

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Groton City Council Agenda Special Meeting Groton Community Center April 20, 2017 7pm

- 1. Exec Session - Personnel - 1-25-2-(1)

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

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

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### Thursday, April 20

**Senior Menu:** Ranch chicken breast, boiled potato, baby carrots, cake with strawberries, whole wheat bread.

**School Breakfast:** Egg Sausage biscuit, fruit, juice, milk.

**School Lunch:** Super nachos, fruit, broccoli and dip.

**St. John's Lutheran:** Quilting at 9 a.m.

**United Methodist:** UMW at 1:30 p.m.

1:00 p.m.: DOT weekly update at Groton Community Center

7 p.m.: Special City Council Meeting at the Groton Community Center

### Friday, April 21

Middle School Talent Show, 7 p.m., GHS Gym

**Senior Menu:** Meatballs, mashed potato and gravy, mixed vegetables, fruit cocktail, whole wheat bread.

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

**School Lunch:** Pizza, green beans, fruit, romaine salad.

### Saturday, April 22

10 a.m.: Track at Ipswich

### Sunday, April 23

**St. John's Lutheran:** Worship at 9 a.m., Sunday School at 10 a.m.

**Emmanuel Lutheran:** Worship with Milestones at 9 a.m., Sunday School at 10 a.m.

**United Methodist:** Conde Worship at 9 a.m., Coffee and fellowship at 10 a.m., Groton Wor-



**Dakota Outdoors**

**Erik Dean**

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Aberdeen, SD 57401  
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## The Life of Gerald "Mick" Osterman



Services for Gerald "Mick" Osterman, 76, of Groton will be 11:00 a.m., Friday, April 21st at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Groton. Pastor Marcia Sylvester will officiate. Burial will follow in Union Cemetery.

Visitation will be 5-7:30 p.m. at the church on Thursday with a prayer service at 7:30 p.m.

Mick passed away April 18, 2017 at Avera St. Lukes Hospital, Aberdeen.

Gerald Everett was born on February 20, 1941 in Britton to Hans and Mathida (Bahr) Osterman. At the age of three, he came to live with his aunt and uncle, Mary & Oliver Belden on the farm near Groton. Mick attended Progress #16 School in Riverside Township and later graduated from Groton High School in 1959. He continued his education at North Dakota State School of Science in Whapeton, in Auto Body. Mick returned home to help run the family farm and joined the US Army Reserve in 1962. On August 31, 1963, he was united in marriage to Carol Knickrehm at the First Presbyterian Church in Groton. Together, they were blessed with two sons.

Mick was a member of Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Groton and had served on its council, both as President and Treasurer. He had also been active in the Groton Jaycees, High Grade Sin-

clair Board, Ferney Farmers Elevator Board and James Valley Farmers Elevators Board. Most recently, he had just vacated his seat on the Riverside Township Board after 47 years. Mick enjoyed both summer and ice fishing. He belonged to the snowmobiling club and liked tractor pulling. Mick had a passion for collecting International Harvester tractors and had served on the IH Collectors Chapter #21 Board for six years.

Celebrating his life is his wife of 53 years, Carol of Groton, his sons, Todd (Sandra) Osterman of Conde, Robert (Angela) Osterman of Andover, grandchildren: Katherine Osterman, Michelle (Lee) Wasland, Loren (Katie) Osterman, Jessica Osterman, Lexi Osterman, Jason (Bridget) Osterman, Nicole (Chris) Freeman, great-grandchildren: Sydney & Wyatt Holmes, Kanin & Grady Wasland, Drake, Gunner & Hadley Osterman, Logan Osterman, his siblings, Darwin (Mavis) Osterman of Sisseton; Larry (Rose) Osterman of Cyrus, MN; Angela (Jack) Brooks of Fergus Falls, MN; Roger (Bertha) Osterman of Little Ferry, New Jersey, a sister-in-law, Jeannie Osterman of Lebanon, Oregon and his two best fur buddies, Hank and Tucker.

Preceding him in death were his parents, his aunt and uncle, Mary & Oliver Belden, Florence Belden, an uncle, Albert Belden, his brother, Gary and grandson, Jeffery Todd Osterman.

Honorary Casketbearers will be IH Chapter #21 Members.

Casketbearers will be Jason Osterman, Loren Osterman, Lee Wasland, Chris Freeman, Loren Johnson and Dale Washnok.

## Thune Statement on Enactment of Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act

"The results of this legislation will be better warning about extreme weather events and changes to long-term forecasting that give farmers better information about what and when to plant ..."

WASHINGTON — U.S. Sen. John Thune (R-S.D), chairman of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation, which has legislative jurisdiction over the National Weather Service (NWS), issued the following statement on the announcement that President Donald Trump has signed into law H.R. 353, the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017. The bill, of which Thune was the lead Senate sponsor, includes sweeping reforms to federal forecasting to improve seasonal forecasting, monitoring and clearly communicating information about extreme weather events, the availability of aircraft systems for hurricane tracking, and the use of commercial data that have been collectively called "the first major piece of weather legislation adopted since the early 1990s."

"I appreciate the efforts of President Trump and the bipartisan supporters of weather reform in both the House and Senate," said Thune. "These sweeping reforms will make needed changes in weather forecasting to reflect and build upon advancements in satellite technology, how we use the internet to communicate, and scientific advancements that can help better predict coming changes in heat and moisture from season to season. The results of this legislation will be better warning about extreme weather events and changes to long-term forecasting that give farmers better information about what and when to plant and local transportation departments more time to prepare for unusually harsh winters."

The Senate approved H.R. 353 with amendments on March 29, 2017, and the House of Representatives cleared the amended bill for White House consideration on April 4. [Click here for the full final text of H.R. 353.](#)

### Summary of H.R. 353:

**Seasonal forecasting** – Directs the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and its component agency the NWS to create usable, reliable, and timely subseasonal and seasonal forecasts, and determine the impact of these forecasts. Through an authorization of \$26.5 million out of funds appropriated to NWS through fiscal year 2018, the legislation lays the groundwork for significant improvements in usable and reliable forecasts for time periods of 2 weeks to 2 years. This improvement in forecasting would, for example, allow farmers to make more informed decisions about when and what to plant.

**Forecast communication** – Requires the NWS to designate at least one employee in each of the established 122 weather forecast offices as the warning coordination meteorologist. Even when forecasters accurately predict dangerous weather events, preventable deaths, injuries, and property losses occur due to shortcomings in communications about what is happening and what at-risk populations should do. Warning coordination meteorologists will focus on the regional area covered by the weather forecast office and work with local officials, media, and other channels to maximize the usefulness and effectiveness of emergency communications.

**Tornado and hurricane forecasting** – Focuses on forecasting improvements and new research into extreme weather events. Establishes a tornado warning improvement and extension program for federal cooperation with private sector and academic partners to focus on developing and extending accurate tornado forecasts and warnings beyond one hour. It also creates a similar collaboration program for improving hurricane forecasting and communication of storm surges.

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**Tsunami warning** – Authorizes NOAA to put tsunami sensors onto commercial and federal telecommunications cables as a cost-effective improvement to the tsunami detection network and research efforts regarding tsunamis. Also authorizes grant funding to survey for “paleotsunamis”— evidence of devastating waves in prehistoric times, or periods before records were kept. By understanding past threats, communities can prepare better for future disasters.

**Satellite governance** – Reforms NOAA’s satellite procurement efforts by requiring consideration of existing systems and the overall cost of integrating new ones. The reform comes after the agency experienced costly difficulties in integrating new equipment with current ground and space systems. The bill further requires NOAA to enter into a pilot program contract to assess the private sector’s capabilities in providing weather data.

**Contracting disclosures** – Addresses concerns about some agency employees abusing the contracting process to enrich themselves with lucrative post-retirement contracts. The bill requires NOAA to annually disclose information about full-time equivalent contractors and those who formerly worked at the agency as federal employees.

**“Hurricane Hunter” backup** – Requires NOAA to establish a backup for the capabilities of its “Hurricane Hunter” aircraft systems. NOAA operates two WP-3D Orion turboprop aircraft that fly through hurricanes and penetrate the eyewall of storms. These aircraft deploy instrumentation that transmits measurements of pressure, humidity, temperature, and wind speed while also scanning the storm with the aircraft’s tail Doppler radar. NOAA also operates one G-IV jet that flies above and around the storm gathering high-altitude data with deployable instrumentation and tail Doppler radar.

**Radar study** – Requires NOAA to identify areas where there are gaps in radar coverage and provide recommendations on the supplemental observations necessary to improve public safety. S.D. basketball, volleyball heading for ‘Sweet 16’

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## Today in Weather History

April 20, 1966: Canadian high pressure brought very cold air to the Rockies and northern Plains. Record lows included: 3 below in Scottsbluff, Nebraska, two below in Cheyenne and Casper, Wyoming, two above in Rapid City, 11 above in Fargo, Williston, and Aberdeen, and 15 in Huron.

April 20, 2007: Severe thunderstorms moved through parts of central and northeast South Dakota during the afternoon and evening hours, producing large hail. The biggest hail measured 1.75 inches in diameter and fell 3 miles east of Westport, in Brown County.

1912: A tornado moved north-northeast from 5 miles southeast of Rush Center, KS across the east half of Bison, KS. Farms were wiped out near Rush Center. The loss at Bison was \$70,000 as half of the town, about 50 homes, were damaged or destroyed. There were 15 injuries in town. A dozen farms were nearly wiped out. Debris from the farm houses was carried for 8 miles. An elderly man who made light of the storm was killed with his granddaughter on a farm 2 miles southwest of Bison.

1901 - A spring storm produced unusually heavy snow in northeast Ohio. Warren received 35.5 inches in thirty-six hours, and 28 inches fell at Green Hill. Akron OH established April records of 15.6 inches in 24 hours, and 26.6 inches for the month. Pittsburgh PA established April records of 12.7 inches in 24 hours, and 13.5 inches for the month. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1920: Tornadoes in Mississippi and Alabama killed 219 persons. Six tornadoes of F4 intensity were reported. Aberdeen, Mississippi was hard hit by an F4 tornado that killed 22 people. This same tornado killed 20 in Marion County, Alabama. Nine people in one family died in Winston County, Alabama.

1952 - The tankers Esso Suez and Esso Greensboro crashed in a thick fog off the coast of Morgan City LA. Only five of the Greensboro's crew survived after the ship bursts into flame. (David Ludlum)

1984: A temperature of 106 degrees at Del Rio, Texas set a new record high for the month of April.

1987 - Fifty-two cities in the central and eastern U.S. reported new record high temperatures for the date. The high of 92 degrees at Memphis TN was a record for April, and the high of 94 at Little Rock AR equalled their April record. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - A storm in the western U.S. brought heavy rain to parts of California. Mount Wilson was soaked with 4.15 inches of rain in 24 hours. The heavy rain caused some flooding and mudslides in the Los Angeles area, and a chain reaction collision of vehicles along the Pomona Freeway which resulted in 26 injuries. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)








1989 - Hot weather spread from the southwestern U.S. into the Great Plains Region. Twenty-three cities reported new record high temperatures for the date. The afternoon high of 104 degrees at Tucson AZ was an April record, and highs of 87 at Provo UT, 90 at Pueblo CO, and 85 at Salt Lake City UT, equalled April records. (The National Weather Summary)

1990 - A fast moving Pacific storm produced heavy snow in the central mountains and the Upper Arkansas Valley of Colorado, with a foot of snow reported at Leadville. Thunderstorms in the south central U.S. produced wind gusts to 76 mph at Tulsa OK, and heavy rain which caused flooding of Cat Claw Creek in the Abilene TX area. Lightning struck the building housing a fish farm in Scott AR killing 10,000 pounds of fish. Many of the fish died from the heat of the fire. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2004: A strong F3 tornado moved across the town of Utica, near LaSalle-Peru in north central Illinois. This tornado destroyed several homes, a machinery building, and a tavern. The roof of the tavern collapsed, killing eight people inside; many of these people had come into town from nearby mobile homes, seeking sturdier shelter. The tornado dissipated on a steep bluff on the northeast side of the city. Another tornado developed shortly afterward, crossing I-80 near Ottawa. Several other tornadoes developed across north central and northeast Illinois, affecting areas around Joliet and Kankakee.

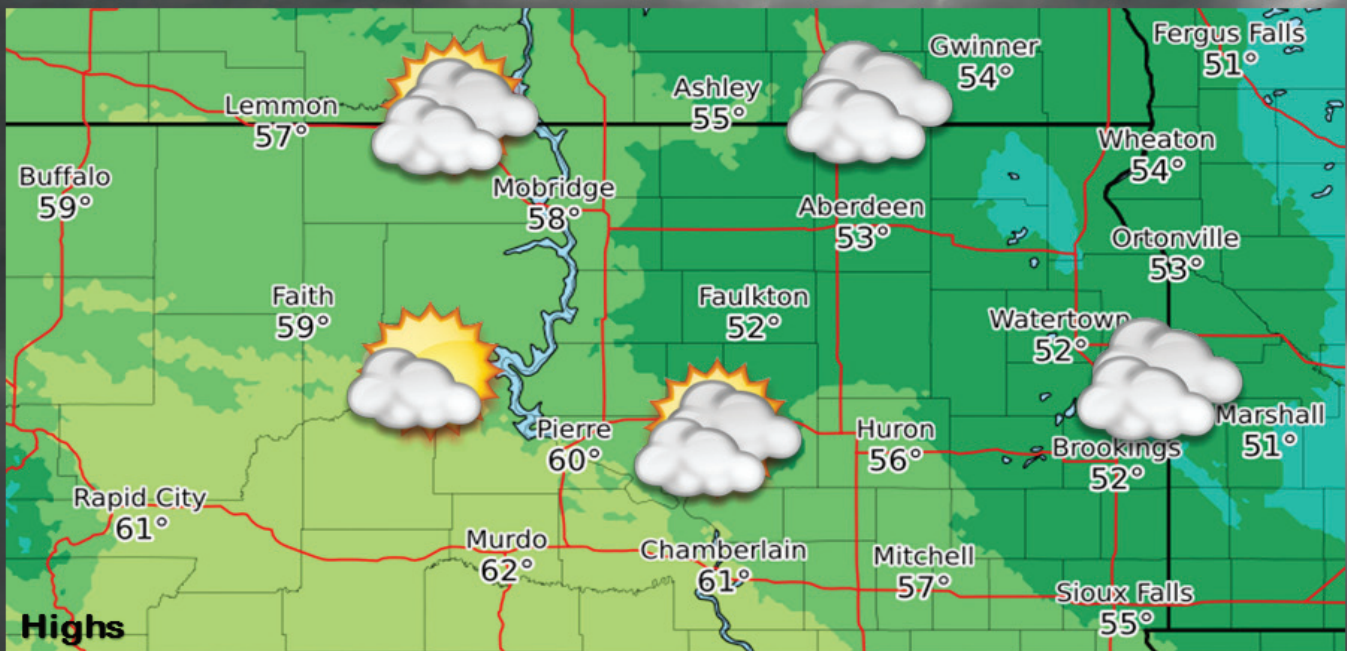
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Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday
						
30% Chance Rain then Cloudy	Patchy Fog	Areas Fog then Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny
High: 53 °F	Low: 30 °F	High: 61 °F	Low: 31 °F	High: 66 °F	Low: 36 °F	High: 66 °F



## Cloudy & Cool Today Clearing With Fog Tonight



National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD



Updated: 4/20/2017 5:12 AM Central

Published on: 04/20/2017 at 5:18AM

The effects of the low pressure system and moisture it brought will linger for another day. This will keep us quite cool, with limited sunshine. Clearing is expected this evening and overnight, with temperatures dropping into the 30s and the potential for fog Friday morning.

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## Yesterday's Weather

**High Outside Temp: 45.8 F at 3:07 PM**

**Low Outside Temp: 36.1 F at 5:39 AM**

**High Gust: 16.0 Mph at 1:30 PM**

**Snow: Precip: 0.30**

## Today's Info

**Record High: 93° in 1980**

**Record Low: 11° in 1966**

**Average High: 60°F**

**Average Low: 34°F**

**Average Precip in April.: 1.04**

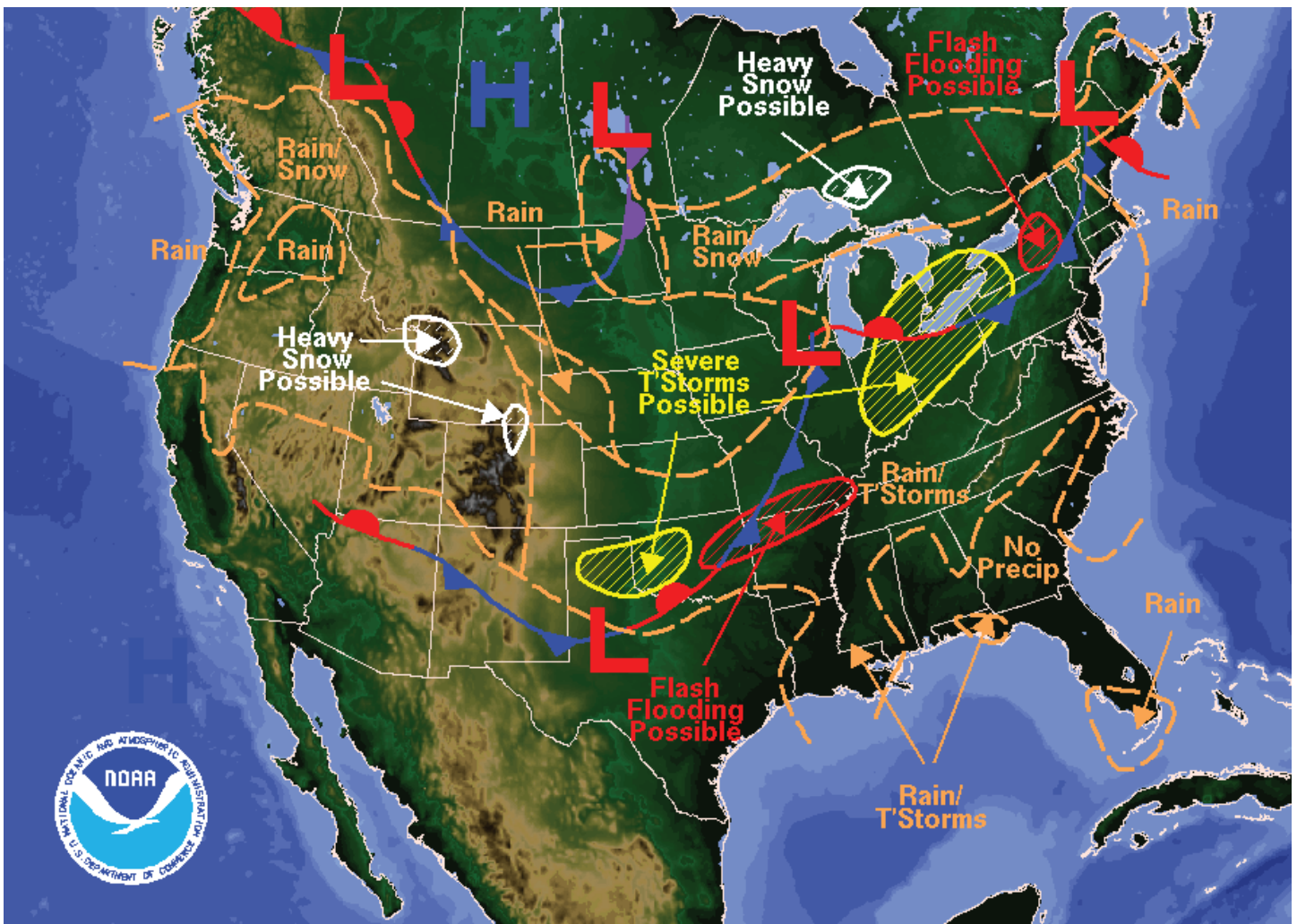
**Precip to date in April.: 1.03**

**Average Precip to date: 3.22**

**Precip Year to Date: 1.62**

**Sunset Tonight: 8:25 p.m.**

**Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:39 a.m.**



Weather Forecast for Thu, Apr 20, 2017, issued 4:48 AM EDT  
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center  
Prepared by McCreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

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## DO IT RIGHT THE FIRST TIME!

The class was excited to meet their new art teacher. Waiting expectantly for their first assignment, the teacher stood before the class and said, "I want each of you to draw a square, a triangle and a rectangle. And I want you to do your best."

After a few minutes she began to walk among the students and observe their work. Pausing to look at the work Bobby was doing she noticed that his lines were not straight.

"Look, Bobby," she said, "that line isn't straight."

"I know," he admitted, "but I can straighten it later."

"Bobby," she replied, "a straight line never needs to be straightened. Do it right the first time!"

The Psalmist wrote, "I have chosen to be faithful; I have determined to live by your law." In this psalm the author reveals two critical decisions: first, to be faithful to God's laws and, secondly, not be deterred from being faithful by being fully committed to keeping God's laws. He said, "I am determined!"

God has given each of us the wonderful gift of choice. In this psalm, the author said that he made a decision that would guide every decision he would ever make.

If our decisions are based on the teachings of God's Word, we will not need to go back and "straighten the lines." May His Word light our paths and guide our steps.

Prayer: We pray, Lord, that we will surrender our lives completely to You and think the truth, speak the truth, live the truth and do things right the first time. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 119:30 I have chosen the way of truth; Your judgments I have laid before me.



## News from the Associated Press

### SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Dakota Cash  
12-16-27-31-35  
(twelve, sixteen, twenty-seven, thirty-one, thirty-five)  
Estimated jackpot: \$92,000

Hot Lotto  
09-13-23-36-41, Hot Ball: 11  
(nine, thirteen, twenty-three, thirty-six, forty-one; Hot Ball: eleven)  
Estimated jackpot: \$5.69 million

Mega Millions  
Estimated jackpot: \$45 million

Powerball  
01-19-37-40-52, Powerball: 15, Power Play: 3  
(one, nineteen, thirty-seven, forty, fifty-two; Powerball: fifteen; Power Play: three)  
Estimated jackpot: \$80 million

### Nebraska beer stores near reservation lose liquor licenses

By GRANT SCHULTE, Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Four Nebraska stores that sell millions of cans of beer each year near a South Dakota Indian reservation lost their liquor licenses Wednesday amid complaints that they fuel alcohol-related problems among members of the Oglala Lakota Tribe.

The state ruling marks a monumental shift for Whiteclay, an unincorporated town with nine official residents on the border of the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation. The stores have operated in town for decades despite criticism that the area lacks adequate law enforcement to enforce state liquor laws and prevent violence and sexual assaults.

Advocates who wanted the stores closed erupted in cheers as the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission voted 3-0 not to renew the stores' licenses. The stores are expected to appeal the ruling. Their licenses are set to expire on April 30, although a district court judge could allow them to stay in business until the appeal is resolved.

"I never expected this to happen," said Bryan Brewer, a former Oglala Lakota Tribe president who had called on state officials to close the stores. "I'm just really surprised and thankful. Now, we have to start our healing process."

Frank LaMere, a Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska member who has fought for decades to close the stores, wiped tears from his eyes after the decision was read.

"Today I am proud to be a Nebraskan," LaMere said. "But our work is just beginning."

Bob Batt, the commission's chairman, said after the hearing that the reservation suffers from "benign neglect" and the attitude of the local Whiteclay officials and beer store owners "reminds me of Alabama in the 1950s," a reference to the local officials who allowed racial discrimination in the South. Batt said the federal government needs to take steps to address the reservation's longstanding problems.

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"These are human beings," Batt said of the tribe members. "They are really suffering."

Andrew Snyder, an attorney for the beer stores, said the commission contradicted previous Nebraska Supreme Court rulings with its decision and argued that the store owners complied with state law.

"They're disappointed, but they're resolved to see it through" to an appeal, Snyder said. "The commission was wrong, and we believe the decision was contrary the law."

Messages left with the beer store owners were not immediately returned.

Here are some key things to know about Whiteclay:

## WHY ARE THE STORES SIGNIFICANT?

The stores sell cheap beer and malt liquor just 200 yards south of the reservation, which prohibits alcohol but continues to struggle with high rates of fetal alcoholism and one of the lowest life expectancy rates in the Western Hemisphere.

Whiteclay draws mostly Native Americans who loiter around abandoned buildings, beg for change and pass out on sidewalks lined with dirty clothes and empty beer cans.

## HOW IS LIFE IN WHITECLAY?

Advocates urged the commission not to renew the licenses during a hearing earlier this month. The tribe's attorney general testified that Nebraska law enforcement officers seldom work with the tribe's police force, which has 25 officers to patrol a reservation that's geographically larger than Rhode Island and Delaware combined.

Religious leaders who live in Whiteclay said they frequently see public drunkenness, human waste and Native Americans suffering from injuries. Occasionally, they said women will come to them claiming they were raped.

Officials in Sheridan County, which includes Whiteclay, disputed the claims that law enforcement is inadequate but acknowledged that they recently increased the county's law enforcement budget to deal with problems in the area. During an April 7 hearing, the Oglala Lakota Tribe's attorney general argued that local law enforcement rarely communicated with the tribe's police force.

Dave Domina, an attorney for the stores' opponents, said those comments played an important role in his case. The nearest law enforcement office in Sheridan County is based in Rushville, more than 20 miles south of Whiteclay.

"I think we're in a very strong position" to contest any appeal, Domina said.

## WHAT DOES LAW ENFORCEMENT SAY?

During the April 7 hearing, longtime Sheridan County Sheriff Terry Robbins disputed allegations that deputies ignore the problems but acknowledged that he no longer writes citations for open container violations. He said his deputies don't visit Whiteclay every day but spend more time in the village during the 1st and 15th of each month, when tribe members receive government benefit checks.

A Nebraska State Patrol investigator told commissioners the patrol has received four formal complaints against the stores in the last two years but wasn't able to substantiate any of them.

Some Nebraska city officials near Whiteclay expressed concern Wednesday that the ruling could lead to more drunken driving and panhandling in their towns. Rushville Mayor Chris Heiser said he will ask his city council to review the town's panhandling and loitering ordinances.

"Rushville is going to be ground zero for this," Heiser said. "Does this solve the problem of everything that goes on with the reservation? Absolutely not. The problem is just going to get spread around."

## WHAT ELSE ARE STATE OFFICIALS AND ACTIVISTS DOING?

In a separate case, the Nebraska attorney general's office has filed 22 citations against the businesses for selling to bootleggers, failing to cooperate with investigators and other liquor-law violations. Those allegations are set for a separate hearing in May and were inadmissible as evidence in the license renewal case.

Nebraska state Sen. Tom Brewer of Gordon, an Oglala Lakota Tribe member whose district includes

Whiteclay, said he and other lawmakers will continue their recently announced push to clean up the garbage-strewn town and promote economic development in the area.

"This isn't going to end the problems, but it's a start," Brewer said.

John Maisch, an activist who fought to shutter the stores, said opponents will work with the tribe to help make changes that its members want.

"A dark cloud has been lifted off of Nebraska today," he said. "We feel Whiteclay can be an enormously vibrant place."

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

## **\$28M donation to be used for national education programs**

**Argus Leader**

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota businessman and philanthropist has donated \$28 million to the National University System, a nonprofit that focuses on education and philanthropy initiatives.

The donation made by T. Denny Sanford is the largest in the history of the nonprofit, which supports students looking for alternative ways to learn. It will be used to help further three programs Sanford helped create that are expected to reach more than 500,000 students nationwide.

One program, Sanford Harmony, helps students learn to work together and respect one another. It's currently in 126 schools in South Dakota.

Sanford Inspire, which aims to help teachers inspire students, now offers 60 video training modules. The third program, the Sanford Institute of Philanthropy, provides education and training programs for nonprofits and has a nationwide affiliate of networks.

The University of South Dakota, South Dakota State University and Augustana University in Sioux Falls are involved with the programs.

"Helping others is what this is all about," Sanford said in a news release. "And it's why I'm so pleased to recognize the remarkable impacts these three programs are having nationwide."

Sanford's donation brings the total funding for the programs to about \$70 million through anonymous donors and matching funds from National University and the university system's chancellor Michael Cunningham.

Sanford is best known for donating about \$1 billion to the Dakotas-based health system that carries his name.

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

## **Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorials**

**By The Associated Press**

Capital Journal, Pierre, April 14

New data on outdoors economics should be a call to action for all South Dakotans

Thanks to a new study commissioned by the Game, Fish and Parks Department, South Dakota has, for the first time, a really clear picture of just how valuable the state's, hunting, fishing and state park resources are.

It shouldn't be too surprising that more than \$1.33 billion were directly spent in our state on outdoor recreation between October 2015 and October 2016. Nevertheless it's an impressive figure. We've reported on the study that collected this data twice this week so we won't go into too much detail of how and where the money was spent but a few things are worth reiterating.

The direct spending on outdoor recreation equates to a roughly \$1.9 billion contribution to the state's economic input. More than 18,000 jobs and the roughly \$534.2 million worth of salaries they generate are supported by outdoor recreation. Outdoor recreation also generated around \$85.5 million dollars' worth

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of state and local tax revenue, according to this new study.

At a more local level, the study found that anglers spent more than \$47 million fishing the Missouri River. That's no small potatoes. Keep in mind too, that Lake Oahe has long been the most popular angling destination on the Missouri River.

The truly amazing thing about all this is that much of the support for outdoor recreation, i.e. boat ramps, game production areas, state parks even public shooting ranges, isn't funded by tax dollars.

The Game Fish and Parks Department, which is in charge of managing outdoor recreation in the state, asked for just \$6 million from the state's general fund for its 2018 budget. Most of the department's slightly more \$90 million budget comes from user fees such as hunting and fishing licenses or park entrance fees. There also are federal excise taxes on some hunting and fishing gear that come into play.

So, for a lousy \$6 million investment, the state's taxpayers who don't hunt, fish or visit state parks saw and benefited from an additional \$1.9 billion worth of economic activity. That's a pretty darn good return.

This editorial isn't all sunshine and roses though. Across the United States there has been a steady decline in the number of people who hunt. The problem is likely to get worse as the baby boomers age. South Dakota, rural state though it may be, is not immune to this problem.

It's a big deal because hunters contributed more than \$682 million of the state's direct spending on outdoor recreation. More than half of that total, \$371 million, came from resident hunters.

Now is a good time for everyone who makes a dime or two off of hunters in the state to join efforts to Recruit, Retain and Reactivate hunters. There is a national action plan dealing with that very issue. It's called the R3 plan. The GF&P already is participating in those national efforts.

On the fishing side of things, this new economic study has come at a pivotal moment in South Dakota's history.

A few weeks ago the supreme court barred everyone in the state from using what are known as non-meandered waters because the state legislature hasn't declared recreation to be a beneficial public use of those waters. Non-meandered lakes are lakes that have naturally come into existence through flooding since the state was surveyed in 1868. Many of those lakes have become very popular, very productive fishing destinations.

Northeast South Dakota, where most of the non-meandered lakes are, has become one of the top fishing destinations in the state. And now that it has become pretty clear that fishing generates some \$271.3 million worth of direct spending on everything from food to lodging in the state, there's a compelling case to be made that recreation is, in fact, a beneficial use of non-meandered water.

That, of course, isn't likely to make the owners of the now flooded land feel better about paying property taxes on the land under the water that everyone else is using. Even if the tax rate on the flooded land has been significantly reduced.

The legislature has failed three times to solve the non-meandered water problem. Hopefully, both the recent supreme court decision and this new economic data can finally inspire a successful compromise.

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The Daily Republic, Mitchell, April 17

Thank a SD landowner for outdoor opportunities

A report last week from the state Game, Fish & Parks Department showed the great contributions outdoor and wildlife recreation bring to South Dakota.

An estimated \$1.33 billion was spent on outdoor recreation last year in South Dakota, with the top three activities — hunting, fishing and state park visitation — accounting for nearly 90 percent of the total.

The study also reported that South Dakota's outdoor activities provide roughly 18,000 full- and part-time jobs for \$520 million of income. GF&P estimates the economic impact to South Dakota at nearly \$1.9 billion.

This report is great news. And it shows the importance these hobbies are for our state's economy.

But it's the landowners who need to be credited for our state's many great available outdoor experiences. If it wasn't for their practices and their appreciation for wildlife, our state wouldn't be an outdoor paradise.

The vast multitude of agricultural acreage makes South Dakota a hunting hotspot. Each year, we ask landowners to consider putting some of their property into conservation to give wildlife a place to live, and many choose to utilize the conservation reserve programs.

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What we get in return is outstanding pheasant, waterfowl, turkey and other hunting opportunities. Several of South Dakota's flooded ponds and lakes are an angler's dream — and in some cases that's because of lease agreements with private landowners who give access to these bodies of water to the public.

Many, many private landowners in South Dakota are willing to let people on their property to hunt and fish. A lot of times they do it expecting nothing in return.

As outdoor enthusiasts, it's important to stop and realize why South Dakota is a desired location to hunt and fish. It's because of the landowners.

That's why we all need to be more appreciative to the people who provide us a place to hunt and fish.

Remember to thank a landowner if they've given you access to their property. Thank a landowner if they set aside acreage for wildlife.

We love our outdoor activities in South Dakota, and we wouldn't have the available opportunities if it wasn't for the landowners.

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Argus Leader, Sioux Falls, April 7

Diversity among teachers is crucial

The face of Sioux Falls is changing. More than 100 languages are spoken within our city limits. Our population's root system stretches back not just to Scandinavia, Great Britain and Germany but also to Central America, Eastern Europe, northern Africa, the Middle East, the Pacific Islands, Southeast Asia - wherever there's land to stand on across the globe.

The complexion of our community grows richer every day, and nowhere is that more apparent than in our schools.

While Sioux Falls' overall population is 82 percent white, our public school district stands at 65 percent, nearly 20 percent more diverse. The percentage of minority students in the district is projected to swell from one-third to close to one-half by 2023.

Meanwhile, 97 percent of teachers are white, which raises questions about whether minority students are being put at a disadvantage by this glaring racial divide.

To their credit, the Sioux Falls School Board and district administrators are taking steps to better understand and address the issue. Local school leaders will participate in a diversity conference this summer, while a partnership with the University of South Dakota encourages students to pursue careers in education.

Board members and administrators also hope to tap the potential of the city's first- and second-generation immigrant communities. They have been more reluctant to recruit minority teachers from farther afield, citing worries about retention.

This push isn't just about diversity for diversity's sake, or do-gooder affirmative action. Studies have revealed benefits of demographic parallel between teachers and students. Minority students tend to close the so-called "achievement gap" under the instruction of educators whose background mirrors their own.

Sioux Falls schools are far from alone in struggling with a diversity gap; it's a national issue. And education isn't the only arena where we have the opportunity to improve. In its redoubled efforts to recruit officers, the Sioux Falls Police Department also aims to make the faces of law enforcement better reflect the faces of those they serve and protect.

We commend the Sioux Falls School District on its efforts so far and urge them to dig deeper. Continue to communicate with local refugee resettlement and multicultural organizations. Explore the idea of teaming with national programs like Educators Rising. Expand and emphasize student mentoring, peer tutoring and classroom aide opportunities.

This is a noble cause we as a community should all support. More importantly, it has practical, long-range implications for our city and for the ongoing exodus of young South Dakotans. We're growing bigger. We need to make sure we're growing strong.

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## Driver sentenced to 9 years in fatal drunken driving crash

MITCHELL, S.D. (AP) — A man convicted of driving drunk and causing a fatal crash in rural Davison County has been sentenced to nine years in prison.

Prosecutors say 19-year-old Tate Thompson drank vodka at a party before crashing his vehicle and killing 18-year-old Dylan Mentele, of Alexandria, a passenger, last June.

A 17-year-old female passenger from Mitchell suffered life-threatening injuries. Thompson and two other passengers sustained minor injuries.

The Daily Republic (<http://bit.ly/2oPFNPF>) reports Thompson apologized to Mentele's family during sentencing Tuesday and told the court he wished he could trade place with him.

Law enforcement reports say Thompson was going 83 mph on a 55 mph road and ran from the crash scene. Officers found him about 90 minutes later.

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

## Outdoor smoking restrictions resurface in Sioux Falls

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The debate over outdoor smoking restrictions has resurfaced in Sioux Falls.

The City Council passed an outdoor smoking ordinance several months ago, but it applies only to playgrounds and parks where youth activity is taking place. A tougher ordinance applying to all city-owned property was rejected by Mayor Mike Huether.

KELO-TV (<http://bit.ly/2pBbTRH>) reports the issue has re-ignited. A new proposal would make it illegal to smoke within 20 feet of an entrance to city-owned buildings. Smoking would be banned at the city's bus transfer stations.

The proposal does not include a fine, but a person could be kicked off the property for violating the ordinance.

Information from: KELO-TV, <http://www.keloland.com>

## Arkansas execution plan again thrown into doubt

By **KELLY P. KISSEL** and **JILL BLEED**, Associated Press

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. (AP) — An aggressive effort by the state of Arkansas to carry out its first executions since 2005 stalled for the second time this week as courts blocked lethal injections planned for Thursday, prompting Gov. Asa Hutchinson to express frustration at legal delaying tactics.

While the latest court rulings could be overturned, Arkansas now faces an uphill battle to execute any inmates before the end of April, when one of its lethal injection drugs expires.

The state originally set eight executions over an 11-day period in April, which would have been the most by a state in such a compressed period since the U.S. Supreme Court reinstated the death penalty in 1976. But Arkansas has faced a wave of legal challenges.

The first two inmates scheduled for execution on Monday were spared — one of them by the U.S. Supreme Court minutes before his death warrant expired — and one of the two rulings on Wednesday could scuttle the entire schedule.

Pulaski County Circuit Judge Alice Gray blocked the state from using the drug vecuronium bromide, siding with McKesson Corp., which had argued that it sold Arkansas the drug for medical use, not executions. The company said it would suffer harm financially and to its reputation if the executions were carried out.

Judd Deere, a spokesman for Arkansas Attorney General Leslie Rutledge, said the state will appeal that ruling.

In another setback for the state on Wednesday, the Arkansas Supreme Court voted 4-3 to grant a stay of execution for Stacey Johnson, one of the inmates scheduled to die Thursday, drawing a rebuke from death penalty supporter Hutchinson. Ledell Lee, who had also been scheduled for execution Thursday, is still seeking a stay in a separate case.

"When I set the dates, I knew there could be delays in one or more of the cases, but I expected the courts to allow the juries' sentences to be carried out since each case had been reviewed multiple times by the Arkansas Supreme Court, which affirmed the guilt of each," Hutchinson said in a statement.

Four of the eight inmates originally on Hutchinson's schedule have now received stays of execution, leaving four remaining who still could be put to death.

It was unclear if Attorney General Leslie Rutledge would appeal the stay of execution for Johnson to the U.S. Supreme Court after the state lost an appeal to the high court on a case involving another inmate Monday night.

Deere, the attorney general's spokesman, said the state was reviewing its options regarding Johnson's case.

In the drug case, a state prison official testified that he deliberately ordered the drug last year in a way that there wouldn't be a paper trail, relying on phone calls and text messages. Arkansas Department of Correction Deputy Director Rory Griffin said he didn't keep records of the texts, but McKesson salesman Tim Jenkins did. In text messages from Jenkins' phone, which came up at Wednesday's court hearing, there is no mention that the drug would be used in executions.

Pharmaceuticals companies and other suppliers have objected to their drugs being used in executions and have been trying to stop states from getting supplies for lethal injections.

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Associated Press writer Andrew DeMillo contributed to this report.

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Follow Kelly P. Kissel at [www.twitter.com/kisselAP](http://www.twitter.com/kisselAP) and Jill Bleed at [www.twitter.com/jzbleed](http://www.twitter.com/jzbleed)

## Once critical of global deals, Trump slow to pull out of any

By **MATTHEW LEE and JOSH LEDERMAN, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The "America First" president who vowed to extricate America from onerous overseas commitments appears to be warming up to the view that when it comes to global agreements, a deal's a deal.

From NAFTA to the Iran nuclear agreement to the Paris climate accord, President Donald Trump's campaign rhetoric is colliding with the reality of governing. Despite repeated pledges to rip up, renegotiate or otherwise alter them, the U.S. has yet to withdraw from any of these economic, environmental or national security deals, as Trump's past criticism turns to tacit embrace of several key elements of U.S. foreign policy.

The administration says it is reviewing these accords and could still pull out of them. A day after certifying Iran's compliance with the nuclear deal, Secretary of State Rex Tillerson attacked the accord and listed examples of Iran's bad behavior. His tone suggested that even if Iran is fulfilling the letter of its nuclear commitments, the deal remains on unsure footing.

Yet with one exception — an Asia-Pacific trade deal that already had stalled in Congress — Trump's administration quietly has laid the groundwork to honor the international architecture of deals it has inherited. It's a sharp shift from the days when Trump was declaring the end of a global-minded America that negotiates away its interests and subsidizes foreigners' security and prosperity.

Trump had called the Iran deal the "worst" ever, and claimed climate change was a hoax. But in place of action, the Trump administration is only reviewing these agreements, as it is doing with much of American foreign policy.

Douglas Brinkley, a presidential historian at Rice University, said Trump may be allowing himself to argue in the future that existing deals can be improved without being totally discarded. "That allows him to tell his base that he's getting a better deal than Bush or Obama got, and yet reassure these institutions that it's really all being done with a nod and a wink, that Trump doesn't mean what he says," Brinkley said.

So far, there's been no major revolt from Trump supporters, despite their expectation he would be an agent of disruption. This week's reaffirmations of the status quo came via Tillerson's certification of Iran upholding its nuclear deal obligations and the administration delaying a decision on whether to withdraw

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from the Paris climate accord.

The president had previously spoken about dismantling or withdrawing from both agreements as part of his vision, explained in his inaugural address, that "every decision on trade, on taxes, on immigration, on foreign affairs will be made to benefit American workers and American families."

The Iran certification, made 90 minutes before a midnight Tuesday deadline, means Tehran will continue to enjoy relief from U.S. nuclear sanctions. Among the anti-deal crowd Trump wooed in his presidential bid, the administration's decision is fueling concerns that Trump may let the 2015 accord stand.

Tillerson on Wednesday sought to head off any criticism that the administration was being easy on Iran, describing a broad administration review of Iran policy that includes the nuclear deal and examines if sanctions relief serves U.S. interests. The seven-nation nuclear deal, he said, "fails to achieve the objective of a non-nuclear Iran" and "only delays their goal of becoming a nuclear state."

On the climate agreement, the White House postponed a meeting Tuesday where top aides were to have hashed out differences on what to do about the non-binding international deal forged in Paris in December 2015. The agreement allowed rich and poor countries to set their own goals to reduce carbon dioxide and went into effect last November, after the U.S., China and other countries ratified it. Not all of Trump's advisers share his skeptical views on climate change — or the Paris pact.

Trump's position on trade deals also has evolved. He had promised to jettison the North American Free Trade Agreement with Mexico and Canada unless he could substantially renegotiate it in America's favor, blaming NAFTA for devastating the U.S. manufacturing industry by incentivizing the use of cheap labor in Mexico.

Now his administration is only focused on marginal changes that would preserve much of the existing agreement, according to draft guidelines that Trump's trade envoy sent to Congress. The proposal included a controversial provision that lets companies challenge national trade laws through private tribunals.

Trump has followed through with a pledge to pull the U.S. out of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, a sweeping free trade deal President Barack Obama negotiated. The agreement was effectively dead before Trump took office after Congress refused to ratify it. Even Trump's Democratic opponent in the presidential race, Hillary Clinton, opposed the accord.

But on NATO, Trump has completely backed off his assertions that the treaty organization is "obsolete." His Cabinet members have fanned out to foreign capitals to show America's support for the alliance and his administration now describes the 28-nation body as a pillar of Western security.

## 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. AP: PESTICIDE MAKERS PETITION GOVERNMENT

Dow Chemical is pushing the Trump administration to scrap scientific findings that a family of widely used pesticides is harmful to about 1,800 critically threatened or endangered species.

### 2. TRUMP'S ART OF THE (NEW) DEAL

From NAFTA to the Iran nuclear agreement to the Paris climate accord, the "America First" president now appears to be warming to the view that when it comes to global agreements, a deal's a deal.

### 3. HOW PENCE FEELS ABOUT INDONESIA

The U.S. vice president praises the Southeast Asian nation's democracy and moderate form of Islam.

### 4. WHY CHINA IS FRUSTRATED BY NORTH KOREA

China is the reclusive nation's most important trading partner and ally, but Pyongyang is ignoring its calls for a suspension of its nuclear and missile programs and its requests for talks.

### 5. HERNANDEZ'S DEATH IN PRISON DOESN'T CLOSE THE BOOK

The former NFL star's apparent suicide leaves a trail of questions, such as the timing of his death, additional details on how it happened and the status of his estate.

### 6. WHY A YOUNG SYRIAN JOINED ISLAMIC STATE GROUP



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Mohammed says he joined extremist fighters to defend his city, Deir el-Zour, against Assad's military, before eventually defecting, highlighting the complexity of motives and alliances in the Syria war.

## 7. THE LEGACY OF BILL O'REILLY

Despite his firing by Fox News Channel, observers say his imprint on cable news outlets and his influence on barbed political discourse remain intact.

## 8. ARKANSAS EXECUTION PLAN AGAIN THROWN INTO DOUBT

While the latest court rulings could be overturned, the state now faces an uphill battle to execute any inmates before the end of April, when one of its lethal injection drugs expires.

## 9. WHAT WILL HAPPEN AT 4:20 PM

The marijuana culture's high holiday, 4/20, gets underway when college students gather on campus quads and pot shops in legal weed states offer discounts.

## 10. PRINCE'S 1980S BAND HITS ROAD FOR MEMORIAL TOUR

For members of The Revolution, reuniting for a spring U.S. tour is how they are coping with the "Purple Rain" pop superstar's unexpected death a year ago.

## VP Pence praises Indonesia's democratic, tolerant values

By KEN THOMAS, Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — U.S. Vice President Mike Pence praised Indonesia's democracy and moderate form of Islam on Thursday alongside the president of the world's most populous Muslim nation, reinforcing his message with a visit to the region's largest mosque.

Pence's comments, though routine, had significance for Indonesian President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo, who a day earlier suffered a serious political setback when a political ally was defeated by Islamic conservatives in the election for Jakarta governor. The divisive campaign undermined the image of Indonesia abroad as a generally tolerant Muslim nation.

Indonesia is the latest stop on an Asian tour by Pence that aims to reaffirm traditional U.S. alliances at a time when Donald Trump's presidency has raised questions about the strength of the U.S. commitment to the region.

Pence said at a joint news conference with Jokowi that the U.S. wants to strengthen its strategic partnership with Indonesia. In brief comments, Jokowi said they agreed to boost cooperation.

The vice president praised Indonesia for its moderate form of Islam and said the two countries would continue to cooperate on combating terrorism.

"As the second- and third-largest democracies in the world, our two countries share many common values including freedom, the rule of law, human rights and religious diversity," Pence said. "The United States is proud to partner with Indonesia. It promotes and protects these values."

The vice president added: "Indonesia's tradition of moderate Islam frankly is an inspiration to the world and we commend you and your people. In your nation as in mine, religion unifies, it doesn't divide."

But Pence foreshadowed some reworking of commercial and economic ties, saying that the U.S. seeks a free and fair relationship that helps job creation and economic growth for both sides. He said that U.S. exporters should face a level playing field and the relationship should be "win-win."

Trump assailed the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal during his 2016 campaign and announced shortly after his inauguration that the U.S. would withdraw from the Pacific Rim-based TPP, which now includes 11 countries from Chile to New Zealand. Pence has sought to reassure allies in the region that the U.S. is still committed to trade and economic ties despite Trump's decision on TPP.

Indonesia is on Trump's trade hit list of nations that he considers the U.S. is losing out to in trade, and U.S. company Freeport-McMoran Inc., which operates the world's largest copper mine in the Indonesian province of Papua, is in a protracted dispute with the Indonesian government.

Trump's company, the Trump Organization, is active in Indonesia with plans to manage luxury resorts being built near the capital Jakarta and on the tourist island of Bali.

Trump's Indonesian business partner, billionaire Hary Tanoë, is an aspiring politician who has said he

might run for president in 2019.

Pence's first engagement in Indonesia was morning tea with Jokowi at the presidential palace. He and his family later visited the Istiqlal Mosque, the largest in Southeast Asia.

The Pences removed their shoes at the entrance and his wife, Karen, and two daughters covered their heads with scarves. They walked inside the large prayer hall, observing the soaring dome, and also stopped at an open terrace in the mosque.

Pence later sat with several faith leaders in a conference room where a speaker gave Pence an overview of the mosque's history. The mosque, which can accommodate up to 200,000 people, was designed by a Protestant and sits near a Catholic cathedral in central Jakarta.

The message and images sought to address questions in the Muslim world about Trump after his push for travel bans that would temporarily suspend visas from six predominantly-Muslim countries and halt the U.S. refugee program. Two judges have blocked the ban, prompting the Trump administration to appeal.

Trump's executive order does not include Indonesia, but the country is home to nearly 14,000 refugees seeking resettlement in third countries and activists have said the ban would affect their ability of entering the U.S.

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Follow Ken Thomas on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/KThomasDC>

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Associated Press writer Stephen Wright contributed to this report.

## **AP Exclusive: Pesticide maker tries to kill risk study**

**By MICHAEL BIESECKER, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Dow Chemical is pushing the Trump administration to scrap the findings of federal scientists who point to a family of widely used pesticides as harmful to about 1,800 critically threatened or endangered species.

Lawyers representing Dow, whose CEO also heads a White House manufacturing working group, and two other makers of organophosphates sent letters last week to the heads of three Cabinet agencies. The companies asked them "to set aside" the results of government studies the companies contend are fundamentally flawed.

The letters, dated April 13, were obtained by The Associated Press.

Dow Chemical chairman and CEO Andrew Liveris is a close adviser to President Donald Trump. The company wrote a \$1 million check to help underwrite Trump's inaugural festivities.

Over the last four years, government scientists have compiled an official record running more than 10,000 pages showing the three pesticides under review — chlorpyrifos, diazinon and malathion — pose a risk to nearly every endangered species they studied. Regulators at the three federal agencies, which share responsibilities for enforcing the Endangered Species Act, are close to issuing findings expected to result in new limits on how and where the highly toxic pesticides can be used.

The industry's request comes after EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt announced last month he was reversing an Obama-era effort to bar the use of Dow's chlorpyrifos pesticide on food after recent peer-reviewed studies found that even tiny levels of exposure could hinder the development of children's brains. In his prior job as Oklahoma's attorney general, Pruitt often aligned himself in legal disputes with the interests of executives and corporations who supported his state campaigns. He filed more than one dozen lawsuits seeking to overturn some of the same regulations he is now charged with enforcing.

Pruitt declined to answer questions from reporters Wednesday as he toured a polluted Superfund site in Indiana. A spokesman for the agency later told AP that Pruitt won't "prejudge" any potential rule-making decisions as "we are trying to restore regulatory sanity to EPA's work."

"We have had no meetings with Dow on this topic and we are reviewing petitions as they come in, giving careful consideration to sound science and good policymaking," said J.P. Freire, EPA's associate administrator for public affairs. "The administrator is committed to listening to stakeholders affected by EPA's regulations, while also reviewing past decisions."

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The office of Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, who oversees the Natural Marine Fisheries Service, did not respond to emailed questions. A spokeswoman for Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke, who oversees the Fish and Wildlife Service, referred questions back to EPA.

As with the recent human studies of chlorpyrifos, Dow hired its own scientists to produce a lengthy rebuttal to the government studies showing the risks posed to endangered species by organophosphates.

The EPA's recent biological evaluation of chlorpyrifos found the pesticide is "likely to adversely affect" 1,778 of the 1,835 animals and plants assessed as part of its study, including critically endangered or threatened species of frogs, fish, birds and mammals. Similar results were shown for malathion and diazinon.

In a statement, the Dow subsidiary that sells chlorpyrifos said its lawyers asked for the EPA's biological assessment to be withdrawn because its "scientific basis was not reliable."

"Dow AgroSciences is committed to the production and marketing of products that will help American farmers feed the world, and do so with full respect for human health and the environment, including endangered and threatened species," the statement said. "These letters, and the detailed scientific analyses that support them, demonstrate that commitment."

FMC Corp., which sells malathion, said the withdrawal of the EPA studies will allow the necessary time for the "best available" scientific data to be compiled.

"Malathion is a critical tool in protecting agriculture from damaging pests," the company said.

Diazinon maker Makhteshim Agan of North America Inc., which does business under the name Adama, did not respond to emails seeking comment.

Environmental advocates were not surprised the companies might seek to forestall new regulations that might hurt their profits, but said Wednesday that criticism of the government's scientists was unfounded. The methods used to conduct EPA's biological evaluations were developed by the National Academy of Sciences.

Brett Hartl, government affairs director for the Center for Biological Diversity, said Dow's experts were trying to hold EPA scientists to an unrealistic standard of data collection that could only be achieved under "perfect laboratory conditions."

"You can't just take an endangered fish out of the wild, take it to the lab and then expose it to enough pesticides until it dies to get that sort of data," Hartl said. "It's wrong morally, and it's illegal."

Originally derived from a nerve gas developed by Nazi Germany, chlorpyrifos has been sprayed on citrus fruits, apples, cherries and other crops for decades. It is among the most widely used agricultural pesticides in the United States, with Dow selling about 5 million pounds domestically each year.

As a result, traces of the chemical are commonly found in sources of drinking water. A 2012 study at the University of California at Berkeley found that 87 percent of umbilical-cord blood samples tested from newborn babies contained detectable levels of chlorpyrifos.

In 2005, the Bush administration ordered an end to residential use of diazinon to kill yard pests such as ants and grub worms after determining that it poses a human health risk, particularly to children. However it is still approved for use by farmers, who spray it on fruits and vegetables.

Malathion is widely sprayed to control mosquitoes and fruit flies. It is also an active ingredient in some shampoos prescribed to children for treating lice.

A coalition of environmental groups has fought in court for years to spur EPA to more closely examine the risk posed to humans and endangered species by pesticides, especially organophosphates.

"Endangered species are the canary in the coal mine," Hartl said. Since many of the threatened species are aquatic, he said they are often the first to show the effects of long-term chemical contamination in rivers and lakes used as sources of drinking water by humans.

Dow, which spent more than \$13.6 million on lobbying in 2016, has long wielded substantial political power in the nation's capital. There is no indication the chemical giant's influence has waned.

When Trump signed an executive order in February mandating the creation of task forces at federal agencies to roll back government regulations, Dow's chief executive was at Trump's side.

"Andrew, I would like to thank you for initially getting the group together and for the fantastic job you've

done," Trump said as he signed the order during an Oval Office ceremony. The president then handed his pen to Liveris to keep as a souvenir.

Rachelle Schikorra, the director of public affairs for Dow Chemical, said any suggestion that the company's \$1 million donation to Trump's inaugural committee was intended to help influence regulatory decisions made by the new administration is "completely off the mark."

"Dow actively participates in policymaking and political processes, including political contributions to candidates, parties and causes, in compliance with all applicable federal and state laws," Schikorra said. "Dow maintains and is committed to the highest standard of ethical conduct in all such activity."

Associated Press reporters Jack Gillum in Washington and Sophia Tareen in East Chicago, Indiana, contributed to this story.

Follow AP environmental writer Michael Biesecker at [www.Twitter.com/mbieseck](http://www.Twitter.com/mbieseck)

## It's an orca! Last killer whale is born at a SeaWorld park

By JENNIFER KAY, Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — The last orca has been born in captivity at a SeaWorld park in San Antonio just over a year after the theme park decided to stop breeding orcas following animal rights protests and declining ticket sales.

The Orlando-based company said the orca — the last in a generation of whales bred in confinement — was born Wednesday afternoon. SeaWorld did not immediately name the calf because the park's veterinarians had not yet determined whether it was male or female.

The mother, 25-year-old Takara, was already pregnant when SeaWorld announced in March 2016 that it had stopped breeding its orcas. The gestation period for orcas is about 18 months.

Preparing late last month for the moment, SeaWorld's chief zoological officer, Chris Dold, told The Associated Press he expected the birth to be bittersweet, because it would be the last such event at any of the parks. But just hours after the calf was born about 3:30 p.m. EDT Wednesday, Dold said, SeaWorld staff only felt like celebrating. SeaWorld said mother and calf both appear healthy.

"These are extraordinary moments," he said by phone while traveling to the U.S. from Abu Dhabi, where SeaWorld is developing its first new park without orcas. "It's a tempered celebration only because we're focused on the health of these guys."

SeaWorld decided to stop breeding orcas, and phase out its world-famous killer whale performances by 2019, after public opinion turned against keeping orcas, dolphins and other animals in captivity for entertainment. The backlash intensified after the 2013 release of "Blackfish," a documentary critical of SeaWorld's orca care. It focused on the orca Tilikum, which killed trainer Dawn Brancheau in Orlando in 2010, dragging her into the pool before shocked visitors after a "Dine with Shamu" show.

Tilikum, which sired 14 calves over nearly 25 years in Orlando, died of bacterial pneumonia in January.

The newborn calf was sired by Kyuquot (pronounced ky YOO kit) at the San Antonio park by natural means. It brings SeaWorld's orca population in the U.S. to 23. All the orcas are expected to remain on display and available for researchers for years to come in Orlando, San Diego and San Antonio.

SeaWorld has said it plans to introduce new "natural orca encounters" in place of theatrical shows. This summer, the San Diego park will unveil a new, educational attraction in a revamped pool, and new orca attractions eventually will follow in San Antonio and Orlando.

The calf will be visible to visitors either in the orca stadium pool at the San Antonio park or in two adjacent pools. Observations about the calf and Takara by SeaWorld trainers will be provided from the moment of birth to researchers trying to fill gaps in their data about wild killer whales.

Dold said veterinarians at the San Antonio park told him the calf was born normally — tail first — after about an hour and a half of smooth labor. Both orcas were swimming calmly, including taking breaths at

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the water's surface, and trainers would be watching for the calf to begin nursing.

"Mom generally will rest but she can't rest too much .... mom's not holding onto the calf, but it's riding in her slipstream, and that's how it gets around," Dold said. "Our expectation is that all of this will go smoothly, but we take none of that for granted."

Birth control and "social management" will prevent future orca pregnancies, said spokeswoman Suzanne Pelisson Beasley. SeaWorld has not collected a wild orca in nearly 40 years, and most of its orcas were born in captivity.

Researchers have said they worry that SeaWorld's decision to stop breeding orcas will slowly reduce their ability to study orca health, growth and behavior, limiting them in coming years to collecting data from a small pod of aging whales.

Heather Hill, a St. Mary's University comparative psychologist who plans to monitor the sleeping habits of Takara and the calf over the coming year, said it was frustrating to see research opportunities at SeaWorld undermined by public opinion amid federal cuts to science funding.

"This will be one of the first times we'll be able to see not just a mother with a newborn calf but also a newborn calf with siblings," Hill said.

In a statement, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals Executive Vice President Tracy Reiman said the mother and her calf should be retired to a seaside sanctuary.

"Throughout her life, Takara the orca has been artificially inseminated many times, separated from her mother and two of her children, and shuffled from theme park to theme park at SeaWorld's whim," PETA's statement said.

This is Takara's fifth calf. Two of her other offspring remain at the San Antonio park, while one lives at SeaWorld Orlando and another has been loaned to a park in Tenerife, Spain. SeaWorld has no current plans to separate Takara and the newborn in the future, or to move any of its other orcas, Dold said.

In March, Dold said SeaWorld remains committed to orca research and conservation, calling the last orca birth in captivity "a solemn reminder of how things can change and how things can be lost."

## O'Reilly is out at Fox but influence endures; career too?

By LYNN ELBER, AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Despite the inglorious end to Bill O'Reilly's two-decade Fox News Channel career, observers say his deep imprint on Fox and other cable news outlets and his influence on barbed political discourse are intact for the foreseeable future.

Fired on Wednesday amid a drumbeat of sexual harassment allegations, the vacationing host's "The O'Reilly Factor" was quickly redubbed "The Factor" and Fox News announced his time slot will be filled by Tucker Carlson, another adamantly conservative Fox host who dovetails with the channel's audience.

But it was O'Reilly who created the template for how to succeed in cable TV punditry, delighting his viewers with unapologetic attacks on liberal politicians and media members that he delivered with gusto.

"In many ways, he led Fox's cable news revolution," said Frank Sesno, a journalism professor at George Washington University and former CNN Washington bureau chief. "Cable news is someone standing on a mountain top shouting, and Bill O'Reilly was on the highest peak so he echoed across the landscape."

And he keeps echoing in the broader media landscape. O'Reilly's success at appealing to like-minded viewers made him and Fox into cable news leaders.

"That left CNN and MSNBC to figure out how to survive, and it shouldn't come as a surprise that MSNBC figured out the only path to success was to segment and go for the liberal audience," said Tom Hollihan, a professor at the Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism at the University of Southern California.

That multiplying effect gave O'Reilly a role in a seismic change, he said.

"He helped shape the kind of very polarized discourse that has come to define politics over the past few years in America," Hollihan said.

His ratings made him Fox's most lucrative personality, with his show generating \$178 million in advertis-

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ing revenue in 2015, according to Kantar Media. There was the prospect of even more, with his audience larger in the first three months of 2017 than it has ever been.

Then came an April 1 report in The New York Times that five women had been paid a total of \$13 million to keep quiet about disturbing encounters with O'Reilly. While O'Reilly denied wrongdoing, dozens of his show's advertisers fled within days even as O'Reilly's viewership increased.

Following the Times story, Fox parent company 21st Century Fox said it had asked the same law firm that investigated Ailes to look into O'Reilly's behavior. 21st Century Fox leaders Rupert Murdoch and his sons Lachlan and James said in a memo to Fox staff that their decision to ax O'Reilly came following an "extensive review" into the charges.

"I understand how difficult this has been for many of you," Rupert Murdoch said in the memo.

With a profit center gone, 21st Century Fox stock fell almost 1 percent Wednesday in heavy trading.

O'Reilly lost his job on the same day he was photographed in Rome shaking the hand of Pope Francis. In a statement, he called it "tremendously disheartening that we part ways due to completely unfounded claims."

His exit came nine months after his former boss, Fox News CEO Roger Ailes, was ousted following allegations of sexual harassment.

O'Reilly's lawyers said he was the victim of an orchestrated campaign by liberal organizations like Media Matters for America, which contacted his advertisers to pressure them to leave the show. Conservative personality Glenn Beck — who once lost a job at Fox because a similar campaign choked his program of paying advertisers — came to O'Reilly's defense on his radio show and called on viewers to pressure Fox, to no avail.

O'Reilly had ruled the "no spin zone" on television with a quick smile and an even quicker temper. He pushed a populist, conservative-leaning point of view, and was quick to shout down those who disagreed with him.

O'Reilly and President Donald Trump are both "crowd-pleasing showmen who know how to signal to loyalists in their audience that they are not taking themselves quite as seriously as their detractors are," said news consultant Andrew Tyndall. "Half of the fun that they have with their audiences comes from watching the outrage that they manage to provoke."

Don't expect O'Reilly to slip quietly away, said Annenberg's Hollihan.

"Some other media outlet is going to pick him up and syndicate what he does. He's a brand on his own, as you can tell from all the best-selling books he's got," he said.

O'Reilly's "Killing" historical series, including "Killing Lincoln" and "Killing Reagan," have consistently sold 1 million or more copies in hardcover, a rare achievement in publishing, and his platform on Fox enabled him to promote his work. He has also had best-sellers with everything from the memoir "A Bold Fresh Piece of Humanity" to his most recent work, "Old School," which includes passages urging the respectful treatment of women.

O'Reilly and co-author Martin Dugard are due to release another book in the "Killing" series in September, and a spokeswoman for publisher Henry Holt and Co. said that plans had not changed.

Even with O'Reilly gone from Fox, Sesno said he doubts that the public appetite for his brand of "angry, high-decibel" chatter will give way to a new regard for civility.

"I'm not sure I see much evidence of that; otherwise, Judy Woodruff would be off the charts," he said, referring to the anchor of "PBS NewsHour."

Stephen Colbert, who mercilessly parodied O'Reilly on "The Colbert Report," paid tongue-in-cheek homage to the deposed host Wednesday on Colbert's late-night CBS show.

"Nation, shame on you. You failed him, you failed Bill O'Reilly. You didn't deserve this great man," Colbert said, channeling his Comedy Central character. "And what, suddenly sexual harassment's a crime?"

AP writers David Bauder, Hillel Italie and Marley Jay in New York and Nicole Winfield in Rome contributed to this story.

## O'Reilly's departure creates new challenges for Fox

By TALI ARBEL, AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — With its biggest star departing in another blowup over sexual harassment, Fox News faces some big challenges. It now has to show that it can hang on to its loyal army of conservative viewers, improve its working culture, and still continue to make big bucks for its corporate parent.

The company said Wednesday that it had parted ways with longtime host Bill O'Reilly after a "thorough and careful review of allegations against him." Dozens of advertisers ditched "The O'Reilly Factor" after a New York Times report detailed \$13 million in payouts to five women over his alleged abusive behavior; more allegations subsequently emerged. (O'Reilly denied the accusations.)

O'Reilly's departure is the second big blow for conservatives' favorite news network in nine months. Fox's longtime CEO Roger Ailes resigned abruptly amid similar sexual harassment charges last July. Its leading female star, Megyn Kelly, also decamped for NBC in January.

The network's parent company, entertainment giant 21st Century Fox, insisted that Fox News will weather the current storm, noting in a statement the "strength of its talent bench" and expressing "full confidence that the network will continue to be a powerhouse in cable news."

That certainly could happen, though it probably won't be easy.

### MONEY MACHINE

Some analysts believe that James and Lachlan Murdoch — the sons of 21st Century Fox executive chairman Rupert Murdoch — made the call on O'Reilly to change the Ailesian culture at the network and to cement their control following his departure.

"Getting rid of the old guard is a way to do that," said Dan Cassino, a professor at Fairleigh Dickinson University and the author of "Fox News & American Politics: How One Channel Shapes American Politics & Society."

But O'Reilly has been on Fox News for more than two decades. "The O'Reilly Factor" has generated a huge ad bonanza for Fox, one that yielded more than \$178 million in 2015. It's the top-rated show on the No. 1 cable network — one that, according to the investment bank Nomura's estimates, accounts for fully 20 percent of profits at 21st Century Fox.

Now, the top ratings for O'Reilly's time slot — and Fox's other prime-time shows — could be at risk. "He's been the linchpin" of the lineup, said Jane Hall, an American University professor and former Fox contributor, who noted that it will take a while to see whether his loyal audience sticks with O'Reilly's replacement.

That will be Tucker Carlson, whose show is moving to the 8 p.m. slot on Fox. O'Reilly's ratings overshadow Carlson's, and his show's viewership fell this week while he was on vacation and other Fox hosts subbed in.

Others figure that O'Reilly's firing won't be a sticking point for most Fox viewers. "When we look at data, at what programs people report watching, you just don't find people who watch Bill O'Reilly and nothing else on Fox," Cassino said.

Fox also has a big financial safety cushion in the fees cable companies pay the network, which dwarf its ad revenue, according to Nomura media analyst Anthony DiClemente. Even if there's some disruption in ad rates or spots, he said, there's a "massive backstop" in those payments, which are long-term deals.

### BROADER AMBITIONS

Fox might also have found it financially risky let O'Reilly remain. Otherwise, the network risked developing "a reputation as unfriendly to women, potentially turning off a lot of people," said Charles Taylor, a marketing professor at Villanova University. Advertisers may have been reluctant to return if there were continuing harassment complaints. It could also have alienated employees.

And 21st Century Fox is much bigger than O'Reilly, Fox News and its aging, conservative audience. It's home to movie and TV studios; a slew of sports and other cable channels; and the Fox broadcast network and shows like "The Simpsons," "Family Guy," and its latest hit, "Empire."

It's also home to ambitions that the O'Reilly crisis may have hindered. Fox owns 39 percent of European TV giant Sky, and has long wanted to take over the whole company. Its previous effort died in 2011, a

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casualty of the phone-hacking scandal at Rupert Murdoch's British newspapers. It's now trying again, although a U.K. media regulator must certify that the combined company would be a "fit and proper" owner of the broadcaster.

"Credit to James and Lachlan for doing the right thing here," said DiClemente, who noted that dealing with the O'Reilly controversy "in the right way" could be helpful for the Sky review.

The U.S. Attorney's office in New York is investigating how 21st Century Fox handled the Roger Ailes scandal. Concern over whether Fox broke the law by failing to disclose its settlements to investors is more likely to impact approval than whether the company is mired in sexual misconduct allegations, said Claire Enders of Enders Analysis, who has studied the Murdoch empire for years.

## TALKING CULTURE CHANGE

When it announced Ailes' departure last summer, 21st Century Fox said that it would "continue our commitment to maintaining a work environment based on trust and respect." But the New York Times reported that two of the O'Reilly settlements were reached after Ailes left.

In a Wednesday memo to employees signed by all three Murdochs and provided to The Associated Press, Fox again emphasized its commitment to a workplace culture of "trust and respect." The company is making "a pretty big statement" to that effect by dropping O'Reilly, said Hall, the American University professor.

Longtime Fox critics don't see it. Fox News has a "culture of harassment that did not start and does not end with Bill O'Reilly," said Rashad Robinson, executive director of the activist group Color of Change, which pressured advertisers to leave his show. Ousting O'Reilly, he said, "does not speak to a changed culture. It speaks to a company that has recognized that the best business decision for them is to end their relationship with Bill O'Reilly."

Jill Lawless from London contributed to this report.

## VP Pence meets Indonesian president on Asia tour

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Vice President Mike Pence is meeting Indonesia's president and other top officials in Jakarta on Thursday with trade and commercial disputes expected to be on the agenda.

The two-day stop in Muslim-majority Indonesia comes as President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo deals with a serious political setback after a political ally was defeated by Islamic conservatives in the election for Jakarta governor.

Indonesia is on President Donald Trump's trade hit list, and U.S. company Freeport-McMoran Inc., which operates the world's largest copper mine in the Indonesian province of Papua, is in a protracted dispute with the Indonesian government.

Pence's first engagement was morning tea at the presidential palace with Jokowi. It will be followed by an official meeting with the Indonesian president and press conference. Pence will also visit Istiqlal Mosque, the largest mosque in Southeast Asia.

Trump's company, the Trump Organization, is active in Indonesia with plans to manage luxury resorts being built near the capital Jakarta and on the tourist island of Bali.

Trump's Indonesian business partner, billionaire Hary Tanoë, is an aspiring politician with ambitions to run for president in 2019.

## Heading home or on a new job: Fresno victims shot at random

By SCOTT SMITH and SOPHIA BOLLAG, Associated Press

FRESNO, Calif. (AP) — One man had just started a new job with the gas company and was riding in a utility truck. Another was carrying a bag of groceries after stopping at a charity center. The third was at a bus stop with a friend, waiting for a ride home.

All three were randomly shot dead by a black gunman, Kori Ali Muhammad, who wanted to kill as many white people as possible and was proud of what he had done, laughing as he explained his actions in interviews with police, authorities said Wednesday.



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"That's what he set out to do that day. He said he did not like white men and said white people were responsible for keeping black people down," Fresno Police Chief Jerry Dyer said.

The men were at the wrong place at the wrong time Tuesday.

Zackary Randalls was the first to die when Muhammad, 39, walked up to a Pacific Gas & Electric truck and fired into the passenger seat. Randalls, 34, had just started work as a customer-service representative and was doing a ride-along, something he was excited about, friend Eddie Valencia said. He described the father of two preschoolers as an open-minded person with a sharp wit and big heart.

"He wouldn't want people to be divided by this," Valencia said. "There were no boundaries with race, religions, beliefs, with anything. If you were a good person and basically could have a good conversation, he would call you a friend. He was a stand-up guy."

Muhammad also shot Mark Gasset, 37, of Fresno, who had just picked up groceries at a Catholic Charities building. The gunman pumped two more rounds into Gasset as he lay on the ground, police said.

Gasset's ex-wife Lisa Gasset told The Fresno Bee that he had faced hard times but had been working to improve his life. The couple has two children.

"He would give his shirt off his back for anybody," she told the newspaper. "That is the kind of guy he was."

Next, Muhammad shot toward a bus stop where he had spotted three white men, police said. They scattered, and Muhammad picked the one who was older and appeared heavier: David Jackson, 58, of Fresno.

Jackson's roommate said they were waiting for a bus home after going to the bank and then stopping to use the bathroom at Catholic Charities.

Mark Greer, 62, said Jackson tripped over a curb in the parking lot, falling down when he was shot. Greer was able to get away.

"I was too fast for him, but David couldn't run that good," he said.

Muhammad was arrested shortly after the rampage. He was expected to be charged with four counts of murder and arraigned Friday.

Police say the shooter was candid in explaining the crimes that began Thursday night, when he killed another white man, a motel security guard, and culminated Tuesday, when he fired 17 rounds in less than two minutes and killed the three men on the same block.

Francine Williams, mother of security guard Carl Williams, 25, described her son as a kind and giving person who had recently gotten engaged.

Williams worked at Toys "R" Us and was at his second job at a Motel 6 when Muhammad shot him multiple times after an argument, police and his mother said. Muhammad told investigators he felt disrespected.

Francine Williams said Wednesday that she was in shock but also at peace because she got to tell her son how much she loved him and how proud he made her a few days before his death. He told her he loved her, too.

"So, I'm very, very, very grateful that I was able to say goodbye, maybe not at that moment, but prior to that," she said.

Muhammad had a long criminal history and filled his social media feeds with posts about black separatism, reparations and "white devils." He told his family there was a war going on between blacks and whites in America.

He claimed insanity after being charged with possessing cocaine with intent to distribute in 2005, and his attorney requested a psychiatric examination, saying Muhammad "appeared eccentric with some bizarre beliefs."

He had at least two prior mental health hospitalizations, and his attorney said in court papers that Muhammad thought the justice system and his own lawyer were conspiring against him.

Muhammad told investigators he is Muslim but prays to seven different gods and has not been to a mosque in 25 years. Police said he hid out in a ravine after the motel shooting and practiced voodoo rituals.

When he learned he was wanted in the security guard killing, Muhammad decided to take out as many other white men as possible before he was caught, Dyer said. The suspect showed no remorse, police said.

Muhammad "is not a terrorist but he is a racist," Dyer said.

Associated Press writers Kristin J. Bender, Janie Har and Olga R. Rodriguez in San Francisco and Mike Balsamo in Los Angeles contributed to this report.

## Questions abound in aftermath of NFL star Hernandez's death

By PHILIP MARCELO and DAVE COLLINS, Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — Aaron Hernandez's death in prison — just days after the former NFL star was cleared of additional murder charges — remains shrouded in mystery.

Why now? Is there more to the story? What happens to his estate?

Authorities offered few answers after Hernandez was found hanging from a bedsheet Wednesday in his cell in a maximum-security prison in Massachusetts, where he was serving a life sentence for the 2013 slaying of a onetime friend.

His death came hours before his former New England Patriots teammates visited the White House to celebrate their Super Bowl victory. Hernandez, 27, died five days after a jury acquitted him in the 2012 shooting deaths of two men whom prosecutors alleged he gunned down after one accidentally spilled a drink on him at a Boston nightclub.

The apparent suicide left friends, family and his legal team shocked and in disbelief. Many were searching for an explanation to the tragic end of a young man whose football skills at one point earned him a five-year, \$40 million contract extension with the NFL's top franchise.

"There were no conversations or correspondence from Aaron to his family or legal team that would have indicated anything like this was possible," said his attorney, Jose Baez. "Aaron was looking forward to an opportunity for a second chance to prove his innocence. Those who love and care about him are heartbroken and determined to find the truth surrounding his untimely death."

Guards found Hernandez shortly after 3 a.m. Wednesday at the state prison in Shirley, Correction Department spokesman Christopher Fallon said. The former tight end was taken to a hospital and pronounced dead about an hour later.

Fallon said he was not aware of any suicide note and officials had no reason to believe Hernandez was suicidal. Otherwise, he would have been transferred to a mental health unit, Fallon said.

The Worcester County district attorney's office and the Correction Department were investigating, and Massachusetts' chief medical examiner was conducting an autopsy.

The Patriots had no immediate comment, and President Donald Trump made no mention of Hernandez at the White House event.

A star tight end for the University of Florida when it won the 2008 title, Hernandez dropped to the fourth round of the NFL draft because of trouble in college that included a failed drug test and a bar fight. His name also had come up in an investigation into a shooting.

Still, he was a productive tight end for the Patriots for three seasons. He caught 79 passes for 910 yards and seven touchdowns in his second year to help the team reach the Super Bowl.

But the Patriots released him in 2013, shortly after he was arrested in the killing of semi-pro football player Odin Lloyd, who was dating the sister of Hernandez's fiancée. Hernandez was convicted and sentenced to life in prison.

Last week, Hernandez was acquitted in the 2012 drive-by shootings of two men in Boston. As the jury deliberated, cameras spied Hernandez blowing kisses to the young daughter he fathered with fiancée Shayanna Jenkins.

Investigators suggested Hernandez shot Lloyd to keep him quiet about the two earlier killings. A lawyer who represents Lloyd's mother said she's moving forward with a wrongful-death lawsuit against Hernandez's estate, which includes a home valued at \$1.3 million.

In the Dorchester neighborhood where Lloyd grew up, a family friend of the victim wondered if Hernandez could no longer bear the weight of his crime and his squandered potential.

"I just think it got to him — the guilt," Mixson Philip said. "Each man has to live with himself. You can

put on an act like nothing happened, but you've got a soul. You've got a heart."

Friends also were grieving in Connecticut, where Hernandez was raised.

"Especially after him getting acquitted of the double murder. That was a positive thing in our minds," said Alex Cugno, who grew up with Hernandez in Bristol. "I don't believe that he would have killed himself. It just doesn't add up."

Collins contributed from Hartford, Connecticut. AP writers Jimmy Golen, Denise Lavoie, Mark Pratt and William J. Kole in Boston also contributed to this report.

## Venezuela's opposition seeks to keep pressure on Maduro

By JOSHUA GOODMAN, Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Venezuela's opposition is looking to keep up pressure on President Nicolas Maduro by taking to the streets again Thursday hours after at least two people were killed and hundreds arrested in the biggest anti-government demonstrations in years.

Tens of thousands of protesters demanding elections and denouncing what they consider increasingly dictatorial government were met by a curtain of tear gas and rubber bullets as they attempted to march to downtown Caracas on Wednesday. Dozens even had to slide down a concrete embankment and into the Guaire River to escape the noxious fumes.

Across the country the clashes were intense. Pro-government militias, some of whose members were armed, were blamed for the two deaths, including that of a teenager in Caracas who was heading to a soccer game with friends. In several cities, protesters described being terrorized by militia members, some of them armed and circling the protesters in motorcycles.

As night fell, a group of youths tore down signs and billboards to build barricades from which they threw Molotov cocktails and rocks at riot police.

The two killings bring to seven the death toll since protests began three weeks ago over the Supreme Court's decision to strip the opposition-controlled congress of its last remaining powers, a move that was later reversed amid a storm of international criticism.

As protesters with burning eyes headed home the opposition called for another round of street demonstrations Thursday.

"If today we were millions tomorrow even more of us need to come out," said opposition governor and two-time presidential candidate Henrique Capriles, who last week was barred from running for office for 15 years.

The Supreme Court's decision has energized Venezuela's fractious opposition, which had been struggling to channel growing disgust with Maduro over widespread food shortages, triple-digit inflation and rampant crime.

Opponents are pushing for Maduro's removal through early elections and the release of scores of political prisoners. The government last year abruptly postponed regional elections the opposition was heavily favored to win and cut off a petition drive to force a referendum seeking Maduro's removal before elections late next year. The opposition sees the government measures as turning Venezuela into a nearly full-blown dictatorship.

But the government has shown little interest in backing down.

Maduro, addressing supporters at a much smaller but still large countermarch of mostly state workers, said he was "anxious" to see elections take place sometime "soon" and repeated his call for dialogue, something many in the opposition see as a stalling tactic.

"Today they attempted to take power by force and we defeated them again," said Maduro, adding that in recent hours authorities had rounded up several armed opponents seeking to carry out a coup.

He didn't provide any evidence to back up the coup claims, and the opposition rejected them as desperate attempt to intimidate Venezuelans from exercising their constitutional right to protest.

As tensions have mounted, the government has used its almost-complete control of Venezuela's institutions to pursue its opponents. On Wednesday alone more than 500 protesters were arrested nationwide, according to Penal Forum, a local NGO that provides legal assistance to detainees. It was unclear how many remained in custody.

Foreign governments are also warning about the increasingly bellicose rhetoric coming from the government. The U.S. State Department said those who commit human rights abuses and undermine Venezuela's democratic institutions would be held accountable.

"We are concerned that the government of Maduro is violating its own constitution and is not allowing the opposition to have their voices heard, nor allowing them to organize in ways that expresses the views of the Venezuelan people," Secretary of State Rex Tillerson told reporters Wednesday.

Opposition marchers included Liliana Machuca, who earns about \$20 a month holding two jobs teaching literature. Although she doesn't expect change overnight, she said protesting is the only option the opposition has against an entrenched, increasingly repressive government.

"This is like a chess game and each side is moving whatever pieces they can," said Machuca, her face covered in a white, sticky substance to protect herself from the effects of tear gas. "We'll see who tires out first."

Joshua Goodman on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/APjoshgoodman>

More Associated Press reporting on Venezuela's problems can be found at <https://www.ap.org/explore/venezuela-undone>

## 2 killed amid massive anti-government marches in Venezuela

By JOSHUA GOODMAN and FABIOLA SANCHEZ, Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Two people were shot dead as opponents of President Nicolas Maduro flooded the streets of Caracas and other Venezuelan cities Wednesday, battling security forces in what's been dubbed the "mother of all marches" against the embattled socialist leader.

Tens of thousands of protesters made an unsuccessful attempt to march to downtown Caracas as security forces fired tear gas and rubber bullets into the crowd. Dozens even had to slide down a concrete embankment and into the Guaire River to escape the noxious fumes.

Carlos Romero, just three days away from his 18th birthday, was walking to play soccer with friends when he bumped into pro-government militias stalking a pocket of protesters, family spokesman Melvin Sojo told The Associated Press, based on the accounts of two people who rushed Romero to the hospital after he was hit by gunfire.

"This was supposed to be a happy moment but instead I came home to see my brother die," said Sojo, who grew up in the Romero home and returned Tuesday from Ecuador, where he had been living the past year.

There was no immediate confirmation that the militias shot the boy, and some government officials cast doubt on the account, saying Romero was killed during an attempted assault.

In the western city of San Cristobal, a 23-year-old woman identified as Paola Ramirez was shot dead by similar groups, according to Mayor Patricia Gutierrez, who said the groups circled demonstrators on motorcycles as they were heading home from the demonstration.

The two killings bring to seven the death toll since protests began three weeks ago over the Supreme Court's decision to strip the opposition-controlled congress of its last remaining powers, a move that was later reversed but not before enraging the opposition and causing a storm of international criticism. The charges that Venezuela is moving toward a full-blown dictatorship come against the backdrop of an ever-deepening economic crisis.

As night fell, a few thousand people were still gathered in a plaza in wealthy eastern Caracas as residents

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in nearby buildings banged pots and pans in a show of support. A group of youths with their faces covered tore down street signs and billboards for makeshift barricades. They then launched rocks and Molotov cocktails against lines of police and national guardsmen who responded with tear gas in cat-and-mouse skirmishes likely to last deep into the night.

The Supreme Court's decision energized Venezuela's fractious opposition, which had been struggling to channel growing disgust with Maduro over widespread food shortages, triple-digit inflation and rampant crime. They've called for another day of protests Thursday.

"We'll see each other tomorrow at the same place and same time because our fight for democracy doesn't end," former presidential candidate Henrique Capriles, who the government last week barred from running for public office, said at an evening press conference to announce the opposition's next steps.

Opponents are now pushing for Maduro's removal through early elections and the release of scores of political prisoners. The government last year abruptly postponed regional elections the opposition was heavily favored to win and cut off a petition drive to force a referendum seeking Maduro's removal before elections late next year.

Maduro, addressing supporters at a large countermarch, seemed open to some sort of electoral showdown. He said he was "anxious" to see elections take place sometime "soon" and repeated his call for dialogue, saying he had a proposal he wanted to make the opposition.

"Today they attempted to take power by force and we defeated them again," said Maduro.

Opposition marchers included Liliana Machuca, who earns about \$20 a month holding two jobs teaching literature. Although she doesn't expect change overnight, she said protesting is the only option the opposition has after what she says are scores of abuses committed by the government.

"This is like a chess game and each side is moving whatever pieces they can," said Machuca, her face covered in a white, sticky substance to protect herself from the noxious effects of tear gas. "We'll see who tires out first."

A short block away, a sea of red-shirted government supporters marched by calmly, some dancing to a salsa band that tried to provide an air of normalcy to the otherwise tense political standoff that has paralyzed Venezuela the past few weeks.

Many were state workers like Leidy Marquez, who was bused in from Tachira state, on the other side of the country, along with co-workers at state-run oil giant PDVSA.

"The opposition is trying to provoke a conflict but they aren't going to achieve their goal," said Marquez, wearing a shirt emblazoned with the eyes of the late Hugo Chavez, a symbol of revolutionary zeal in Venezuela.

The government has responded to the near-daily protests with its own show of force: jailing hundreds of demonstrators, barring Capriles from running for office and standing by as pro-government groups violently attack opposition members of congress.

The president also signed orders on TV late Tuesday activating the "green phase" of enigmatic military plans to defend Venezuela against what he describes as U.S.-backed attempts to sow chaos and overthrow him. He also said authorities in recent hours had rounded up unnamed members of an underground cell of conspirators at Caracas hotels, including some who were allegedly planning to stir up violence at the march.

Maduro didn't provide evidence to back his claim that a coup attempt was underway, and the opposition rejected his comments as a desperate attempt to intimidate Venezuelans from exercising their constitutional right to protest.

"We're convinced the country knows who the true coup mongers are and it's against them we will march," the opposition said in a Tuesday late-night statement.

Foreign governments are also warning about the increasingly bellicose rhetoric and repressive stance of the government.

Maduro this week said he was dramatically expanding civilian militias created by Chavez and giving each member a gun. There's also criticism that the government isn't doing enough to restrain the collectives — motorcycle-driving militants — that have operated like shock troops firing on protesters as security forces stand by.

"We're a peaceful people, but we're also armed," Energy Minister Luis Motta Dominguez told state workers gathering for Wednesday's rally.

The U.S. State Department said those who commit human rights abuses and undermine Venezuela's democratic institutions would be held accountable.

"We are concerned that the government of Maduro is violating its own constitution and is not allowing the opposition to have their voices heard, nor allowing them to organize in ways that expresses the views of the Venezuelan people," Secretary of State Rex Tillerson told reporters Wednesday.

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## Runoff in Georgia House race could test Trump, opposition

By **BILL BARROW** and **ERICA WERNER**, Associated Press

DUNWOODY, Ga. (AP) — A narrow miss by a Democratic newcomer in a conservative Georgia House district has triggered a high-stakes runoff that could test President Donald Trump's influence and the limits of the backlash against him.

Democrat Jon Ossoff, a 30-year-old former congressional aide fueled by a colossal fundraising haul from out-of-state donors, came within two percentage points of an outright victory Tuesday over 17 other candidates in Georgia's traditionally Republican 6th Congressional District.

Republican Karen Handel, a former Georgia secretary of state, lagged in a distant second, qualifying her for the runoff. Well known to voters, Handel had treated Trump gingerly in a district the president barely carried, but declared Wednesday she'd like to see him campaign for her ahead of the June 20 runoff.

"We want everybody who is supportive of Republicans, so absolutely," Handel told The Associated Press after taking a congratulatory call from Trump on Wednesday. "We are going to be united from this point going forward."

Trump, who attacked Ossoff in recent days as a liberal shill and mocked him for living outside of the district, crowed on Twitter about the outcome in Georgia following Democrats' failure to win a different special election in Kansas last week.

"Dems failed in Kansas and are now failing in Georgia. Great job Karen Handel! It is now Hollywood vs. Georgia on June 20th," Trump wrote, alluding to celebrity donors to Ossoff.

Still, the close finishes in Georgia as well as conservative Kansas underscored Democrats' potential to capitalize on surging liberal energy following Trump's election, even as they also pointed to the limits of how far Democrats can go in Republican-friendly districts.

The Kansas and Georgia races also serve notice that GOP candidates may struggle to handle Trump, who alienates many independents and even some Republicans. In fact, Trump arguably gave Ossoff his opening in the first place; Trump barely won the Georgia 6th in November and failed to win a majority, four years after Republican Mitt Romney got more than 60 percent of the presidential vote.

Both major parties are approaching the runoff in Georgia as an important test ahead of the 2018 midterm elections. Democrats have a long-shot chance of taking back control of the House next year and breaking the GOP's monopoly control of Washington. But it will require picking up more than 20 seats and winning over droves of voters like those in the affluent, well-educated 6th District of Georgia.

Winning such a seat will depend on Ossoff keeping voters like Shari Springle engaged in the race. The 54-year-old organized a Facebook group, "Liberal Moms of Roswell and Cobb," in 2015. She says it proliferated since Trump's victory, with several members acting as precinct captains for Ossoff.

Springle's take Wednesday was simple: "Let's get to work."

But she'll run up against Handel backers like 82-year-old Bev Wingate. The Dunwoody retiree and Handel volunteer says Republicans were too cautious in the primary for fear they'd "step on toes." Now, she says,

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she's free to ask all her friends and neighbors to be "on our team."

DuBose Porter, chairman of the Georgia Democratic Party, said the district offers the perfect setting for Democrats to prove their momentum heading into 2018. "If we can get over 50 percent in this district, we know we can do that statewide and around the country," Porter said, mocking Republican assertions that Ossoff failed Tuesday by falling short of an outright primary victory.

"Only the Republicans could try to define this as a defeat for the Democrats," said Porter.

At the White House, spokesman Sean Spicer tried to do exactly that. "The reaction has somewhat been, you know, that they almost won. No, they lost!" Spicer said. "They spent \$8.3 million dollars and threw everything including the kitchen sink at it, and lost."

Spicer did not mention that outside Republican groups also plowed millions into attacking Ossoff and encouraging GOP turnout; a political action committee backed by House Speaker Paul Ryan and other House GOP leaders accounted for at least \$2.2 million.

As for whether Trump will campaign with Handel, Spicer said: "We'll see if we're needed."

Other Republicans saw clear warning signs in Tuesday night's outcome. GOP Rep. Tom Cole of Oklahoma, an ally of House leadership, said congressional Republicans must start showing they can lead after the failure of their health care legislation, or risk voters snatching away their majorities.

"The Democratic base is totally engaged, totally fired up, and anybody that thinks that is going to go away I think is whistling past the political graveyard," Cole said. "The only way you fight that is ... fire up the Republican base. And to do that, strangely enough, you have to govern."

For his part, Ossoff said for weeks his goal was to win outright, but he rejected any notion that he lost. "We have defied the odds ... shattered expectations," Ossoff told supporters, adding that they'd "carry us to victory" in June.

The runoff victor will succeed Republican Tom Price, who resigned to join Trump's administration as health secretary. Price won 62 percent of the vote in November, about 14 percentage points ahead of Trump's total.

More tests await, with special elections approaching in Montana and South Carolina in May and June.

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Associated Press reporter Kathleen Foody contributed. Werner reported from Washington. Follow Barrow on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/BillBarrowAP> and Werner at <https://twitter.com/ericawerner>

## Nation by nation, how Trump has shaken up Koreas, neighbors

By KIM TONG-HYUNG, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Unpredictable. Unhinged. Dangerous.

Many South Koreans are using those words to describe the president of their most important ally, rather than the leader of their archrival to the North. They worry that President Donald Trump's tough, unorthodox talk about North Korea's nuclear program is boosting already-high animosity between the Koreas.

No matter whether Trump succeeds at getting North Korea to abandon its nuclear weapons and missile programs, his actions, comments and tweets are changing how the region views the long-running conflict. Senior North Korean officials see their relations with Washington as even more volatile than before. China is appealing for calm, and possibly re-examining its role. Japan is weighing a retaliatory strike capability against the North.

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### CHINA

After decades of failure to stop North Korea's march toward a nuclear arsenal, some see Trump's bluster as a shrewd attempt to press China, the North's most important ally and trading partner, into pressuring North Korea more aggressively over its nuclear program.

Trump has said he's willing to make trade and economic concessions to China in return for its help with North Korea. "A trade deal with the U.S. will be far better for them if they solve the North Korean problem!" Trump said on Twitter, recounting what he told Xi while hosting him this month at his Palm Beach,

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Florida, resort.

Pulling back from a campaign promise, Trump has also said he would not declare China a currency manipulator, as he looked for help from Beijing.

The rhetoric seems to be blurring the lines between North Korea and economic ties with China, issues that previous U.S. administrations had kept separate.

If such persuasion falls short, Trump has suggested he might use more coercive methods. So-called secondary sanctions on Chinese banks that do business with North Korea could also be in the offing, officials have said.

"Trump is posing a hard choice to Beijing — do something, something about North Korea and hope it generates some effects, or face American economic retaliation," said Dean Cheng, senior research fellow at the Heritage Foundation in Washington, D.C. "Whether that works or not, it's a very different strategy from the last three presidents."

Koh Yu-hwan, a North Korea expert at Seoul's Dongguk University, said that the way U.S. officials describe "maximum pressure and engagement" suggests that the Trump administration wants to ease Chinese fears about a collapse in North Korea, something that prevented Beijing from aggressively pressuring the North in the past.

"If the United States and China can set the tone, there will also be more opportunities for dialogue. It seems Trump could be more willing to cut a deal with North Korea than Obama was," Koh said.

## SOUTH KOREA

South Koreans may be uneasy about North Korea's expanding arsenal of weapons, but many doubt that the country's leader, Kim Jong Un, wants to start a war that would likely end in the destruction of his government and the ruling elite. Donald Trump is another story, judging by widespread concern posted on Twitter.

Some see him as a hot-tempered, unpredictable leader who might attack North Korea before it masters the technology to build a nuclear-tipped missile that could hit the U.S. mainland. North Korea is moving steadily toward that goal, and some experts believe it could achieve it during Trump's presidency.

U.S. strikes earlier this month against Syria, coupled with Trump's dispatching of what he called an "armada" of U.S. warships to the Korean region, touched off fears that the United States was preparing for military action, though it was revealed this week that the flotilla was taking a roundabout path to Korean waters and has yet to arrive.

Lim Eul Chul, a North Korea expert at South Korea's Kyungnam University, doesn't think Trump wants to attack North Korea but said he appears eager to send a message that war is possible.

That has driven North Korea to issue its own threats and begin preparations for "even a 1 percent chance that the U.S. will launch pre-emptive strikes," Lim said. "That's just how the authoritarian Kim government survives."

The Kyunghyang Shinmun newspaper said recently that Trump is playing a "dangerous card" with his verbal threats, risking a miscalculation by Pyongyang and a war on the peninsula.

"Trump seems capable of doing anything, and he might choose to strike the North before it's technologically able to strike back," said Ray Kim, a 39-year-old Seoul resident. "Even if a war breaks out, it's not like that war will take place on U.S. soil. Trump has much less to lose."

## NORTH KOREA

Trump is clearly on the mind of the North Korean leadership.

A senior Foreign Ministry official told The Associated Press last week that Pyongyang has been watching Trump's actions — including his recent order for the strike on a Syrian air base and his many tweets about North Korea — and determined that his administration is "more vicious and more aggressive" than that of his predecessor, Barack Obama.

In response, Pyongyang is promising it will continue to build up its "nuclear deterrent" and respond in kind to any hostile moves, perceived or real.

North Korean fury at Washington was rising well before Trump took office, in particular over reports



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that annual U.S.-South Korean military exercises now include training for precision strikes on the North's leadership or nuclear and military facilities. Pyongyang's regime has called that "a red line," and has since begun its own training for pre-emptive strikes and speeded up its testing of nuclear weapons and long-range missiles.

## JAPAN

Japan is drawing up emergency responses in case of a North Korea missile strike. A number of municipalities are testing community alarm systems and planning evacuation drills as concerns run high around U.S. military bases. Both Japan and South Korea are home to tens of thousands of U.S. troops.

The rising tension has opened the door to debate about once-taboo subjects in Japan, where the disastrous World War II experience and a postwar constitution that renounced the right to use military force have created a strong pacifist streak.

Japan's ruling party recently urged the government to introduce advanced missile-defense equipment such as a land-based Aegis or Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) system, which is being introduced in South Korea.

Ruling party defense experts have even proposed that Japan lift a self-imposed restraint on conducting a retaliatory strike if attacked, rather than relying solely on the U.S. military.

The steady turning up of the heat on all sides has increased the possibility of a miscalculation that could result in an incident that escalates too quickly to be contained, or even outright conflict.

Associated Press Writers Eric Talmadge in Pyongyang, North Korea; Christopher Bodeen in Beijing; Mari Yamaguchi in Tokyo and Hyung-jin Kim in Seoul, South Korea, contributed to this story.

## Huge indeed: \$107 million in donations for Trump's inaugural

By JULIE BYKOWICZ and NANCY BENAC, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It was huge.

Big money from billionaires, corporations and a roster of NFL owners poured into Donald Trump's inaugural committee in record-shattering amounts — to pull off an event that was considerably lower-key than previous inaugural celebrations.

That leaves a bit of a mystery: What the \$107 million was spent for and how much was left over — the excess, if any, to go to charity. It also raises a new round of questions about the influence of money in politics, this time for a president who promised to "drain the swamp" of Washington.

Contribution records from Trump's inaugural committee, released Wednesday by the Federal Election Commission, show the president who railed as a candidate against the corrupting influence of big-money donors was only too willing to accept top-dollar checks for his swearing-in festivities.

Trump's total take was about double the previous record set by Barack Obama, who collected \$53 million in contributions in 2009, and had money left over to spend on the annual Easter egg roll and other White House events.

Trump's top inaugural donor was Las Vegas gambling billionaire Sheldon Adelson, who gave \$5 million. He and his wife came away with prime seats for Trump's swearing-in ceremony on Jan. 20 and gained access to a private lunch with the new president and lawmakers at the Capitol. Phil Ruffin, another casino mogul and close friend of Trump, was among dozens of donors who gave \$1 million each.

At least eight NFL team owners kicked in big money for the inauguration. Seven of them, including Patriots owner Bob Kraft, whose team won the Super Bowl and visited the White House on Wednesday, gave \$1 million apiece. Kraft's donation came via his limited liability company.

Trump plans to name the New York Jets' Woody Johnson, one of those million-dollar donors, to be the country's ambassador to the United Kingdom.

Asked whether the president feels conflicted about his committee accepting so much corporate and wealthy donor money, spokesman Sean Spicer said Wednesday that financing the inaugural is "a time-

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honored tradition" and there are "a lot of people who really take pride in helping us show the world a peaceful transformation of power."

Brendan Fischer of the Campaign Legal Center, a nonprofit pro-transparency group, countered: "If you take Trump at his word that when political figures accept large amounts of money from corporate interests or special interests that they're indebted to those big donors, there's certainly reason to question what donors to Trump's inaugural committee might expect in return."

As is often the case with campaigns and inaugurations, some of the donations came from people doing business with the federal government.

Billionaire Texan Kelcy Warren, whose company is building the Dakota Access Pipeline, gave the inaugural committee \$250,000. Christopher Cline, a billionaire coal magnate who owns Foresight Energy Partners, gave \$1 million. Trump has vowed to bring back coal jobs, and his administration quickly approved the Dakota pipeline.

Businesses that donated at the \$1 million level included Bank of America, Boeing, Dow Chemical, Pfizer and Qualcomm. Companies also gave big in-kind contributions of goods and services, including nearly \$500,000 in "vehicle expenses" from General Motors. AT&T made combined in-kind and cash donations of \$2.1 million, and Microsoft's combined total was \$500,000.

Casino mogul Steve Wynn donated entertainers and production work valued at \$729,000 for the Chairman's Ball, where the band Alabama and Wynn's ShowStoppers performed, according to Wynn spokesman Michael Weaver.

Russian-America businessman Alexander Shustorovich also was among the \$1 million donors to Trump's inauguration committee. The Republican National Committee refused a contribution from the U.S. citizen in 2000, citing news reports at the time that cautioned about his ties to Russian business. In more recent years, he's given money to the party, to 2012 candidate Mitt Romney, and to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, FEC records show.

Donations from foreign nationals are banned. But the socialist administration of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro made a \$500,000 donation through Citgo Petroleum, a U.S. affiliate of Venezuela's state oil company PDVSA. PDVSA recently offered up a nearly 50 percent stake in Citgo as collateral for a \$1.5 billion loan from Russian firm Rosneft. The deal drew criticism from Republicans who worry it sets the stage for Vladimir Putin to take control of American oil.

The inauguration offered donors who had held back during the presidential campaign a chance to show belated support for the incoming president.

Billionaire investor Paul Singer gave \$1 million after long expressing skepticism about Trump. Like Singer, Chicago hedge fund manager Ken Griffin, conspicuously avoided giving money to Trump's campaign during the general election. Griffin gave the Trump inaugural \$100,000.

While the government sets strict contribution limits on political campaigns, the only federal restrictions on donations to inaugural committees are a ban on foreign nationals, according to Fischer, of the Campaign Legal Center. Past presidents-elect have tended to set voluntary limits on their inaugural fundraising, but Trump's only restriction was to ban money from lobbyists, he said.

Obama in 2009 set a \$50,000 cap on individual contributions and banned money from corporations, political action committees and lobbyists. He lifted those caps in 2013, when he raised about \$43 million for a lower-key event.

Inaugural committees have broad leeway in how they spend their money and what they do with the leftovers, although some limitations apply, according to Fischer. As a 501(c)(4) organization, for example, the committee could use some of the money to give bonuses to staff, but IRS rules say the committee couldn't operate primarily to benefit a small group of individuals. Federal campaigns wouldn't be able to receive the money because it was raised outside contribution limits, he said.

Trump's inaugural committee has promised to "identify and evaluate charities that will receive contributions left from the excess monies raised."

bykowicz

## Trump congratulates Patriots, doesn't mention Hernandez

By CATHERINE LUCEY and JONATHAN LEMIRE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump welcomed the New England Patriots to the White House Wednesday, noting the parallels between his own upset victory and their stunning Super Bowl win — but avoiding discussion of the apparent prison suicide of their former teammate Aaron Hernandez earlier in the day.

As he extolled the team's virtues and saluted individual players, the president did not name star quarterback Tom Brady, who notified the White House that he was dealing with a "personal family matter" and would not attend the ceremony.

Trump hosted the five-time champions on the South Lawn and declared that "no team has been good this long."

"It was a complete team effort. That's the beauty of what they do, they win as a team," said Trump, who compared the team's 25-point comeback against the Atlanta Falcons in February to his own political upset. "Pundits, boy, are they wrong a lot, aren't they? They said you couldn't do it."

More than two dozen Patriots skipped the ceremony. Several had said beforehand that they would not show for political reasons. Shortly before the event, Brady posted a photo of his parents on Instagram, wishing them a happy anniversary.

Casting a pall over the ceremony was the news about Hernandez, who hanged himself in a prison cell hours before the White House visit, according to Massachusetts prison officials. Hernandez, who played for the Patriots from 2010 to 2012, was serving a life sentence for a murder conviction. Days ago, the 27-year-old former tight end was acquitted of a double murder.

A team spokesman said the Patriots were aware of the reports of Hernandez's death but the club wasn't expected to comment. Two players were brought to speak to reporters after the White House ceremony, but both said they had not known Hernandez.

Wide receiver Malcolm Mitchell said he was moved by the White House ceremony, saying it "almost brought me to tears. As a child growing up, I never would have thought a president would have said my name by any means."

One player made an impromptu appearance at a White House press before the official ceremony. Tight end Rob Gronkowski stuck his head in the door of the briefing room as Press Secretary Sean Spicer was holding a televised briefing.

Gronkowski jokingly asked Spicer whether he needed any help. Spicer — an avid Patriots fan — responded: "I think I got this. But thank you."

Trump has particularly close ties to the Patriots, counting owner Bob Kraft and head coach Bill Belichick as friends. One of Trump's signature "Make America Great Again" hats was spotted in Brady's locker in 2015.

During the South Lawn ceremony, Trump recounted reading a supportive letter from Belichick on the eve of the election, while Kraft saluted the president as a friend for decades.

"It is a distinct honor for us to celebrate what was unequivocally our sweetest championship with a very good friend and somebody whose mental toughness and strength I greatly admire," said Kraft. The team presented the president with a personalized "Trump" No. 45 jersey and a helmet from February's Super Bowl, the first such game to go to overtime.

Kraft was one of at least seven NFL team owners who gave \$1 million each to Trump's inaugural committee, a new fundraising report shows. Others include the owners of the Houston Texans, the Washington Redskins, the Jacksonville Jaguars and the Los Angeles Rams. Kraft gave the money via his Kraft Group LLC.

After the victory in February, tight end Martellus Bennett quickly made it clear he was not coming to the White House, and other teammates followed. Some noted their differences with the Republican administration, though others did not an issue a reason for their absence.

Defensive back Devin McCourty told Time Magazine: "I don't feel accepted in the White House. With

the president having so many strong opinions and prejudices I believe certain people might feel accepted there while others won't."

Players have turned down White House invites ever since such events began to take off under President Ronald Reagan. That includes Brady in 2015. He cited a "family commitment" at the time, but there was speculation he declined because of some unflattering comments a spokesman for President Barack Obama made about the "Deflategate" scandal.

Associated Press writers Julie Bykowicz and Jill Colvin contributed to this report.

## Another nearby planet found that may be just right for life

By **SETH BORENSTEIN, AP Science Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Astronomers have found yet another planet that seems to have just the right Goldilocks combination for life: Not so hot and not so cold. It's not so far away, either.

This new, big, dense planet is rocky, like Earth, and has the right temperatures for water, putting it in the habitable zone for life, according to a study published Wednesday in the journal *Nature*.

It's the fifth such life-possible planet outside our solar system revealed in less than a year, but still relatively nearby Earth. Rocky planets within that habitable zone of a star are considered the best place to find evidence of some form of life.

"It is astonishing to live in a time when discovery of potentially habitable worlds is not only commonplace but proliferating," said MIT astronomer Sara Seager, who wasn't part of the study.

The first planet outside our solar system was discovered in 1995, but thanks to new techniques and especially NASA's planet-hunting Kepler telescope, the number of them has exploded in recent years. Astronomers have now identified 52 potentially habitable planets and more than 3,600 planets outside our solar system.

The latest discovery, called LHS 1140b, regularly passes in front of its star, allowing astronomers to measure its size and mass. That makes astronomers more confident that this one is rocky, compared to other recent discoveries.

In the next several years, new telescopes should be able to use the planet's path to spy its atmosphere in what could be the best-aimed search for signs of life, said Harvard astronomer David Charbonneau, a co-author of the study. If scientists see both oxygen and some carbon in an atmosphere, that's a promising sign that something could be living.

Outside astronomers have already put this new planet near the top of their must-see lists for new ground and space-based telescopes.

"This is the first one where we actually know it's rocky," Charbonneau said. "We found a planet that we can actually study that might be actually Earth-like."

Make that super-sized, because it belongs to a class of planets called super-Earths that are more massive than Earth but not quite the size of giants Neptune or Jupiter.

Compared to Earth, the new planet is big, pushing near the size limit for rocky planets. It's 40 percent wider than Earth but it has 6.6 times Earth's mass, giving it a gravitational pull three times stronger, Charbonneau said. A person weighing 167 pounds would feel like 500 pounds on this planet.

While many super-Earths are too big to have the right environment for life, 1140b is just small enough to make it a good candidate. Thirty-two of the potentially habitable planets found so far are considered super-Earth sized.

The new planet was found using eight small telescopes in Chile and help from an amateur planet-hunter, Charbonneau said.

In the constellation Cetus, it is 39 light years or 230 trillion miles away. So are a group of seven mostly Earth-sized planets in or near the habitable zone found circling a star called Trappist-1 earlier this year, but it in a different direction. And in August, astronomers found that the nearest planet to Earth outside our solar system, only 25 trillion miles away, also could have the right temperature for life, but astronomers can't get a peek at its atmosphere.

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"If you picture the Milky Way as the size of the United States, then these systems are all within the size of Central Park," Charbonneau said. "These are your neighbors."

The latest discoveries have their founders at odds over which of the planets are the most promising. Charbonneau said recent studies show that the Trappist planets may not be rocky like Earth, while Trappist discoverer Michael Gillon said the newest planet has such intense gravity that its atmosphere may be smooshed down so telescopes can't get a good look at it.

Seven outside astronomers said the Milky Way is big enough for all the discoveries to be exciting, requiring more exploring.

Yale astronomer Greg Laughlin, who wasn't part of any of the teams, praised all the new findings but said the Trappist planets seem too light and the new one too dense for his taste: "I wouldn't book a trip to any of these planets."

Follow Seth Borenstein at <http://twitter.com/borenbears> and his work can be found at <http://tinyurl.com/sethap>

## Internal memo on Bill O'Reilly sent to Fox News employees

NEW YORK (AP) — The following internal memo was sent to Fox News Channel employees on Wednesday: "We'd like to address questions about Bill O'Reilly's future at Fox News. After a thorough and careful review of allegations against him, the Company and Bill O'Reilly have agreed that Mr. O'Reilly will not return to the Fox News Channel.

This decision follows an extensive review done in collaboration with outside counsel.

By ratings standards, Bill O'Reilly is one of the most accomplished TV personalities in the history of cable news. In fact, his success by any measure is indisputable. Fox News has demonstrated again and again the strength of its talent bench. We have full confidence that the network will continue to be a powerhouse in cable news.

Lastly, and most importantly, we want to underscore our consistent commitment to fostering a work environment built on the values of trust and respect.

Best,

Rupert, Lachlan, James

## Newspaper decline continues to weigh on AP earnings

By The Associated Press, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Earnings at The Associated Press shrank substantially last year compared with 2015, when the news organization enjoyed a large tax benefit that skewed its results. Revenue also edged downward, reflecting continued contraction in the newspaper industry and a stronger U.S. dollar that reduced the value of overseas sales.

Net income last year shrank to \$1.6 million from \$183.6 million in 2015, a 99 percent decline. The 2015 profit figure was bolstered by a one-time, \$165 million tax benefit. AP's 2014 net income of \$140.9 million was also boosted by a large non-recurring gain from the sale of a stake in a sports data company. In 2013, net income at the AP — a not-for-profit news cooperative — was \$3.3 million.

Although AP's 2016 profit was slightly less than half that of 2013, AP chief financial officer Ken Dale said last year brought the company's net results "back to more normal levels."

Dale said he was focused on other measures of the company's financial health. "We feel like we're financially stable, we have no debt and we continue to generate positive cash flow," he said. AP ended 2016 with \$24.7 million in cash and equivalents, down from \$50.6 million the year before.

Revenue at AP, which reported its earnings Wednesday, dropped 2 percent to \$556.3 million in 2016. The news agency gave some papers lower rates in exchange for longer contracts, Dale said. The number of U.S. newspaper customers didn't change much.

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AP's annual revenue peaked in 2008 at \$748 million, and has mostly fallen since then, battered by the shift to online media and the decline of newspapers. The news agency, which sells other media organizations subscriptions to its print stories, videos and photos, has worked to make up the shortfall by investing more in video and focusing on new overseas customers.

Revenue related to the 2016 presidential election offset some of the decline. AP charges TV networks and newspapers extra for its vote-counting services. The agency's international video division also showed marginal growth. AP expects further growth in video revenue, particularly from the Middle East and Asia.

Nearly half of AP's revenue comes from TV broadcasters. Newspapers account for 23 percent of revenue. U.S. papers make up the bulk of that, contributing 19 percent of total revenue. Internet companies like Yahoo and Microsoft contribute about another 10 percent. AP also gets money from other agencies and radio stations.

Expenses rose nearly 2 percent last year to \$562.7 million, a sum that included \$16.6 million in costs related to the move of AP's headquarters to lower Manhattan from midtown. That move is expected to save the company \$10 million annually going forward. AP also laid off some news staffers last year.

AP held its annual meeting in New York Wednesday. Four new directors were named to the organization's 21-member board: Emily Barr, president and CEO of Graham Media Group, which owns seven local TV stations; Lisa DeSisto, CEO of MaineToday Media, which publishes newspapers in Maine; William Lewis, CEO of News Corp.'s Dow Jones and publisher of The Wall Street Journal; and Michael Newhouse, director and senior executive of Advance/Newhouse, a magazine and newspaper publisher with cable interests.

Vice chairman Steven Swartz, the president and CEO of newspaper and magazine publisher Hearst Corp., was named chairman of AP's board, succeeding Lee Enterprises Inc. executive chairman Mary Junck.

How dangerous air bags can find their way into used cars  
By TOM KRISHER and KEN RITTER, Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — A Nevada crash that nearly killed a young woman has exposed a hole in the government's efforts to get dangerous Takata air bag inflators off the road: There's nothing that prevents the devices from being taken from wrecked cars and reused.

Karina Dorado's trachea was punctured by shrapnel from an inflator in an otherwise minor crash in Las Vegas on March 3. She was rushed to a trauma center, where surgeons removed pieces that damaged her vocal cords. She is still being treated for neck injuries.

Dorado, 18, is among nearly 200 people injured or killed by the inflators, which can explode when the chemical propellant inside deteriorates. What's different about her case is how the inflator wound up in her 2002 Honda Accord in the first place.

Dorado's father, Jose, bought the car for her in March of last year so she could get to and from her job at a customer service call center, attorneys for the family said Wednesday. The family did not know the car's history, including that it had been wrecked in Phoenix and declared a total loss by an insurance company in 2015, the attorneys said.

According to AutoCheck, a service that tracks vehicle histories, the car was given a salvage title, repaired and resold in Las Vegas last spring.

Engineers from Honda inspected Dorado's car after the crash and traced the serial number from the blown-apart inflator to a 2001 Accord, which had been covered by a recall but never had the inflator replaced.

Honda spokesman Chris Martin said the air bag in the 2001 Accord must have been removed by a salvage yard, or perhaps stolen. Somehow it ended up at the shop that repaired the car eventually bought by the Dorados.

It's perfectly legal under federal law for air bag assemblies or other parts subject to recall to be pulled out of wrecked cars and sold by junkyards to repair shops that may not even know the danger.

No government agency monitors the transactions. In addition, no states appear to have laws against the reuse of recalled parts.

"What there should be is a program that prevents old air bags from being recycled," said Michael Brooks, acting director of the nonprofit Center for Auto Safety.

Carfax, another auto history tracking service, said it is unknown just how many cars are sold each year with salvage titles, but they number in the thousands.

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At least 16 people have been killed by Takata inflators worldwide and more than 180 injured. The problem touched off the biggest automotive recall in U.S. history, with 69 million inflators recalled. About 100 million have been recalled globally. Takata has been fined and faces lawsuits, and it could be driven into bankruptcy.

Kent Emison, an attorney for the Dorado family, said that given the huge size of the Takata recall, millions of inflators are probably still in use and unaccounted for by authorities.

"People are not going to know until it's too late that they have a defective Takata air bag," he said.

The inflator that nearly killed Dorado was among the most dangerous made by Takata. In testing, inflators taken from older Hondas had a 50 percent chance of blowing apart, prompting the automaker and the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to issue desperate pleas for people to get them replaced.

Unlike most other air bag makers, Takata used the chemical ammonium nitrate to create a small explosion to inflate the bags in a crash. But the chemical deteriorates over time when exposed to heat and humidity, causing it to burn too fast and blow apart a metal canister.

Attorneys for the Dorado family said they are trying to find out where Jose Dorado bought the Accord.

"It's a tragedy that shouldn't have happened," said Billie-Marie Morrison, another family attorney. "You would think in today's age with communication technology these types of things should not be allowed to happen."

Morrison said she doesn't know if the elder Dorado checked the Accord's vehicle identification number in a government database of recalled vehicles to see if it had any unfixed recalls.

Had he checked, he would have been given a false sense of security: The NHTSA website says the car has zero outstanding recalls. Honda said that before the Phoenix wreck, the previous owners had the air bag inflator replaced twice under recalls.

The federal government has no authority over used car sales and cannot stop air bags from being resold, a NHTSA spokeswoman said. The American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators said it knows of no states that prohibit salvaged parts from being reused, though some require parts to be inspected to make sure they aren't stolen.

Honda's Martin said the automaker has a program to buy up air bags made by Takata. In the past few years it has purchased 60,000 to take them out of circulation, he said.

Karina Dorado still has a hole in her trachea that is covered by a collar and will have to be repaired later, Morrison said. She is starting to get her voice back, but it's very raspy and she will probably need speech therapy, the lawyer said.

Brooks said people should be suspicious of cars with salvage titles because there is no way of knowing where the parts came from or the quality of the repair work. Although some are safe, stolen or counterfeit parts can be used, he said.

"There are just so many questions that are impossible to answer," he said. "I would always recommend buying something that has no crash history if you can."

Krisher reported from Detroit.

## Asian shares gain on oil price rebound, strong Japan exports

By ELAINE KURTENBACH, AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Shares were mostly higher in Asia on Thursday after crude oil prices rebounded from an overnight sell-off and Japan reported stronger-than-expected exports in March. Easing tensions over North Korea helped brighten the mood after weeks of jitters over the U.S. response to Pyongyang's missile tests and nuclear weapons program.

KEEPING SCORE: Japan's Nikkei 225 index gained 0.2 percent to 18,474.64 and the Kospi in South Korea rose 0.4 percent to 2,147.16. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index climbed 0.3 percent to 23,905.35 and Australia's S&P ASX 200 edged 0.1 percent higher to 5,812.30. The Shanghai Composite index lost 0.2 percent to 3,164.78 and Southeast Asian benchmarks were mixed.

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**OIL PRICES:** Benchmark U.S. crude gained 32 cents to \$51.17 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It lost \$1.97, or 3.8 percent overnight, to \$50.44 a barrel after the Energy Information Administration said U.S. crude inventories fell less than expected last week. The EIA said stockpiles are larger than normal for this time of year. Brent crude, used to price international oils, jumped 39 cents to \$53.32 a barrel. It fell \$1.96, or 3.6 percent, to \$52.93 per barrel in London.

**JAPAN TRADE:** Japan's exports rose at a faster-than-expected 12 percent pace in March, while imports jumped nearly 16 percent from a year earlier. A revival of demand in China helped push exports up 16.4 percent from the year before to 1.3 trillion yen (\$11 billion), while exports to the U.S. climbed 3.5 percent to 1.35 trillion yen (\$12 billion).

**ANALYST VIEWPOINT:** "The upshot is that net trade should have provided another boost to Q1 GDP growth," Marcel Thieliant of Capital Economics said in a commentary.

**WALL STREET:** U.S. stocks gave up a promising start and finished mostly lower Wednesday as investors fretted over lagging wages and energy companies dropped with the price of oil. The Standard & Poor's 500 index shed 0.2 percent to 2,338.17 and the Dow Jones industrial average gave up 0.6 percent, to 20,404.49. The Nasdaq composite added 0.2 percent to 5,863.03. All 34 energy companies on the S&P 500 fell.

**CURRENCIES:** The dollar rose to 108.95 yen from 108.86 yen. The euro rose to \$1.0716 from \$1.0712.

## Today in History By The Associated Press

### Today in History

Today is Thursday, April 20, the 110th day of 2017. There are 255 days left in the year.

### Today's Highlights in History:

On April 20, 1977, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Wooley v. Maynard*, ruled 6-3 that car owners could refuse to display state mottoes on license plates, such as New Hampshire's "Live Free or Die." The Woody Allen comedy "Annie Hall," co-starring Diane Keaton in the title role, went into general release.

### On this date:

In 1792, France declared war on Austria, marking the start of the French Revolutionary Wars.

In 1861, Col. Robert E. Lee resigned his commission in the United States Army. (Lee went on to command the Army of Northern Virginia, and eventually became general-in-chief of the Confederate forces.)

In 1889, Adolf Hitler was born in Braunau am Inn, Austria.

In 1912, Boston's Fenway Park hosted its first professional baseball game while Navin Field (Tiger Stadium) opened in Detroit. (The Red Sox defeated the New York Highlanders 7-6 in 11 innings; the Tigers beat the Cleveland Naps 6-5 in 11 innings.)

In 1914, the Ludlow Massacre took place when the Colorado National Guard opened fire on a tent colony of striking miners; about 20 (accounts vary) strikers, women and children died.

In 1916, the Chicago Cubs played their first game at Wrigley Field (then known as Weeghman Park); the Cubs defeated the Cincinnati Reds 7-6.

In 1947, Denmark's King Christian X, a popular symbol of resistance to German occupation during World War II, died at age 76, ending a reign of 35 years.

In 1968, Pierre Elliott Trudeau was sworn in as prime minister of Canada.

In 1972, Apollo 16's lunar module, carrying astronauts John W. Young and Charles M. Duke Jr., landed on the moon.

In 1987, the United States deported Karl Linnas to the Soviet Union, where he had been convicted in absentia of Nazi war crimes and faced a death sentence. (Linnas, who maintained his innocence, died of heart disease in Leningrad the following July.)

In 1999, the Columbine High School massacre took place in Colorado as two students, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, shot and killed 12 classmates and one teacher before taking their own lives.

In 2010, an explosion on the Deepwater Horizon oil platform, leased by BP, killed 11 workers and caused a blow-out that began spewing an estimated 200 million gallons of crude into the Gulf of Mexico. (The well was finally capped nearly three months later, on July 15.)



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Ten years ago: The family of Virginia Tech gunman Seung-Hui Cho (sung-wee joh), who shot and killed 32 people and himself, told The Associated Press they felt "hopeless, helpless and lost," and "never could have envisioned that he was capable of so much violence." A disgruntled worker, William Phillips, shot and killed NASA employee David Beverly at the Johnson Space Center in Houston before barricading himself with a hostage and then killing himself. (The second hostage escaped with minor injuries.)

Five years ago: A judge ruled that George Zimmerman could be released on \$150,000 bail while he awaited trial on a charge of murdering 17-year-old Trayvon Martin during a Feb. 2012 confrontation in a Sanford, Florida gated community. (Zimmerman was acquitted.) In Pakistan, a Bhoja Air Boeing 737-200 crashed while on approach to the main airport in Islamabad, killing all 127 people on board.

One year ago: Five former New Orleans police officers pleaded guilty to lesser charges in the deadly shootings on the Danziger Bridge in the days following Hurricane Katrina in 2005. ESPN fired former Red Sox pitcher Curt Schilling as a baseball analyst after comments he'd made on Facebook that were critical of transgender rights. Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew announced that Harriet Tubman, an African-American abolitionist born into slavery, would be the new face on the \$20 bill, replacing President Andrew Jackson. Pro wrestler Chyna (Joan Marie Laurer) was found dead in her Redondo Beach, California, apartment; she was 46.

Today's Birthdays: Retired Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens is 97. Actor Leslie Phillips is 93. Sen. Pat Roberts, R-Kan., is 81. Actor George Takei is 80. Singer Johnny Tillotson is 79. Actor Ryan O'Neal is 76. Bluegrass singer-musician Doyle Lawson (Quicksilver) is 73. Actress Judith O'Dea (Film: "Night of the Living Dead") is 72. Rock musician Craig Frost (Grand Funk; Bob Seger's Silver Bullet Band) is 69. Actor Gregory Itzin (iht-zihn) is 69. Actress Jessica Lange is 68. Actress Veronica Cartwright is 68. Actor Clint Howard is 58. Actor Crispin Glover is 53. Actor Andy Serkis is 53. Olympic silver medal figure skater Rosalynn Sumners is 53. Actor William deVry is 49. Country singer Wade Hayes is 48. Actor Shemar Moore is 47. Actress Carmen Electra is 45. Reggae singer Stephen Marley is 45. Rock musician Marty Crandall is 42. Actor Joey Lawrence is 41. Country musician Clay Cook (Zac Brown Band) is 39. Actor Clayne Crawford is 39. Actor Tim Jo is 33.

Thought for Today: "If anyone tells you something strange about the world, something you had never heard before, do not laugh but listen attentively; make him repeat it, make him explain it; no doubt there is something there worth taking hold of." — Georges Duhamel, French author (1884-1966).