

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 21, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 281 ~ 1 of 33

- 1- Recycling trailers
- 1- Dakota Brush Ad
- 2- Dr. Schwan leaving GHS
- 2- School Board Agenda
- 3- DOT holds weekly meeting
- 3- Laundromat open
- 4- Ringling Bros Circus: The End of an Era
- 5- Today in Weather History
- 6- Local Weather Forecast
- 7- Yesterday's Groton Weather
- 7- Today's Weather Climate
- 7- National Weather map
- 8 - Daily Devotional
- 9 - News from the Associated Press

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 Worship at 11 a.m., Sunday School begins after children's sermon.

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

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

Monday, April 24

Senior Menu: Sloppy joe on wheat bun, oven roasted potatoes, mixed vegetables, crunchy cranberry salad.

School Lunch: Submarines, sweet potato tots, fruit.

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

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

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

© 2017 Groton Daily Independent

Dakota Brush

Brooms, Brushes, Mops, Can Liners, Paper Products.

Get Ready for Spring With
Wash Brushes & Squeegees

397-9337

104 N. Main, Groton

Dr. Anna Schwan leaving GHS

Dr. Anna Schwan has accepted a professor position at Northern State University in Aberdeen. As a result, she is turning in your resignation as middle/high school principal at Groton Area. The school board will be acting on her letter of resignation at Monday's school board meeting.



GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #06-6

School Board Meeting

April 24, 2017 – 7:00 PM – GHS Conference Room

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order with members present. Approve agenda as proposed or amended.
- POTENTIAL CONFLICTS DISCLOSURE PURSUANT SDCL 23-3
- OLD/CONTINUING BUSINESS:
 1. Open Forum for Public Participation...in accordance with Board Policy & Guidelines.
 2. Program Overview Presentations
 - a. K-12 Special Education...C. Fadness, J. Erdmann, M. Erickson, N. Johnson, B. Erickson, K. Miller
 - b. K-5 Title/RtI...B. Schimmel, J. Helvig, L. Grieve
 3. School Board Committee Reports:
 - a. Building, Grounds, & Transportation: Clint Fjelstad, Merle Harder, Marty Weismantel
 - b. Personnel, Policy, & Curriculum: Deb Gengerke, Grant Rix
 - c. Negotiations: Kelly Kjelden, Steve Smith
 4. Administrative Reports: (a) Superintendent's Report; (b) Principal's Reports; (c) Business Manager Report
- NEW BUSINESS:
 1. Canvass election results from April 11, 2017 School Bond Election.
 2. Discussion of potential next steps in addressing MS/HS facilities needs.
 3. Discussion of repair options for Bus #09.
 4. Approve amended bus driver agreement for Brian Gravatt.
 5. Consider early retirement request from Mrs. Cindy Fadness.
 6. Accept resignation of Dr. Anna Schwan, MS/HS Principal, effective at the end of the 2016-2017 school year.
 7. Executive session pursuant SDCL 1-25-2(1) for personnel and SDCL 1-25-2(4) for negotiations.
- ADJOURN

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 21, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 281 ~ 3 of 33

DOT holds weekly meeting

The weekly road construction meeting was held Thursday at the Groton Community Center. There have been 12 days of delays due to utility issues and another three days of delays due to weather. There are six days of delays built into the plans.

Many of those days can be made up once they hit the road running on the highway 37 project. In addition, they are looking at various options for rerouting truck traffic away from the construction zone on US12. This would allow more concrete to be poured at one time; thus, reducing overall curing time. They are still hashing out the details of that new plan.



Now Open!
GDI CLEAN!
Downtown
Groton

Paul - 397-7460
Tina - 397-7285

Ringling Bros Circus: The End of an Era

By Brad Deutser (originally featured in NYdailynews.com)

From ring to ring, you have entertained. From generation to generation, you have brought families together. You have invited us in to witness and be a part of the Greatest Show on Earth.

But, you have also become one of America's great tragedies. After nearly a century and a half in business, doing what you do best, you will vacate your place in the entertainment space. There will be other circuses. But, there will never be another Ringling Bros and Barnum & Bailey Circus. You have never wavered from your roots – your history, your way of working and promoting, and your way of entertaining. Until, recently. Pressures to change practices. Pressures to change acts. Pressures to conform to current ways.

Most people are unaware of the extent you cared for animals. Most are unaware of the brilliant business model to get people in the door to experience the circus and buy memorabilia and merchandise. Most are unaware that Ringling Bros. was the entry point for so many to begin their careers in show business. It was a gateway for many around the world to explore, to share culture, and to provide smiles. It was so much to so many.

In many ways, it was part of the American way. I remember the excitement when the train stopped in a city. I remember the authentic joy the clowns brought as the elephants paraded down the streets to the arena. I remember the genuine love of the circus by its performers behind the scenes and in the rings. I remember the sweat on the brow before each show and the smiles that filled the stands.

So it begs the question: Why did Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey fail? Or did we fail it?

I have struggled to explain how we allow our American icons to disappear. For what? Better, more wholesome family entertainment? Why did the business environment change so rapidly? Or did it? Was it lack of strategic foresight? Was it changing societal norms? Were there simply better options? Or did we take it for granted that what was once here will always be here?

This was an icon that navigated the generations. It circumvented challenges over nearly 15 decades. Somehow it remained relevant year after year, until now. But why? To some, Ringling gave up its core values and become something different when it removed elephants from its show. To others, no matter the advances or new innovations, it was still the circus that you only needed to see once. To others, it was a lumbering icon that couldn't change quickly enough to keep up with the pace of technology and today's entertainment. And, to others, it was simply taken for granted that it would always be there for us, like it had been for the previous 146 years.

Perhaps, this is less Ringling Bros. giving up or giving in and more a statement of the America we live in today. We gravitate to sexy headlines. We are intrigued more by the glitz and less by the substance. We place stereotypes on things that we are reluctant to ever modify. We expose our youth more to what is ahead and much less to what is now. Reality works best when there is controversy or big names. But, that has never been the circus' way. Theirs was a way of basic, good old-fashioned American values.

This ending of an era sends a message to all of us. It reminds us that relevance is fleeting. It reminds us, as parents and grandparents, that we must find new forms of entertainment to bring our families together. It reminds us to hold on to what is important to each of us – whether it is the circus or something else. At its core, this is about family values – and working fiercely to protect them – in whatever way is most appropriate to today's family.

The circus that convened families, generations and communities is soon to be no longer here. For many it has been replaced by the bright lights of the computer screen and video games as well as the solitude it brings. We may not be able to recreate the greatest show on earth, but we can recreate the environment and the magic that it was to families who came together to celebrate the goodness and wholesomeness it represented.

There will be many questions. What really happened to end this era? What will become of the animals for whom Ringling provided such genuine and remarkable care? What will happen to the children who no longer have the greatest show on earth?

There will be answers. But, unfortunately, not the same answers our parents had for us.

Ringling Bros., RIP.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 21, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 281 ~ 5 of 33

Today in Weather History

April 21, 2007: Heavy rains of 2 to 2.50 inches caused flash flooding in and around Watertown. Many streets were flooded in town, along with several roads outside of town. A warm front extending across the region was the focus for heavy rain, along with severe weather, during the evening across far north-east South Dakota. Hail up to the size of quarters, along with heavy rains of over 2 inches, caused some flooding mainly in Codington and Hamlin counties.

1885: The town of Denison, Texas was struck by a tornado in 1883 that destroyed a church. The congregation rebuilt the church. On this date, a second tornado destroyed the newly rebuilt church.

1958 - Portions of Montana were in the midst of a spring snowburst. Snowfall amounts ranged up to 55 inches at Red Lodge, 61 inches at Nye Mine, and 72 inches at Mystic Lake. (David Ludlum)

1980 - The temperature at International Falls MN hit 90 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1987 - Unseasonably warm weather prevailed from the Gulf of Mexico to New England and the Great Lakes Region, with twenty-nine cities reporting record high temperatures for the date. Afternoon highs of 82 degrees at Caribou ME, 94 degrees at Mobile AL, 95 degrees at Monroe LA, and 93 degrees at New Orleans LA, were records for the month of April. (The National Weather Summary)

1967: Severe thunderstorms spawned 48 tornadoes in the Upper Midwest. Hardest hit was northern Illinois where sixteen tornadoes touched down during the afternoon and evening hours causing fifty million dollars damage. On that Friday afternoon tornadoes struck Belvidere IL and the Chicago suburb of Oak Lawn, killing 58 persons.

1988: After having had just twelve rain outs in the previous twenty-six years at Dodger Stadium, the third day of heavy rain in southern California rained out a doubleheader at Dodger Stadium, which had been scheduled due to rainouts the previous two days.






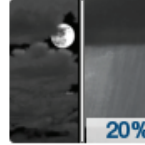

1989 - The temperature at Las Animas, CO, soared to 100 degrees to establish a state record for April. Twenty-two cities in the central and southwestern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Eight cities equalled or exceeded previous April records. (The Weather Channel) (The National Weather Summary)

1990 - Afternoon and evening thunderstorms produced golf ball size hail in Oklahoma, and also caused some flash flooding in the state. Thunderstorms over the Southern High Plains produced golf ball size hail at Roswell NM and El Paso TX. Easterly winds and temperatures near zero produced wind chill readings as cold as 50 degrees below zero for the spring festival (Piuraagiaqta) outdoor events at Barrow AK. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2007 - The South Plains and Panhandle of West Texas were hit by an outbreak of severe thunderstorms. Between the hours of 5 and 6 pm, several thunderstorms developed across the western South Plains. Around 7 pm, a supercell produced a tornado which touched down around Fieldton (southwest of Olton) and then moved just south and east of Olton, doing damage to several structures and equipment. The thunderstorm continued to move northeast across northeast Lamb, northwest Hale, southeast Castro and southwest Swisher Counties, producing a long-lived tornado (along with hail up to the size of tennis balls). By 7:45 pm, the storm approached the town of Tulia in Swisher County. A tornado touchdown was reported in the town, causing major damage. The tornadic thunderstorm continued to move northeast across Swisher County over open country through about 8:30 pm. (NWS Lubbock, TX)

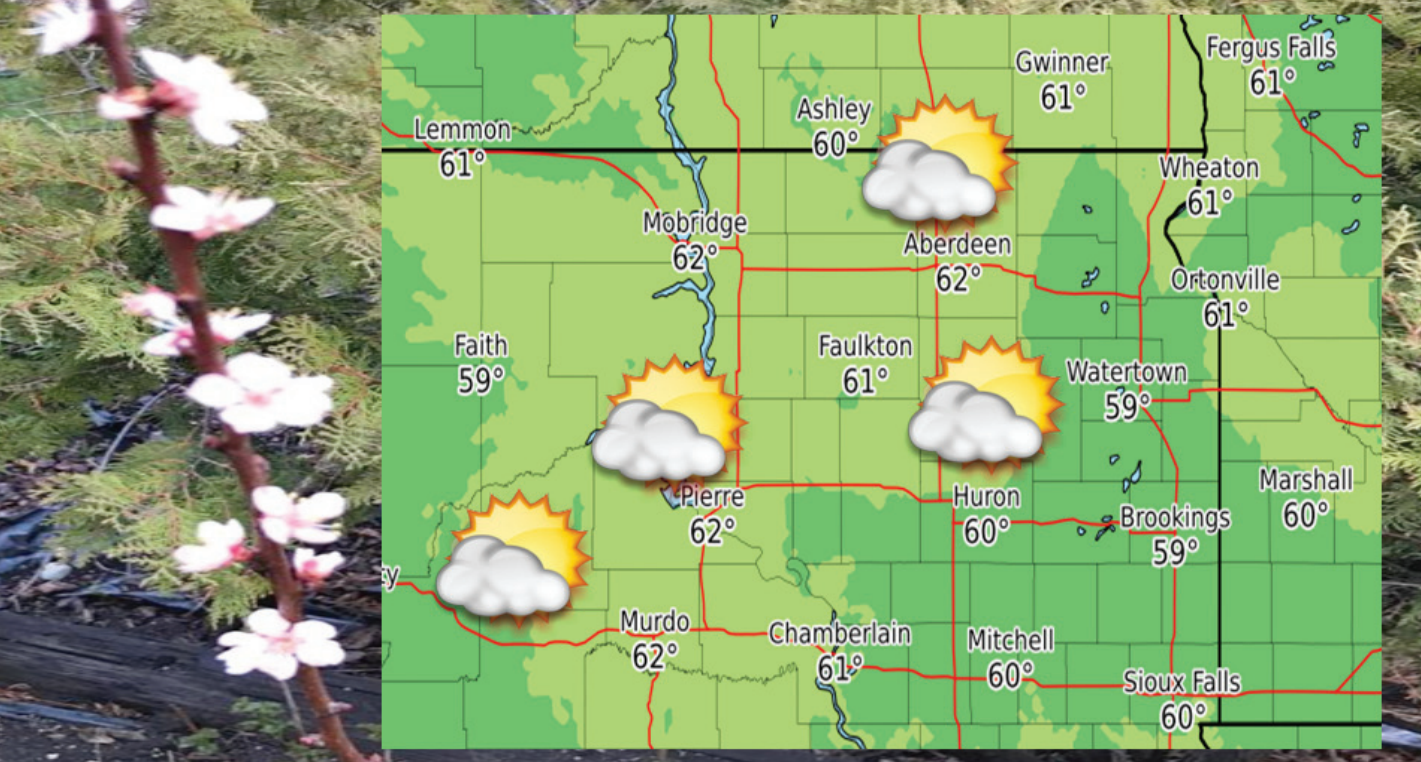
Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 21, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 281 ~ 6 of 33



Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
						
Patchy Fog then Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy then Slight Chance Showers	Chance Showers
High: 62 °F	Low: 33 °F	High: 65 °F	Low: 34 °F	High: 66 °F	Low: 46 °F	High: 63 °F

Patchy Morning Fog – Otherwise Mostly Sunny

Average Temperatures Today – Warming Through The Weekend



City	Temperature (°F)
Lemmon	61°
Mobridge	62°
Faith	59°
Pierre	62°
Murdo	62°
Ashley	60°
Faulkton	61°
Chamberlain	61°
Mitchell	60°
Gwinner	61°
Aberdeen	62°
Huron	60°
Sioux Falls	60°
Wheaton	61°
Ortonville	61°
Watertown	59°
Brookings	59°
Marshall	60°
Fergus Falls	61°

National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD   Updated: 4/21/2017 4:35 AM Central

Published on: 04/21/2017 at 4:39AM

High pressure means we will see little in the way of clouds and temperatures in the 60s. Readings will be slightly warmer for Saturday, with highs Sunday in the 60s and 70s.

Groton Daily Independent

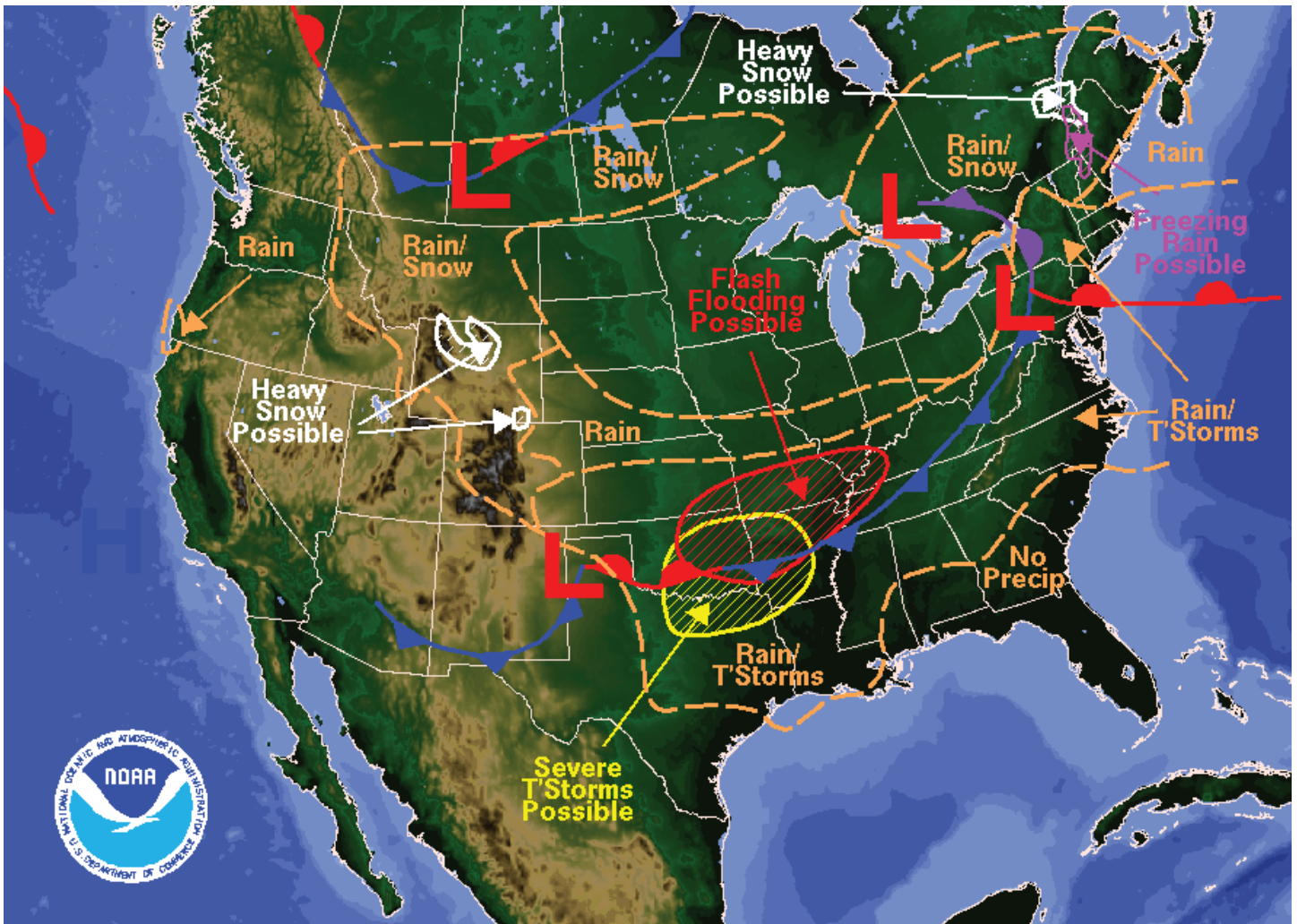
Friday, April 21, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 281 ~ 7 of 33

Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 53.9 F at 7:01 PM
Low Outside Temp: 39.7 F at 12:00 AM
High Gust: 20.0 Mph at 10:05 AM
Snow: Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 97° in 1980
Record Low: 16° in 1936
Average High: 60°F
Average Low: 34°F
Average Precip in April.: 1.11
Precip to date in April.: 1.09
Average Precip to date: 3.29
Precip Year to Date: 1.68
Sunset Tonight: 8:28 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:35 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Fri, Apr 21, 2017, issued 4:35 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Mcreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 21, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 281 ~ 8 of 33



HOW TO BE HAPPY ALWAYS

Long time comedian Jimmy Durante was rushing from one performance to another. He had only a few minutes to spare, but a friend asked him to "take a moment" and say a few words to a group of veterans in a hospital.

Walking into a ward, he went through a brief routine of his favorite jokes. The crowd applauded loudly and cheered for more. He told a few more jokes and the applause and cheers became louder and longer. The soldiers were thoroughly enjoying every word he spoke and every joke he shared. Instead of a greeting and "taking a few moments," he ended up staying for thirty minutes. Finally, he had to leave.

As he was exiting the ward his manager asked, "What happened? You said you only had a few moments and you stayed for half an hour."

"I really needed to leave," said Durante. "But I want to show you the two men in the front row. See those two men? Look carefully at them."

When his manager looked at the two men, he noticed that one had lost his right arm and the other had lost his left arm in combat. But, working together they were able to clap: one's right hand reached out to the other's left hand and together they were able to register their delight for the entertainer taking time to be with them.

Happiness does not spring from an empty heart. It comes from sharing the gifts God gives us with others!

Prayer: Help us, Father, to be as generous to others as You have been to each of us. May we always share the gifts You have given us with others. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 106:3 Blessed are those who keep justice, And he who does righteousness at all times!

News from the Associated Press

Compromises save threatened trail bike races in Black Hills

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Several Black Hills mountain-bike and trail-running races that had been threatened by a U.S. Forest Service crackdown on illegal trails are now getting approved.

Black Hills National Forest Supervisor Mark Van Every says compromises have allowed the issuance of permits to all but one of the races, and that progress is being made on the final permit. The Rapid City Journal reports (<http://bit.ly/2oPuXL6>) his announcement came Wednesday.

The races had been permitted in the past, even though they used rogue trails. But the Forest Service last year cracked down on illegal trail building, saying it was damaging parts of the forest and posing a safety risk to trail users. Mountain bikers and other users said the illegal trails arose in response to Forest Service inaction on ideas for new trails.

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

Aberdeen man convicted of murder in friend's beating death

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — A jury has convicted an Aberdeen man of murder for fatally beating a friend in what prosecutors say was a dispute over a \$400 debt.

Fifty-six-year-old Bradley Quist was sentenced to life in prison Thursday after the jury found him guilty in the death of 61-year-old Ron Witchey.

In closing arguments Thursday, Brown County prosecutor Chris White said Witchey owed Quist \$400 when they left a bar on May 31, 2015.

The Aberdeen News (<http://bit.ly/2pX3jJP>) reports White said Quist sucker-punched Witchey, knocking him to the ground, then kicked him twice in the head before punching him one last time.

Defense attorney Tom Cogley said Quist acted in self-defense. He said the men were hard-drinking, hard-living friends who would settle their arguments with their fists and go back to being friends.

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

South Dakota city prepares for budget shortfall

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Sioux Falls is preparing for a possible \$1.2 million budget shortfall this year as city officials cut their spending plans in response to sluggish sales tax revenues.

March sales tax revenue growth for the city came in at 2.5 percent, less than the 4 percent increase projected when the 2017 budget was adopted, the Argus Leader (<http://argusne.ws/2pGNev4>) reported.

Sioux Falls finance director Tracy Turbak said if the rate stays the same throughout the year, the city will need to reduce the budget by \$1.2 million to avoid using reserves to cover the gap.

"If that rate fell to zero, by the end of the year that would be a shortfall of about \$2.7 million," he said.

Turbak said the city's 12 department directors are trying to counter the slow growth by looking for places in their budgets to cut expenses, including limiting overtime hours, use of part-time employees and reducing out-of-state travel. The only out-of-state travel being allowed for city staff are trips necessary to maintain professional certifications, though if in-state or online options are available, they go that route instead, Turbak said.

Turbak said Tuesday the directors expect economic indicators to worsen, with contingency plans prepared to reduce budgets by 5 percent. Details on the budget cuts were not provided.

"Two-point-five percent growth is not bad," he said. "It's not great but, by gosh, things could get a lot tougher."

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

SD Supreme Court upholds sentence in killing of cab driver

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Supreme Court has upheld concurrent 200-year sentences against a Pierre man who was 14 when he killed a cab driver more than two decades ago.

A jury convicted Paul Dean Jensen Jr. of murder, kidnapping and other offenses in 1996 in the slaying that year of Michael Hare, and Jensen received life without parole.

Last year, a judge re-sentenced Jensen to a term of 200 years after a 2012 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that banned mandatory life sentences without parole for juveniles, but left open the possibility that judges could still issue life sentences after considering the circumstances of each case.

He would be eligible for parole in 2021 at age 39 and has a good-time release date in 2097 at age 116. Jensen, 35, appealed the lower court decision.

Jensen unsuccessfully argued to the state Supreme Court that the 200-year term is unconstitutional because it's functionally equivalent to life without parole, saying that he could remain parole eligible until he died without getting a real opportunity to be released. He asked for a second re-sentencing.

The high court declined and decided Wednesday that Jensen's sentence came after an individualized sentencing that considered his youth and prospects for rehabilitation as required by the U.S. Supreme Court ruling.

Prosecutors have said Jensen and Shawn Cameron Springer, who was 16 at the time, hailed Hare's cab to drive them out of town and then robbed him of \$36.48 before shooting him to death. Prosecutors said Jensen shot Hare once in the chest, listened to Hare plead for his life on his knees and then shot him two more times in the head.

Springer was sentenced to 261 years in prison after pleading guilty to kidnapping. Springer sought to have his sentence reduced in 2013, but a judge refused.

An attorney for Jensen declined to comment.

2 minors arrested following traffic stop chase

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A routine traffic stop in Sioux Falls escalated with the arrest of two juveniles who will likely face numerous felony charges.

Police say they pulled over an adult motorist Wednesday afternoon, and after he stepped out of the vehicle, a boy in the front passenger seat slid over and drove away.

Police followed the vehicle. The boy eventually jumped out and fled. The Argus Leader (<http://argusne.ws/2pGrUpR>) says a girl in the back seat jumped out as well, grabbed a 6-year-old child in the vehicle and tried to flee.

The car rolled over the foot of the older girl as she tried to get away and hit a police car. She was treated at a hospital. The boy was arrested following a short foot chase. Both are in juvenile detention.

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

Officials: Police had Champs-Elysees attacker in their grasp

By LORI HINNANT and JOHN LEICESTER, Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — The Champs-Elysees gunman who shot and killed a police officer just days before France's presidential election was detained in February for threatening police but then freed, two officials told The Associated Press on Friday. He was also convicted in 2003 of attempted homicide in the shootings of two police officers.

The French government pulled out all the stops to protect Sunday's vote as the attack deepened France's political divide.

"Nothing must hamper this democratic moment, essential for our country," Prime Minister Bernard Cazeneuve said after a high-level meeting Friday that reviewed the government's already heightened security plans for the two-round vote that begins Sunday.

"Barbarity and cowardice struck Paris last night," the prime minister said, appealing for national unity and for people "not to succumb to fear."

Investigators believe at this stage that the gunman, 39-year-old Frenchman Karim Cheurfi, was alone in killing a police officer and wounding two others and a German tourist on Thursday night, less than 72 hours before the polls open, a French official who discussed details of the investigation with the AP said on condition of anonymity.

The official and another, also speaking on condition of anonymity, said Cheurfi was detained toward the end of February after speaking threateningly about police but was then released for lack of evidence.

The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for Thursday's attack unusually quickly in a statement that sowed confusion by apparently misidentifying the gunman.

Police shot and killed Cheurfi after he opened fire on a police van on Paris' most famous boulevard. Investigators found a pump-action shotgun and knives in his car. Cheurfi's identity was confirmed from his fingerprints.

One of the key questions was how the attack might impact French voters.

The risk for the main presidential candidates is misjudging the public mood by making an ill-perceived gesture or comment. With polling so close, and campaigning banned starting Friday at midnight, they would have no time to recover before voters cast ballots.

The two top finishers Sunday advance to a winner-takes-all presidential runoff on May 7. Two of the main candidates, conservative Francois Fillon and centrist Emmanuel Macron, cancelled planned campaign stops Friday.

The attack brought back the recurrent campaign theme of France's fight against Islamic extremism, one of the mainstays of the anti-immigration platform of far-right leader Marine Le Pen and also, to a lesser extent, of Fillon, a former prime minister. In the wake of the assault, they redoubled appeals for a firmer hand against Islamic extremism and promised get-tough measures if elected.

Le Pen, speaking at her campaign headquarters, urged the outgoing Socialist government to immediately re-establish border controls. Cazeneuve, the Socialist prime minister, accused the National Front leader of seeking to make political hay from the assault.

After Le Pen spoke scathingly Friday of the government's fight against extremism, Cazeneuve said Le Pen's party in 2014 voted against an anti-terrorism law and, in 2015, against a law that beefed up resources for French intelligence services.

He said: "She seems to be deliberately forgetting everything that has been done over five years to make people forget that she opposed everything, without ever proposing anything serious or credible."

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 21, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 281 ~ 12 of 33

Fillon separately pledged to maintain the state of emergency that has been in place since IS-claimed gun and bomb attacks killed 130 people in Paris in November 2015.

"The fight for the French people's freedom and security will be mine. This must be the priority," he said.

As Paris got back to business, municipal workers in white hygiene suits were out before dawn to wash down the sidewalk where the assault took place — a scene now depressingly familiar after multiple attacks that have killed more than 230 people in France over two years. Delivery trucks did their early morning rounds. Everything would have seemed normal if not for a row of TV trucks parked along the boulevard that is a must-visit for tourists.

Asked if the assault would impact voting, the centrist Macron said: "No one knows."

With some voters doubtful whether the 39-year-old former banker is experienced enough to be head of state, Macron appealed for cool heads.

"What our attackers want is death, symbolism, to sow panic (and) to disturb a democratic process, which is the presidential election," he said.

Macron said he canceled campaign stops out of a sense of "decency" and to allow police to concentrate their resources on the attack investigation.

Said by polls to be running neck-and-neck with Le Pen, he tore into her claims that previous attacks wouldn't have happened under her watch.

"She won't be able to protect our citizens," Macron said of Le Pen.

The two police officers injured in the attack are out of danger, Interior Ministry spokesman Pierre-Henry Brandet said. National police spokesman Jerome Bonet, also speaking on BFM television, said there were thousands of people on Paris' iconic boulevard when the gunman opened fire and that the rapid response of officers who shot and killed him avoided possible "carnage."

Voters also wondered how the latest attack might impact the election.

Elena Worms, walking her dog near the Champs-Elysees, called the attack "destabilizing" and said she fears it will "push people to the extremes." She said her plans to vote Fillon remained unchanged.

"He wants to lead Muslims away from fundamentalism to security," she said.

In a statement from its Amaq news agency, IS group gave a pseudonym for the shooter, Abu Yusuf al-Beljiki, indicating he was Belgian or had lived in Belgium. But Belgium's interior minister said the pseudonym did not belong to the attacker.

Investigators searched a home early Friday in an eastern suburb of Paris believed linked to the attack and police detained for questioning three of the gunman's family members — routine in such cases.

The attack appeared to fit a spreading pattern of European extremists targeting security forces and symbols of state to discredit, take vengeance or destabilize society. It recalled two recent attacks on soldiers providing security at prominent locations around Paris: one at the Louvre museum in February and one at Orly airport last month.

For Sunday's vote, the government is mobilizing more than 50,000 police and gendarmes to protect the 70,000 polling stations, with an additional 7,000 soldiers also on patrol.

Sylvie Corbet, Angela Charlton and Raphael Satter in Paris, Jeff Schaeffer and Nadine Achoui-Lesage in Chelles, France, and Raf Casert in Brussels contributed to this report.

Arkansas conducts first execution since 2005, plans 3 more

By **ANDREW DeMILLO** and **SEAN MURPHY**, Associated Press

VARNER, Ark. (AP) — Arkansas carried out its first execution in nearly a dozen years despite a flurry of legal challenges that had spared three convicted killers, but courts still could scuttle the remainder

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 21, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 281 ~ 13 of 33

of the nation's most ambitious death penalty schedule since capital punishment was restored in 1976.

Ledell Lee was pronounced dead at 11:56 p.m. Thursday, four minutes before his death warrant was due to expire at midnight, capping a chaotic week of legal wrangling. Arkansas originally wanted to put eight inmates to death before the state's supply of midazolam, one of three drugs used in its lethal injection process, expires at the end of April.

Three of those executions were canceled this week because of court decisions. Another inmate scheduled for execution next week has received a stay. But Arkansas wants to put two other inmates to death Monday, and one next Thursday.

Lee, 51, was put on death row for the 1993 death of his neighbor Debra Reese, whom Lee struck 36 times with a tire tool her husband had given her for protection. Lee was arrested less than an hour after the killing after spending some of the \$300 he had stolen from Reese.

After a hiatus of nearly 12 years, the execution was carried out without any apparent glitches. There had been concern because midazolam was used in some flawed executions in other states. Lee showed no signs of consciousness two minutes after the lethal injection, which began at 11:44 p.m. With arms extended, covered with a sheet, his head and hands covered with leather straps, Lee made no final statement and showed no apparent signs of suffering during the execution.

The state originally set four double executions over an 11-day period in April. That 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.

Lee's execution went ahead after the U.S. Supreme Court rejected last-minute appeals from his lawyers. But at least one high court justice expressed serious reservations about what critics have called Arkansas' rush to the death chamber.

"Apparently the reason the state decided to proceed with these eight executions is that the 'use by' date of the state's execution drug is about to expire...In my view, that factor, when considered as a determining factor separating those who live from those who die, is close to random," Justice Stephen Breyer wrote.

Arkansas dropped plans to execute a second inmate, Stacey Johnson, on Thursday after the state Supreme Court said it wouldn't reconsider his stay, which was issued so Johnson could seek more DNA tests in hopes of proving his innocence.

State justices also on Thursday reversed an order by Pulaski County Circuit Judge Alice Gray that halted the use of vecuronium bromide, one of three drugs used in the state's lethal injection process, in any execution. McKesson Corp. says the state obtained the drug under false pretenses and that it wants nothing to do with executions.

Justices also denied an attempt by makers of midazolam and potassium chloride — the two other drugs in Arkansas' execution plan — to intervene in McKesson's fight over the vecuronium bromide. The pharmaceutical companies say there is a public health risk if their drugs are diverted for use in executions, and that the state's possession of the drugs violates rules within their distribution networks.

The legal delays in the executions frustrated Gov. Asa Hutchinson and other state officials. Lawyers for the state have complained that the inmates are filing court papers just to run out the clock. Prisons director Wendy Kelley has said the state has no way to obtain more midazolam or vecuronium bromide.

But after the resumption of the death penalty on Thursday, Hutchinson's spokesman J.R. Davis said: "Justice was carried out."

Associated Press Writers Jill Bleed in Little Rock, Kelly P. Kissel in Varner and Mark Sherman in Washington contributed to this report. DeMillo reported from Little Rock

Follow Andrew DeMillo at www.twitter.com/ademillo and Sean Murphy at www.twitter.com/apsean-murphy

US Defense Sec'y Mattis: Syria still has chemical weapons

By ROBERT BURNS, AP National Security Correspondent

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Syria still possesses chemical weapons, U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said in Israel on Friday, warning against the banned munitions being used again.

At a news conference in Tel Aviv, Mattis also said that in recent days the Syrian Air Force has dispersed its combat aircraft. The implication is that Syria may be concerned about additional U.S. strikes following the cruise missile attack earlier this month in retaliation for alleged Syrian use of sarin gas.

Mattis spoke alongside Israeli Defense Minister Avigdor Lieberman. "There can be no doubt in the international community's mind that Syria has retained chemical weapons in violation of its agreement and its statement that it had removed them all," said Mattis. He said he didn't want to elaborate on the amounts Syria has in order to avoid revealing sources of intelligence.

"I can say authoritatively they have retained some, it's a violation of the United Nations Security Council resolutions and it's going to have to be taken up diplomatically and they would be ill advised to try to use any again, we made that very clear with our strike," he said.

Israeli defense officials said this week that Syria still has up to three tons of chemical weapons in its possession. It was the first specific intelligence assessment of President Bashar Assad's weapons capabilities since a deadly chemical attack earlier this month.

Lieberman also refused to go into detail but said "We have 100 percent information that Assad regime used chemical weapons against rebels."

Assad has strongly denied he was behind the attack in the opposition-held town of Khan Sheikhoun in Syria's northern Idlib province, and has accused the opposition of trying to frame his government. Top Assad ally, Russia, has asserted a Syrian government airstrike hit a rebel chemical weapons factory, causing the disaster.

In response to the April 4 attack, the United States fired 59 missiles at a Syrian air base it said was the launching pad for the attack.

Before meeting with Mattis in Jerusalem, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told reporters that Israel is encouraged by the change of administrations in Washington.

"We sense a great change in the direction of American policy," Netanyahu said. He referred to the U.S. cruise missile strike in Syria as an important example of the new administration's "forthright deeds" against the use of chemical weapons.

The Syrian government has been locked in a six-year civil war against an array of opposition forces. The fighting has killed an estimated 400,000 people and displaced half of Syria's population.

Israel has largely stayed out of the fighting, though it has carried out a number of airstrikes on suspected Iranian weapons shipments it believed were bound for the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah. Iran and Hezbollah, both bitter enemies of Israel, along with Russia have sent forces to support Assad.

Syria agreed to give up its chemical weapons arsenal to avert U.S. strikes following a chemical weapons attack in opposition-held suburbs of Damascus in August 2013 that killed hundreds of people and sparked worldwide outrage.

Ahead of that disarmament, Assad's government disclosed it had some 1,300 tons of chemical weapons, including sarin, VX nerve agent and mustard gas.

The entire stockpile was said to have been dismantled and shipped out under international supervision in 2014 and destroyed. But doubts began to emerge soon afterward that not all such armaments or

production facilities were declared and destroyed. There also is evidence that the Islamic State group and other insurgents have acquired chemical weapons.

Associated Press writer Ian Deitch in Jerusalem contributed to this story.

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. FRANCE SAYS ELECTION SECURITY MEASURES "FULLY MOBILIZED" AFTER SHOOTING

The Paris prosecutor's office leading the investigation of the Champs-Elysees attack on police officers says investigators found a pump-action shotgun and knives in the gunman's car.

2. ARKANSAS CARRIES OUT FIRST EXECUTION SINCE 2005

Ledell Lee's lethal injection capped a chaotic week of legal wrangling that left Arkansas scrambling to salvage any part of its attempt to execute eight men before one of its drugs expires at the end of April.

3. CHILDREN FATHERED BY RETREATING ISLAMIC STATE FOREIGN FIGHTERS ARE IN LIMBO

One young Tunisian orphan, 2-year-old Tamim Jaboudi, has been in a prison in Tripoli, Libya, for well over a year.

4. WHO WILL WORK TO SMOOTH OVER US RELATIONS WITH AUSTRALIA

Vice President Mike Pence will meet with Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull on Saturday more than two months after President Donald Trump got into a spat with the Australian leader.

5. VENEZUELAN OPPOSITION AIMS TO BUILD MOMENTUM OF MASS PROTESTS

The anti-government movement is planning sit-ins on roads, silent marches a day after tens of thousands of protesters were met by curtains of tear gas and rubber bullets.

6. WHY A JAILED PALESTINIAN LEADER IS BACK IN THE SPOTLIGHT

By organizing a mass hunger strike by hundreds of Palestinian prisoners, Marwan Barghouti has solidified his standing as a likely successor to President Mahmoud Abbas.

7. WHERE PROGRESS OVERCOMING THE STIGMA OF DEPRESSION IS SLOW

China adopted its first mental health law five years ago but change is coming slowly within a society that traditionally viewed symptoms such as anxiety as isolated physical problems.

8. SOUTH KOREA ACCUSED OF TARGETING GAY SOLDIERS FOR PROSECUTION

A watchdog group said the army's effort began after a video of two male soldiers having sex was posted on the internet earlier this year.

9. SUSPECT IN FRESNO, CALIFORNIA, MASS SHOOTING TO MAKE COURT APPEARANCE

Kori Ali Muhammad is charged with killing unarmed security guard Carl Williams at a Motel 6 in Fresno.

10. HOW FANS WILL MARK ANNIVERSARY OF PRINCE'S DEATH

At Paisley Park, a full four days of events are on tap, including concert performances by Prince's former bandmates. Fans who can't afford those high-priced tickets can head to a street party outside First Avenue.

Paris police shot on Champs-Elysees; IS group claims attack

By LORI HINNANT and SYLVIE CORBET, Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — A gunman opened fire on police on Paris' iconic Champs-Elysees boulevard Thursday night, killing one officer and wounding three people before police shot and killed him. The Islamic State group quickly claimed responsibility for the attack, which hit just three days before a tense presidential election.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 21, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 281 ~ 16 of 33

Security already has been a dominant theme in the campaign, and the violence on the sparkling avenue threatened to weigh on voters' decisions. Candidates canceled or rescheduled final campaign events ahead of Sunday's first round vote.

Investigators searched a home early Friday in an eastern suburb of Paris believed linked to the attack. A police document obtained by The Associated Press identifies the address searched in the town of Chelles as the family home of Karim Cheurfi, a 39-year-old with a criminal record.

Police tape surrounded the quiet, middle-class neighborhood in Chelles, and worried neighbors expressed surprise at the searches. Archive reports by French newspaper Le Parisien say that Cheurfi was convicted of attacking a police officer in 2001.

Authorities are trying to determine whether "one or more people" might have helped the attacker, Interior Ministry spokesman Pierre-Henry Brandet told reporters at the scene of the shooting.

One officer was killed and two police officers were seriously wounded when the attacker emerged from a car and used an automatic weapon to shoot at officers outside a Marks & Spencer's department store at the center of the Champs-Elysees, anti-terrorism prosecutor Francois Molins said.

A female foreign tourist also was wounded, Molins said.

The Islamic State group's claim of responsibility just a few hours after the attack came unusually swiftly for the extremist group, which has been losing territory in Iraq and Syria.

In a statement from its Amaq news agency, the group gave a pseudonym for the shooter, Abu Yusuf al-Beljiki, indicating he was Belgian or had lived in Belgium. Belgian authorities said they had no information about the suspect. IS described the shootings as an attack "in the heart of Paris."

The attacker had been flagged as an extremist, according to two police officials, speaking on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to publicly discuss the investigation.

Brandet said officers were "deliberately" targeted, as has happened repeatedly to French security forces in recent years, including preceding the 2012 election.

Police and soldiers sealed off the area, ordering tourists back into hotels and blocking people from approaching the scene.

Emergency vehicles blocked the wide Champs-Elysees, an avenue lined with boutiques and normally packed with cars and tourists that cuts across central Paris between the Arc de Triomphe and the Tuileries Gardens. Subway stations were closed off.

The gunfire sent scores of tourists fleeing into side streets.

"They were running, running," said 55-year-old Badi Ftaiti, who lives in the area. "Some were crying. There were tens, maybe even hundreds of them."

French President Francois Hollande said he was convinced the circumstances of the attack in a country pointed to a terrorist act. Hollande held an emergency meeting with the prime minister Thursday night and planned to convene the defense council Friday morning.

The incident recalled two recent attacks on soldiers providing security at prominent locations around Paris: one at the Louvre museum in February and one at Orly airport last month.

Speaking in Washington during a news conference with Italian Prime Minister Paolo Gentiloni, U.S. President Donald Trump said the shooting "looks like another terrorist attack" and sent condolences to France.

A French television station hosting an event with the 11 candidates running for president briefly interrupted its broadcast to report the shootings.

Conservative contender Francois Fillon, who has campaigned against "Islamic totalitarianism," said on France 2 television that he was canceling his planned campaign stops Friday.

Far-right candidate Marine Le Pen, who campaigns against immigration and Islamic fundamentalism,

took to Twitter to offer her sympathy for law enforcement officers "once again targeted." She canceled a minor campaign stop, but scheduled another.

Centrist candidate Emmanuel Macron offered his thoughts to the family of the dead officer.

Socialist Benoit Hamon tweeted his "full support" to police against terrorism.

The two top finishers in Sunday's election will advance to a runoff on May 7.

Associated Press Writers Angela Charlton and Raphael Satter in Paris, Jeff Schaeffer and Nadine Achoui-Lesage in Chelles, France, and Raf Casert in Brussels contributed to this report.

The senior Sanders backs party youth to remake Democrats

By THOMAS BEAUMONT, Associated Press

OMAHA, Nebraska (AP) — Bernie Sanders, who attracted millions of college-aged and young adults to his presidential campaign last year, is following through on a promise he made when he left the race: to promote younger leaders for the Democratic Party.

It may not seem the most likely role for the slightly stooped, white-haired, 75-year-old Vermont senator. But Sanders rallied support Thursday for Omaha's Democratic mayoral candidate Heath Mello, who's half his age.

While the Democratic Party searches for a path back to power around the country, Sanders is using his popularity to draw thousands to events to promote next-generation Democrats, though his effectiveness so far is unclear. He's on an eight-state circuit of rallies with Democratic National Committee leaders, visiting states Donald Trump carried in the November election.

"All over this country now, we're seeing young people inspired to run," Sanders told The Associated Press after headlining a rally of more than 3,000 in Omaha Thursday. "What all of this is about at the end of the day is the belief that, in order to preserve our democracy, we have to bring millions of people, in one form or another, into the political process."

The 17 candidates Sanders' political action committee has endorsed this year, including Mello, generally reflect Sanders' call for newer faces in a variety of political positions and have a direct connection to urban concerns or social justice causes. Most are in their 30s or 40s.

"Maybe, just maybe it's time to change one-party rule in Nebraska," said in University of Nebraska-Omaha's packed Baxter Arena Thursday, headlining a Democratic Party rally in the GOP-heavy state. "And we can start right here by electing Heath Mello as the next mayor."

The contrast was apparent throughout the arena, where supporters waved signs featuring the familiar image of Sanders' white hair and glasses alongside Mello's jet black hair and sunglasses.

Mello, a 37-year-old state senator, exuded that youthful theme Thursday. "I just believe the City of Omaha needs a unifying, aspirational vision for the future," he said.

Some of the candidates Sanders has endorsed are direct products of the his campaign, such as Khalid Kamau, who was elected to the South Fulton, Georgia, City Council on Tuesday. The 40-year-old Atlanta-area activist in the Black Lives Matter movement volunteered for Sanders' campaign last year.

Others, such as Tom Pierrello of Virginia, reflect Sanders' challenge to the party establishment. The 43-year-old former U.S. House member and adviser to former President Barack Obama is seeking the Democratic nomination for governor against Virginia Lieutenant Governor Ralph Northam.

But Sanders is using his popularity with younger Democrats to chiefly to inspire, rather than directly recruit, the younger faces he says the party needs.

It's a tricky dance for Sanders, an independent who does call himself a Democrat — rather, a demo-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 21, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 281 ~ 18 of 33

cratic socialist — but sought the 2016 Democratic presidential nomination and aligns with the party's minority in the Senate.

Still, Sanders' call for tax-supported free college tuition and, more broadly, his indictment of the political influence of the wealthy drew millions of younger voters to his cause during last year's campaign.

In the primaries and caucuses he captured 70 percent of the 30-and-younger vote, and those 2 million votes far exceeded the combined totals for Democrat Hillary Clinton and Republican Donald Trump. Among Democratic primary voters alone, Sanders won a solid majority of support from voters ages 45 and younger.

Sanders seemed to pick up right where he left off when he ended his bid for the Democratic nomination less than a year ago. He brought many in the Omaha arena to their feet in rock-concert cheers when he reprised some familiar lines from his 2016 campaign.

"Health care is a human right, not a privilege," Sanders shouted, his voice cracking.

In that way, most of what Sanders is offering on the DNC-sponsored tour through states Trump carried is the core of his standard campaign speech from last year.

After that campaign, he didn't rule out a second bid for the White House, a prospect that troubles some next-generation Democrats. In four years, Sanders would be 79 — nine years older than Trump, who is the oldest ever to assume the White House.

But 19-year-old Corina Campbell of Omaha said she was ready to back Sanders for president again in 2020. "People might see their mistakes in not supporting him last time," the community college student said.

It takes more than being a younger Democrat for a candidate to gain Sanders' support. His political action committee decided against endorsing 30-year-old Georgia Democrat Jonathan Ossoff, a former congressional staffer who qualified Tuesday for a June 20 runoff House election after raising more than \$8 million in mostly out-of-state contributions.

Sanders did endorse and campaign for 46-year-old Democrat James Thompson, a civil rights lawyer, ahead of his closer-than-expected losing effort in a special U.S. House election in Kansas last week. Thompson raised a fraction of Ossoff's haul, and in smaller contributions, a hallmark of Sanders' own campaign.

Some Democrats say Sanders is headed in the right direction, but must do more.

Rep. Tim Ryan, a Democrat from eastern Ohio, said the party needs to more aggressively organize its target audience — working- and middle-class voters who turned to Trump — and recruit from among them.

"We need newer faces across the board: veterans, police officers, teachers, coaches, firefighters that can improve our party's brand at least visually," said Ryan, who unsuccessfully challenged Nancy Pelosi for House minority leader late last year.

Such candidates, no matter their age, Ryan said, "can be powerful, as long as they are driving an economic message."

Gunfire sensors credited with quick arrest in Fresno rampage

By SCOTT SMITH, Associated Press

FRESNO, Calif. (AP) — Acoustic sensors mounted on lampposts and telephone poles picked up the crack of gunfire and rapidly enabled police to zero in on where it was coming from. Within minutes, the alleged gunman in the deadly rampage was under arrest.

Fresno Police Chief Jerry Dyer credited the technology Wednesday with the swift capture of Kori Ali Muhammad, a 39-year-old black man who authorities say killed three people Tuesday in a bid to wipe

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 21, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 281 ~ 19 of 33

out as many whites as possible.

"He was in custody within 4 minutes and 13 seconds," Dyer said Wednesday at a news conference where he played audio clips of the ShotSpotter technology. "Kori Muhammad would be outstanding today if it wasn't for shots-fired detection."

First developed two decades ago, ShotSpotter technology has been used widely since 2011 in U.S. cities. The Fresno rampage is one of the more serious crimes in which it played a vital role.

Police say Muhammad randomly targeted white men he encountered in a tree-lined Fresno neighborhood, firing 17 rounds within a few minutes before running out of ammunition, police said.

He was charged with one count of first-degree murder Thursday in the killing of a motel security guard days before the rampage. Police said he told them Carl Williams, who was also white, showed him disrespect.

Authorities say he decided to kill more white people when he learned he was wanted in Williams' death. Prosecutors say they are holding off on three additional charges while investigators piece together their case.

The technology police credit with stopping Muhammad is used by about 90 U.S. cities, including New York; San Francisco; Oakland, California; and Chicago, as well as Cape Town, South Africa, according to ShotSpotter. Police in Fresno have had it for the past two years.

ShotSpotter of Newark, California, requires the installation of numerous sensitive microphones. Computers and technicians at a California-based center distinguish the sound of gunfire from other noises and triangulate the shots, in much the same way that cell towers are used to zero in on the location of a cellphone.

The system can tell police the location and time the shots were fired, how many there were, and sometimes the type of weapon, the number of shooters and whether they changed location as they fired.

The information can be sent to officers on the street via their smartphones and their squad-car computer screens, as was the case in Fresno.

Fresno police said officers were alerted to the gunfire by ShotSpotter even before they received any word from the dispatchers who take 911 calls, and the system pinpointed the shooter's location to within a matter of feet.

Muhammad had tossed aside his empty gun moments before the officer pulled up, according to police. The suspect then threw himself on the ground and surrendered.

Fresno Officer Nicholas El-Helou said it is rare for police relying on traditional dispatch calls to arrive while a gunman is still on the scene.

The speedy arrest in this case may have averted another tragedy, he said.

"He could carjack somebody. What's to say he doesn't force his way into a home and take hostages?" El-Helou said. "We don't know what could have happened. He was a desperate man."

A one-year contract with ShotSpotter costs \$55,000 to \$95,000 for each square mile. Because of the cost, cities often limit the technology to high-crime areas.

Privacy advocates criticize it for also sometimes recording speech, though the manufacturer says it is designed to ignore such noise.

Still, prosecutors used a recording of the last words of Tyrone Lyles to help convict the gunman who killed him in Oakland in 2007. Lyles called out Arlison Johnson's nickname as he lay dying.

ShotSpotter CEO Ralph Clark said the technology has helped take gunmen off the streets, often in rough neighborhoods where gunfire goes unreported.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 21, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 281 ~ 20 of 33

"It shows communities that police are aware of it and responding," Clark said. "That builds confidence and accountability."

Associated Press writers Donald Thompson and Sophia Bollag contributed to this story from Sacramento.

This story has been corrected to show that Kori Ali Muhammad has not been charged in Tuesday's three shooting deaths but has now been charged with the killing of a security guard days earlier.

Nervous about China, Southeast Asia gets Trump's attention

By MATTHEW PENNINGTON and KEN THOMAS, Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Southeast Asia, a focus of past U.S. presidents, has been overlooked thus far for the Trump administration, but Vice President Mike Pence's visit to Indonesia Thursday marked a sign of change and he announced the president would follow him to the region later this year.

Anxious Southeast Asian governments are looking for America's commitment to counter China's economic and military clout. Vietnam's foreign minister is in Washington this week, and the top diplomats of the region's 10-nation bloc are expected to arrive en masse in early May, amid concerns their interests were being crowded out as President Donald Trump prioritizes Mideast counterterrorism, traditional alliances in Europe and North Korea's nuclear and missile threats.

Pence's stop in Jakarta on a 10-day swing through the Asia-Pacific, meeting with Indonesian President Joko "Jokowi" Widodo, sends a message that Trump's interests in Asia extend beyond North Korea and the massive U.S. trade imbalance with China. It is the first to Southeast Asia by a top administration official, and Pence announced Thursday that Trump will attend the annual summit of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, or ASEAN, in November.

Washington is "taking steps to strengthen our partnership with ASEAN and deepen our friendship," Pence said, resolving to strengthen economic ties and security cooperation in combating terrorism and in the disputed South China Sea.

This year marks ASEAN's 50th anniversary. November's gathering is being held in the Philippines, setting the stage for an encounter between two unconventional leaders: Trump and the host, Rodrigo Duterte, the Philippine president who is sometimes likened to the American leader because of his outspokenness and unashamed populism. Duterte's government welcomed Pence's announcement that Trump would attend.

U.S.-Philippine relations are strained over Duterte's war on drugs, and his brash efforts to forge closer ties with China. President Barack Obama scrapped a planned meeting last fall after Duterte cursed him. Before that, Obama engaged Southeast Asia more than any U.S. president since the aftermath of the Vietnam War and made ASEAN summits a virtual fixture in his diplomatic calendar.

Among Obama's foreign policy accomplishments: Promoting democratic reform in Myanmar, on communist China's doorstep. He stood up, albeit unsuccessfully, against Beijing's construction of artificial islands that can give it a strong military foothold in the South China Sea. He paved the way for a bigger U.S. military presence in the Philippines, where American bases were shuttered 25 years ago.

Obama also understood the importance of showing up. He made nine trips to Southeast Asia, became the first sitting U.S. president to visit former adversaries Myanmar and Laos, and was first to travel to Malaysia in more than four decades.

Trump got off on the wrong foot.

His "America First" rhetoric and abrupt withdrawal from Obama's pan-Pacific trade pact raised fears of U.S. protectionism hurting the region's 600 million people. They do \$225 billion in trade with the U.S. each year. Trump's relationship with Beijing remains unclear and his unorthodox foreign policy has begged the question as to whether he could ease U.S. demands on the South China Sea to win Chinese cooperation on North Korea.

"The region very much wants to know where the United States is going to stand on the South China Sea, and more broadly what its approach to China is going to be," said Amy Searight, a former top U.S. defense official for the region.

Senior State Department official Patrick Murphy told reporters Thursday that the U.S. would continue freedom of navigation operations in the South China Sea. Those U.S. Navy maneuvers through disputed waters were conducted periodically under Obama but have not occurred since Trump took office three months ago.

Still, the future of economic ties is probably the region's top concern. China is the main trading partner for most of Southeast Asia, although the U.S. remains a key source of foreign investment. The TPP's demise leaves an alternative pact as the main avenue for boosting trade among the fast-growing economies. China is a part of that negotiation, while the U.S. isn't.

Trump's decision to leave TPP "creates a vacuum that China is happy to try to fill," Searight said.

Trump also is expected to attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation summit in Vietnam in November.

ASEAN members Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia are among 16 nations the Trump administration is investigating over their U.S. trade surpluses. Pence said U.S. exporters to Indonesia should enjoy a level playing field and the relationship should be "win-win."

Vietnam, which has courted its former U.S. enemy, wants even better ties. Its ambassador visited the U.S. Military Academy at West Point this month. On Thursday, Foreign Minister Pham Binh Minh met Secretary of State Rex Tillerson at the State Department.

And in an unusual move, ASEAN foreign ministers have arranged an 11-way meeting in Washington with Tillerson. The State Department said the meeting will take place May 4. It will reprise, at a lower level, a leaders' summit Obama hosted in California last year.

Pennington reported from Washington. Associated Press writers Stephen Wright in Jakarta and Jim Gomez in Manila, Philippines, contributed to this report.

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

Tennessee girl safe, teacher arrested near California cabin

By SHEILA BURKE, Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — A 15-year-old Tennessee girl was rescued near a cabin in a remote part of northern California on Thursday, more than a month after her 50-year-old teacher kidnapped her and set off a nationwide manhunt, authorities said.

Health sciences teacher Tad Cummins surrendered to sheriff's deputies without incident in Cecilville, California, hours after they had set up surveillance on his vehicle in the area, the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation said. The girl was apparently healthy and unharmed, and authorities said their main concern was her emotional and mental state.

"We couldn't be happier to tell you she will soon be on her way back home to Tennessee," Tennessee Bureau of Investigation Director Mark Gwyn said.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 21, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 281 ~ 22 of 33

Cummins faces state charges of aggravated kidnapping and sexual contact with a minor as well as a federal charge of taking a minor across state lines to have sex. If convicted of the federal charge, he faces at least 10 years in prison, acting U.S. Attorney Jack Smith said.

Authorities declined to answer a question on whether the girl went willingly, saying it didn't matter.

"At the end of the day she's 15 years old. She's 15 years old; she's a young girl that's with a grown man that's 50 years old. He needs to be held accountable for kidnapping this girl," Gwyn said.

Authorities received a tip late Wednesday night that the pair may have taken up residence in the woods in Siskiyou County, perhaps for more than a week, bureau spokesman Josh DeVine said. The remote, mountainous area has limited cellphone service and the terrain is difficult to traverse. Snow was still on the ground in some places.

Authorities had earlier said the arrest happened at a commune but later clarified that it occurred in a very remote area and that they were still collecting evidence.

The pair's disappearance March 13 came after Cummins was investigated by the school system when another student reported seeing the then-married teacher kiss the girl at the Culleoka Unit School. Culleoka is a community about 60 miles (100 kilometers) south of Nashville near the Alabama state line.

"We're so happy that California police worked quickly and were able to find them and get her safe," one of the girl's sisters told The Tennessean.

"I believe the FBI are going to make sure she's healthy before she comes home," she said. "We'll make sure she'll get what therapy she needs and that she's safe, that she knows she's safe."

The Associated Press is not naming the girl or her family members because she is an alleged victim of a sex crime.

Court papers filed recently in the girl's disappearance said she was afraid of the teacher and thought she would face repercussions at school if she resisted him.

A lawyer for the girl's family has said the teacher was allowed to continue working at the school for two weeks after he was reported kissing the girl. Attorney Jason Whatley has said the school system must have not believed the student's report.

The school's investigative files provided to The Associated Press by the attorney show that both Cummins and the girl denied kissing. The teacher, however, acknowledged that the girl was "a really good friend and she does leave her other classes to come see him when she needs someone to calm her down," according to a school report dated Jan. 30.

The report recommended that the girl be taken out of Cummins' class and that he be reprimanded to uphold his professional responsibility. The report also recommended that the administration monitor Cummins' classroom to make sure students weren't there when they weren't supposed to be.

The teacher would later be reprimanded on Feb. 3 by school principal Penny Love after the girl was seen in Cummins' classroom for a little more than half an hour that day. In her letter, Love said the girl being in his classroom was a violation of the principal's order to him.

The school system didn't suspend Cummins until Feb. 6. He was fired about a month later — a day after the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation issued an Amber Alert about the teen.

The Tennessee Bureau of Investigation said it worked tirelessly for the past five weeks, looking into more than 1,500 leads from all 50 states.

Two days after the girl disappeared, surveillance images from a Walmart in Oklahoma City showed Cummins and the girl purchasing food items in the store with cash. The images showed Cummins had altered his hair to appear darker and the girl's hair may have changed to red.

The teacher's wife of 31 years has filed for divorce. Court records show that Jill Cummins sued her

then-missing husband on the grounds of irreconcilable differences and inappropriate marital conduct. The wife, who works for the Maury County school system, said she had not seen her husband since March 13. The couple has two children together.

Kristin Bender in San Francisco contributed to this report.

UC Berkeley flip-flops on Ann Coulter, proposes May date

By JOCELYN GECKER, Associated Press

BERKELEY, Calif. (AP) — University of California, Berkeley officials said Thursday they have a “grave concern” of violence on campus if Ann Coulter follows through on her vow to speak next week at the university.

Chancellor Nicholas B. Dirks instead proposed an alternate May 2 date for the conservative author, reversing a decision from a day earlier when officials canceled the event.

Coulter took to Twitter to reject the offer, saying she will appear next Thursday as originally planned. “I’m speaking at Berkeley on April 27th, as I was invited to do and have a contract to do,” tweeted Coulter, who was invited to speak by campus Republicans. In a separate tweet she said she’s not free May 2.

Coulter’s rejection potentially sets the stage for another political brawl at Berkeley, where violent protesters forced the cancellation of a speech by former Breitbart News editor Milo Yiannopoulos in February.

Dirks told a news conference that police have “very specific intelligence regarding threats that could pose a grave danger to the speaker,” her audience and protesters if the event goes ahead next Thursday. He urged Coulter to speak at the later date instead, when the university can provide an “appropriate, protectable venue.”

The Berkeley College Republicans invited Coulter to speak on the subject of illegal immigration.

On Wednesday, UC Berkeley officials announced they were calling off the event because of security concerns.

“We have been unable to find a safe and suitable venue,” officials wrote in a letter to the campus Republicans on Wednesday. “Given current active security threats, it is not possible to assure that the event could be held successfully.”

Coulter responded Wednesday, also on Twitter, by saying she planned to come anyway.

Campus spokesman Dan Mogulof said Coulter’s promise “to come to the campus come what may” prompted Dirks to launch an expanded search beyond the usual venues for high-profile speakers to find one where officials can ensure safety.

Berkeley has been the site of clashes between far-right and far-left protesters, most recently at a rally last weekend called in support of President Donald Trump in downtown Berkeley.

Mogulof said campus police learned that some of the groups that appeared to be responsible for the violence last weekend and at the Yiannopoulos event “planned to target the appearance of Ann Coulter on campus.”

GM quits Venezuela after government seizes its factory

By JUAN CARLOS HERNANDEZ and JOSHUA GOODMAN, Associated Press

VALENCIA, Venezuela (AP) — General Motors announced Thursday that it was shuttering its operations in Venezuela after authorities seized its factory in the country, a move that could draw the Trump

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 21, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 281 ~ 24 of 33

administration into the escalating chaos engulfing the South American nation amid days of deadly protests.

The plant in the industrial city of Valencia was confiscated Wednesday as anti-government protesters clashed with security forces and pro-government groups in a country battered by economic troubles, including food shortages and triple-digit inflation. Three people were killed and hundreds arrested in the deadliest day of protests since the unrest began three weeks ago.

The seizure arose from an almost 20-year-old lawsuit brought by a former GM dealership in western Venezuela. The dealership had been seeking damages from GM of 476 million bolivars — about \$665 million at the official exchange rate, or \$115 million on the black market where many Venezuelans are forced to turn to sell their increasingly worthless currency. GM said it was notified this week that a low-level court ordered the seizure of its plant, bank accounts and other assets in the country.

Hundreds of workers desperate for information about their jobs gathered at the plant Thursday to meet with government and military officials, as well as representatives of the dealership that brought the lawsuit. The neglected factory hasn't produced a car since 2015 but GM still has 79 dealers that employ 3,900 people in Venezuela, where for decades it was the market leader.

General Motors' announcement came as Venezuela's opposition moved to keep up pressure on President Nicolas Maduro, taking to the streets again Thursday a day after the biggest anti-government demonstrations in years.

It's not the first time the Venezuelan government has seized a foreign corporation's facilities. Last July, the government said it would take over a factory belonging to Kimberly-Clark Corp. after the American personal care giant said it was halting manufacturing because materials weren't available in Venezuela.

But the move against GM, the United States' biggest automaker, was a much more powerful statement, and could lead to a further erosion of relations between the two countries.

"This is a test case for Trump," said Raul Gallegos, a Bogota-based analyst at Control Risks consultancy. "His response to a rogue nation taking over the assets of a brand name U.S. company will be indicative of the road it wants to take with Venezuela."

The State Department said Thursday it was reviewing details of the GM case but called on authorities to act swiftly and transparently to resolve the dispute.

"A fair, predictable and transparent judicial system is critical to implementing the essential economic reforms critical to restoring growth and addressing the needs of the Venezuelan people," State Department spokesman Mark Toner said.

Later Thursday, Maduro said he had called for an investigation into cellphone operator Movistar for allegedly being part of the "coup-minded march" organized by adversaries of his government. He said the subsidiary of Spain's Telefonica "sent millions of messages to users every two hours" in support of Wednesday's protests.

Tens of thousands of protesters took to the streets again Thursday to demand elections and denounce what they consider an increasingly dictatorial government. They were met by a curtain of tear gas and rubber bullets as they attempted to march to downtown Caracas.

Across the country, the clashes have been intense. Pro-government militias were blamed for two deaths on Wednesday, including that of a teenager in Caracas who was heading to a soccer game with friends. However, government officials cast doubt on the account saying the other victim, a 23-year-old woman, was killed by a member of an anti-government movement led by former congresswoman Maria Corina Machado, a claim Machado denied.

"They're using a Venezuelan's death, for which they're responsible, to commit slander," Machado said on Twitter. "That's how this criminal dictatorship works."

The third fatality was a National Guard sergeant killed overnight when his squad was attacked with

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 21, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 281 ~ 25 of 33

gunfire while trying to control disturbances in a suburb of Caracas, the chief prosecutor's office said. Another officer was wounded in the clashes.

Another five people have been killed in the three weeks of protests sparked by a Supreme Court decision to strip the opposition-controlled Congress of its last remaining powers, a move that was later reversed amid a storm of international criticism.

The move 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 hasn't backed down.

Maduro, addressing supporters Wednesday, 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 authorities rounded up several armed opponents seeking to carry out a coup. He didn't provide any evidence to back up the claim, and the opposition rejected it as an 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, 565 protesters were arrested nationwide, according to Penal Forum, a local NGO that provides legal assistance to detainees. The group said 334 remained in jail on Thursday.

Associated Press writer Juan Carlos Hernandez reported this story in Valencia and AP writer Joshua Goodman reported from Caracas. AP Auto Writer Tom Krisher in Detroit contributed to this report.

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>.

In final hours, Hernandez thought of family, not football

By PHILIP MARCELO and COLLIN BINKLEY, Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — Family, not football, dominated Aaron Hernandez's final hours as a lifer in prison.

As the hour of his death approached, the former NFL star chatted on the phone with his longtime fiancée, Shayanna Jenkins-Hernandez. Authorities say the pair stayed on the phone until the 8 p.m. lockdown at the maximum-security prison where he was serving a life sentence for murder.

Alone in his cell, the ex-New England Patriots tight end scribbled three notes. He laid them carefully next to a Bible.

Then he turned his bedsheet into a noose and hanged himself.

Those cryptic details emerged Thursday as authorities ruled Hernandez's death a suicide and turned his body over to a funeral home so his family could lay him to rest.

Investigators wouldn't say what Hernandez's handwritten notes said. But they said they were satisfied he died at his own hand, and they said his brain would be donated to sports concussion researchers,

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 21, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 281 ~ 26 of 33

ending a brief public dispute over its custody.

Authorities said the medical examiner had ruled Hernandez's cause of death was asphyxia by hanging and investigators had found the notes and Bible in Hernandez's cell at the Souza-Baranowski Correctional Center in Shirley. Authorities previously said Hernandez had not left a suicide note and he hadn't been on suicide watch.

"There were no signs of a struggle, and investigators determined that Mr. Hernandez was alone at the time of the hanging," the Worcester County district attorney's office said in a statement.

Hernandez had been locked into his cell at about 8 p.m. Wednesday, and no one entered the cell until a guard saw him just after 3 a.m. and forced his way in because cardboard had been jammed into the door track to impede entry, authorities said. Hernandez was found hanging from a bedsheet and was rushed to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead an hour later.

Earlier Thursday, Hernandez's lawyer complained that state officials had turned over the 27-year-old's body but not his brain.

Attorney Jose Baez said the family had arranged for researchers at Boston University's Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy Center to take custody of the brain. The center studies a progressive degenerative brain disease found in some athletes who have experienced repetitive brain trauma.

Hernandez's body is at a Boston-area funeral home, but services for the Bristol, Connecticut, native likely will be held elsewhere.

Baez said he retained Dr. Michael Baden, a former chief medical examiner for New York City, to perform an independent autopsy.

Baden, who didn't immediately comment, has performed autopsies in several high-profile cases, including the death of Michael Brown, a black teenager shot and killed by a white police officer in Ferguson, Missouri, in 2014.

Baez declined to say whether he or the family believed brain damage from Hernandez's playing days led him to kill himself.

"We're not suggesting anything," he said. "You go where the evidence takes you. We need to examine every aspect of this case."

Hernandez was diagnosed with only one concussion during his time with the Patriots, according to the injury reports teams file each week. He missed parts of practice during the week before the AFC championship following the 2011 season but played in the game, catching seven passes and running the ball three times in the Patriots' 23-20 victory over Baltimore.

CTE has been linked to concussions and repeated blows to the head in athletes, members of the military and others who have experienced repeated head trauma. It can only be diagnosed posthumously. The Boston University CTE Center is one of the leading research efforts to diagnose and understand the disease, which can result in violent mood swings, memory loss and other cognitive difficulties.

It may never be clear why Hernandez would kill himself just days after he was cleared of two additional murder charges.

He had been serving a life sentence without parole for the 2013 slaying of a onetime friend, Odin Lloyd. But during his trial for the killings of two men in 2012, he appeared upbeat, backslapping his lawyers, letting out bellowing laughs and blowing kisses to his 4-year-old daughter and other family members in the audience.

The former University of Florida standout died five days after a jury acquitted him in those two deaths, which prosecutors alleged were precipitated by one of the men accidentally spilling a drink on Hernandez at a Boston nightclub.

His death also came just hours before his former Patriots teammates visited the White House to cel-

celebrate their recent Super Bowl victory.

His suicide left friends, family and his legal team in disbelief as many searched for an explanation to the tragic end of a young man whose football skills earned him a five-year, \$40 million contract extension with the NFL's top franchise.

What's to become of Hernandez's home and other assets is another unanswered question.

The 5,800-square-foot, five-bedroom, seven-bathroom house he bought near Gillette Stadium for \$1.3 million in 2012 is still up for sale. It was put on the market for \$1.5 million in 2016.

Attorneys for Lloyd's mother have placed an attachment on the house as part of their civil lawsuit against Hernandez. The Internal Revenue Service has a \$117,000 lien on the property.

Hernandez's older brother, Jonathan "DJ" Hernandez, meanwhile, took to Facebook on Thursday to wish his mother, Terri Hernandez, happy birthday.

"I know if Aaron was here one more day he would have said he loves you," he wrote. "Keep smiling because I know Aaron and Dad are both smiling down on you (and) us right now."

AP reporters Jimmy Golen and Bob Salsberg in Boston, Dave Collins in Connecticut and Michelle R. Smith and Jennifer McDermott in Rhode Island contributed to this report.

Trump raps Iran as violating 'spirit' of nuclear deal

By JOSH LEDERMAN and JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Iran is failing to fulfill the "spirit" of its nuclear deal with world powers, President Donald Trump declared Thursday, setting an ominous tone for his forthcoming decision about whether to pull the U.S. out of the landmark agreement.

As he often had during the president campaign, Trump ripped into the deal struck by Iran, the U.S. and other world powers in 2015 and said "it shouldn't have been signed." Yet he pointedly stopped short of telegraphing whether or not the U.S. would stay in.

"They are not living up to the spirit of the agreement, I can tell you that," Trump said of the Iranians, though he did not mention any specific violations. Earlier this week, the administration certified to Congress that Iran was complying — at least technically — with the terms of the deal, clearing the way for Iran to continue enjoying sanctions relief in the near term.

In a news conference alongside Italian Premier Paolo Gentiloni, Trump also said:

— The U.S. is committed to a strong Europe, though he didn't say directly whether he prefers that the European Union stay intact.

— He sees no military role for the U.S. in stabilizing Libya.

— It's possible he may soon be able to strike deals with Congress on both health care and funding legislation to head off a government shutdown.

On Iran, Trump and his top officials have been walking a narrow line as they seek to show an aggressive stance. While disparaging the nuclear deal and accusing Iran of fomenting violence and terrorism throughout the Middle East, Trump has avoided committing to abandoning the agreement, a move that would be staunchly opposed by U.S. businesses and European allies.

Yet the president seems keenly aware that his indecisiveness about the deal's future is a step back from his campaign declaration that as president he would rip it up or renegotiate.

He said of Iran, "I think they are doing a tremendous disservice to an agreement that was signed."

Under the deal, brokered during the Obama administration, Iran agreed to roll back key aspects of its nuclear program in exchange for relief from certain economic sanctions. Critics have said it's unfathom-

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 21, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 281 ~ 28 of 33

able that the U.S. would grant sanctions relief to Tehran even as it continues testing ballistic missiles, violating human rights and supporting extremist groups elsewhere in the Middle East.

By design, the nuclear deal does not address those Western grievances, meaning Tehran can be in compliance even as it violates U.N. resolutions and remains a U.S.-designated state sponsor of terrorism. The U.S. has continued to punish Tehran for those activities with non-nuclear sanctions that also fall outside the purview of the deal.

Trump hasn't given a timeline for when his administration's review of Iran policy — including whether to stick with the deal — will be complete. But the U.S. must decide next month whether to renew a waiver so that Iran can continue receiving sanctions relief.

The president joined Italian Premier Gentiloni for a White House news conference at a tense time for Europe, which was reeling anew from a deadly attack in Paris on Thursday ahead of a pivotal presidential vote in France on Sunday. The French election is being seen as a bellwether for whether the move toward nationalism and separation from the European Union, displayed by Britain's move to leave the EU, will continue spreading to other European countries.

Trump didn't specifically weigh in on the French election, nor would he say outright whether he supported countries staying in the EU. But he said a strong Europe is "very, very important" to the United States.

"We will help it be strong, and it's very much to everybody's advantage," Trump said.

Weeks after he said he was moving on after a failed attempt in Congress to replace the Affordable Care Act, Trump said "there's no give-up" and predicted a proposed GOP overhaul of Obama's health care law was gaining popularity.

And, with a funding deadline looming to keep the government running, Trump said it was possible Congress would manage to accomplish it all next week or "shortly thereafter."

"I think we'll get both," he said.

Grappling with other national security concerns, Trump said he did not see a role for the U.S. in Libya, adding that the U.S. "has right now enough roles." Trump has criticized the Obama administration for a 2011 military intervention that he says created a power vacuum that led Libya to slip into chaos.

Trump also voiced optimism that the U.S. had successfully enlisted China to try to persuade North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons program.

"We don't know whether or not they're able to do that, but I have absolute confidence that he will be trying very, very hard," Trump said, referring to Chinese President Xi Jinping.

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

Woods has 4th back surgery; likely to miss majors this year

By DOUG FERGUSON, AP Golf Writer

One day after saying his back was progressing, Tiger Woods had a fourth back surgery to alleviate pain and will go through another year without playing a major.

The surgery was Wednesday at the Texas Back Institute.

Woods was in Missouri on Tuesday to announce plans to design a public golf course at Big Cedar Lodge, and he even tried hitting a few shots to a par 3. The first one rattled around in the rocks, and the second shot was about 10 feet from the flag.

Asked about his health during the ceremony, Woods said he had good days and bad days. And then he flew to Dallas for fusion surgery to create space in his lower back.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 21, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 281 ~ 29 of 33

The announcement on his website Thursday said typical recovery from a single-level fusion surgery is six months.

"The surgery went well, and I'm optimistic this will relieve my back spasms and pain," Woods said. "When healed, I look forward to getting back to a normal life, playing with my kids, competing in professional golf and living without the pain I have been battling so long."

The 41-year-old Woods first had back surgery — a microdiscectomy — a week before the 2014 Masters, and he tried to return in three months. He sat out three months at the end of 2014 to let his body fully heal.

But after a 2015 season in which he missed the cut in three majors, he had back surgery in September and another one in October.

He went 15 months without competition before returning in December at his Hero World Challenge in the Bahamas, where Woods made 24 birdies in 72 holes and swung freely.

But then he missed the cut at Torrey Pines in January, and he withdrew from the Dubai Desert Classic on Feb. 3 after opening with a 77, citing back spasms.

And now he's gone through a fourth surgery.

"You see him in the Bahamas, and he looked pretty good," said Mark Steinberg, his agent at Excel Sports Management. "And then you see him in Dubai. It can happen any time. You heard him say two days ago, 'I have good days and bad days.' This surgery, we hope, eliminates the bad days."

Questions about the 14-time major champion have shifted from if he will win another major to if he will play another major.

The statement on his website said Woods' bottom disc in his lower back has severely narrowed, causing sciatica and severe pain in his back and legs. Woods opted for a fourth surgery when more conservative therapy, such as rest and injections, failed to solve anything.

"He had consulted with a number of top people that had recommended this was the way to go if he wanted a clear and final path," Steinberg said. "Everything he had done in the past was a temporary fix, so to speak. At that point, they thought there were other alternatives than fusion."

Steinberg said they were advised fusion surgery was the best option if Woods wanted an active lifestyle and was willing to sit out the rest of the season.

"He should be better than he's been in the past five years," Steinberg said. "He's pretty encouraged."

The surgery was described as "anterior lumbar interbody fusion" at the L-5 and S-1 of his spine. It was performed by Richard Guyer of the institute's Center for Disc Replacement, and involved removing the damaged disc and lifting the collapsed disc space to normal levels.

"After he recovers from surgery, he will gradually begin his rehabilitation until he is completely healed," Guyer said on the website. "Once that's accomplished, his workouts will be geared to allowing him to return to competitive golf."

Guyer said the bottom of the spine is the best place for single-level fusion to occur.

Woods' first surgery in 2014 was in Park City, Utah, by neurosurgeon Charles Rich, who also did the second operation. This is the first time Woods has gone to the Texas Back Institute.

Woods was to begin therapy and treatment after several weeks of rest.

He won his 79th PGA Tour event in August 2013 at the Bridgestone Invitational. Three weeks later, he was in contention late in the final round at the Barclays when he dropped to his knees after experiencing what he described as back spasms.

Woods is exempt for life at the Masters and PGA Championship, and until he is 60 at the British Open. He has a 10-year exemption for the U.S. Open from his 2008 victory at Torrey Pines, which was his 14th and last major. He had reconstructive knee surgery a week later.

He has started just 19 events worldwide since that first back surgery, and he has completed 72 holes in just nine of them. His best finish was a tie for 10th in the Wyndham Championship in August 2015, a month before his second back surgery.

With so many injuries and inactivity, Woods now is No. 788 in the world ranking.

GM faces hard road getting compensated for Venezuela factory

By TOM KRISHER and JOSHUA GOODMAN, Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — General Motors became the latest corporation to have a factory or other asset seized by the government of Venezuela, and the Detroit automaker faces an uphill battle to recover any damages.

GM said Thursday that its only factory in Venezuela was confiscated a day earlier, as anti-government protesters clashed with authorities in a country that is roiled by economic troubles. GM said assets such as vehicles were taken from the plant, causing the company irreparable damage.

The seizure is the latest in a long string of government confiscations of factories and other assets that have been a staple of the so-called 21st century socialist revolution in Venezuela started by the late Hugo Chavez two decades ago. Venezuela is currently fighting claims of illegal asset seizures at a World Bank-sponsored arbitration panel from more than 25 companies.

GM vowed to defend itself legally but getting compensated could be difficult. Under Chavez, Venezuela seized some Exxon Mobil assets. The oil giant sought compensation of \$16.6 billion. The company won a \$1.4 billion judgment, but earlier this year the arbitration panel determined that Venezuela had to pay only \$180 million.

GM can seek compensation and damages for its lost plant in several different international venues, said Nigel Blackaby, a lawyer at the Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer law firm, which has battled Venezuela in several high-profile cases in international courts. The venue depends on what treaties, if any, govern the investment, he said. While Exxon's case was heard by the World Bank panel, Freshfields has successfully pursued claims against Venezuela's government before a United Nations panel.

The Venezuelan government had no comment about the GM factory.

Auto production in Venezuela has nearly ground to a halt amid the country's economic collapse. The cash-strapped government has choked off car companies' access to dollars needed to import parts and repatriate profits. GM's factory in the industrial city of Valencia did not produce a single vehicle last year. Nationwide, car makers assembled just 2,849 cars in 2016, from a peak of 172,218 in 2007. Still, many car makers have stayed put in case the economy experiences a turnaround.

GM has about 2,700 workers in Venezuela, where it's been the market leader for over 35 years. It also has 79 dealers that employ 3,900 people.

The factory seizure arose from an almost 20-year-old lawsuit brought by a former GM dealership in western Venezuela. The dealership had been seeking damages from GM of 476 million bolivars — about \$665 million at the official exchange rate, but just \$115 million on the black market where many Venezuelans are forced to turn to sell their increasingly worthless currency. GM said it was notified this week that a low-level court ordered an embargo of its plant, bank accounts and other assets in the country.

Hundreds of workers desperate for information about their jobs gathered at the plant on Thursday to meet with government and military officials, as well as representatives of the dealership that brought the lawsuit.

In Washington, the State Department said in a statement that it was reviewing details of the factory seizure and called on Venezuelan authorities to resolve the case "rapidly and transparently." The statement said a fair judicial system is critical to economic reforms that would restore growth, but it made

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 21, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 281 ~ 31 of 33

no mention of any action the U.S. government might take.

In July of last year, the Venezuelan government took control of a factory belonging to Kimberly-Clark Corp. after the U.S. personal care giant said it was no longer possible to manufacture in the crisis-racked nation due to a lack of materials. President Nicolas Maduro accused Kimberly-Clark of participating in an international plot to damage Venezuela's economy.

In recent years, Bridgestone, General Mills, Procter & Gamble, Ford Motor Co. and other multinational corporations have also scaled back operations in Venezuela. Ford suspended operations at its Valencia plant in December due to slumping sales. Toyota said its lone factory in Cumana, Venezuela, continues to operate normally.

GM's Venezuelan operations have been a drag on earnings for several years. In the second quarter of 2015, the company took a \$720 million charge for currency devaluation and asset valuation write-downs as the economy faltered.

South American operations, which include Venezuela, account for about 6 percent GM's total sales. Last year, GM lost \$400 million before taxes in South America, but overall it made a pretax profit of \$12.5 billion.

Shares of General Motors Co. rose 31 cents to close at \$34.10.

Goodman reported from Caracas. Dee-Ann Durbin in Detroit and Christopher Rugaber in Washington contributed to this report. More Associated Press reporting on Venezuela's problems can be found at <https://www.ap.org/explore/venezuela-undone>

Asian stocks advance after US markets rally

By **JOE McDONALD, AP Business Writer**

BEIJING (AP) — Asian stocks rose Friday ahead of the first round of voting in France's closely watched presidential election, after Wall Street rallied on strong corporate earnings.

KEEPING SCORE: Tokyo's Nikkei 225 gained 0.8 percent to 18,585.31 and the Shanghai Composite Index edged up 0.1 percent to 3,174.74. Hong Kong's Hang Seng advanced 0.3 percent to 24,145.52 and Sydney's S&P-ASX 200 added 0.7 percent to 5,861.50. Seoul's Kospi rose 0.9 percent to 2,168.12 and benchmarks in New Zealand, Taiwan and Southeast Asia also advanced.

WALL STREET: U.S. stocks climbed as corporate results left investors feeling better about the economy. Industrial companies, banks, technology and materials firms and energy companies all rallied. Railroad operator CSX gave transportation companies like railroads and airlines a big boost while Sherwin-Williams raised its annual projections and helped basic materials makers go higher. The Dow Jones industrial average rose 0.9 percent to 20,578.81. The Standard & Poor's 500 index advanced 0.8 percent to 2,355.84. The Nasdaq composite gained 0.9 percent to a new high of 5,916.78.

ANALYST'S TAKE: "With the French elections bearing down on markets the bulls seem to be wrestling back some control here and despite the prospect of real volatility on Monday, there is hope that all will be well," said Chris Weston of IG in a report. "Having pared back expectations around the issue to a minimum, some have even bought into the idea that perhaps U.S. tax reform could be on the cards."

FRENCH ELECTIONS: French voters choose among 11 candidates Sunday in the first round of a presidential election that has left the country and financial markets on edge, especially after a shooting on Paris' Champs-Elysees boulevard Thursday that killed a police officer and wounded three other people. The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the attack. Prominent contenders in the race include populists Marine Le Pen and Jean-Luc Melenchon, who both say they want to tear up agreements that

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 21, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 281 ~ 32 of 33

bind together the 28 European Union nations. Others include Francois Fillon, a conservative former prime minister, and Emmanuel Macron, a former banker and economy minister.

US TAXES: Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, speaking at an IMF event, said the Trump administration's plan for tax changes will come "very soon." Mnuchin's goal of getting it passed by Congress's August recess has slipped. He said the administration still hoped to get a measure through Congress well before the end of the year. Mnuchin is also working on proposals to overhaul regulations put in place by the Dodd-Frank Act passed after the 2008 financial crisis. He said he would have a report with recommendations for the president by June that would address major issues in changing the law.

ENERGY: Benchmark U.S. crude gained 2 cents to \$50.73 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract shed 14 cents on Thursday to close at \$50.71. Brent crude, used to price international oils, added 3 cents in London to \$53.02. It rose 6 cents the previous session to \$52.99.

CURRENCY: The dollar declined to 109.25 yen from Thursday's 109.32 yen. The euro was steady at \$1.0718.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Friday, April 21, the 111th day of 2017. There are 254 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 21, 1967, army officers in Greece staged a coup, seizing power and creating a military dictatorship that ruled the country for the next seven years.

On this date:

In 1649, the Maryland Toleration Act, providing for freedom of worship for all Christians, was passed by the Maryland assembly.

In 1789, John Adams was sworn in as the first vice president of the United States.

In 1836, an army of Texans led by Sam Houston defeated the Mexicans at San Jacinto, assuring Texas independence.

In 1910, author Samuel Langhorne Clemens, better known as Mark Twain, died in Redding, Connecticut, at age 74.

In 1930, fire broke out inside the overcrowded Ohio Penitentiary in Columbus, killing 332 inmates.

In 1942, the first edition of "The Stranger" (L'Etranger), Albert Camus' (al-BEHR' kah-MOOZ') highly influential absurdist novel, was published in Nazi-occupied Paris by Gallimard.

In 1955, the Jerome Lawrence-Robert Lee play "Inherit the Wind," inspired by the Scopes trial of 1925, opened at the National Theatre in New York.

In 1960, Brazil inaugurated its new capital, Brasilia, transferring the seat of national government from Rio de Janeiro.

In 1962, the Century 21 Exposition, also known as the Seattle World's Fair, began a six-month run.

In 1977, the musical play "Annie," based on the "Little Orphan Annie" comic strip, opened on Broadway, beginning a run of 2,377 performances.

In 1986, a rediscovered vault in Chicago's Lexington Hotel that was linked to Al Capone was opened during a widely watched live TV special hosted by Geraldo Rivera; aside from a few bottles and a sign, the vault turned out to be empty.

In 1992, Robert Alton Harris became the first person executed by the state of California in 25 years as he was put to death in the gas chamber for the 1978 murder of two teen-age boys, John Mayeski and Michael Baker.

Groton Daily Independent

Friday, April 21, 2017 ~ Vol. 24 - No. 281 ~ 33 of 33

Ten years ago: The Fallujah, Iraq, city council chairman (Sami Abdul-Amir al-Jumaili), a critic of al-Qaida who had taken the job after his three predecessors were assassinated, was killed by attackers in a passing car. American billionaire Charles Simonyi (sih-MOHN'-ee) returned to Earth from a dream voyage to the international space station, riding a Russian capsule to a soft landing in Kazakhstan. Professional sailor Reid Stowe and his girlfriend, Soanya Ahmad, set off from North Hoboken, New Jersey, on a 1,000-day, nonstop globe-girdling cruise. (Ahmad abandoned the cruise in Australia in Feb. 2008, saying she was plagued by seasickness and suspecting she was pregnant; Stowe completed the journey as he arrived in New York on June 17, 2010 and met his toddler son, Darshen, for the first time.)

Five years ago: Charles W. "Chuck" Colson, 80, described as the "evil genius" of the Nixon administration who served seven months in prison for a Watergate-related conviction, then spent the next 35 years ministering to prison inmates, died in northern Virginia. Phil Humber threw the first perfect game in the majors in almost two years, leading the Chicago White Sox to a 4-0 victory over the Seattle Mariners.

One year ago: Prince, one of the most inventive and influential musicians of modern times, was found dead at his home in suburban Minneapolis; he was 57. Queen Elizabeth II, Britain's oldest and longest-reigning monarch, drew crowds of well-wishers and floods of tributes on the occasion of her 90th birthday. Jake Arrieta of the Chicago Cubs pitched his second no-hitter in a span of 11 regular-season starts, shutting down the Cincinnati Reds in a 16-0 rout. (Arrieta also no-hit the Dodgers 2-0 on Aug. 30, 2015).

Today's Birthdays: Britain's Queen Elizabeth II is 91. Actress-comedian-writer Elaine May is 85. Actor Charles Grodin is 82. Actor Reni Santoni (REH'-nee san-TOH'-nee) is 79. Anti-death penalty activist Sister Helen Prejean is 78. Singer-musician Iggy Pop is 70. Actress Patti LuPone is 68. Actor Tony Danza is 66. Actor James Morrison is 63. Actress Andie MacDowell is 59. Rock singer Robert Smith (The Cure) is 58. Rock musician Michael Timmins (Cowboy Junkies) is 58. Actor John Cameron Mitchell is 54. Rapper Michael Franti (Spearhead) is 51. Actor Toby Stephens is 48. Rock singer-musician Glen Hansard (The Frames) is 47. Actor Rob Riggle is 47. Comedian Nicole Sullivan is 47. Football player-turned-actor Brian White is 44. Olympic gold medal pairs figure skater Jamie Sale (sah-LAY') is 40. Rock musician David Brenner (Theory of a Deadman) is 39. Actor James McAvoy is 38. Former NFL quarterback Tony Romo is 37. Actor Terrence J is 35. Actress Gugu Mbatha-Raw is 34. Actor Christoph (cq) Sanders is 29. Actor Frank Dillane is 26. Rock singer Sydney Sierota (Echosmith) is 20.

Thought for Today: "To spare oneself from grief at all cost can be achieved only at the price of total detachment, which excludes the ability to experience happiness." — Erich Fromm, German-American psychoanalyst and author (1900-1980).