their children, Nancy and Kenyon. The murders were detailed in the Truman Capote non-fiction novel "In Cold Blood."

In 1970, President Richard Nixon nominated Harry Blackmun to the U.S. Supreme Court. (The choice of Blackmun, who was unanimously confirmed by the Senate a month later, followed the failed nominations of Clement Haynsworth and G. Harrold Carswell.)

In 1981, the first test flight of America's first operational space shuttle, the Columbia, ended successfully with a landing at Edwards Air Force Base in California.

In 1986, Americans got word of a U.S. air raid on Libya (because of the time difference, it was the early morning of April 15 where the attack occurred.) French feminist author Simone de Beauvoir died in Paris at age 78.

In 1994, two U.S. Air Force F-15 warplanes mistakenly shot down two U.S. Army Black Hawk helicopters over northern Iraq, killing 26 people, including 15 Americans. Turner Classic Movies made its cable debut; the first film it aired was Ted Turner's personal favorite, "Gone with the Wind."

Ten years ago: Riot police beat and detained protesters as thousands defied an official ban and attempted to stage a rally in Moscow against Russian President Vladimir Putin's government. A car bomb exploded near one of Shiite Islam's holiest shrines in Karbala, Iraq, killing 47 people. Entertainer Don Ho

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 14, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 274 ~ 40 of 40

died in Honolulu at age 76.

Five years ago: In Belfast, Northern Ireland, where the RMS Titanic was built, thousands attended a choral requiem at the Anglican St. Anne's Cathedral or a nationally televised concert at the city's Waterfront Hall to mark the 100th anniversary of the ship's sinking. Eleven Secret Service agents were placed on administrative leave as a deepening scandal involving prostitutes overshadowed President Barack Obama's diplomatic mission to Latin America. Actor Jonathan Frid, best known for playing Barnabas Collins in the 1960s original vampire soap opera "Dark Shadows", died in Hamilton, Ontario, Canada at age 87. Guns N' Roses, Red Hot Chili Peppers, the Beastie Boys, folk icon Donovan, late singer-songwriter Laura Nyro and British bands the Small Faces and Faces were among those inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in Cleveland.

One year ago: Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders aggressively challenged each other's judgment to be president during a Democratic debate in Brooklyn, New York, sparring over Wall Street banks, how high to raise the minimum wage and gun control. The first of two strong earthquakes struck southern Japan; the temblors killed at least 50 people.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Bradford Dillman is 87. Country singer Loretta Lynn is 85. Actress Julie Christie is 77. Retired MLB All-Star Pete Rose is 76. Rock musician Ritchie Blackmore is 72. Actor John Shea is 68. Actor-turned-race car driver Brian Forster is 57. Actor Brad Garrett is 57. Actor Robert Carlyle is 56. Rock singer-musician John Bell (Widespread Panic) is 55. Actor Robert Clendenin is 53. Actress Catherine Dent is 52. Actor Lloyd Owen is 51. Baseball Hall of Famer Greg Maddux is 51. Rock musician Barrett Martin is 50. Actor Anthony Michael Hall is 49. Actor Adrien Brody is 44. Classical singer David Miller is 44. Rapper DaBrat is 43. Actor Antwon Tanner is 42. Actress Sarah Michelle Gellar is 40. Actor-producer Rob McElhenney is 40. Roots singer JD McPherson is 40. Rock singer Win Butler (Arcade Fire) is 37. Actress Claire Coffee is 37. Actor Christian Alexander is 27. Actor Nick Krause is 25. Actress Vivien Cardone is 24. Actor Graham Phillips is 24. Actress Skyler Samuels is 23. Actress Abigail Breslin is 21.

Thought for Today: "Education ... has produced a vast population able to read but unable to distinguish what is worth reading." — George Macaulay Trevelyan, English historian (1876-1962).