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Friday, April 28

Senior Menu: Scalloped chicken, spinach, strawberry Jell-O with Mandarin oranges, Gingerbread with topping.

School Lunch: BBQ, baked chips, fruit, romaine salad.

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

CANCELLED: Track at Sisseton

6:30 p.m.: FFA Banquet

Saturday, April 29

4 p.m.: Piano recital at GHS Gym

Sunday, April 30

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

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

United Methodist: Jed Morehouse baptism/ blessings shower, Conde Worship at 9 a.m., Coffee 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.

Open: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave.

The cardboard/paper

recycling trailer at the school is **Open**

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Hanlon Brothers
Gravel Hauling

New & Cleaning of
Stockdams with our
60' reach trackhoe

605/395-6531



Groton math students place second at NSU

Thirty-one students in grades eight through twelve from the Groton Area School District participated in the 64th Annual Northern State University Mathematics Contest held Wednesday, April 19, 2017, in the Barnett Center at NSU in Aberdeen, South Dakota. They were among 423 contestants representing 25 schools from North Dakota, South Dakota, and Minnesota, who participated in the event and tested in four divisions: Elementary Algebra, Geometry, Advanced Algebra, and Senior Math. Out of the 124 students taking the Elementary Algebra test, Samantha Pappas received a certificate of honorable mention. Of the 98 students taking the Advanced Algebra test, AnneMarie Smith earned the second place trophy, and Alexis Simon received a certificate of honorable mention. Out of the 89 students taking the Senior Math test, Jenifer Fjelstad received a certificate of honorable mentions.

As a school, Groton received second place in the Class AA/A division. To determine school rank, the highest score in each of the four divisions was taken to compute each school's result.

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WE'RE TICKLED PINK!
AND HAPPY TO SAY
A BABY GIRL IS ON THE WAY!

JOIN US FOR A COME AND GO
BABY SHOWER HONORING
MOM-TO-BE

McKinsey Smith
MAY 20, 2017
9:30 TO 11 A.M.
STEVE AND CAROL SMITH HOME
1104 North Main Street, Groton

McKinsey is registered at Target



50th Anniversary

Dave and Mary Blackmun are celebrating 50 years of marriage. Please join family and friends for an open house Saturday, April 29th, at Olive Grove golf course in Groton, SD from 2-4 pm. No gifts please.



Phillips, Dixon engaged

Michael Phillips and Heather Dixon are engaged and plan to be married June 10th 2017 in Watertown SD. Parents of the groom are Tammy Sutton and Keith Phillips. Parents of the bride are Todd and Kara Anderson and Kelli and Dan Danburg. Groom to be works for Data Dimensions and bride to be works at Great Western Bank. They are living in Watertown.

Utility issues push back US12 project 3 weeks

It was last week's GDILIVE.COM broadcast of the weekly DOT meeting that sparked the installation of the stop and go lights at the intersection of US12 and SD37. A concerned citizen was watching the broadcast and when it was over, they went down to the community center to express some ideas, one of them being the stop and go lights. The idea sounded good and a set was ordered from Chicago and was installed earlier this week. The D.O.T. is helping with the financing of these lights.

At this week's D.O.T. meeting, it was discussed that 15 days (three working weeks) have been lost due to utility issues. It was mentioned that the utility companies knew about this project since 2014 and have had ample time to move them. One of the biggest hang ups is the Natural Gas line under US12, which has been hit twice during construction. This past week, the one hit shut down restaurants over noon hour along US12 with Ken's, Subway and the Clinic all being evacuated.

Lionel Bruemmer from Ken's Food Fair said there was concern about the recent Natural Gas line and the loss of business that the businesses have experienced.

John Schumacher from Webster Scale said, "What's really unfortunate is that the utilities were suppose to be moved several years ago. It hasn't happened, and now we're left dealing with the aftermath. It's impeding our process immensely. It's costing us a tremendous amount of money in wages and I would suggested calling NWPS to make sure the utilities are out of the way." Bruemmer said they lost about an hour of business and that other business owners were not happy about the situation either. Joe Schumacher from Webster Scale said the utility companies were made aware of this project in July of 2014. None of them have been moved. John said, "They (the utilities) are guests in the DOT right-of-way and they are to move them when asked and they have chosen not to. We were suppose to be done paving the first phase by May 3rd and start paving on the south side of the road. We haven't even paved the north side yet. It's not a good situation for anybody. We sympathize with you because it's affecting you guys as well.

"All of the utility companies have been notified and all have been participating in the daily meetings with the exception of NWPS. They have chosen not to come to our meetings, including our preconstruction meetings and utility meetings, they have chosen to come to none." He went on to say that the City of Groton, James Valley Telecommunications and MidContinent have all been working with the contractors on this project, working out conflicts. "The DOT called NWPS and asked if they would come to the meetings and they said they would, but they don't come."

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Today in Weather History April 23, 2002:

April 28, 1994: Snow accumulated 5 to 12 inches over most of the eastern half of South Dakota, with the 12-inch report from Winner. Ten to eleven inches of snow was reported at numerous places including Sioux Falls and Platte in the southeast, and Summit in the northeast. Numerous accidents were caused by snow and ice, including one which killed a man and injured two women on Highway 12 near Bath, South Dakota. There was some undetermined crop damage, and livestock loss was feared as the late season cold and snow lowered resistance to disease.

1893: A ½ mile wide estimated F4 tornado killed 23 people and injured 150 as it tore a path of devastation through Cisco, Texas. Every building in the town was either totally destroyed or severely damaged.

1921 - A severe hailstorm in Anson County, NC, produced hail the size of baseballs. Gardens, grain fields and trees were destroyed. Pine trees in the storm's path had to be cut for lumber because of the hail damage. (The Weather Channel)

1928 - A coastal storm produced tremendous late season snows in the Central Appalachians, including 35 inches at Bayard WV, 31 inches at Somerset PA, and 30 inches at Grantsville MD. High winds accompanying the heavy wet snow uprooted trees and unroofed a number of homes. The storm caused great damage to fruit trees and wild life. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1973: The record crest of the Mississippi River at St. Louis, Missouri was registered at 43.23 feet on this day. This level exceeded the previous 1785 mark by 1.23 feet. This record was broken during the 1993 Flood when the Mississippi River crested at 49.58 feet on August 1st. At Memphis, Tennessee, the Mississippi was over flood stage for 63 days, more than that of the historic 1927 flood, and the river was above flood stage for an even longer 107 days at upstream Cairo, Illinois. Out of the seven largest floods on the Mississippi between 1927 and 1997, the 1973 event ranked third in both volume discharged and duration but only sixth in flood height. Over \$250 million of damages were incurred mainly in the Mississippi Valley states of Missouri, Arkansas, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Louisiana.

1987 - Twenty cities in the western and central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Highs of 95 degrees at Houston TX, 95 degrees at Lake Charles LA, and 94 degrees at Port Arthur TX, were April records. (The National Weather Summary)








1988 - Miami, FL, hit 92 degrees, marking a record eight days of 90 degree heat in the month of April. Squalls produced snow in the Washington D.C. area. Belvoir VA reported a temperature reading of 57 degrees at the time the snow began. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)


1989 - Strong northerly winds and heavy snow ushered cold air into the north central U.S. Snowfall totals in Montana ranged up to 20 inches at Miles City. Thunderstorms produced severe weather from eastern Texas to the Southern Appalachians and the southern Ohio Valley. Hail four and a half inches in diameter was reported at Keller TX and White Settlement TX. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1990 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the southeastern U.S. during the day. Severe thunderstorms spawned four tornadoes, including one which injured four persons at Inman SC. There were also more than one hundred reports of large hail and damaging winds, with better than half of those reports in Georgia. Strong thunderstorm winds injured four people at Sadler's Creek SC. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data) Twenty-nine cities in the northeastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date as readings soared into the 80s and lower 90s. Highs of 88 degrees at Binghamton NY, 94 degrees at Buffalo NY, 89 degrees at Erie PA, 90 degrees at Newark NJ, 93 degrees at Rochester NY and 92 degrees at Syracuse NY, were records for the month of April. (The National Weather Summary)


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Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
						
Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	20% 40%	30% 30%
High: 53 °F	Low: 25 °F	High: 56 °F	Low: 29 °F	High: 56 °F	Slight Chance Rain then Chance Rain/Snow	Chance Rain/Snow then Chance Rain

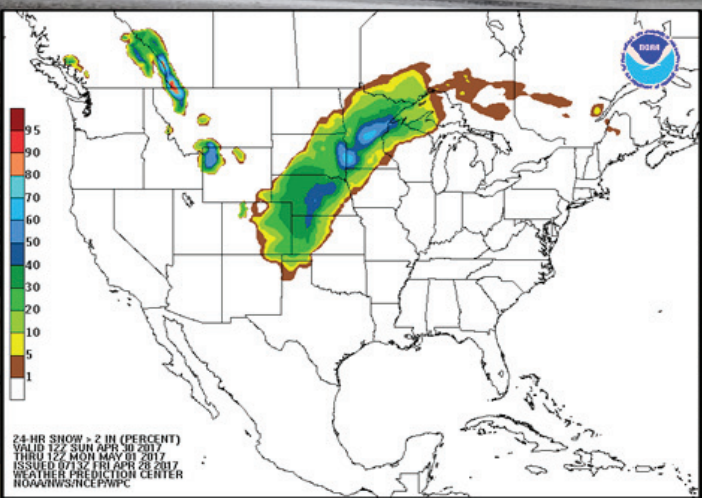
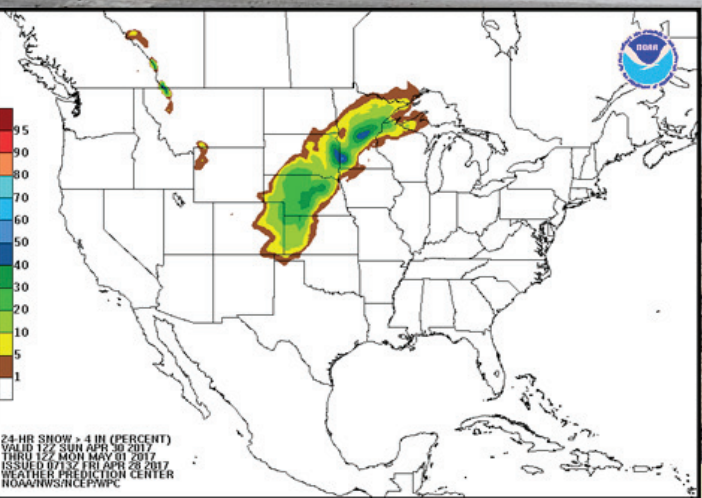


Winter May Not Be Over!



*Potential For Accumulating Snow
Late Sunday Night Through Monday Morning*

Probability for 2+ Inches Probability for 4+ inches

*** The maps show the probability for 2+ inches and 4 + inches of snow in a 24-hour period from 7am Sunday to 7am Monday**

National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD

 weather.gov/Aberdeen
 National Weather Service Aberdeen
  @NWSAberdeen
 Updated: 4/28/2017 5:43 AM Central

Published on: 04/28/2017 at 5:51AM

Just when you thought we had to be done seeing snow for the season back on Wednesday, think again! The potential exists to see more snow across eastern South Dakota late Sunday night into Monday morning when a potent low pressure system moves across the plains. There is a lot of uncertainty to deal with here, since temperatures will play a huge role in how much snow we receive, or if it will be just all rain instead of snow! Temperatures will be hovering near freezing and that will make all the difference. Regardless, it certainly appears temps have the potential to get cold enough late Sunday night to support a few inches of wet, slushy snow accumulations across eastern South Dakota. Stay tuned to the latest forecasts as this could be a snow event in May! This is rather rare!

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 49.3 F at 6:32 PM

Low Outside Temp: 28.0 F at 12:24 AM

High Gust: 22.0 Mph at 11:00 AM

Snow: Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 90° in 1934

Record Low: 19° in 2008

Average High: 63°F

Average Low: 37°F

Average Precip in April.: 1.68

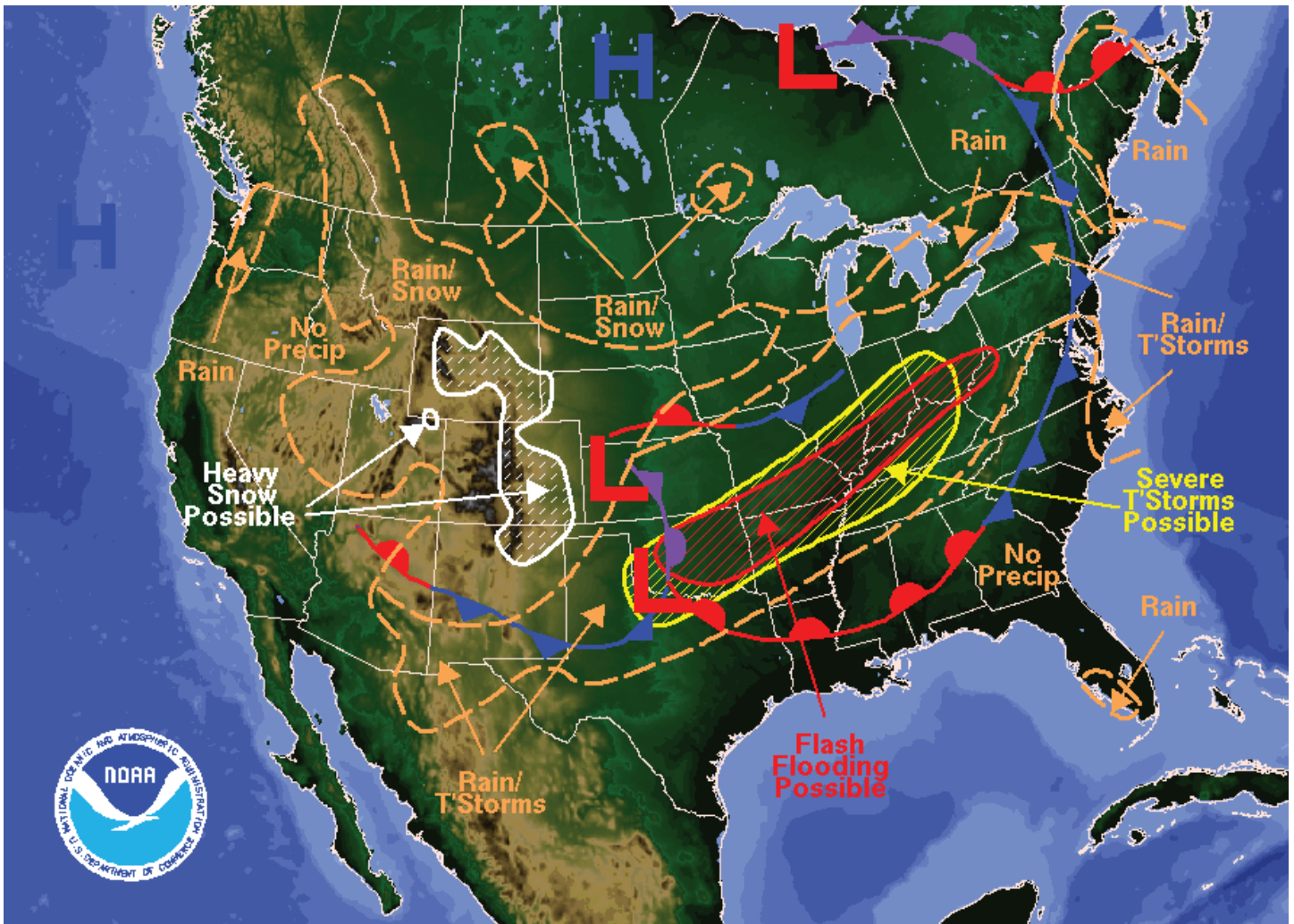
Precip to date in April.: 1.09

Average Precip to date: 3.86

Precip Year to Date: 1.68

Sunset Tonight: 8:36 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:24 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Fri, Apr 28, 2017, issued 4:50 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Mcreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts



FACING THE ENEMY

Sometime ago, the DENVER POST reported a most unusual incident. A rancher, Ms. Lexy, of Montana, was losing many of her lambs to coyotes that roamed her pastures. She tried every suggestion that her friends and fellow ranchers made but nothing solved the problem. Nothing she tried protected her lambs.

One day, quite by accident, she read an article that described llamas as afraid-of-nothing animals. The article reported that "when the llamas see something, they put up their heads and walk straight toward it." She decided to purchase some and place them in her pastures.

And it worked! When the llamas saw the coyotes, they walked straight toward them, heads held high and frightened them so much that they ran away.

Is there a lesson here for the Christian? It seems that there is.

What would happen in this sin-hardened world if, when we Christians recognized someone or something that was destroying lives or the very fabric of society, we would face it bravely, walk into it confidently and with God's power expose its dangers? Sadly, we have surrendered our convictions to "being politically correct" and fearful of "offending" the enemy and expecting politicians to do God's work. We have retreated hastily because we no longer choose "to resist the devil and he will flee."

Prayer: Convict us, Lord, for being weak and fearful in the face of the enemy. Empower us with Your Holy Spirit and the strength of Your Word to battle Satan. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: James 4:7 Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.

News from the Associated Press

Owner wants answers after horses' tail hair cut

GARRETSON, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota horse owner wants answers after someone cut hair from his horses' tails.

DJ Lindner says he was going to give food and water to the family's four horses outside of Garretson on Wednesday night when he noticed two of them did not have hair on their tails.

Someone had chopped off 2 to 3 feet of the hair on Prince, a 7-year-old white horse, and 6-year-old gray horse Dolly.

Lindner tells the Argus-Leader (<http://argusne.ws/2oBHSBM>) the thieves probably got three pounds of hair from each horse.

Since the tail is usually the only defense the horse has against flies, Lindner is going to braid twine to what's left of the hair to make sure Prince and Dolly have some form of self-defense.

Authorities have no suspects.

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

Nebraska beer stores near reservation may have to close

By GRANT SCHULTE, Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — Four Nebraska beer stores that sell millions of cans annually near a South Dakota Indian reservation plagued by alcoholism may have to close, at least temporarily, while a case against them works its way through the courts.

The stores in Whiteclay scored a legal victory Thursday when a judge overturned a state commission's decision not to renew their liquor licenses. But hours after the ruling, the Nebraska attorney general's office filed a notice of appeal.

The appeal supersedes the judge's ruling, which would have allowed the stores to stay in business. Their licenses are set to expire Sunday, at which point their attorney said they'll have to close.

"We're looking into all of our options" for how to respond, said Andrew Snyder, a Scottsbluff-based attorney for the stores.

The judge's ruling had been a setback for those who want to close the stores in Whiteclay, an unincorporated village of nine residents that sells millions of cans each year next to the reservation. Critics blame the stores for widespread alcoholism and high rates of fetal alcohol syndrome on the reservation, which is home to the Oglala Lakota Tribe.

The Nebraska Liquor Control Commission ruled last week that it would not renew the stores' licenses, citing a lack of adequate law enforcement in the area.

Whiteclay has drawn criticism for selling alcohol so close to the reservation and for drawing dozens of people a day who drink, pass out and sometimes fight in public.

The town was originally part of a 10-mile-wide, 5-mile-deep buffer zone created in 1889 to protect the reservation from whiskey peddlers. President Theodore Roosevelt returned all but one square mile of the land to the public domain in 1904, and alcohol merchants flocked to the area.

Lancaster County District Court Judge Andrew Jacobsen agreed with the stores' arguments that the decision by state regulators was arbitrary and unreasonable and ran afoul of previous Nebraska Supreme Court rulings.

The liquor control commission "is vested with discretion in the granting or denial of retail liquor licenses, but it may not act arbitrarily or unreasonably," Jacobsen said in the ruling.

The court has said the state must automatically renew licenses when a licensee is qualified to hold one, when the premises haven't changed and the premises are still suitable for sales. Jacobsen said the commission failed to show that any of those conditions was not met.

A spokesman for the Oglala Lakota Tribe in Pine Ridge, South Dakota, said he had not yet seen the ruling and needed to consult with the tribe's president before commenting.

John Maisch, a former Oklahoma alcohol regulator who has advocated closing the stores, said he was confident the courts would eventually uphold the commission's decision.

"Nebraskans see suffering in Whiteclay and want it to stop," he said. "Taxpayers see hundreds of thousands of dollars being spent on law enforcement in this tiny, unincorporated town and want those dollars spent elsewhere. That will happen in due time."

Frank LaMere, an activist who has spent decades trying to shutter the stores, was "hugely disappointed" by the judge's ruling.

"I apologize as a Nebraskan to my Oglala relatives," said LaMere, a member of the Winnebago Tribe of Nebraska. "There are many of us here who do see the death, the dying and the devastation that the judge just ignored under the color of law."

State Sen. Patty Pansing Brooks of Lincoln, a leading advocate on Whiteclay issues, said she was "greatly disappointed" by the ruling but said she will continue working with other advocates to address public health and safety concerns.

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

Man accused of shooting at repo agents in SE South Dakota

HARRISBURG, S.D. (AP) — A 68-year-old man is accused of shooting at repossession agents who were taking his boat in southeastern South Dakota.

Lincoln County sheriff's authorities responded late Wednesday morning to shots fire southeast of Harrisburg. Authorities say repossession agents were trying to take a boat and the owner allegedly fired several shots during the attempt.

The repo agents then left with the boat but were allegedly chased by the owner. During the chase the boat became unlatched and slid into a ditch.

The sheriff's office says the rural Harrisburg man was arrested on suspicion of aggravated assault and reckless driving. The investigation continues.

Police chief defends handling of Facebook threats case

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The Sioux Falls police chief is defending how his department handled the case of a man who livestreamed himself brandishing weapons and making threats to the public outside an anti-Islam event.

Police Chief Matt Burns says authorities determined that Ehab Jaber was not an imminent threat to the conference he was asked to leave at the Hilton Garden Inn South.

Burns told KELO-AM (<http://bit.ly/2pqPIxq>) on Thursday that the case is a "high profile matter, and it's much better to get it right than get it fast."

Jaber allegedly made his Facebook video afterward in his car in the hotel parking lot. He eventually was charged with making terroristic threats.

The incident happened outside an April 9 event titled "Sabotaging America: Islam's March Toward Supremacy."

Information from: KELO-AM, <http://www.keloam.com>

Judges revive lawsuit against Sara Lee

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — An appeals court has revived a lawsuit filed by a small energy drink company with South Dakota origins against former food giant Sara Lee.

The Argus Leader (<http://argusne.ws/2ppiPB5>) reports that a three-judge panel with the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals in Texas ruled that a state district court judge wrongly dismissed claims made by the company, Jacked Up.

The lawsuit argues that Jacked Up founder Joseph Schmitz signed a licensing agreement with Sara Lee that entitled it to royalties on sales of the product and sales to Sara Lee. Three weeks later, Sara Lee sold its beverage division to the J.M. Smucker Company, which terminated the contract with Jacked Up. Part of the Sara Lee company later became Hillshire Brands, which in turn was bought by Tyson Foods.

Schmitz sued Sara Lee for breach of contract, breach of fiduciary duty, fraud and fraudulent inducement. The suit also named Smucker for interfering with the lawsuit and trade secret misappropriation.

Sara Lee argued it was willing to go forward with the energy drinks but Jacked Up violated the agreement, but Schmitz said Greg Immell, then an executive with Sara Lee, called to terminate the deal.

The judges believed Schmitz's account.

"Schmitz's account is corroborated by an internal Sara Lee email dated October 26, 2011, suggesting that Immell had told Schmitz that the licensing agreement would be terminated and that Schmitz 'was not too happy,'" the judges wrote.

The ruling allows Jacked Up to move forward with the lawsuit.

Last year, Schmitz was jailed in South Dakota's Lake County in connection to the shooting death of his fiancée at the Lake Madison home they rented.

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

Suspect sought in Sioux Falls credit union robbery

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The search is on for a man who robbed a Sioux Falls credit union.

A police spokesman says the man entered Voyage Federal Credit Union on Kiwanis Avenue late Thursday morning and told employees he had a gun. Police say employees never saw a gun but handed over money, and the man ran away.

No one was hurt. The robber escaped with an undisclosed amount of money.

South Dakota man claims he found mouse in Coca-Cola can

MITCHELL, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota man who claims to have found a mouse in a can of soda is suing Coca-Cola Co., saying he missed 60 hours of work and accumulated \$1,000 in medical bills after becoming ill.

In court documents, attorneys for Coca-Cola Co. disputed that there was proof that the mouse ended up in the can during bottling, saying it would have been in a more advanced stage of decomposition,

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The Daily Republic in Mitchell, South Dakota, reported (<http://bit.ly/2qiyJdQ>). Six weeks had passed between bottling and when Putzier opened the can on June 7.

Brian Johnson, an attorney for the Atlanta-based company, said during a motions hearing Tuesday that he anticipates testimony from a veterinary pathologist, who will analyze the mouse's decomposition. The defense also hopes to get testimony from the quality assurance manager and line supervisor of the Portland, Indiana, plant where the can was bottled.

Putzier is seeking \$2,026, plus any general damages proven at trial, with interest. He sued under a new South Dakota law that allows certain cases to be handled more quickly. Under that law, each side is restricted to one witness and six hours.

But Johnson asked Judge Patrick Smith to change those limits for the case. Smith approved three experts for each party and agreed to lengthen the time limit for the trial. Johnson asked for four days, though the trial could take longer.

"Coca-Cola is faced with a claim that's really an attack on its brand," Johnson said. "Coca-Cola takes these cases extremely seriously and tries them all."

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

Couple dies after van-pickup crash in southeast South Dakota

DAVIS, S.D. (AP) — Authorities say a couple from Lennox has died from injuries suffered in a two-vehicle crash in southeastern South Dakota last weekend.

The South Dakota Department of Public Safety says 89-year-old Delmar Kuper was driving a van that collided with a pickup at an intersection on U.S. Highway 18 east of Davis on Sunday afternoon.

Kuper and his wife, 81-year-old Viola Kuper, were both injured and taken to a Sioux Falls hospital. Both died Monday.

The driver of the pickup was not hurt. All three people were wearing seat belts.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol is investigating.

Daugaard appoints Strawn as 4th Circuit judge

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Gov. Dennis Daugaard says he will appoint Magistrate Judge Eric Strawn of Spearfish as a circuit court judge in South Dakota's 4th Circuit Court.

Daugaard announced the appointment Thursday. Strawn will fill a vacancy created by the recent retirement of Judge Jerome Eckrich.

Strawn has served as magistrate judge in the 4th Circuit since 2013, and operates the circuit's DUI Court. He previously worked in private practice for eight years, in both civil and criminal law.

Strawn served as a special assistant attorney general for child support enforcement and as a child support referee. The U.S. Marine veteran graduated from the University of South Dakota School of Law in 2004.

The 4th Circuit includes Butte, Corson, Dewey, Harding, Lawrence, Meade, Perkins and Ziebach counties in western South Dakota.

Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorials

By The Associated Press

Rapid City Journal, Rapid City, April 20

State should look into secret sect

Rep. Tim Goodwin of Hill City recently asked a question that has been on the minds of many Black Hills residents. Will the state investigate what is going on at the compound in Pringle led by the brother of convicted sex offender Warren Jeffs?

The Associated Press reported this week that Goodwin wants his fellow lawmakers to investigate the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints' compound, a request that was shot down by Mark Mickelson of Sioux Falls, the speaker of the House of Representatives.

"If he thinks we need some laws, beautiful," said Mickelson, who is also chairman of the Legislature's Executive Board. "If he wants us to go investigate, I'm out."

It's interesting to hear that Mickelson is open to considering new laws even as the leadership at the FLDS compound continues to flout them.

According to the Department of Health, no reports of births or deaths have been received from the compound since the sect came to the state 10 years ago even though state law requires they be reported.

Furthermore, a former resident of the 140-acre compound in Custer County estimates there have been at least a dozen births there, which includes two of her daughters who were not allowed to have their births documented. In addition, no one in the state knows if the children there are getting an education.

Custer County Sheriff Rick Wheeler would also like the state to learn more about the super-secretive sect, which has a guard tower at its 140-acre compound.

The compound, one of several owned by the sect, is led by Seth Jeffs, the brother of Warren Jeffs, the FLDS leader and prophet now serving a life sentence in a Texas prison for sexually assaulting two of his child brides. He was arrested in 2011 after law enforcement raided a FLDS compound in Texas. Prior to that, he had been on the FBI's 10 Most Wanted List for arranging marriages between his followers and young girls.

Seth Jeffs, meanwhile, was convicted last year of participating in a multi-million dollar food-stamp fraud case in Utah.

The track record of this sect and how it treats women and girls in particular should offend any sense of decency. Yet South Dakota, which prides itself on its Christian and family values, has chosen to not only look the other way but has enabled the sect's presence in the state.

In 2015, the Water Management Board approved a permit to increase water use at the compound even though its attorney would not disclose the number of people who live there and several neighbors opposed the request on the grounds they believed suspicious activities were occurring there. The board voted 5-1 to grant the permit, which is good for 20 years.

Even though the Legislature might not be the appropriate body to investigate why the FLDS doesn't follow state laws, Mickelson could have expressed his concerns about a sect led by a convicted felon and then encouraged Attorney General Marty Jackley or the Department of Health to investigate why births and deaths are not being reported. As Goodwin said, an investigation of the less serious offenses could uncover the types of crimes that put Warren Jeffs in prison.

To continue to do nothing, however, sends the message that state laws don't apply to everyone, which will only encourage others who think they are above the law to come here and do as they please.

We'd rather see Jackley, who is running for governor on a law and order platform, and other state

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agencies hold this sect to the same standards they expect of other residents.

The Daily Republic, Mitchell, April 24

Community assets needed for small towns

Want to have a thriving, forward-thinking rural community?

Here are some ideas: Update the town's ballpark. Polish up and improve the local pool. Or, like in Mount Vernon recently, build a new track at the high school.

Mount Vernon late last week got to show off its \$450,000 track at the inaugural Greenway Relays, and we couldn't be happier for the small town.

Community assets are so important for rural areas. And while these investments many times do not have direct financial returns, the benefits are for long-term success.

Important to understand is many of South Dakota's rural communities are losing populations quickly. And that trend will likely continue for years to come.

But the towns with leaders who put stock into where they live will last much longer than those that are happy with business as usual. Remember, there's no silver bullet for success in rural areas.

We presume there are some who live in Mount Vernon who aren't happy that nearly a half-million-dollar track was constructed, but we applaud the move.

Communities like Mount Vernon need reasons to draw and keep people when there aren't as many jobs available as larger-sized towns. These rural areas need to engage the public and create a sense of community pride.

In Mount Vernon's case, the school district just showed a big commitment to athletics and extracurricular activities. It also gave residents an area to exercise and potentially hold community events.

So if you think your rural town needs a shot in the arm, talk to your local leaders about finding areas to spruce up or develop. Get involved with fundraising. Make a difference.

Doing nothing will only ensure a quicker decline to the death of rural South Dakota.

Capital Journal, Pierre, April 18

Recent closure announcements underscore need to support local entrepreneurs

There was a bit of bad news for Pierre last Friday.

Another national retailer announced the imminent closure of its Pierre location. This time it was Rue 21 up at Northridge Plaza. This is sort of a double whammy for the local mall and it's really not the Northridge Plaza management's fault.

Smaller malls have been declining in popularity for more than a decade and the retail sector of the U.S. economy has been sputtering through a tectonic shift in the way it does business. Profit margins are shrinking and store visitation is down, which means the folks at the top of these national chains have to decide whether the expense of keeping a smaller store in a rural area open is justifiable.

Increasingly, it seems, the answer is no, those smaller stores aren't worth keeping open. The corporate officers making these decisions are not beholden to the people who lose their jobs or the customers who find their already limited shopping options narrowed a bit more. They answer to the stockholders and the company's board of directors. That is as it should be. After all, a corporation exists to both mitigate risk and pay its shareholders their dividends.

The bottom line for those of us who live in rural America is that we are increasingly under served by that kind of business, particularly when it comes to retail. The problem gets worse when the ag economy finds itself on the down side of its business cycle like it is now.

Thankfully, Pierre and Fort Pierre are somewhat insulated against the ag economy's downturn thanks

to the presence of state government. Still, as evidenced by the recent closure announcements of Rue 21 and J.C. Penneys, our community is still going to be affected by national trends, just like any other rural community. And like other rural communities those issues will continue to make growth harder.

The solution is entrepreneurship. We should be looking to our own citizens to fill gaps in our communities. We should be encouraging people to come here to open a business. Support for local entrepreneurs should come not only from each of us as individuals but from our city and county governments too.

Locally owned businesses are far better for the local economies too. The money spent at local businesses tends to stay in the community far longer than money spent at large chain stores, for example. Local business owners also are far more likely to give money to local charities and are more likely to be civically engaged.

More of that can only be a good thing.

Law enforcement shakeup underway on Pine Ridge reservation

PINE RIDGE, S.D. (AP) — A major shakeup in law enforcement is taking place on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

The Oglala Sioux Tribal Council declared a state of emergency and withdrew support this week for Police Chief Harry Martinez, who has since resigned.

The council has faced a deluge of complaints from tribal members on a reservation that's experienced a wave of drug-related crime. Eight police chiefs have come and gone since 2008. Not long ago, 100 officers patrolled the reservation's 3 million acres. Now, it's just 30 officers.

KOTA (<http://bit.ly/2pCDPoH>) says the council has disbanded the Public Safety Board and hired Mark Mesteth as interim police chief. He held the job before Martinez.

Information from: KOTA-TV, <http://www.kotatv.com>

UN Security Council to discuss North Korea nuclear program

By MATTHEW PENNINGTON and EDITH M. LEDERER, Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Turning to diplomacy after flexing military muscle, the United States will urge the U.N. Security Council on Friday to increase economic pressure on North Korea over its nuclear weapons program, leaning on China in particular to turn the screws on its wayward ally.

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson will meet with his counterparts from allies Japan and South Korea before chairing a ministerial meeting of the U.N.'s top decision-making body. The U.S. wants to tighten the implementation of sanctions and build international resolve to isolate North Korea so it eventually disarms.

That's a goal that has eluded U.S. administrations for two decades, and the threat is intensifying. North Korea may already be able to strike its U.S.-allied neighbors with a nuclear-tipped missile, and could have the U.S. mainland within range by the end of President Donald Trump's first term.

Tensions on and around the divided Korean Peninsula have been running high. In an attempt to deter North Korea from more nuclear and missile testing, the U.S. has sent a group of American warships led by an aircraft carrier to the region. North Korea this week conducted large-scale, live-fire exercises on its eastern coast.

However, after weeks of unusually blunt military threats, the Trump administration announced this

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week its policy is to exert economic and diplomatic pressure with international partners to achieve denuclearization and that it is not aiming for regime change in North Korea. Officials say, however, a military strike is still an option.

While the U.S. is calling for global action, it says the onus is on China to ramp up pressure on North Korea, its main trading partner and source of food and fuel aid. China wants North Korea to end its nuclear weapons program but is wary of destabilizing its traditional ally on whose side it fought in the 1950-53 Korean War.

Tillerson said in an interview Thursday that Beijing has threatened to impose unilateral sanctions on North Korea if it conducts further nuclear tests. It conducted two last year and satellite imagery in recent weeks has suggested another could be imminent.

China "confirmed to us that they had requested the regime conduct no further nuclear test," Tillerson said on Fox News Channel.

China's foreign ministry on Friday refused to confirm or deny Tillerson's assertion "that if they did conduct further nuclear tests, China would be taking sanctions actions on their own."

In February, China said it was suspending for the rest of the year coal imports that are an important revenue source for North Korea. Beijing said that was to adhere to the latest in a series of Security Council resolutions aimed at curbing the North's nuclear and missile programs. Other Chinese economic activity with North Korea remains robust.

In a separate interview with National Public Radio, Tillerson said the U.S. remains open to holding direct negotiations with Pyongyang.

"But North Korea has to decide they're ready to talk to us about the about the right agenda, and the right agenda is not simply stopping where they are for a few more months or a few more years and then resuming things," he said. "That's been the agenda for the last 20 years."

China is eager to see a resumption of negotiations. Multi-nation talks with North Korea on its nuclear program stalled in 2008. The Obama administration attempted to resurrect them in 2012, but a deal to provide food aid in exchange for a nuclear freeze soon collapsed.

North Korea says it needs nuclear weapons because of the "hostile" policy of the U.S. toward it, and has threatened nuclear strikes if there is war. It complained this week that the Security Council rejected its request last month to discuss U.S.-South Korea military exercises it says are a rehearsal for invasion.

The U.S. is currently president of the 15-member Security Council. Although South Korea is not currently on the council it will also address the meeting. As of late Thursday, North Korea had not requested to speak.

Tillerson will have separate meetings Friday with British Foreign Secretary Johnson, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, and U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

Britain's U.N. Ambassador Matthew Rycroft told reporters Thursday, "the world cannot ignore" the emerging threat of the North's intercontinental ballistic missile and nuclear capability. French Ambassador Francois Delattre said it supports America and others in seeking to maximize pressure on the North Korean government.

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. TRUMP HEADS TO NRA CONVENTION IN ATLANTA

Gun control advocates say they are ready to rumble now that the president, a darling of the National Rifle Association, is in the Oval Office.

2. ARKANSAS COMPLETES SERIES OF EXECUTIONS

The state concludes an aggressive lethal injection schedule, executing a fourth inmate in eight days.

3. WHO WON'T SHOW THEIR HAND ON PUNITIVE NORTH KOREA ACTION

China has refused to confirm or deny U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's assertion that Beijing has threatened to impose unilateral sanctions on Pyongyang if it conducts further nuclear tests.

4. WHAT THE POPE IS SEEKING IN EGYPT

Francis aims to present a united Christian-Muslim front that repudiates violence committed in God's name during his two-day trip to Cairo.

5. THE HOUSE WON'T VOTE ON A HEALTH BILL THIS WEEK

The decision deals a setback to the White House, which has pressured congressional Republicans to pass the bill by Saturday — Trump's 100th day in office.

6. NEW NUMBERS ARE EXPECTED TO SHOW THE US ECONOMY SLOWED IN LAST QUARTER

But economists foresee a sharp rebound in the current April-June quarter on the strength of solid job growth, higher consumer confidence and stock-market records.

7. A TRUMP TOWER IS FATED NOT TO RISE IN BALI

Trump's organization is promising that its first resort in Asia will have breathtaking views overlooking a famed nearby temple, but Bali's height restrictions prohibit structures higher than coconut palms — about 49 feet.

8. THE WAIT FOR A CALORIE COUNT ON THAT BURGER OR PIZZA MIGHT GET LONGER

New FDA rules to help people find out how many calories are in their restaurant meals are set to go into effect next week. But they could be pushed back if grocery stores, convenience stores and pizza delivery chains get their way.

9. MEET NEW, HIGH-TECH METHODS IN THE FIGHT AGAINST INVASIVE SPECIES

Examples including a robot that zaps and vacuums up venomous lionfish in Bermuda, and a helicopter that pelts Guam's trees with poison-baited dead mice to fight the voracious brown tree snake.

10. NFL TEAMS GO ON OFFENSIVE IN DRAFT

Despite defensive studs everywhere in pro football's annual draft, teams went after offensive talent, especially quarterbacks like North Carolina's Mitchell Trubisky.

In Egypt, pope seeks Christian-Muslim rejection of violence

By NICOLE WINFIELD, Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Francis is brushing off security concerns to forge ahead on Friday with a two-day trip to Egypt aimed at presenting a united Christian-Muslim front that repudiates violence committed in God's name.

Three weeks after Islamic militants staged twin Palm Sunday church attacks, Francis is to land in Cairo in the early afternoon for a series of deeply symbolic encounters with Egypt's religious and political leadership.

He will meet with Egypt's president, patriarch and the "other" pope, Tawadros II of the Coptic Orthodox Church, and pray for victims of the attacks.

Most importantly, he will also visit Al-Azhar, the revered 1,000-year-old seat of learning in Sunni Islam. There, he will meet privately with grand imam Sheikh Ahmed el-Tayeb, and participate in an international peace conference Friday afternoon.

Looking relaxed and cheerful and carrying his own travel satchel as usual, the pope climbed the steps of the Alitalia jet in late morning and chatted with the flight crew. The plane took off from Rome's

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Leonardo da Vinci airport about 11 a.m. (0900 GMT).

The goal of the trip is to bring a message of peace to a country that has been ravaged by Islamic extremist attacks, and encourage a culture of respect and tolerance for religious minorities, said Cardinal Pietro Parolin, the Vatican secretary of state.

"The fundamental issue is education, and educating those of different religious beliefs and especially the young, to have great respect for those of other faiths," Parolin told the Vatican newspaper L'Osservatore Romano. "The question of language is fundamental: when you use a violent language, there is the danger that it can result in violent acts."

After visiting Al-Azhar, Francis meets with Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, and then heads to the seat of the Coptic Orthodox Church, which accounts for about 10 percent of Egypt's 92 million people.

Francis and Tawadros will preside over an ecumenical prayer service in St. Peter's church, the Coptic cathedral that was the site of a December suicide bombing claimed by Islamic State militants that killed 30 people.

Francis has frequently spoken out about today's Christian martyrs and the "ecumenism of blood" that has united Catholic, Orthodox and other Christians targeted for their faith by Islamic militants.

Parolin, the Vatican No. 2, said he hoped Francis' visit might help convince them to "stay in their countries despite the difficulties and continue to give their Christian testimony in a majority Muslim society."

While Francis eschewed the armored popemobile his predecessors used on foreign trips, security was visibly tightened for the 27 hours he will be on the ground in Cairo.

Streets that will be used by the pontiff's motorcade around the Coptic Orthodox cathedral and the Vatican Embassy were cleared of cars, and police swarmed the upscale Cairo neighborhood of Zamalek on a Nile River island where Francis will sleep on Friday.

Policemen in riverboats patrolled the Nile in front of the embassy. Security men were posted every hundred meters (yards) or so along the 20-kilometer (12-mile) stretch between the airport and central Cairo in anticipation of Francis' arrival. Armored cars were stationed in front of the presidential palace, where Francis makes his first stop.

The pope's visit, however, is unlikely to cause much disruption to the city of some 18 million people as it falls on the Muslim Friday-Saturday weekend, when the usually congested traffic is significantly lighter.

Banners in the Zamalek neighborhood welcomed Francis, with one from a private company saying "1,000,000 workers of Sharm el-Sheikh welcome the pontiff."

Associated Press Writer Brian Rohan in Cairo contributed to this report.

New scrutiny of timeline after Arkansas executes 4th inmate

By KELLY P. KISSEL and ANDREW DeMILLO, Associated Press

VARNER, Ark. (AP) — Arkansas wrapped up an accelerated executions schedule with a lethal injection that left the condemned inmate lurching and convulsing before he died, prompting calls for investigations and renewed scrutiny of the state's efforts to put multiple inmates to death on a compressed timeline.

Kenneth Williams on Thursday became the fourth convicted killer executed in Arkansas in eight days as the state sought to carry out as many lethal injections as possible before one of its drugs expires Sunday.

An Associated Press reporter who witnessed the execution said that about three minutes in, Williams'

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body jerked 15 times in quick succession — lurching violently against the leather restraint across his chest — then the rate slowed for a final five movements.

J.R. Davis, a spokesman for Gov. Asa Hutchinson who did not witness the execution, called the movements “an involuntary muscular reaction” that he said was a widely known effect of the surgical sedative midazolam, the first of three drugs administered.

Williams’ attorneys released a statement calling witness accounts “horrific” and demanding an investigation into what they called the “problematic execution.”

Arkansas had scheduled eight executions over an 11-day period before one of its lethal injection drugs expires on Sunday. That would have been the most in such a short time since the U.S. Supreme Court reinstated the death penalty in 1976, but courts issued stays for four of the inmates. The four lethal injections that were carried out included Monday’s first double execution in the United States since 2000.

Williams read a prepared final statement before the execution began, apologizing to the families he “senselessly wronged and deprived of their loved ones.” He also spoke in tongues, the unintelligible but language-like speech used in some religions. But his prayer faded off as the midazolam took effect. He said, “The words that I speak will forever be, will forever ...” before he fell silent.

The inmate breathed heavily through his nose until just after three minutes into his execution, when his chest leaped forward in a series of what seemed like involuntary movements. His right hand never clenched and his face remained what one media witness called “serene.”

After the jerking, Williams breathed through his mouth and moaned or groaned once — during a consciousness check — until falling still seven minutes into the lethal injection.

A Friday morning tweet from the account of a Republican state Sen. Trent Garner, who witnessed the execution, said Williams did not “seem in pain. ... It was not cruel, unusual, botched or torture.”

Williams was sentenced to death for killing a former deputy warden, Cecil Boren, after he escaped from prison in 1999. At the time of his escape in a 500-gallon barrel of hog slop, Williams was less than three weeks into a life term for the death of a college cheerleader.

“Any amount of movement he might have had was far less than any of his victims,” said Jodie Efir, one of Boren’s daughters, who witnessed the execution.

State officials have called Arkansas’ string of executions a success, declaring justice served and “closure” for victims’ families. Some concerns had been raised about Monday’s execution of Jack Jones, whose mouth moved after attorneys said he should have been unconscious, though a federal judge determined it did not appear to be “torturous and inhumane.”

All of the Arkansas inmates — including Williams — have died within 20 minutes of their executions beginning, a contrast from troubled midazolam-related executions in other states that took anywhere from 43 minutes to two hours. Though witnesses to those lengthier executions also described hearing inmates breathe heavily, snore or snort or seeing them struggle against their restraints.

“The long path of justice ended tonight and Arkansans can reflect on the last two weeks with confidence that our system of laws in this state has worked,” Hutchinson said in a statement issued after Williams’ execution.

Davis, the governor’s spokesman, said later that he was sure Hutchinson would follow up “as he does with every execution,” but that the governor was confident the Department of Correction “did what it was supposed to do.”

Davis stood by his previous description of the state’s executions as “flawless.”

Dale Baich, an assistant federal public defender who witnessed a flawed 2014 Arizona execution that took two hours, said in an email early Friday that after reading media reports, “It appears from witness

accounts that Mr. Williams was not fully sedated when the paralytic was administered.

"At a minimum, this was a deviation from the protocol."

Williams' lawyers had said he had sickle cell trait, lupus and brain damage, and argued the combined maladies could subject him to an exceptionally painful execution in violation of the U.S. Constitution. They argued Arkansas' "one size fits all" execution protocol could have left him in pain after a paralytic agent rendered him unable to move. State and federal courts rejected the claims.

Williams was sentenced to death for killing Boren after escaping from the Cummins Unit prison in a barrel holding a mishmash of kitchen scraps. He left the prison — where the execution chamber is located in another part of the facility — less than three weeks into a life prison term for killing University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff cheerleader Dominique Hurd in 1998. At the conclusion of that trial, he had taunted the young woman's family by turning to them after the sentence was announced and saying "You thought I was going to die, didn't you?"

After jumping from the barrel, he sneaked along a tree line until reaching Boren's house. He killed Boren, stole guns and Boren's truck and then drove away to Missouri. There, he crashed into a water-delivery truck, killing the driver. While in prison, he confessed to killing another person in 1998.

At the time of Boren's death, investigators said it did not appear Boren was targeted because of his former employment by the Arkansas Department of Correction.

Follow Kelly P. Kissel at www.twitter.com/kisselAP and Andrew DeMillo on Twitter at www.twitter.com/ademillo.

Trump won't get House OK of health bill before his 100th day

By ALAN FRAM, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump seems destined to serve his 100th day in office without House passage of a major Republican health care bill or enactment of a budget financing the government for the rest of this year. But at least the government probably won't be shut down — for at least another week.

The House won't vote on a reworked health care overhaul until at least next week, Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., told reporters late Thursday. Party leaders made that decision after spending all day pressuring moderate GOP lawmakers to back that bill, but fell short of the votes they'd need to prevail.

"As soon as we have the votes, we'll vote on it," McCarthy said after leaving a nearly two-hour meeting of the House GOP leadership.

He ruled out votes on Friday or Saturday — which is Trump's 100th day in the White House. That was a disappointment for the administration, whose officials had pressured House leaders all week to try completing the health measure by Saturday.

McCarthy also said Republicans would push through the House Friday a short-term spending bill keeping the government open for at least another week. They plan to pass it with only GOP votes, if necessary. Minority Democrats are threatening to withhold support unless there is a bipartisan deal on a massive \$1 trillion measure funding agencies through Sept. 30, when the current fiscal year ends, and no final agreement has been reached.

"We're working on the funding of government. We're getting that through" on Friday, McCarthy said of the temporary spending measure.

Asked by reporters whether Republicans would have to pass the short-term bill without Democratic

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votes, McCarthy said, "Yeah."

The struggle over both bills was embarrassing to the GOP, which has Trump in the White House and majorities in Congress. Republicans would have preferred to not be laboring to keep agencies functioning or approve a health care overhaul, the gold standard of GOP campaign promises for the past seven years.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said bargainers were "very close" to completing the \$1 trillion budget package. But underscoring lingering battles over environmental and financial regulations, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., blocked the Senate late Thursday from approving the short-term measure.

"No poison pill riders," he said.

The bipartisan budget talks had progressed smoothly after the White House dropped a threat to withhold payments that help lower-income Americans pay their medical bills and Trump abandoned a demand for money for a border wall with Mexico.

With neither party savoring a federal shutdown, it seemed likely Congress would approve the week-long stopgap measure in time to keep agencies open.

On the separate health care bill, House Republican leaders are still scrounging for votes from their own rank-and-file to rescue it.

Republicans have recast it to let states escape a requirement under President Barack Obama's 2010 law that insurers charge healthy and seriously ill customers the same rates. They could also be exempted from Obama's mandate that insurers cover a list of services like hospitalization and substance abuse treatment and from its prohibition against charging older customers more than triple their rates for younger ones.

The overall legislation would cut the Medicaid program for the poor, eliminate Obama's fines for people who don't buy insurance and provide generally skimpier subsidies.

Centrist Republicans were the primary target of lobbying by the White House and GOP leaders seeking the 216 votes they would need to clinch passage of the health measure.

More than a dozen Republicans, mostly moderates, said they were opposing the legislation. Many others remained publicly uncommitted, putting party elders in a tough spot. If 22 Republicans defect, the bill would fail, assuming all Democrats opposed it.

House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., wants to avoid an encore of last month's embarrassment. He abruptly canceled a vote on a health care overhaul at that time because of opposition from moderates and conservatives alike.

On Wednesday, conservatives in the House Freedom Caucus announced their support for the revised health legislation. That reversed the conservatives' opposition to the earlier edition of the legislation.

AP reporters Erica Werner, Andrew Taylor and Kevin Freking contributed to this report.

AP FACT CHECK: US anti-missile system in S. Korea has limits

By FOSTER KLUG, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Neat certainties are rare in the North Korean nuclear crisis, which for decades has simmered and occasionally boiled over, without resolution.

So it was jarring to see the absolute confidence with which America's top Pacific commander described the ability of a contentious U.S. missile defense system, scheduled to be up and running in days in South Korea, to shoot down North Korean missiles.

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"If it flies, it will die," Adm. Harry Harris Jr. told U.S. lawmakers at a hearing Wednesday. Like nearly everything associated with the world's last Cold War standoff, the truth is muddier. To test the admiral's assertion, The Associated Press asked a handful of specialists to weigh in on one of the biggest points of friction in Northeast Asia.

THAAD HAS LIMITS, UNKNOWNNS

Harris does have some data to back up his bold statement.

After an early redesign, the Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense system, or THAAD, was reportedly successfully tested 12 times, according to Jonathan McDowell, an astrophysicist at the Harvard-Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics.

A controlled test, however, is a much different matter than an actual war, where large numbers of missiles will be fired with little or no warning.

"Things that work well at home on the test range don't always go as smoothly when deployed," McDowell said.

A salvo of multiple North Korean short-range missiles, for instance, could overwhelm THAAD, said David Wright, co-director of the Union of Concerned Scientists' Global Security Program.

THAAD will also be deployed about 200 kilometers (125 miles) south of Seoul, whose greater metropolitan area, about an hour from the heavily armed border, is home to 25 million. "It cannot engage missiles fired at Seoul, so it offers no additional protection of the city," Wright said.

Some scientists are even blunter.

Harris' comments about THAAD's capabilities "are technically incorrect," said Theodore Postol, a professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. "The THAAD interceptor is very easily defeated by either causing a missile to tumble end over end, or by intentionally fragmenting a rocket into pieces."

THAAD's capabilities as a defense system "can be expected to be very low, probably zero or close to that," Postol said.

THE POLITICAL ANGLE

Viewed one way, Harris' declaration of confidence makes perfect sense.

A senior military official briefing lawmakers beholden to American taxpayers must show complete confidence in the very expensive piece of hardware that's about to be deployed in a skittish U.S. ally living in direct range of North Korean missiles.

"Just imagine an Air Force general saying that his new jetfighters, designed for air superiority, will not stand a chance against the enemy fighters," said Markus Schiller, a missile specialist in Germany. "The same is true for a missile defense system — once deployed, the commanding officer has to say it will work."

The U.S. admiral may also have been looking to soothe South Korea.

THAAD is a big issue ahead of the May 9 presidential election, with the leading candidate, liberal Moon Jae-in, vowing to reconsider the deployment if he wins.

Some South Koreans wonder why the United States and the caretaker government that took over for recently removed President Park Geun-hye rushed key parts of THAAD into place before dawn this week, prompting violent clashes between local villagers and police.

THE CHINA ANGLE

Another subtext to the admiral's comments on THAAD is China.

Beijing says THAAD's powerful radar can be reconfigured to peer deep into its territory and monitor

its flights and missile launches.

Seoul already sees moves by Beijing to retaliate, including limits on Chinese tour group visits to South Korea, which is increasingly dependent on Chinese tourism and demand for its industrial products.

Some experts are sympathetic with China's argument.

Postol said THAAD's radar can track Chinese intercontinental ballistic missiles flying below the curved earth horizon of U.S. missile defense radars in Alaska. It could then send and receive critical missile defense information to U.S. monitors.

"This makes it possible for the THAAD radar to quickly acquire ICBMs launched from China well before the ICBMs rise over the horizon where they could be then seen by U.S. national missile defense radars," Postol said.

Klug, AP bureau chief in Seoul, has reported on the Koreas since 2005. Follow on Twitter: www.twitter.com/@apklug

Immigrants plan May Day rallies buoyed by Trump opposition

By SOPHIA TAREEN and AMY TAXIN, Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Immigrant groups and their allies have joined forces to carry out marches, rallies and protests in cities nationwide next week to mark May Day, saying there's renewed momentum to fight back against Trump administration policies.

Activists in major cities including New York, Chicago and Los Angeles expect tens of thousands of people to participate in Monday demonstrations, starting with morning neighborhood protests and culminating in rush hour events downtown. Activists also plan an overnight vigil in Phoenix, a farm workers demonstration outside Miami and a White House rally. In Seattle, pro-immigrant events are expected to give way to rowdier, anti-capitalist marches led by protesters who said they plan to shut down a major freeway through the city.

"We're seeing an unprecedented amount of enthusiasm and activity," said New York Immigration Coalition executive director Steven Choi. "It's driven by the fact that Trump administration has made immigration the tip of the spear."

Around the world, union members have traditionally marched on May 1 for workers' rights. In the United States, the event became a rallying point for immigrants in 2006 when more than 1 million people marched against a proposed immigration enforcement bill.

While the current climate surrounding immigration may be similar to 2006 amid President Donald Trump's hard-line approach to the issue, the immigrant rights movement has changed dramatically since then.

Advocacy groups that in 2006 were united in their determination to flood the streets to make a statement have fractured since then and pursued other efforts, such as voter registration, lobbying and fighting deportations.

However, activists expect a surge in participation this year, in part because immigrant rights groups have worked with Women's March participants, Black Lives Matter and Muslim civil rights groups who are united by their opposition to Donald Trump. Also, businesses with immigrant ties are closing or allowing employees to take the day off without penalty.

Immigrant groups acknowledged there is some fear among people in the country illegally who are skittish about drawing attention to themselves in visible marches. But organizers are reminding them that it's an important cause and there's safety in numbers.

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"If you are an immigrant in Los Angeles, the safest place you can be on Monday is in the action in downtown Los Angeles," said David Huerta, president of SEIU United Service Workers West.

As Trump approaches his first 100 days, he has aggressively pursued immigration enforcement, including executive orders for a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border and a ban on travelers from six predominantly-Muslim countries. The government has arrested thousands of immigrants in the country illegally and threatened to withhold funding from sanctuary jurisdictions, which limit cooperation between local and federal immigration authorities.

In response, leaders in sanctuary cities have vowed to fight back and civic participation has seen a boost, including February's "Day Without Immigrants." The travel ban and sanctuary order were temporarily halted by legal challenges.

"We will not be divided," Pastor Don Taylor of an interfaith organizing group told Chicago supporters preparing this week for May 1. "It is a moral issue."

Still, while there is opposition to Trump, activists aren't focused on a single course of action.

In Illinois, they're pushing legislative plans to essentially extend sanctuary protections statewide. Outside Miami, advocates are calling for an extension of temporary protected status for Haitians displaced by a deadly 2010 earthquake. In Detroit, the push is for immigrants' constitutional rights, including due process.

In Los Angeles, organizers expect as many as 100,000. New York could see up to 50,000 participants. Chicago organizers estimate at least 20,000. In Pennsylvania, student groups are calling for strikes to demand a safe place for immigrants on campus, while in Las Vegas culinary workers will take to the casino-lined strip to show support.

In the Chicago area, dozens of restaurants and grocery stores planned to either close or allow workers to attend the demonstrations. In Portland, Oregon, unions, immigrants and others are urging people to skip work, school and shopping to highlight the importance of workers and the community's strength.

Elsewhere, union leaders have asked employers to let workers participate. Google, for one, asked managers to be flexible in accommodating requests for time-off so employees can join marches.

Adonis Flores, an organizer with Michigan United, plans to participate for the first time on what's long been known as International Workers Day.

The 28-year-old was brought to the country as a young child from Mexico and doesn't have legal permission to stay. For four years, he's received a work permit through an Obama administration program for young people, and doubts Trump's assurances that his administration won't target people like him for deportation.

"I don't believe anything he says and don't believe anybody should," he said. "It's getting to a point where the community is being tired and ready to take action."

Taxin reported from Santa Ana, California. Astrid Galvan contributed from Phoenix.

Follow Sophia Tareen on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/sophiatareen> and Amy Taxin at <https://twitter.com/ataxin>.

Wait for calorie count on burgers, pizza may get longer

By MARY CLARE JALONICK, Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Consumers hoping to consistently find out how many calories are in that burger and fries may have to wait — again.

New government rules to help people find out how many calories are in their restaurant meals are set

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to go into effect next week after years of delays. But they could be pushed back again if grocery stores, convenience stores and pizza delivery chains get their way.

Originally passed as part of the health care overhaul in 2010, the law requires restaurants and other establishments that sell prepared foods and have 20 or more locations to post the calorie content of food "clearly and conspicuously" on their menus, menu boards and displays. The delays have come as those businesses that never wanted to be part of the law say it is burdensome and have fiercely lobbied against it.

Facing a May 5 compliance deadline set by the Food and Drug Administration last year, those groups are eyeing a massive spending bill that Congress will have to pass in the next week to keep the government open. They're hoping to either delay the menu labeling rules again or include legislation in the larger bill that would revise the law and make it easier for some businesses to comply.

At the same time, the FDA is signaling it may act on the issue even sooner. In a typical first step before a rule or decision is announced, the agency has sent language to the White House for review that would delay the compliance date.

A delay would be the latest of many. The FDA took more than four years to write the rules, and establishments originally had until the end of 2015 to comply. That was pushed to 2016 and then to May 2017.

The idea behind the menu labeling law is that people may pass on that bacon double cheeseburger at a chain restaurant, hot dog at a gas station or large popcorn at the movie theater if they know that it has hundreds of calories. But grocery stores and convenience stores have said the rules would be more burdensome for them than they would be for restaurants, which typically have more limited offerings and a central ordering point. The majority of prepared foods in grocery stores will have to be labeled — from the salad bar to the hot food bar to cookies in the bakery.

The industry groups are backing legislation by Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, R-Wash., that would narrow labeling requirements for supermarkets by allowing stores to use a menu or menu board in a prepared foods area instead of putting labels on individual items. It would also allow restaurants like pizza chains that receive most of their orders remotely to post calories online instead of at the retail location, as the rules now require.

McMorris Rodgers, a member of House leadership, has been pushing for her legislation to be included in the spending bill. But if it's not included, a delay by the FDA could give Congress the needed time to pass it.

With the nutrition-minded Obama administration out of office and President Donald Trump promising to repeal burdensome regulations, the groups think they may finally have a chance to win some concessions on the law. Jon Taets of the National Association of Convenience Stores says his group is doing "a full court press" to get some changes.

The American Pizza Community, an advocacy group for pizza companies, is also pushing for a revision. They say the FDA rules, which require menu boards in the restaurants, don't make any sense because most of their customers don't come into the store.

The law "works for fast food and sit-down restaurants, but it does not work for pizza companies," says Tim McIntyre, an executive at delivery giant Domino's and head of the pizza group.

Nutrition advocates who worked closely with the Obama administration say the rules should go forward. Margo Wootan, a lobbyist at the Center for Science and the Public Interest who helped negotiate the original legislation with the restaurant industry, says the rules are important because people get a third of their calories from eating out and restaurant portions tend to be larger.

"Congress and the Trump administration should listen to the millions of Americans who want to make

informed choices when eating out rather than the whining of a few special interests," she says.

The National Restaurant Association also came out against a delay Thursday, saying a patchwork of state laws would be "even more burdensome." Many restaurants have already posted the calorie labels, but they aren't required to until next week.

4th Arkansas inmate executed in 8 days lurches on gurney

By **ANDREW DeMILLO** and **KELLY P. KISSEL**, Associated Press

VARNER, Ark. (AP) — Arkansas executed its fourth inmate in eight days Thursday night, wrapping up an accelerated schedule with a lethal injection that left the prisoner lurching and convulsing 20 times before he died.

Kenneth Williams, 38, was pronounced dead at 11:05 p.m., 13 minutes after the execution began at the Cummins Unit prison at Varner.

An Associated Press reporter who witnessed the lethal injection said Williams' body jerked 15 times in quick succession, then the rate slowed for a final five movements. J.R. Davis, a spokesman for Gov. Asa Hutchinson who did not witness the execution, called it "an involuntary muscular reaction" that he said was a widely known effect of the sedative midazolam, the first of three drugs administered.

Williams' attorneys are calling for an investigation into the execution.

Arkansas had scheduled eight executions over an 11-day period before one of its lethal injection drugs expires on Sunday. That would have been the most in such a compressed period since the U.S. Supreme Court reinstated the death penalty in 1976, but courts issued stays for four of the inmates.

The four lethal injections that were carried out included Monday's first double execution in the United States since 2000.

"I extend my sincerest of apologies to the families I have senselessly wronged and deprived of their loved ones," Williams said in a final statement he read from the death chamber. "... I was more than wrong. The crimes I perpetrated against you all was senseless, extremely hurtful and inexcusable."

Williams also spoke in tongues, the unintelligible but language-like speech used in some religions. But his prayer faded off as the sedative midazolam took effect. His final words were, "The words that I speak will forever be, will forever ..." before he fell silent.

The inmate breathed heavily through his nose until just after three minutes into his execution, when his chest leaped forward in a series of what seemed like involuntary movements. His right hand never clenched and his face remained what one media witness called "serene."

After the jerking, Williams breathed through his mouth and moaned or groaned once — during a consciousness check — until falling still seven minutes into the lethal injection.

Williams was sentenced to death for killing a former deputy warden, Cecil Boren, after he escaped from prison in 1999. At the time of his escape in a 500-gallon barrel of hog slop, Williams was less than three weeks into a life term for the death of a college cheerleader.

"Any amount of movement he might have had was far less than any of his victims," said Jodie Efir, one of Boren's daughters, who witnessed the execution.

State officials have declared the string of executions a success, using terms like "closure" for the victims' families. The inmates have died within 20 minutes of their executions beginning, a contrast from midazolam-related executions in other states that took anywhere from 43 minutes to two hours. The inmates' lawyers have said there are still flaws and that there is no certainty that the inmates aren't suffering while they die.

"The long path of justice ended tonight and Arkansans can reflect on the last two weeks with confi-

dence that our system of laws in this state has worked," Hutchinson said in a statement issued after the execution. "Carrying out the penalty of the jury in the Kenneth Williams case was necessary. There has never been a question of guilt."

Arkansas scheduled the executions for the final two weeks of April because its supply of midazolam, normally a surgical sedative, expires on Sunday. The Arkansas Department of Correction has said it has no new source for the drug — though it has made similar remarks previously yet still found a new stash.

Williams' lawyers said he had sickle cell trait, lupus and brain damage, and argued the combined maladies could subject him to an exceptionally painful execution in violation of the U.S. Constitution. Arkansas' "one size fits all" execution protocol could leave him in pain after a paralytic agent renders him unable to move, they'd argued to state and federal courts, which all rejected his claims.

One of Williams' attorneys, Shawn Nolan, described the accounts of Williams' execution as "horrifying."

"We tried over and over again to get the state to comport with their own protocol to avoid torturing our client to death, and yet reports from the execution witnesses indicate that Mr. Williams suffered during this execution," Nolan said.

Williams was sentenced to death for killing Boren after escaping from the Cummins Unit prison in a barrel holding a mishmash of kitchen scraps. He left the prison — where the execution chamber is located in another part of the facility — less than three weeks into a life prison term for killing University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff cheerleader Dominique Hurd in 1998. At the conclusion of that trial, he had taunted the young woman's family by turning to them after the sentence was announced and saying "You thought I was going to die, didn't you?"

After jumping from the barrel, he sneaked along a tree line until reaching Boren's house. He killed Boren, stole guns and Boren's truck and then drove away to Missouri. There, he crashed into a water-delivery truck, killing the driver. While in prison, he confessed to killing another person in 1998.

At the time of Boren's death, investigators said it did not appear Boren was targeted because of his former employment by the Arkansas Department of Correction.

Follow Andrew DeMillo on Twitter at www.twitter.com/ademillo and Kelly P. Kissel at www.twitter.com/kisselAP

Starting with Bears, surprises galore on Day 1 of NFL draft

By **SIMMI BUTTAR**, AP Sports Writer

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Defense was supposed to dominate in the first round of the NFL draft. It did, eventually. It just took a while.

After the Browns took Texas A&M defensive end Myles Garrett with the No. 1 overall pick Thursday night, eight of the next 11 picks were offensive players in a surprising opening day. Overall, 19 of the 32 players were from the defense, which was closer to projections.

The first stunning move was the Bears trading with the 49ers to select North Carolina quarterback Mitchell Trubisky at No. 2.

"It was just pretty much silence," Trubisky said. "That's why I'm surprised to hear my name called because we didn't have a lot of contact. I just think they ... were impressed with me at the combine and my workout. But yeah, I haven't had a whole lot of contact with them, so that makes it so much more exciting."

Considering the wild nature of the opening round, Friday's second and third rounds could feature

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more of the same.

Among the players still available are Florida State running back Dalvin Cook, Notre Dame quarterback DeShone Kizer, Alabama offensive lineman Cam Robinson, Oklahoma running back Joe Mixon, and UConn defensive back Obi Melifonwu. Cook was an All-American last season.

After taking Garrett, the Browns added Michigan's Jabrill Peppers and tight end David Njoku as they look to improve off a horrendous 1-15 season. The Browns were the first team since Minnesota in 2013 to have three first-round picks.

The Chiefs and the Texans also got in on the bartering to get quarterbacks. Kansas City moved from 27 to 10 for Patrick Mahomes of Texas Tech. And Houston made a trade with the Browns and selected Deshaun Watson, who led Clemson to the national title last season.

"You're trying to anticipate what's going to happen," Texans GM Rick Smith said. "The foundation for this move was laid earlier with Sashi (Brown, Cleveland's VP of football operations).

"You've got all kinds of scenarios that you have to run to be prepared, because as much as you think you're prepared when the draft starts, it's such a fluid process that you've got to be able to react, and the only way to do that is to be in some respects prepared."

The first run of defensive players started with Arizona taking Temple's Haason Reddick at No. 13, which drew a big cheer from the huge crowd at Philadelphia's Museum of Art — city officials estimated 100,000 attended the Draft Experience.

The Eagles went next and picked defensive end Derek Barnett. But it was what was going on around him that surprised Philadelphia's Howie Roseman.

"We had a lot of scenarios, but we did not have any scenarios like what's happened here," the Eagles' executive vice president of football operations said.

After not having any players selected in the top 15, Alabama ended up having the most taken in the first round: Baltimore took cornerback Marlon Humphrey at 16, Washington got defensive tackle Jonathan Allen at 17, Tampa Bay selected tight end O.J. Howard at 19, and San Francisco took linebacker Reuben Foster at 31.

One controversial pick was Ohio State cornerback Gareon Conley, who was drafted by Oakland at No. 24. Days before the draft, allegations emerged that Conley raped a woman in Cleveland. He called the accusations "completely false" and no charges have been filed. Conley was named in a police report that details the allegations but no information has been forwarded to prosecutors.

Raiders general manager Reggie McKenzie sounded confident the situation will be resolved.

"The research was done," McKenzie said. "It wasn't just a gut (feeling). It was based on research. We are very confident in the information that we gathered."

Earlier in the draft, the 49ers took Stanford tight end Solomon Thomas at No. 3, and LSU running back Leonard Fournette went to Jacksonville at No. 4. The Titans rounded out the top five with Western Michigan wide receiver Corey Davis.

The New York Jets took LSU safety Jamal Adams at No. 6 for the third defensive pick in the top 10. He was followed by wide receiver Mike Williams as the first pick of the Los Angeles Chargers, then running back-kick returner Christian McCaffrey went to Carolina. Cincinnati surprised some by taking speedy wide receiver John Ross from Washington.

Kansas City, which was 12-4 and won the AFC West last season and has Alex Smith at quarterback, may have found his replacement in Mahomes.

It was only the third time in the common-draft era Kansas City selected a quarterback in the first round, and the first since Todd Blackledge failed to live up to expectations from the 1983 draft.

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"Right now, Patrick isn't absolutely ready to play. He's got some work to do," Chiefs coach Andy Reid said.

"But he's coming into a great room, he has an opportunity to learn from Alex, which will be a great for him. We have to have some patience with him, but he has tremendous upside."

Upside is what it's all about on Day 1 of the draft.

For more NFL coverage: <http://www.pro32.ap.org> and http://www.twitter.com/AP_NFL

Offensive draft early, QBs prized after Garrett is No. 1

By BARRY WILNER, AP Pro Football Writer

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — With defensive studs everywhere in this draft, NFL teams turned offensive. With an emphasis on quarterbacks.

Hardly stunning in a pass-happy league, except that no quarterbacks in this crop have been highly touted. Yet three went in the first dozen Thursday night, with two surprising trades putting the Bears and Chiefs in position to grab QBs.

Chicago paid a whopping price to move up one spot to second overall for North Carolina's Mitchell Trubisky. Kansas City gave up its first-rounder next year to go from 27th to 10th for Texas Tech's Patrick Mahomes.

Altogether, eight of the first dozen picks were offensive players, including Houston trading up for Clemson QB Deshaun Watson.

One controversial pick was Ohio State cornerback Gareon Conley, who was drafted by Oakland at No. 24. Days before the draft, allegations emerged that Conley raped a woman in Cleveland. He called the accusations "completely false" and no charges have been filed. Conley was named in a police report that details the allegations but no information has been forwarded to prosecutors.

The top of the draft was predictable: Roger Goodell got booed, then Myles Garrett was picked first by the Cleveland Browns.

"C'mon, Philly, C'mon," Goodell said Thursday night amid the boos, not even wincing at the reception. Moments later, he was back onstage announcing the Texas A&M defensive end's name. Garrett, a junior and All-American considered the best pass rusher in this crop, is the first Aggie selected No. 1 overall.

Garrett stayed close to home in Texas, and he promised Cleveland fans "great things are coming."

Cleveland went 1-15 last season and has holes everywhere. It ranked 31st defensively and had only 26 sacks.

The Browns were the first team since Minnesota in 2013 with three first-rounders. Cleveland also took Michigan safety Jabrill Peppers and Miami tight end David Njoku.

The Bears sent a third-round pick, a fourth and a 2018 third to San Francisco to switch that one slot and take Trubisky, who started only 13 games for North Carolina.

"It was crazy," Trubisky said. "There was no call. I didn't think I was going to be picked until the commissioner said my name."

Bears general manager Ryan Pace said he was "100 percent" sure that other teams were looking to get to San Francisco's spot.

"I knew there were teams inquiring about going up," he said. "There were teams calling me at our pick, wanting to come up. You could feel that all around us."

San Francisco was up next, and new GM John Lynch already was looking good for bringing in such a haul to drop back to No. 3. The 49ers took DE Solomon Thomas from just down the road at Stanford.

For much of the round, it was an offensive draft, although the breakdown wound up 19-13 on de-

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fense, including strings of six and five defenders from the 13th pick onward.

"We had a lot of scenarios, but we did not have any scenarios like what's happened here," Eagles executive vice president of football operations Howie Roseman said.

LSU running back Leonard Fournette, who some scouts compared to Adrian Peterson, went to Jacksonville; new Jaguars boss Tom Coughlin is enamored of powerful running backs.

"He's special," Coughlin said. "We need playmakers. We need people to put the ball in the end zone. We need to do something about balance. We need to do something about creating a better situation where the quarterback doesn't have the entire game on his shoulders."

Another LSU player, safety Jamal Adams, whose father, George, was an NFL running back, was taken by the New York Jets, one pick after Tennessee, needing an upgrade at wide receiver, selected Corey Davis of Western Michigan. Davis is the FBS career leader in receiving yards with 5,285 and was a key to the Broncos' turnaround last season.

Two more skill position offensive players went seventh and eighth. Receiver Mike Williams, who came off a serious neck injury in 2015 to help Clemson to the national championship last season, was taken by the Chargers. Then Christian McCaffrey, son of former NFL wideout Ed McCaffrey, wound up with Carolina.

The Panthers, eager to get back to the form that won them the 2015 NFC title, got a versatile running back from Stanford who also can play receiver and return kicks. Cam Newton sure must be smiling.

"Can't wait to grind every single day for that team, the fans, for everybody there," McCaffrey said.

More picks and more offense followed. A third receiver, John Ross of Washington, was taken by Cincinnati, which desperately needs a complement to A.J. Green. Ross tore a ligament in his left knee in 2015 that didn't slow him down much. He ran a record 4.2 in the 40 at the scouting combine.

The next trade saw Buffalo's new coach, Sean McDermott, deal with his mentor, Chiefs coach Andy Reid. The Chiefs surged up for ... a quarterback. They took Mahomes, whose stock soared in workouts this year. Mahomes comes from a spread attack and will need to learn a pro-style offense, but Kansas City has Alex Smith in place right now.

"Right now, Patrick isn't absolutely ready to play. He's got some work to do," Reid said. "But he's coming into a great room, he has an opportunity to learn from Alex (Smith), which will be a great for him. We have to have some patience with him, but he has tremendous upside."

What KC no longer has is its first-round choice next year, which went in the deal that also saw the Bills get a third-rounder on Friday.

Nine of the first 10 picks were underclassmen.

Watson, another junior who led Clemson to the national title, landed with the Texans after they moved from 25 to 12, and included their No. 1 selection in 2018 in the trade with the Browns. Houston got out of the big contract it gave Brock Osweiler as a free agent last year by dealing him to Cleveland earlier this offseason.

"You're trying to anticipate what's going to happen," Texans GM Rick Smith said. "The foundation for this move was laid earlier with Sashi (Brown, Cleveland's VP of football operations). You've got all kinds of scenarios that you have to run to be prepared, because as much as you think you're prepared when the draft starts, it's such a fluid process that you've got to be able to react, and the only way to do that is to be in some respects prepared."

Surprisingly, no one from Alabama was chosen until cornerback Marlon Humphrey went 16th to Baltimore. Two more Crimson Tide players went in the next three picks: DE Jonathan Allen to Washington and tight end O.J. Howard to Tampa Bay.

T.J. Watt of Wisconsin, brother of three-time NFL Defensive Player of the Year J.J. Watt of Houston,

was selected by Pittsburgh.

New Orleans, which chose Ohio State cornerback Marshon Lattimore earlier, concluded the round with Wisconsin tackle Ryan Ramczyk.

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Tillerson says China asked North Korea to stop nuclear tests

By RICHARD LARDNER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said Thursday that China has threatened to impose sanctions on North Korea if it conducts further nuclear tests.

"We know that China is in communications with the regime in Pyongyang," Tillerson said on Fox News Channel. "They confirmed to us that they had requested the regime conduct no further nuclear test."

Tillerson said China also told the U.S. that it had informed North Korea "that if they did conduct further nuclear tests, China would be taking sanctions actions on their own."

Earlier Thursday, the senior U.S. Navy officer overseeing military operations in the Pacific said the crisis with North Korea is at the worst point he's ever seen, but he declined to compare the situation to the Cuban missile crisis decades ago.

"It's real," Adm. Harry Harris Jr., commander of U.S. Pacific Command, said during testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Harris said he has no doubt that North Korean leader Kim Jong Un intends to fulfill his pursuit of a nuclear-tipped missile capable of striking the United States. The admiral acknowledged there's uncertainty within U.S. intelligence agencies over how far along North Korea's nuclear and missile programs are. But Harris said it's not a matter of if but when.

"There is no doubt in my mind," Harris said.

China's foreign ministry had no immediate comment on Tillerson's remarks on new sanctions, but a spokesman Thursday said Beijing remained committed to implementing sanctions imposed under U.N. Security Council resolutions.

"And the reason that China implements relevant resolutions is to fulfill our due international obligation rather than being pressured by any outside parties," Geng Shuang said at a daily briefing.

China has consistently called for an end to North Korea's nuclear weapons program, but says it opposes unilateral sanctions imposed without a U.N. mandate. China in January suspended coal imports from the North for the rest of the year, but it did so following the passage of a Security Council resolution capping Pyongyang's coal exports.

Other economic activity with North Korea remains robust.

Still, Beijing has been increasing pressure on North Korea, and would be willing to impose punitive measures unilaterally in the event of another nuclear test, said Cheng Xiaohe, an associate professor at Renmin University's School of International Studies in Beijing.

"So Tillerson's comments are correct — but be careful, China does so for China's national interest, not as a result of U.S. pressure," Cheng said.

The Trump administration has declared that all options, including a targeted military strike, are on the table to block North Korea from carrying out threats against the United States and its allies in the region. But a pre-emptive attack isn't likely, U.S. officials have said, and the administration is pursuing a strategy of putting pressure on Pyongyang with assistance from China, North Korea's main trading partner and the country's economic lifeline.

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With international support, the Trump administration said Thursday it wants to exert a "burst" of economic and diplomatic pressure on North Korea that yields results within months to push the communist government to change course from developing nuclear weapons.

Susan Thornton, the acting top U.S. diplomat for East Asia, said there's debate about whether Pyongyang is willing to give up its weapons programs. She said the U.S. wants "to test that hypothesis to the maximum extent we can" for a peaceful resolution.

But signaling that military action remains possible, Thornton told an event hosted by the Foundation for Defense of Democracies — the Washington think tank has advocated tougher U.S. policies on Iran and North Korea — that the administration treats North Korea as its primary security challenge and is serious that "all options are on the table."

"We are not seeking regime change and our preference is to resolve this problem peacefully," Thornton said, "but we are not leaving anything off the table."

Tillerson took a similar stand in the Fox News interview Thursday, saying: "We do not seek regime change in North Korea. ... What we are seeking is the same thing China has said they seek — a full denuclearization of the Korean peninsula."

In a separate interview with National Public Radio, Tillerson said the U.S. remains open to holding direct negotiations with North Korea.

"But North Korea has to decide they're ready to talk to us about the about the right agenda, and the right agenda is not simply stopping where they are for a few more months or a few more years and then resuming things," he said, according to excerpts of an interview that will air Friday morning. "That's been the agenda for the last 20 years."

Multi-nation negotiations with North Korea on its nuclear program stalled in 2008. The Obama administration attempted to resurrect them in 2012, but a deal to provide food aid in exchange for a nuclear freeze soon collapsed.

The House GOP leadership announced late Thursday that it would vote next week on new sanctions against North Korea that would target its shipping industry and those who employ North Korean slave labor abroad.

"The time for waiting on North Korea to get its act together is over. Congress has led the effort to institute tough and far-reaching sanctions against Pyongyang," said House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif.

In a show of military might, the U.S. has sent a massive amount of American weaponry to the region. A group of American warships led by the aircraft carrier USS Carl Vinson is in striking range of North Korea "if the president were to call on it," Harris told the committee. A U.S. missile defense system called Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense is being installed in South Korea.

Harris said he has adequate forces to "fight tonight" against North Korea if that were to become necessary.

Associated Press writers Matthew Pennington in New York and Matthew Brown in Beijing contributed to this report.

Contact Richard Lardner on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/rplardner>

GOP says it can pass short-term spending without Democrats

By ERICA WERNER, AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republicans said they would push a short-term spending bill — essential to keeping the government open — through the House Friday with only GOP votes, if necessary.

The brinkmanship came less than 30 hours before a midnight Friday deadline for a shutdown.

At the same time, a House GOP leader said late Thursday that there would be no vote on major GOP health care legislation until at least next week. That meant that on both the budget and health care fronts, there would be no milestone victories for Trump before Saturday, his 100th day as president.

“We’re working on the funding of government. We’re getting that through” on Friday, House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., said of the temporary spending measure.

Asked by reporters whether Republicans would have to pass the short-term bill without Democratic votes, McCarthy said, “Yeah.”

Democrats have threatened to oppose the temporary spending bill if there wasn’t a bipartisan deal on a \$1 trillion measure financing the government through September. Final agreement on some loose ends in that massive measure has remained elusive.

Republicans had been hoping for Democratic support because a significant number of conservative GOP lawmakers often vote against spending legislation.

McCarthy told reporters late Thursday that the health care vote would not occur Friday or Saturday.

“As soon as we have the votes, we’ll vote on it,” he said after leaving a House GOP leadership meeting that lasted nearly two hours.

Across the Capitol, Senate Democrats late Thursday blocked a quick vote on a short-term spending bill.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell pressed for an agreement on the short-term legislation that will carry through next week. That would give lawmakers more time to complete negotiations on the \$1 trillion measure.

Democratic leader Chuck Schumer insisted that any vote only occur when Republicans abandon efforts to add provisions on abortion, financial regulations and the environment to the legislation.

“Our position has been clear and it’s nothing news. No poison-pill riders,” Schumer said.

The House is scheduled to vote on the one-week extension Friday morning and the Senate could still vote ahead of the deadline.

Besides not finishing the \$1 trillion measure, the House GOP abandoned hopes of giving Trump a victory on health care before his 100th day. A revised health care bill has won the support of the hard-right House Freedom Caucus, holdouts on an earlier version that collapsed last month, but GOP leaders were struggling to round up votes from moderate-leaning Republicans.

Trump himself unleashed a tweetstorm of criticism of Democrats involved in negotiations on the spending bill.

“Democrats jeopardizing the safety of our troops to bail out their donors from insurance companies. It is time to put #AmericaFirst,” he tweeted.

Democrats dismissed such accusations.

“We are never going to shut government down. In fact, we don’t even have the power to do so,” said House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif. Referring to Republicans, she said: “They have the majority. They have the president. They have the Senate. They have the House. Any shutting down of government, the ball is in their court.”

Nonetheless, leaders in both parties projected certainty that a deal would ultimately be reached on the spending legislation, which covers all government agencies and is leftover business from last year.

"Talks on government funding legislation have continued throughout the week on a bipartisan, bicameral basis," said McConnell, R-Ky.

The talks involving congressional Republicans and Democrats had progressed relatively smoothly after the White House earlier this week backed off a threat to withhold payments that help lower-income Americans pay their medical bills and Trump dropped a demand for money for the border wall.

After the U.S.-Mexico wall issue and the Obamacare controversy were addressed, negotiators turned to a lengthy roster of unfinished issues, many of which involve extraneous policy "riders" on the environment and financial services regulations.

"Now we're making progress — we're not there yet," said Schumer, D-N.Y.

Associated Press writers Andrew Taylor, Kevin Freking, Richard Lardner and Alan Fram contributed to this report.

Berkeley protests peaceful as hundreds rally over Coulter

By JOCELYN GECKER, Associated Press

BERKELEY, Calif. (AP) — Hundreds of people waving American flags and chanting "USA" held a raucous rally Thursday at a park in Berkeley — home of the free speech movement — to protest a canceled appearance by conservative commentator Ann Coulter, but the expected violence did not materialize.

Scores of officers in riot gear lined up in preparation for possible violence between supporters and opponents of Coulter, but there were no major confrontations, largely because members of an anti-fascist group did not show up in force.

Coulter did not appear at the rally or show up at the University of California, Berkeley despite hinting that she might "swing by to say hello" to her supporters. Coulter had said she was forced to cancel a speaking engagement at the school. University officials said they had been unable to find a suitable and safe spot for her to speak, and offered a May 2 date.

She did not immediately respond to a request for comment from The Associated Press, but she told Fox News's Tucker Carlson after the event that she wasn't going to say anything more inflammatory than calling for enforcement of immigration laws.

"Well, my seditious and hateful speech, the theme of it, obviously, it was going to be a searingly brilliant speech on immigration," she said.

Thursday's tensions were another example of how Berkeley has emerged as a flashpoint for extreme left and right forces amid the debate over free speech in a place where the 1960s U.S. free speech movement began before spreading to college campuses across the nation.

Berkeley student Joseph Pagadara, 19, said he had worried about violence and added that the university is caught in the middle of the country's political divide.

"Both sides are so intolerant of each other. We are a divided country. We need to listen to each other but we're each caught in our own bubbles," he said.

As for Coulter, Pagadara said the university should have let her speak. "Now she's making herself look like the victim and Berkeley like the bad guys," he said.

University police erected barricades and refused to let any protesters enter the campus. Six people were arrested; one for obstructing an officer and wearing a mask to evade police, and another for possessing a knife.

Several hundred people gathered for the afternoon event supporting Coulter at Martin Luther King Jr. Civic Center Park in downtown Berkeley.

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"It's a shame that someone can't speak in the home of the free speech movement," said Wilson Grafstrom, an 18-year-old high school student from Menlo Park.

He wore a military grade helmet with a "Make America Great Again" sticker across the back, goggles, a gas mask and knee pads. He blamed people opposed to Coulter and President Donald Trump for forcing him to gear up for problems.

Many at the park about a mile (1.6 kilometers) from the university's main Sproul Plaza also wore such helmets and body armor. Some had "Build That Wall" or Trump stickers across their headgear. One man had duct tape reading "Berkeley" over his mouth.

While the afternoon rally ended without serious conflict, police at one point formed a human wall in the street separating anti-Trump protesters from the park where pro-Trump groups were gathered.

Anti-Coulter protesters at the park held a banner that read: "It's not about 'free speech,' it's about bigots trying to normalize hate."

Earlier, dozens of police wearing flak jackets and carrying 40 mm launchers that shoot "foam batons" flanked Sproul Plaza while a small group of protesters condemning Coulter staged a rally outside campus.

Officers took selfies with students in an attempt to lighten the mood.

Gavin McInnes, co-founder of Vice Media and founder of the pro-Trump "Proud Boys," spoke at the park gathering later in the day. He said America doesn't have an obligation to take people from other countries.

"We are here because Ann Coulter got canceled," he said. "She is one of the most inspiring writers in America today. She is an American hero."

On its Facebook page, the group calls itself a fraternal organization aimed at "reinstating a spirit of Western chauvinism during an age of globalism and multiculturalism."

University officials said they feared violence on campus if Coulter spoke, citing "very specific intelligence" of threats that could endanger her and students. In a letter to the campus Wednesday, Chancellor Nicholas B. Dirks said the university is committed to defending free speech but also to protecting its students.

"This is a university, not a battlefield," Dirks wrote.

Earlier this month, a bloody brawl broke out in downtown Berkeley at a pro-Trump protest that featured speeches by members of the white nationalist right. They clashed with a group of Trump critics who called themselves anti-fascists.

In February, violent protesters forced the cancellation of a speech by right-wing writer Milo Yiannopoulos, who like Coulter was invited by campus Republicans.

Associated Press writer Kristin J. Bender contributed to this report from San Francisco.

Facing backlash on killings, Duterte to find solace in ASEAN

By JIM GOMEZ and TERESA CEROJANO, Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — When Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte hosts a summit of Southeast Asian leaders this weekend, the spotlight will be on him. Just less than a year in power, he faces a mass murder complaint before the International Criminal Court and an impeachment bid at home as bodies continue to pile up in his war on illegal drugs.

Duterte, however, will find solace from the storm of criticism in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which has a bedrock policy forbidding its member states from meddling in each other's domestic

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affairs. That has fostered the 10-nation bloc, founded half a century ago, as it evolved into an unwieldy collective of dictatorships, authoritarian states and a monarchy, along with fledgling democracies.

The foul-mouthed president will not only fit right in, critics say, he'll likely steal the show.

"The ratbag of dictators, autocrats and juntas that dominate ASEAN's ranks perceive transparency, accountability and rule of law as existential threats rather than foundations of good governance," said Phelim Kine of the U.S.-based Human Rights Watch.

"Expect ASEAN leaders to yet again throw the human rights of an Asian country under the bus by remaining silent about Duterte's abusive drug war by implicitly or explicitly invoking the organization's 'non-interference' principle," Kine said.

Alarm expressed by Western governments, U.N. rights officials and watchdog groups over the thousands of killings of drug suspects under Duterte's brutal crackdown isn't reflected in a draft of the ASEAN chairman's statement to be issued by the Philippine president at the end of Saturday's summit. Instead, the leaders praise ASEAN efforts to advance human rights in a diverse region that remains a world hotspot.

"We were pleased with the continuous efforts to mainstream human rights across all pillars of the ASEAN Community," says the draft statement, a copy of which was obtained by The Associated Press.

The daylong summit is expected to focus on long-raging territorial rifts in the South China Sea, North Korea, terrorism threats and efforts to integrate the region's diverse economies.

The summit venue in a theater complex by Manila Bay has been put in a security lockdown, with the navy patrolling the waters and authorities declaring a no-fly zone. Anti-aircraft guns mounted on trucks have been seen in the area.

Duterte, meanwhile, has ordered the military to wipe out Muslim militants in the south and at a central resort island where the army blocked a kidnapping and bombing plot.

Once a government prosecutor who fought outlaws and insurgents, Duterte became a longtime mayor of southern Davao city, where he received a nickname for his deadly anti-crime campaign — "Duterte Harry," after Clint Eastwood's Dirty Harry movie character. Since becoming president last June, his crackdown on suspected drug dealers and users has left nearly 2,800 people dead purportedly in gunbattles with police. Another 6,000 deaths are being investigated.

The mounting killings prompted a Filipino lawyer to submit documents to the International Criminal Court in The Hague on Monday, which he said contained evidence of crimes against humanity against Duterte. The president's aides dismissed the move as black propaganda, along with an impeachment complaint, which has little chance of advancing in a Congress dominated by Duterte's allies.

ASEAN has long been hamstrung by the diversity of its members along with its policies of noninterference and making decisions by consensus. That has allowed leaders like Hun Sen of Cambodia, Thailand's coup leader-turned-premier Prayuth Chan-ocha, the one-party Communist rulers of Laos and Vietnam, and the generals who once ruled Myanmar to attain regional legitimacy and defy the call for democratic governance.

ASEAN says it's best to keep dictators in its midst engaged, because dialogue helps to keep them in check. It takes credit for helping Myanmar's generals give up power. It also sees itself as a platform to resolve conflicts and integrate the members' economies as a counterweight to Asian powerhouses led by China.

Duterte has denied condoning extrajudicial killings. He sees himself as a leader with an extra tough approach on crime, especially drug-related, which he calls a pandemic. While critics cringe, Duterte has been adored by a substantial base of followers.

While he may dodge criticism from fellow ASEAN leaders in Saturday's meetings, that could change in an expanded summit with the United States and other Western governments in November, according

to Malcolm Cook, a fellow at Singapore's Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.

Aside from his deadly record, some local diplomats worry about Duterte's disdain for statecraft, irreverence and bluntly frank and profane language that could weigh on ASEAN, a conservative group steeped in tradition, protocol and nuanced rhetoric.

Last year, he broke tradition when he set aside a prepared speech in an expanded ASEAN summit with President Barack Obama and other world leaders in Laos and lashed out at what he described as America's colonial atrocities in the Philippines.

He raised an old photograph of what he said were Muslims who were massacred by American soldiers and dumped in a pit in the early 1900s on southern Jolo island. The abuses, he said, were at the root of the minority Muslim restiveness in his largely Catholic nation.

Passenger who was dragged off jetliner settles with United

By MICHAEL TARM and DON BABWIN, Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — The passenger who was dragged off a flight after refusing to give up his seat settled with United for an undisclosed sum Thursday in an apparent attempt by the airline to put the fiasco behind it as quickly as possible.

David Dao's legal team said the agreement includes a provision that the amount will remain confidential. One of his lawyers praised United CEO Oscar Munoz.

Munoz "said he was going to do the right thing, and he has," attorney Thomas Demetrio said in a brief statement. "In addition, United has taken full responsibility for what happened ... without attempting to blame others, including the city of Chicago."

The deal came less than three weeks after the episode and before Dao had even sued. The deal means United will not face a lawsuit, which could have been costly, both in legal bills and in further damage to the airline's reputation.

Keeping settlement amounts secret is standard practice, including because companies often don't want others contemplating lawsuits or negotiating deals over separate grievances to know how much they've been willing to pay previously.

Several legal observers unconnected to Dao's case said a payout to him of a few million dollars was possible. Chicago-based attorney Terry Sullivan said United executives may have been willing to pay as much as \$5 million to make this particular case go away. "United just couldn't afford any more bad publicity on this," he said.

United issued a brief statement Thursday, saying it was pleased to report "an amicable resolution of the unfortunate incident that occurred aboard Flight 3411."

The dragging was one of several recent embarrassments for United.

The airline was criticized in March after a gate agent stopped two teenage girls from boarding a flight because they were wearing leggings — an apparent violation of a dress code for passengers traveling in a program for employees and their dependents. Then a giant showcase rabbit died this week after it was shipped across the Atlantic on a United flight from London's Heathrow Airport to O'Hare.

Cellphone video of the April 9 confrontation aboard a jetliner at Chicago's O'Hare Airport sparked widespread public outrage over the way Dao was treated.

The footage showed airport police officers pulling the 69-year-old Kentucky physician from his seat and dragging him down the aisle. His lawyer said he lost teeth and suffered a broken nose and a concussion.

In a phone interview with The Associated Press, Demetrio said the settlement also averts any lawsuit

against Chicago officials. The airport police officers who pulled Dao off the jet work for the city.

"I praise Mr. Munoz and his people for not trying to throw the city under the bus or pass the buck," Demetrio said. "He stood in front of the world and has stated that, 'We, United, take full responsibility.'"

Demetrio said it was "unheard of" for a company to admit responsibility so quickly and completely.

"I hope corporate America notices when you goof up, people respect you a heck of a lot more when you admit it, instead of making people go through three years of depositions, motions, court hearings."

He said Dao was also impressed that "United stepped up to the plate."

The incident arose from a common air travel issue — a fully booked flight. Wanting to seat four crew members, the airline offered passengers \$400 and later \$800 to voluntarily relinquish their seats. When no one did, United selected four passengers at random.

Three people got off the flight, but Dao refused, saying he needed to get home to treat patients the next day. The airline then summoned the officers, who forcibly removed Dao.

The dragging was a major public-relations crisis for United. The company's response in the immediate aftermath was widely criticized. Munoz first defended the airline and described Dao as "belligerent" before publicly apologizing days later and vowing to do better.

The three airport police officers who took Dao off the plane were placed on leave from the Chicago Department of Aviation.

The agency released a report Monday in which the officer who pulled Dao from his seat, James Long, gave his version of events. Long said Dao was verbally and physically abusive and was flailing his arms before he lost his balance and struck his mouth on an armrest.

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

Also Thursday, the airline released a report detailing mistakes that led to the incident. United said it would raise to \$10,000 the limit on the payments it offers to customers who give up seats on oversold flights and increase training for airline employees.

The airline has vowed to reduce, but not eliminate, overbooking.

United representatives have not said whether ticket sales have dropped since Dao was removed from the jet.

Follow Michael Tarm on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/mtarm> .

Senate confirms Alex Acosta as Trump's secretary of labor

By LAURIE KELLMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate on Thursday confirmed Alex Acosta as Labor secretary, filling out President Donald Trump's Cabinet as he approaches his 100th day in office.

The 60-38 vote confirms Acosta to the post. Once sworn as the nation's 27th Labor secretary, the son of Cuban immigrants will lead a sprawling agency that enforces more than 180 federal laws covering about 10 million employers and 125 million workers.

Sen. Tim Scott, R-S.C., spoke for many Republicans with a statement issued just after the vote saying he hopes Acosta's focus will be "promoting labor policies that are free of unnecessarily burdensome federal regulations." Scott said he wants Acosta to permanently revoke rules governing financial advisers and adding Americans eligible for overtime pay.

Democrats said any Labor secretary should advocate for the American workers to whom Trump promised so much during his upstart presidential campaign. They said Acosta has given no such commit-

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ment.

"Acosta failed this basic test," tweeted Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass.

Acosta has been a federal prosecutor, a civil rights chief at the Justice Department and a member of the National Labor Relations Board. He will arrive at the top post with relatively little clear record on some of the top issues facing the administration over key pocketbook issues, such as whether to expand the pool of American workers eligible for overtime pay.

Acosta wasn't Trump's first choice for the job. Former fast food CEO Andrew Puzder withdrew his name from consideration last month, on the eve of his confirmation vote, after becoming a political headache for the new administration.

Puzder acknowledged having hired a housekeeper not authorized to work in the U.S. and paying the related taxes years later — after Trump nominated him — and came under fire from Democrats for other issues related to his company and his private life.

Acosta's ascension would come at a key moment for Trump, just two days before he reaches the symbolic, 100-day marker. The White House has sought to cross the threshold with its own list of Trump's accomplishments.

Trump can say the Acosta vote was bipartisan, because eight Democrats and one independent voted yes. Joining the Republicans in his favor were Democratic Sens. Catherine Cortez Masto of Nevada, Heidi Heitkamp of North Dakota, Joe Manchin of West Virginia, Claire McCaskill of Missouri, Bob Menendez of New Jersey, Bill Nelson of Florida, Jon Tester of Montana and Mark Warner of Virginia. Independent Sen. Angus King of Maine also voted for Acosta.

Labor secretary is the last Cabinet post for Trump to fill. Trump's choice for U.S. trade representative, a job considered Cabinet-level, is awaiting a Senate vote.

From the beginning, Acosta's was a quiet march to confirmation that stood out because it didn't attract the deep partisan battles faced by some of Trump's other nominees, including Education Secretary Betsy DeVos and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson. Justice Neil Gorsuch's nomination provoked such a fight that majority Senate Republicans used the "nuclear option" to remove the 60-vote filibuster barrier for Supreme Court picks.

Thursday's vote marks the fourth time Acosta has been confirmed for the Senate.

Democrats and most labor groups were mostly muted in their response to Acosta's nomination. At his confirmation hearing, Democratic Sens. Patty Murray of Washington and Warren hammered Acosta for answers on a selection of issues important to labor and whether Acosta would cave to political pressure from Trump. Acosta refused to answer the policy questions until he's confirmed, and he vowed to be an independent and fair voice for workers. Both senators said they had great concerns, and both voted no.

Our standard can't be 'not Puzder,'" Murray said Wednesday on the Senate floor.

But tellingly, even as Acosta's nomination wound through the Senate, Democrats and their allies also tried to move on to other, labor-related issues — namely, a minimum wage hike to \$15 an hour, which Trump opposes.

Meanwhile, the Labor Department's online landing page bears a glimpse of Acosta's policy priorities: "Buy American, Hire American."

That's the title of Trump's executive order this week directing the secretaries of labor and other agencies to issue guidance within 60 days on policies that would "ensure that, to the extent permitted by law" federal aid "maximize the use of materials produced in the United States, including manufactured products; components of manufactured products; and materials such as steel, iron, aluminum, and cement."

Online

<https://www.doi.gov/>

NFL draft set to begin in Philadelphia

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — The NFL draft will begin in about an hour in Philadelphia.

The Cleveland Browns hold the first pick yet again after finishing just 1-15 last season. Though Cleveland could use help at quarterback, the Browns could also help their defense by taking Texas A&M defensive end Myles Garrett, thought by many to be the most talented overall player in the draft.

Cleveland will be followed by San Francisco, Chicago and Jacksonville.

The first round could see a slew of players from the nation's top college programs get selected. From smaller schools, Temple's Haason Reddick and Western Michigan's Corey Davis are projected to be picked among the first 15 selections.

For more NFL coverage: <http://www.pro32.ap.org> and http://www.twitter.com/AP_NFL

Pentagon joins intensifying probe of former Trump aide Flynn

By CHAD DAY and STEPHEN BRAUN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Investigations intensified into President Donald Trump's ousted national security adviser, Michael Flynn, on Thursday as the Pentagon watchdog joined lawmakers in probing payments he accepted from foreign sources including a Russian state-sponsored TV network.

At the same time, documents released by the top Democrat on a House oversight committee showed Flynn was warned by authorities after he retired from the military in 2014 not to take foreign government-sourced money without "advance approval" from the Pentagon.

Flynn, a former Army lieutenant general and Defense Intelligence Agency chief, later accepted tens of thousands of dollars for his work on behalf of foreign interests, including RT, the state-supported Russian television network, and a Turkish-owned company linked to Turkey's government.

The Pentagon's acting inspector general's office confirmed Thursday he has launched an inquiry into whether those payments qualify as coming from foreign governments and whether Flynn properly informed military authorities about them.

The White House defended its hiring of Flynn and attempted to shift blame for any problems with his vetting onto the Obama administration, which handled the reissuance of his security clearance in January 2016.

Rep. Elijah Cummings, D-Md., who released the documents, said during a news conference that Flynn had been clearly informed he needed to get permission to receive foreign payments and there's no evidence he did so.

"The Pentagon's warning to General Flynn was bold, italicized and could not have been clearer," Cummings said.

In a key 2014 document, Flynn was told by a Defense Intelligence Agency official that the U.S. Constitution's emoluments provision prohibits any monetary payments or gifts "from a foreign government unless congressional consent is first obtained." The Oct. 8, 2014, letter — which was sent to Flynn at his request — explained that such "advance approval" would need to come "from the relevant service secretary."

Earlier this week, Cummings and Republican Rep. Jason Chaffetz, chairman of the House committee, said that they had found no evidence Flynn asked the Army for permission to receive foreign payments or informed the military he had accepted them. Army spokeswoman Cynthia O. Smith said the Army

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had no records that Flynn requested that permission.

One episode in question involves a trip he took to Moscow in 2015 for RT's anniversary celebration. He was paid at least \$33,750 to attend the gala at which he was seated next to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"General Flynn's attorney says he discussed his trip to Moscow with DIA, but we have no evidence, not a shred, that he disclosed his payments," Cummings said Thursday.

In a statement, Flynn's attorney Robert Kelner said the Defense Department "was fully aware of the trip," citing his previous statements that his client briefed DIA officials before and after the RT trip.

Kelner also pointed to a letter, released in redacted form by Cummings, that notes that Flynn provided a thumb drive to the agency containing documents detailing the RT event, including that Leading Authorities, a speakers bureau that handled Flynn's paid speeches, was handling the event for him.

Kelner's statement did not address other payments Flynn received from foreign sources. Flynn has previously disclosed he got between \$50,000 and \$100,000 as part of his personal stake in \$530,000 that his company, Flynn Intel Group, received for consulting work last year for a Turkish businessman.

Last month Flynn's firm filed as a foreign agent with the Justice Department for its consulting work and acknowledged the work may have benefited the government of Turkey. Flynn's client, Inovo BV, is owned by a businessman who is also a member of a committee overseen by Turkey's finance ministry.

In comments to the AP, Utah Republican Chaffetz, chairman of the Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, said that Flynn "had an obligation to seek approval to take money from a foreign government. We found no evidence that he did that."

Chaffetz's office released a letter he sent on Thursday to the Army, asking the service's acting secretary to make a final determination as to whether Flynn violated federal law by accepting the payments, and if so, to start the process of recovering that money.

Chaffetz also asked the Army to say why it hasn't yet made a determination as to the legality of Flynn's payments from RT given that they have been widely reported for at least two years. He also wants the Army to disclose any other investigations it's launched since 2010 into similar legal violations.

The committee's inquiry is one of several congressional investigations into Flynn's contacts with foreign officials. Trump fired Flynn in February for failing to inform senior administration officials about his contacts with Russian officials — contacts that are being examined as part of the wider inquiries into Russian meddling in the 2016 presidential campaign.

On Thursday, 18 House Democrats on the oversight committee signed a letter calling on Chaffetz to do more to pressure the White House to release documents regarding Flynn.

"There is obviously a paper trail that the White House does not want our committee to follow," the Democrats wrote in the letter.

On Thursday, White House press secretary Sean Spicer rebuffed criticism from Cummings that the White House was covering up. Asked about Trump administration vetting, Spicer appeared to shift blame onto the Obama administration, which had fired Flynn as head of the DIA.

"Why would you re-run a background check on someone who is the head of the Department of Defense Intelligence Agency that had and did maintain a high-level security clearance?" Spicer asked. He noted that Flynn's security clearance was renewed during the Obama administration "with all of the information that's being discussed that occurred in 2015."

The White House recently told the committee that documents the lawmakers sought would not be turned over because they contained classified information or were not relevant to the committee's investigation.

Associated Press writers Lolita C. Baldor, Jill Colvin and Jeff Horwitz contributed to this report.

Trump tax plan: Relief for his voters but lots of unknowns

By **STEPHEN OHLEMACHER**, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's plan to overhaul the nation's tax code could provide significant tax cuts for the working-class voters who elected him, but the unknowns could end up hurting many of these core supporters of the president.

A look at how Trump's tax plan could affect families at different income levels:

THE WORKING CLASS

These are the people who have been left behind by an increasingly globalized economy.

Trump's proposal, a one-page outline short on detail, says he would double the standard tax deduction, which could provide significant relief to working-class families. But Trump's top economic adviser used some bad math to describe the proposal, raising questions.

Gary Cohn said the standard deduction for a married couple would be doubled to \$24,000. But that's not double. The standard deduction for a married couple is \$12,700, so double would be \$25,400.

Cohn said the deduction would create "a zero tax-rate for the first \$24,000."

That sounds great, but very few families making \$24,000 a year pay federal income tax, said Roberton Williams, a fellow at the nonpartisan Tax Policy Center. In fact, 44 percent of all U.S. households pay no federal income tax, though most pay other taxes.

Trump's one-page sketch is silent on whether the tax code would still include the personal tax exemption, which allows most families to exempt \$4,050 in income for each spouse and dependent child. In big families, this tax exemption can add up.

During the campaign, Trump released a tax proposal that would eliminate the personal exemption.

Also during the campaign, Trump proposed getting rid of the "head of household" filing status, which is mainly used by single parents. This filing status provides a lower tax rate and a higher standard deduction than filing as a single person.

Trump's new plan is silent on this issue as well.

THE MIDDLE CLASS

The median household income in the U.S. is about \$55,000, though people living in high-cost areas can make much more than that and still feel like they are in the middle class.

Doubling the standard deduction — or at least raising it to \$24,000 — could provide significant tax relief to middle-income families. But whether they pay more or less depends largely on details that have yet to be released.

One of those pesky details is how Trump will structure the tax rates on individual income.

Trump has proposed reducing the number of tax rates from seven to three — 10 percent, 25 percent and 35 percent. But the administration has yet to determine the income levels for people who would be put in each bracket.

HIGH-INCOME FAMILIES

Trump's plan has the potential to provide big tax cuts to high-income families — unless you live in a state with high state and local taxes.

Trump calls for eliminating the Alternative Minimum Tax, which was enacted in 1969 to prevent high-income people from paying no income tax. It has evolved over the years and now impacts about 5

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million households, most of them making between \$200,000 and \$1 million a year.

In 2005, Trump himself paid \$36.5 million in taxes, mostly because of the AMT. Without it, he would have paid just \$5.5 million, according to a leaked copy of that year's return.

On the flip side, Trump wants to eliminate the deduction for state and local taxes, a big tax break that benefits millions, especially people living in Democratic-controlled states with high local taxes such as New York, New Jersey and California.

Last year, more than 43 million families claimed the deduction, saving them nearly \$70 billion.

THE SUPERRICH

These are the 1 percenters, people like Trump who make millions a year and are worth even more. Trump is proposing big tax cuts for the superrich, including repealing the estate tax.

The federal estate tax is widely misunderstood. The fact is it affects very few estates.

If your parents' estate is worth less than \$10.9 million, you don't have to worry about this tax. This year, about 5,200 estates will pay the tax, according to the Tax Policy Center.

Trump also wants to reduce the top income tax rate from 39.6 percent to 35 percent. But perhaps the biggest windfall for rich people could come from Trump's plan to lower the top tax rate for small business owners from 39.6 percent to 15 percent.

Rich people, including Trump, tend to report a lot of business income, Williams said.

But the true effect of this tax cut will depend on how the Trump administration defines a small business owner. If the tax cut applies to all business income reported on individual tax returns, it would be a huge windfall for many rich families.

Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin said Trump will propose safeguards that would prevent rich people from taking advantage of the tax cut, but he provided no details on how that would work.

Follow Stephen Ohlemacher on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/stephenatap>

Asian stocks lower as North Korea jitters flare

By **JOE McDONALD, AP Business Writer**

BEIJING (AP) — Asian stocks were mostly lower Friday amid renewed jitters over North Korea and conflicting signals from President Donald Trump about U.S. trade policy.

KEEPING SCORE: The Shanghai Composite Index lost 0.3 percent to 3,143.81 and Tokyo's Nikkei 225 retreated 0.2 percent to 19,210.49. Sydney's S&P-ASX 200 shed 0.2 percent to 5,907.40 and Malaysia also declined. Seoul's Kospi was unchanged at 2,209.48 while benchmarks in New Zealand, Taiwan and Singapore gained.

WALL STREET: U.S. stock indexes fluttered up and down, then ended the day a hair above where they started. Gains by Under Armour, Comcast and other companies reporting stronger-than-expected profits helped to offset a slump in energy stocks. A growing list of companies say they earned more in the first three months of 2017 than Wall Street had forecast. Analysts expect this to be the strongest quarter of growth in years. The Standard & Poor's 500 index rose 0.1 percent to 2,388.77 and the Dow Jones industrial average added less than 0.1 percent to 20,981.33. The Nasdaq composite rose 0.4 percent, to a record 6,048.94.

NORTH KOREA: U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said China has threatened to impose sanctions on North Korea if it conducts further nuclear tests. The Trump administration has declared that all options are on the table to block North Korea from carrying out threats against the United States and its

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allies in the region. The administration is trying to pressure Pyongyang with assistance from China, its main trading partner and aid donor. Tillerson said on the Fox News Channel that China told the U.S. that it had informed North Korea "that if they did conduct further nuclear tests, China would be taking sanctions actions on their own." The Trump administration said it wants to exert economic and diplomatic pressure to push North Korea to change course from developing nuclear weapons.

TRUMP AND TRADE: The Trump administration rattled companies and investors this week by leaking a possible plan to abandon the North American Free Trade Agreement with Canada and Mexico. Hours later, Trump backtracked and said he would try to overhaul the deal and would only pull out if he couldn't secure favorable terms. Earlier this month, Trump reversed course on China and dropped a campaign promise to declare Beijing a currency manipulator. Nor has he followed up on vows to punish American companies that move jobs overseas or on threats to tax Chinese and Mexican imports.

STRONGER EUROPE: The European Central Bank kept its stimulus program and interest rates unchanged but said the economy of the 19-country eurozone is becoming stronger. There was little expectation the central bank would ease off its stimulus programs in the run-up to the second round of France's presidential election, in which anti-euro candidate Marine Le Pen is battling pro-EU front-runner Emmanuel Macron. A survey by the European Union commission found economic sentiment in the eurozone near a ten-year high. "It's true that growth is improving; things are going better," said the European Central Bank president, Mario Draghi. He described the recovery as "solid and broad."

ANALYST'S TAKE: Market sentiment is lagging hard data that show better European and Japanese economic growth, falling U.S. unemployment and rising Chinese exports, said DBS Group in a report. "What's the bottom line to all this? Simple: the hard data isn't going to look a lot better in 2017 than it did in 2016 anywhere in the world. But that's because 2016 was already experiencing a very significant improvement that most simply refused to recognize."

TRUMP AND TAXES: Trump's proposal to cut corporate and capital gains taxes could draw money out of Asian stock markets and financial industries. A proposal to encourage U.S. companies to bring home profits could cause capital to "flee away from emerging markets," said Margaret Yang of CMC Markets in a report. She said the attractiveness of Singapore and Hong Kong as wealth management centers would be "significantly diminished" by a U.S. capital gains tax cut, which would encourage Americans to move money home.

ENERGY: Benchmark U.S. crude jumped 46 cents to \$49.43 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract fell 65 cents on Thursday to close at \$48.97. Brent crude, used to price international oils, surged 47 cents to \$52.31 in London. It lost 59 cents the previous session to \$51.82.

CURRENCY: The dollar declined to 111.15 yen from Thursday's 111.26 yen. The euro retreated to \$1.0868 from \$1.0874.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Friday, April 28, the 118th day of 2017. There are 247 days left in the year.

Today's Highlights in History:

On April 28, 1967, heavyweight boxing champion Muhammad Ali was stripped of his title after he refused to be inducted into the armed forces. U.S. Army Gen. William C. Westmoreland told Congress that "backed at home by resolve, confidence, patience, determination and continued support, we will prevail in Vietnam over communist aggression." McDonnell Aircraft and Douglas Aircraft merged to form

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McDonnell Douglas.

On this date:

In 1758, the fifth president of the United States, James Monroe, was born in Westmoreland County, Virginia.

In 1788, Maryland became the seventh state to ratify the Constitution of the United States.

In 1789, there was a mutiny on the HMS Bounty as rebelling crew members of the British ship, led by Fletcher Christian, set the captain, William Bligh, and 18 others adrift in a launch in the South Pacific. (Bligh and most of the men with him reached Timor in 47 days.)

In 1925, the International Exposition of Modern Industrial and Decorative Arts, which gave rise to the term "Art Deco," began a six-month run in Paris.

In 1942, pollster George Gallup said most Americans preferred to call the then-current global conflict "World War II" or "The Second World War" (other suggestions included "Survival War" or "War of World Freedom").

In 1945, Italian dictator Benito Mussolini and his mistress, Clara Petacci, were executed by Italian partisans as they attempted to flee the country.

In 1947, a six-man expedition set out from Peru aboard a balsa wood raft named the Kon-Tiki on a 101-day journey across the Pacific Ocean to the Polynesian Islands.

In 1952, war with Japan officially ended as a treaty signed in San Francisco the year before took effect. Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower resigned as Supreme Allied commander in Europe; he was succeeded by Gen. Matthew B. Ridgway.

In 1974, former Attorney General John Mitchell and former Commerce Secretary Maurice H. Stans, accused of attempting to interfere in a Securities and Exchange Commission probe of financier Robert Vesco in exchange for a \$200,000 contribution to President Richard Nixon's re-election campaign, were acquitted of all charges by a federal jury in New York.

In 1987, Contra rebels in Nicaragua killed Benjamin Ernest Linder, 27, an American engineer working on a hydroelectric project for the Sandinista government.

In 1996, a man armed with a semi-automatic rifle went on a rampage on the Australian island of Tasmania, killing 35 people; the gunman was captured by police after a 12-hour standoff at a guest cottage, and is now serving a life prison sentence.

In 2001, a Russian rocket lifted off from Central Asia bearing the first space tourist, California businessman Dennis Tito, and two cosmonauts on a journey to the international space station.

Ten years ago: A suicide car bomber struck in Karbala, Iraq, killing at least 63 people. A suicide attack on Pakistan's Interior Minister (Aftab Khan Sherpao) killed 28 people; the official was slightly hurt. Death claimed "Tonight Show" assistant conductor Tommy Newsom at age 78 and character actor Dabbs Greer at age 90.

Five years ago: Syria derided United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon as biased and called his comments "outrageous" after he blamed the regime for widespread cease-fire violations. Patricia Medina, 92, a British-born actress who became a leading lady in Hollywood films of the 1950s, died in Los Angeles.

One year ago: Vice President Joe Biden pressed Iraq during an unannounced visit not to let its crippling political crisis upend hard-fought gains against the Islamic State group. A police sniper shot and wounded a man who walked into the lobby of Baltimore station WBFF-TV wearing a full animal costume and surgical mask and displaying what appeared to be an explosive device on his chest (the "device" turned out to be aluminum-wrapped chocolate bars duct-taped to a flotation device).

Today's Birthdays: Former Secretary of State James A. Baker III is 87. Actor Frank Vincent is 80.

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Actress-singer Ann-Margret is 76. Actor Paul Guilfoyle is 68. Former "Tonight Show" host Jay Leno is 67. Rock musician Chuck Leavell is 65. Actress Mary McDonnell is 64. Rock singer-musician Kim Gordon (Sonic Youth) is 64. Actress Nancy Lee Grahn is 61. Supreme Court Justice Elena Kagan is 57. Rapper Too Short is 51. Actress Simbi Khali is 46. Actress Bridget Moynahan is 46. Actor Chris Young is 46. Rapper Big Gipp is 44. Actor Jorge Garcia is 44. Actress Elisabeth Rohm is 44. Actress Penelope Cruz is 43. Actor Nate Richert is 39. TV personalities Drew and Jonathan Scott are 39. Actress Jessica Alba is 36. Actor Harry Shum Jr. is 35. Actress Jenna Ushkowitz is 31. Actress Aleisha Allen is 26.

Thought for Today: "The world does not require so much to be informed as reminded." — Hannah More, English religious writer (1745-1833).