

Groton Daily Independent

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Thursday, May 25

Groton School: Region girls golf at Sioux Valley, 9 a.m.

Senior Menu: Stir fry beef with rice, oriental blend vegetables, honey fruit salad, whole wheat bread.

Friday, May 26

Groton School: State Track at Tea

Senior Menu: Oven fried chicken, potato salad, carrots and broccoli medley, muffin, fresh fruit.

Saturday, May 27

Groton School: State Track at Sioux Falls

Sunday, May 28

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship at 9 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship at 9 a.m.

United Methodist Church: Conde worship, 9 a.m.; coffee fellowship time, 10 a.m., Groton worship, 11 a.m.

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

First Presbyterian: Bible Study at 9:30 a.m., Worship at 11 a.m.

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

Monday, May 29

MEMORIAL DAY

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**

Midwest Masonry & concrete Pumping

Greg Heilman, owner

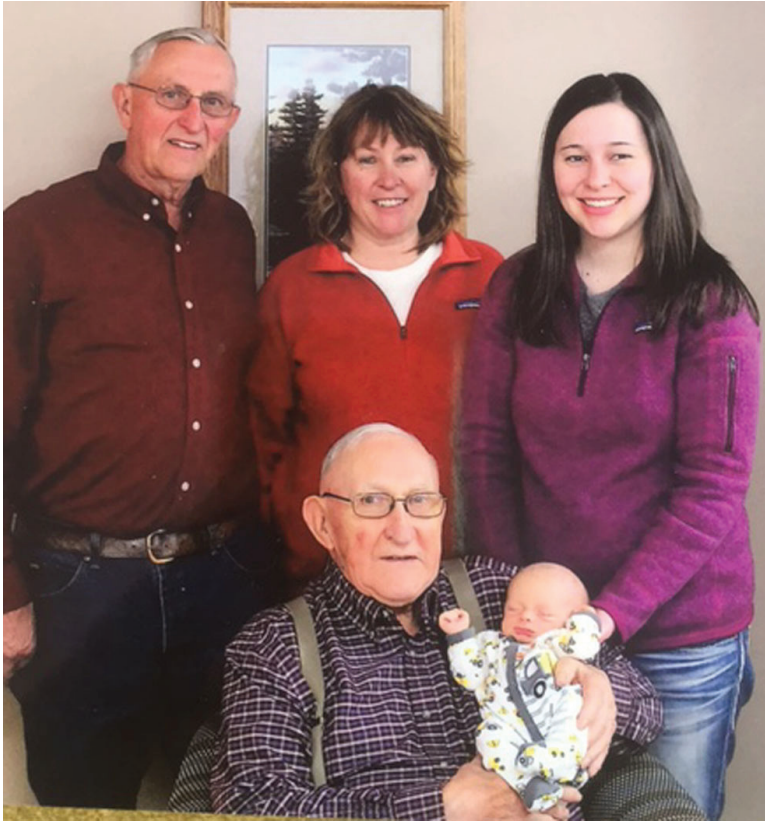
405 E 1st Ave., Groton

Greg: 253/929-9137

Mike: 605/492-7041

midwestmasonry1@yahoo.com





Five Generations

Gathering at Lester's are the five generation. Lester Herr, Bristol; Larry Herr, Bristol; Tammy Plimpton, Crooks, SD; Kayla and Korbin Siemonsma, Garretson, SD

GROTON KIWANIS CLUB

President Tom Paepke introduced his guest, Nancy Jark, at Kiwanis Club, Wednesday. Nancy now has a realty office in Groton.

Lee Schinkel then introduced his guest, Joseph Schwan, superintendent of our Groton School.; and proposed him for Kiwanis Club membership.

Lee thanked Reed Litch, on behalf of the Groton Senior Citizens, for the two new cedar planters for the center. Flowers will be planted Wednesday afternoon.

Reed Litch was program leader, and introduces Shaun Wanner, drivers ed instructor for Groton school. Shaun introduced two of his students, Jackson Cogley and Steve Kurtz. Some facts that were told the group, were we are one of the few states who issue drivers licenses to 14 year olds. Each summer there 40-50 students in this program, and their parents pay for this program.

Fourteen members and five guests attended Wednesday's dinner meeting.



Work has been progressing on the new playground equipment at the Groton Baseball Complex.

Increase Diversity, Plant Trees to Prepare for Emerald Ash Borer

PIERRE, S.D.- Spring is the best time of year to plant new trees to get them established. With that in mind, the South Dakota Department of Agriculture's (SDDA) Resource Conservation and Forestry Division (RCF) encourages South Dakotans to plant different varieties of trees.

May 21-28 is Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Awareness Week. The ash tree species are commonly used as urban street trees, wind breaks and shelter belts. Native ash species have no natural defense against the EAB.

"Although EAB has not yet been confirmed in South Dakota, it's estimated that about one-third of our urban and community trees in the state are ash," said state forester Greg Josten. "Now is a great time to consider planting trees for any reason, but one good reason is to ultimately replace ash trees that may later succumb to emerald ash borer."

Native to Asia, the emerald ash borer only attacks true ash trees. The larvae feed beneath the bark, disrupting the movement of water and nutrients and killing the tree within several years. EAB is now found in 30 states, including neighboring Minnesota, Iowa and Nebraska.

"Since trees can take decades to grow but provide a lifetime of benefits, homeowners want to take special considerations when deciding what to plant," said SDDA forest health specialist Dr. John Ball. "The good rule of thumb is we don't want to see more than 10 percent of a community's trees in any one genus. That means no more than 10 percent maple, 10 percent oak, 10 percent any other genus of tree. My recommendation is to look and see what's being planted down your neighborhood and plant something else. We never know what the next threat might be."

For more information, go to <http://sdda.sd.gov/conservation-forestry/forest-health/emerald-ash-borer/default.aspx>.

Sanford
Underground
Research
Facility



Subscribe at: Sanfordlab.org/newsletters

Deep Thoughts

Notes from the underground by Communications Director Constance Walter

Monday, May 22, 2017

Not your average field trip

By Christel Peters, Communications Intern

Hands-on fun helps students learn while attending field trips to the Sanford Underground Research Facility in Lead. From experimenting with magnets to building model hoist lifts, Sanford Lab's Education and Outreach team uses a wide variety of exercises to engage the students who visit.

Field trips should be educational as well as entertaining, said Peggy Norris, deputy director for E&O at Sanford Lab. "It's a great way to show kids the science happening in their own backyard," said Norris.

One of the world's premiere underground research facilities, Sanford Lab is a unique place to host students and provide an educational experience. Knowing that scientists are performing groundbreaking experiments nearly a mile below their feet makes for an exciting environment in which to learn.

Sanford Lab hosts approximately 20 field trips per year for classes K-12. Some schools travel from as far as Chamberlain to experience the unique opportunity Sanford Lab offers those interested in a day of science discovery. Since 2015, more than 700 children from across South Dakota have participated in field trips at Sanford Lab.

"Participating in field trips at Sanford Lab sparks students' interest in science and other STEM fields," said Mike Headley, executive director at Sanford Lab. "We always enjoy hosting them and seeing their excitement."

Educators choose the focus of their field trip. Options range from geology to astronomy to engineering to biology and other science-related themes developed for grade-specific activities.

For more information about Field Trips opportunities for K-12 classrooms, visit www.sanfordlab.org/field-trips



Students from Grant-Deuel School in Revillo, South Dakota, learned the intricacies involved in engineering a hoist lift while on a recent field trip to Sanford Lab. Photo by: Matthew Kapust

Deep Thoughts gets a new look

For the past several years, we've been sending our Deep Thoughts newsletter to nearly 1,000 readers as a PDF file. Beginning next week, May 30, the newsletter will be available only through html. The new format allows us to bring you more news about Sanford lab, tell stories

with greater depth and share more photographs.

One other change: You'll find Deep Thoughts in your mailbox every Tuesday morning.

Please share Deep Thoughts with friends or on social media.

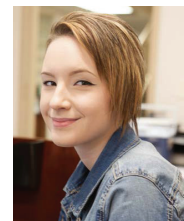
Meet our new receptionist

Amelia Pearson really likes that she's part of something big. "I'm working for a place that has a bigger purpose, a bigger picture," she said of Sanford Lab. "And the people are all so nice."

Pearson began her role as the receptionist at Sanford Lab in early May.

"Amelia is doing a wonderful job," said Mandy Knight, administrative support manager. "We're glad to have her on our team."

When she's not working, Pearson loves walking her German Shepherd named Ein, gardening and, most importantly, spending time with family. She and husband Andrew, a police officer in Spearfish, are expecting their first child.



Tage Suzanne Taylor



Parents: Richard and Tennille Taylor

Hometown: Stratford

Brother: Little brother Taryn Taylor age 14

Hobbies: painting and drawing, showing sheep, and hanging out with friends

School/community activities: I am in 4-H and FCCLA

Favorite high school memory: homecoming

Future plans: I plan to attend Minnesota State University- Moorhead to be an Art Teacher with a minor in Art Therapy

Awards: Renee McKiver Memorial Scholarship, Stratford Community Theatre Scholarship

Good Luck From



605-397-2228

www.jarkrealestate.com

Whitney Jo Voss



Parents: Chad and Joy Voss

Hometown: Bristol

Brother: Alec Voss 20

Hobbies: hanging with friends, hunting, tubing, baking, listening to music, reading

School/community activities: FBLA (Future Business Leaders of America), volleyball, volleyball stats, golf, Luther league at Bergen Lutheran Church, show choir, jazz band

Favorite high memory: winning state show choir in Sioux Falls

Future plans: I am attending Minnesota State University Moorhead and majoring in Speech-Language Pathology

Awards: Minnesota State University Moorhead, Jean Conley Brokaw Memorial Scholarship, Groton Lions Club Scholarship, Jerald W. Peterson Memorial Scholarship, Tom and Barbara Paepke Fine Arts Scholarship, Groton Class of 1969 Scholarship

Congratulations Whitney!

 <p><i>Simon Insurance & Auction Service</i></p>	<p>Steve Simon Auctioneer / Crop & Hail Insurance Specialist 605/397-8507 Cell: 605/380-8506 ssimonins@nvc.net</p>
<p>www.stevesimongroton.com</p>	

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Audrey Rose Wanner



Parents: Lynn and Shaun Wanner

Hometown: Groton

Brother and sister: Andrew 29, Erin 23, and Eliza 14

Hobbies: sports, hanging out with friends, singing and dancing, movie nights, spending time at the lake

School/ community activities: volleyball, basketball, track, dance team, FFA member of the First Reformed church in Aberdeen

Favorite high school memory: when Shelby Hjernstad came into our last home game, senior year against Redfield and made a basket

Future plans: attend Northern State University double major in Musical Theater and English Education

Awards: Northern State University Music Performance Scholarship, Northern State University Theatre Scholarship, Groton Phyllis J. Jark Memorial Education Major Scholarship

Congrats Auds!!!!



Setting Higher Standards

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Emmalea Joy Watje



Parents: Neil Watje and Angie Watje

Hometown: showing livestock, judging livestock

School/community activities: FFA, 4H

Future plans: attend Lake Area Tech to major Ag Business

Awards: Groton FFA Alumni Scholarship, Andover Threshing Association Scholarship, Round Lake Minnesota Legion Scholarship

Congrats and Good Luck from

The logo for Erickson Insurance Agency features a dark blue silhouette of a farm with a barn and silos, topped with a golden wheat stalk. A golden arc curves over the farm.

ERICKSON
INSURANCE AGENCY
• FARM • HOME • AUTO
605-397-4420
WWW.EIAINSURE.COM

Turner Thomas Webb



Parents: Kent Webb and Lori Webb

Hometown: Groton

Sister: Hannah 19

Hobbies: wrenching on my short box Chevy and making money

School/community activities: Groton baseball and FFA

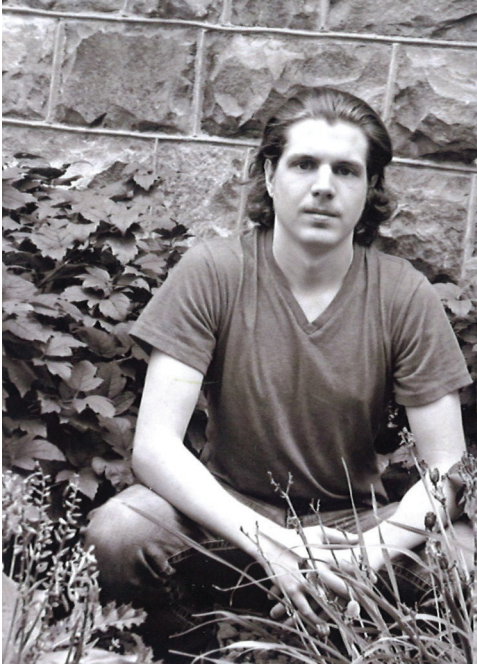
Favorite high school memory: being with my friends everyday

Future plans: attend SDSU for Agronomy

Good Luck From



Kayde Michael Wiedrick



Parents: Mike Wiedrick and LeeAnn Harrell

Hometown: Groton

Sisters and brother: Ashlee-33, Garrett 21, Shannon 17, Grace 15

Hobbies: fishing, working on my car, bond fires with friends

Favorite high school memory: having fun with my friends

Future plans: becoming a police officer or a Mechanic

Best wishes Kayde in your future as you graduate and start the next adventure!!



Cheri's on Main

Men & Women Haircuts ~ Perms ~ Color

7 N Main, Groton ~ 605/397-2491

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Franklin George Allen Michael Wuestewald



Hometown: Huron

Brothers and sisters: my brothers and sisters are the ones who have been by my side all 4 years here in Groton

Hobbies: sports, art, or just video games, plus hanging out with friends

School/community activities: basketball, football, and track

Favorite high school memory: Well I don't have just one but playing along side my brothers during basketball all these years. But my personal memory is getting 4th place at regions for my 400m dash

Future plans: Either become a Welder, Tattoo artist or become a Therapist/Social Worker.

Best of Luck from LW Sales

LW Sales, Inc.

300 Railroad Ave, Groton

605-397-8111

Halie Elizabeth Rose Yarborough



Parents: Kim Yarborough

Hometown: Groton

Brother: Tomas Yarborough 21

Hobbies: reading, writing, and spending time with friends

School/community activities: Drama club, FCCLA, and DI

Favorite high school memory: being student director for the school play

Future plans: going to Northern to major in Secondary English Education and minoring in special Education.

Awards: Groton FCCLA Service Award, Groton Sammuli-Rix Scholarship

Congratulations Halie from



1503 N Broadway, Groton, 605/397-8145

Today in Weather History

May 25, 1880: An estimated F2 tornado moved northeast through the town of Mitchell. Two men were killed when they ran out the back door of a saloon to reach the cellar entrance. The caulk stone saloon was destroyed along with two homes and several businesses. This tornado was one of the first significant tornadoes on record for the state of South Dakota.

May 25, 1985: During the afternoon hours, thunderstorms developed along the east side of the Black Hills. The storms produced quite a bit of lightning and over the course of 2 hours started 18 small fires in the Black Hills. Fortunately, most of the fires were small and quickly contained. One unfortunate firefighter was struck by lightning as he was helping to extinguish a blaze that burned some 50 acres of grassland and forest. Thankfully, the man lived, but he did suffer several broken bones, burns, and major damage to his ears. The strike was so powerful that a man standing over 150 feet away was dropped to his knees.

1896: An estimated F5 tornado hit Oakwood, Ortonville, and Thomas, Michigan. Forty-seven people were killed, and 100 were injured. Trees were debarked "even to the twigs, as though done by the careful hand of an experienced artisan." Parts of houses were found up to 12 miles away.








1955: An estimated F5 tornado moved north and NNW through the heart of Blackwell, Oklahoma. About 400 homes were destroyed, and many were leveled and swept away. About 500 other homes were damaged. The tornado dissipated just over the Kansas border, as the Udall, Kansas tornado was forming to the east. The Blackwell tornado was accompanied by unusual electrical activity, with up to 25 discharges per second recorded on sferics equipment. The funnel was said to glow and have "arcs" of glowing light. The Udall, Kansas tornado was estimated to be an F5 as well. Over half of the population of Udall was killed or injured as the tornado completely devastated a large portion of town. Seventy-five people were killed, and many of the 270 injuries were serious.

1975: On Raccoon Lake, Indiana, lightning struck the motor of a speedboat and traveled up the control wires, killing the driver. The 38-year-old man was knocked into the water by the bolt. His wife and two children, also in the boat, were not injured.

2008: A rare, large and destructive EF5 tornado created a 43-mile long path across Butler and Black Hawk counties in Iowa. This tornado killed eight people, injured dozens and caused several millions of dollars in damage. The tornado was nearly three-quarters of a mile wide as it moved through the southern end of Parkersburg. A third of the town was affected by devastating damage with nearly 200 homes destroyed. This storm produced the first EF5 tornado in Iowa since 6/13/1976 and only the third EF5 tornado to occur in the United States in the past ten years.

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Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday
						
Partly Sunny and Breezy then Partly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny then Slight Chance Showers	Partly Cloudy	Chance Showers
High: 76 °F	Low: 47 °F	High: 74 °F	Low: 46 °F	High: 73 °F	Low: 47 °F	High: 71 °F

Memorial Weekend Outlook



Thursday



Low 70s

slight chance of afternoon showers east

Friday



Low 70s

Saturday



Low 70s

slight chance of afternoon showers

Sunday



69-73°

chance of mainly afternoon showers

Memorial Day



65-70°

chance of mainly afternoon showers/storms east

National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD



Updated: 5/24/2017 4:01 PM Central

Published on: 05/24/2017 at 4:03PM

After a chilly start to the morning under high pressure and light winds, the afternoon will turn warmer with increasing southerly winds. Highs will rebound into the 60s and low 70s with partly cloudy to mostly sunny skies. Dry conditions are expected today, but shower chances arrive across central South Dakota this evening.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 65.7 F at 6:06 PM

Low Outside Temp: 34.4 F at 5:51 AM

High Gust: 25.0 Mph at 7:59 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 93° in 1941

Record Low: 29° in 1924

Average High: 71°F

Average Low: 47°F

Average Precip in May: 2.53

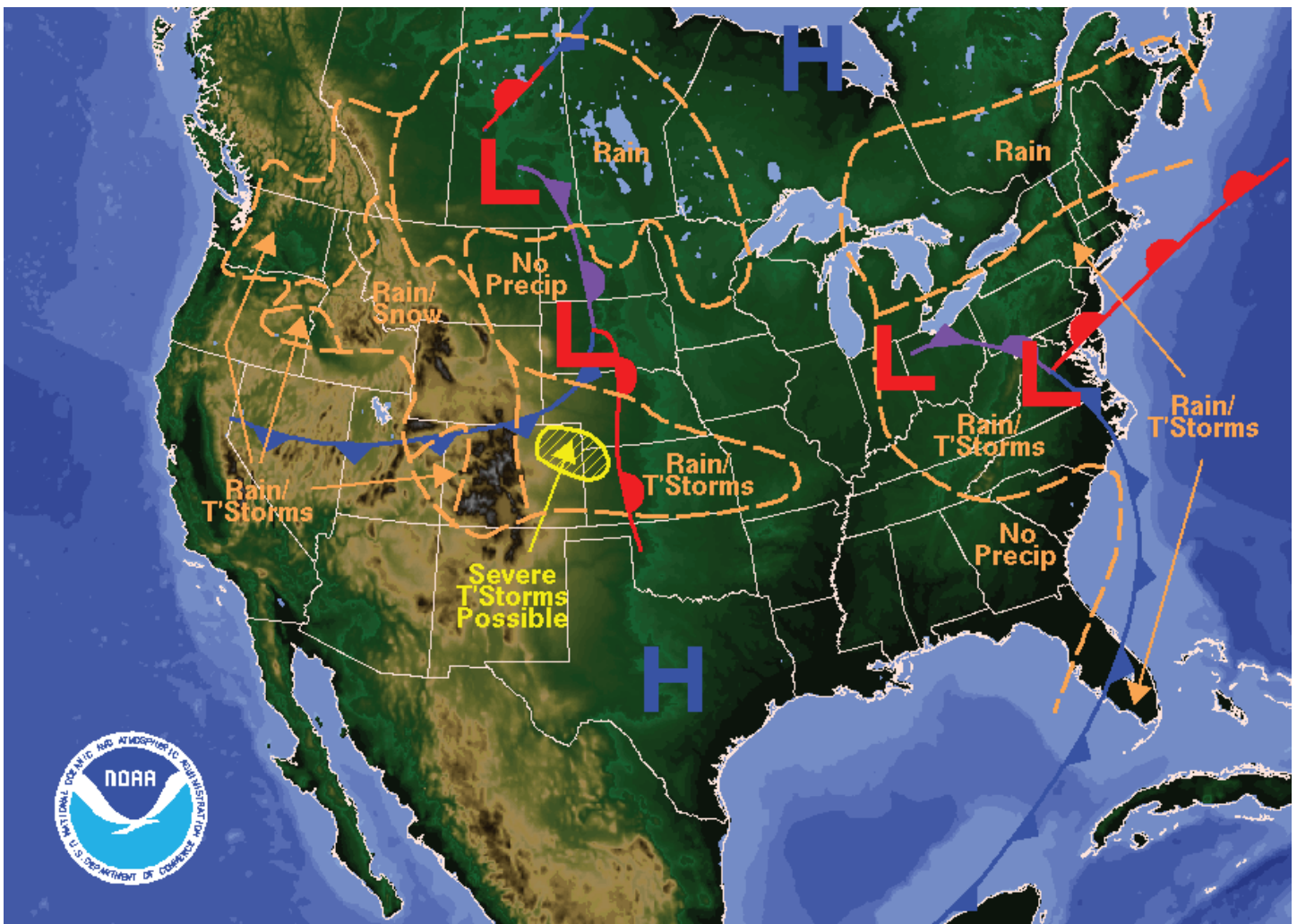
Precip to date in May: 1.21

Average Precip to date: 6.56

Precip Year to Date: 3.19

Sunset Tonight: 9:08 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:52 a.m.



Weather Forecast for Thu, May 25, 2017, issued 4:43 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Mcreynolds based on WPC, SPC and NHC forecasts

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WHAT'S SO AMAZING ABOUT GRACE?

Shortly after John Newton turned eight years old, he was orphaned and became a "wanderer." He eventually began working on ships and the sea captain became his "father." It was not long before he joined the Royal Navy. Dissatisfied, he deserted his post, was caught, put in irons and whipped publicly before being thrown in prison.

Leaving prison angry and defiant, he signed on with the lowest of all seagoing ships - one that carried slaves.

Aboard the new ship life continued to deteriorate. The wife of the captain treated him with great disdain. When meals were served, his food was thrown on the floor and he was forced to eat like a dog. If he refused to eat, he was beaten. He finally escaped, made his way to shore where he built a fire and attracted a ship that rescued him.

John could hardly read, but his knowledge of the sea and sailing ships earned him a promotion. One day he served the crew too much rum and they became drunk. It so angered the captain, that while brutally beating him, John was knocked overboard. But instead of allowing him to drown, he threw a harpoon at John and rescued him. The harpoon speared him and as a result, he carried a scar the rest of his life.

On a voyage from Brazil a severe storm nearly sank the ship. Newton became so frightened that he fell on his knees and asked God to save him. Years later, reflecting on his sordid life, he again fell on his knees. This time to write the great hymn, "Amazing Grace," to honor "The Lord who was gracious, compassionate, and slow to anger."

Prayer: Father, "sin is sin" and all of us have compiled our own list. We thank You that Your grace exceeds every sin! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 145:8 The Lord is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love.

News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Dakota Cash
05-14-15-18-21
(five, fourteen, fifteen, eighteen, twenty-one)
Estimated jackpot: \$175,000

Hot Lotto
01-17-26-28-36, Hot Ball: 8
(one, seventeen, twenty-six, twenty-eight, thirty-six; Hot Ball: eight)
Estimated jackpot: \$6.71 million

Mega Millions
Estimated jackpot: \$58 million

Powerball
28-32-33-38-62, Powerball: 15, Power Play: 2
(twenty-eight, thirty-two, thirty-three, thirty-eight, sixty-two; Powerball: fifteen; Power Play: two)
Estimated jackpot: \$250 million

Mission man must serve 2 years for involuntary manslaughter

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota man has been sentenced to two years in prison a fatal shooting that took place last year on the Rosebud Indian Reservation.

Nineteen-year-old Jacob McCloskey, of Mission, pleaded guilty in March to involuntary manslaughter.

Authorities say McCloskey believed he had removed all the ammunition from the gun before he playfully asked the 17-year-old victim if he wanted to be shot. When the victim jokingly agreed, McCloskey pointed the rifle at the victim and pulled the trigger.

Police say McCloskey first told authorities the rifle had discharged accidentally after the victim had set it down and told other juveniles who were present to lie about what happened.

McCloskey was ordered to serve two years of supervised release and perform 80 hours of community service.

South Dakota jury finds consultant not guilty in pot case

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

FLANDREAU, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota jury on Wednesday cleared a consultant of drug charges after he helped an American Indian tribe grow marijuana for a pot resort that the tribe once hoped would include a nightclub, an outdoor music venue and bring in millions of dollars.

Eric Hagen, a 34-year-old consultant who worked with the Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe, had faced charges of conspiracy to possess, possession by aiding and abetting and attempted possession of more than 10 pounds of marijuana. The plan for a resort north of Sioux Falls was ultimately abandoned.

The jury took only a couple of hours to find Hagen, of Sioux Falls, not guilty in state court. He had faced a maximum penalty of 10 years in prison on both the conspiracy and possession counts and 7 1/2 years on the attempted possession count.

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The verdict was a setback for state Attorney General Marty Jackley, who opposed the tribe's project from the start. Jackley, a Republican running for governor next year, said in a statement that he respected the jury's decision on Hagen's role.

"I do continue to urge our South Dakota tribes to make their own determination that marijuana grows of this nature can affect the public health and safety on their reservations and across our state," Jackley said.

Afterward, Hagen said the prosecution had damaged Monarch America, the consulting company for which he serves as president and CEO that helped the Santee Sioux. He said Jackley's prosecution was spurred by politics.

"He tanked our company by spreading lies and rumors, and it's upsetting," Hagen said. "This was simply a media ploy for Marty because he's running for governor in 2018."

When the Santee Sioux announced their plan for the marijuana resort in 2015, it set the stage for a collision between the tribe's hopes for economic development and state and federal law. Flandreau President Anthony Reider said Wednesday that the tribe had proceeded with caution and transparency.

"From the start, we did not want to see anybody get in trouble with this project," he said.

Their push came after the Justice Department, asked in 2014 to clarify whether they would enforce marijuana laws on tribal land as states such as Colorado and Washington were legalizing the drug, appeared to clear the way for tribes to do the same.

But the same 2014 Justice memo also reserved the right to enforce federal law that still says marijuana is illegal, and when federal officials signaled a potential raid, the tribe burned its crop. Reider said after the marijuana was burned that federal officials had concerns about whether the tribe could sell marijuana to non-Indians, along with the origin of the seeds used for its crop.

Marijuana isn't legal in the state of South Dakota, though the tribe legalized it in on Santee Sioux land in 2015. Hagen and fellow consultant Jonathan Hunt, with Colorado-based Monarch America, were charged last year after helping the tribe. Hunt pleaded guilty to a drug conspiracy count after agreeing to cooperate with law enforcement.

Authorities have said that Hunt and others cultivated the plants at the Flandreau grow facility before hundreds of plants were burned. Assistant Attorney General Bridget Mayer told jurors that Hagen aided and abetted Hunt in possessing more than 10 pounds of marijuana.

Hagen's defense argued that the marijuana belonged to the tribe, not to him.

"That marijuana was the property of the Santee Sioux tribe," defense attorney Mike Butler said. "They undertook to build this facility, to legalize it on their reservation, they sought to do so under a Justice Department guideline for Native American tribes."

When tribal leaders initially touted their plan to open the resort on tribal land, Reider said they wanted it to be "an adult playground."

They projected as much as \$2 million in monthly profits, with ambitious plans that included a smoking lounge with a nightclub, bar and food service, and eventually an outdoor music venue. They planned to use the money for community services and to provide income to tribal members.

Reider said the Santee Sioux have discussed the possibility of growing marijuana again, but said they're waiting for more clarity at the federal level.

"We don't want a repeat of what happened," he said.

South Dakota girl with cancer prevented from graduating

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A western South Dakota high school won't allow a student who has brain cancer to walk during its graduation ceremony because she is a few credits short of being able to graduate.

Meredith Erck, 17, wasn't sure whether she would live to see graduation day, the Rapid City Journal (<http://bit.ly/2rAnfX9>) reported.

The Central High School student had colon cancer before she was diagnosed with brain cancer in 2015. Between surgeries and recovery, she couldn't complete all of her classes on time.

Meredith hoped she could walk the stage with her friends and her twin brother this weekend, and formally

receive her diploma at a later date. She is six credits short, but expects to finish half over the summer and the remaining before the end of the next academic year.

But Rapid City school district officials said in a statement that her participation without credit completion would be unfair to other students who met the criteria to graduate.

"If we grant one exception, we have opened the door to any and all future requests. High school administrators believe that allowing exceptions diminishes the accomplishments of the graduates," the statement read.

Meredith's mother, Laura Polanco, disagreed.

"She just wanted to participate in graduation with the kids she's been in school with since kindergarten," Polanco said. "She knows she's not finished, she knows she's not getting a diploma."

Polanco said Meredith did her best to keep up with schoolwork while staying in the hospital for chemotherapy and radiation treatments.

In a letter to the school's principal, family friend Bethany Wojahn pleaded: "This was not a failing on her part. This was unfair. This was rare. This was life-changing. I see no possible purpose that can be served by disallowing her to walk with her brother on graduation day, even if only to hold his hand while he receives his diploma."

Principal Michael Talley declined to comment directly to the newspaper.

Meredith's mother said there is a 30 percent change the cancer will return, and it will take her daughter five years to fully recover from her illness.

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

The Latest: South Dakota AG accepts loss in drug case

FLANDREAU, S.D. (AP) — The Latest in the South Dakota trial of a man who faced drug charges after acting as consultant to an American Indian tribe seeking to develop a marijuana resort (all times local):
2:05 p.m.

South Dakota Attorney General Marty Jackley says he respects a jury's decision to clear a consultant of drug charges over helping an American Indian tribe develop a marijuana resort on tribal land.

Eric Hagen was cleared of three felony charges after the jury deliberated just a couple of hours Wednesday. Hagen and his company consulted with the Flandreau Santee Sioux in 2015 on the project, which eventually fizzled as the tribe burned its crop amid fear of a federal raid.

Jackley opposed the project from the start. In a statement, he urged other tribes in South Dakota to consider that such marijuana growing operations can affect public health and safety.

The verdict is a setback for Jackley, one of two prominent Republicans running for governor next year.

1:40 p.m.

A consultant who was cleared of drug charges brought after he helped a South Dakota Indian tribe trying to develop a marijuana resort says the state never had a case.

Eric Hagen was acquitted Wednesday by a jury in Flandreau that needed only a couple of hours to deliberate. Hagen and his company consulted with the Flandreau Santee Sioux in 2015 on the project.

The tribe eventually torched its crop amid fears of a federal raid, and Hagen was charged with several counts related to marijuana possession.

Hagen says the state overstepped its authority in bringing the case. He says he "never once thought that I was guilty."

1:25 p.m.

A South Dakota jury has cleared a consultant of drug charges after he helped an American Indian tribe develop a marijuana resort on tribal land.

Eric Hagen, a consultant who worked with the Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe, was found not guilty in state

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court of conspiracy to possess, possession by aiding and abetting and attempted possession of marijuana.

The tribe began a marijuana growing operation in 2015 after the Justice Department outlined a policy allowing Indian tribes to grow and sell marijuana under the same conditions as states that had legalized pot such as Colorado.

But the government also reserved the right to enforce federal law that still says marijuana is illegal, and when federal officials signaled a potential raid, the tribe burned its crop.

Hagen was indicted on state marijuana charges.

1:15 p.m.

A South Dakota jury has reached a verdict in the case of a consultant who faces drug charges for helping an American Indian tribe that sought to develop a marijuana resort on tribal land.

The 12-member jury reached a verdict Wednesday in the trial of Eric Hagen, who worked as consultant to the Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe on the project. Jurors deliberated for roughly two hours.

Hagen is accused of conspiracy to possess, possession by aiding and abetting and attempted possession of more than 10 pounds of marijuana. His defense has argued that Hagen and others were transparent with authorities and that the marijuana belonged to the tribe.

The tribe pursued the resort in 2015 after the Justice Department cleared the way for tribes to grow and sell marijuana under the same conditions as states that legalized pot. But the tribe eventually burned its crop.

11:20 a.m.

A South Dakota jury is weighing the case of a man who faces drug charges for helping an American Indian tribe that sought to develop a marijuana resort.

Closing arguments took place Wednesday morning in the trial of Eric Hagen, who worked as consultant to the Flandreau Santee Sioux on the project.

The tribe pursued the resort in 2015 after the Justice Department cleared the way for tribes to grow and sell marijuana under the same conditions as states that legalized pot. But the tribe eventually burned its crop.

Assistant Attorney General Bridget Mayer asked the jury to find Hagen guilty of conspiracy to possess, possession by aiding and abetting and attempted possession of more than 10 pounds of marijuana.

Defense attorney Mike Butler says Hagen and others were transparent with authorities about the project and that the marijuana belonged to the tribe.

8:55 a.m.

A South Dakota jury will soon have the case of a man who faces drug charges for helping an American Indian tribe that sought to develop a marijuana resort.

Closing arguments are scheduled Wednesday in the trial of Eric Hagen, who worked as consultant to the Flandreau Santee Sioux on their project near Sioux Falls.

The tribe pursued the project in 2015 after the Justice Department cleared the way for tribes to grow and sell marijuana under the same conditions as states that legalized pot.

But state and federal officials raised concerns about the Santee Sioux plan, and the tribe eventually burned its crop after federal officials signaled a potential raid.

Hagen has pleaded not guilty to charges related to possession of marijuana. He's argued it was the tribe's marijuana.

Advocates: Count of homeless in Sioux Falls inaccurate

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Social service advocates say the latest count of those without a permanent address in Sioux Falls doesn't accurately reflect the level of the city's homeless population.

Sioux Falls Advisory Board coordinator Stacey Tieszen says the annual homeless count this year is mis-

leading. It shows a decline of about 100 people identified as homeless since last year. Tieszen says the number is much higher than the 322 homeless people counted.

The Argus Leader (<http://argusne.ws/2qVXQ9A>) says volunteers who counted the homeless this year used an automated survey system, which Tieszen says created challenges in getting an accurate count. A snow storm the day of the count also drove many people away from the places where surveyors typically find the homeless.

The advisory board updates the count each spring for elected leaders to illustrate how social programs and outreach efforts are effecting the homeless population.

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

Nebraska commission sets O'Neill hearing for pipeline review

O'NEILL, Neb. (AP) — A state commission that will decide whether to approve the Keystone XL oil pipeline's route through Nebraska has scheduled a one-day public hearing in northern Nebraska's Holt County.

The Nebraska Public Service Commission says the hearing will run from 1 to 8 p.m. June 7 at the O'Neill Community Center in O'Neill. Public comment will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Speakers will have three to five minutes to comment about the TransCanada project.

A hearing was held May 3 in York and a five-day hearing is scheduled to run Aug. 7-11 at a Lincoln hotel.

The \$8 billion pipeline would transport oil from Alberta, Canada, across Montana and South Dakota to Nebraska, where it would connect with an existing pipeline that feeds Texas Gulf Coast refineries.

UK slams US on probe leaks; queen visits child victims

By JILL LAWLESS, PAISLEY DODDS and GREGORY KATZ, Associated Press

MANCHESTER, England (AP) — British police arrested two more people and searched a new site in Manchester suspected of links to the concert bombing that left 22 people dead, as British authorities complained bitterly Thursday about investigation leaks blamed on U.S. officials.

British Prime Minister Theresa May said she plans to raise the issue with President Donald Trump at the NATO summit in Brussels. She said she plans to "make clear to President Trump that intelligence that is shared between our law enforcement agencies must remain secure."

British officials are particularly angry that photos detailing evidence about the bomb used in the Manchester attack were published in The New York Times, although it is not clear that the newspaper obtained the photos from U.S. officials.

May also said Thursday that progress is being made in the Manchester bombing investigation noted the national threat level remains critical — meaning another attack may be imminent.

Speaking after a meeting of the government's COBRA crisis committee, May said "the public should remain vigilant."

As hundreds of British soldiers rush to protect some of the world's most visited tourist sites in London and elsewhere, police are pressing to uncover the network that is thought to have helped Abedi in the deadly attack.

Greater Manchester Police condemned the leaks on behalf of the National Counter-Terrorism Policing units in a statement that suggested a severe rupture in trust between Britain and the United States, who have traditionally shared intelligence at the highest levels.

"When the trust is breached it undermines these relationships, and undermines our investigations and the confidence of victims, witnesses and their family," the statement said. "This damage is even greater when it involves unauthorized disclosure of potential evidence in the middle of a major counter terrorism investigation."

British police and security services are also upset that the name of British bomber Salman Abedi was apparently leaked by U.S. officials and published while police in Britain were withholding the name for operational security.

The bomber's name was allegedly released by U.S. officials just as raids were underway both in Manchester and in Libya where the bomber's father lives.

Home Secretary Amber Rudd complained the leaks could cost police "the element of surprise" in their bid to prevent future attacks.

British officials, who have also had access to sensitive information regarding past U.S.-focused investigations, are bound by the Official Secrets Act. The act prohibits them from sharing sensitive information regarding national security but also prevents them from sharing security information involving other countries.

Greater Manchester Police say two men were arrested overnight in Manchester and in the Withington area south of the city. Officers also raided a property in the city's Moss Side neighborhood early Thursday and carried out a controlled explosion.

Eight men have now been detained in Britain connection with Monday's attack. Those include Abedi's brother Ismail, his father Ramadan Abedi told The Associated Press. A woman was arrested late Wednesday but was later released without charge.

The senior Abedi denied that his son Salman had links to militants, telling the AP in an interview "we don't believe in killing innocents" before being taken into custody in Libya, along with another son, Hashim.

Abedi died in Monday's blast at an Ariana Grande concert. Grande cancelled concerts that were to take place Thursday and Friday in London, and in several other sites in Europe.

Queen Elizabeth II visited Royal Manchester Children's Hospital on Thursday to talk to some of the concert blast victims. Twelve children under the age of 16 were taken to the hospital by ambulance following Monday night's attack.

Earlier Thursday, at 11 a.m., many across Britain fell silent and bowed their heads for a minute in tribute to the victims caught up in Monday night's concert bombing. Crowds gathered at well-known sites including London's Parliament and Trafalgar Squares and Manchester's Albert Square.

In addition to those killed, 116 people have received medical treatment at Manchester hospitals for wounds from the blast. The National Health Service says 75 people have been admitted to eight hospitals, "including 23 patients currently receiving critical care.

Dodds and Katz reported from London.

GOP candidate charged with misdemeanor assault of reporter

By BOBBY CAINA CALVAN, Associated Press

BOZEMAN, Mont. (AP) — Thursday's nationally-watched election for Montana's sole congressional seat got a last-minute twist when the Republican candidate, Greg Gianforte, was charged with misdemeanor assault for grabbing a reporter by the neck and throwing him to the ground.

Gallatin County Sheriff Brian Gootkin made the announcement shortly before midnight Wednesday in a written statement, about six hours after the attack on reporter Ben Jacobs of The Guardian. Gianforte would face a maximum \$500 fine or 6 months in jail if convicted. The statement added that Jacobs' injuries did not meet the legal definition of felony assault.

Gianforte was in a private office preparing for an interview with Fox News when Jacobs came in without permission, campaign spokesman Shane Scanlon said.

The Fox News crew watched in astonishment as, after Jacobs pressed him on the GOP health care bill, "Gianforte grabbed Jacobs by the neck with both hands and slammed him into the ground behind him," Fox News reporter Alicia Acuna wrote in an article. She added that Gianforte then began to punch Jacobs.

In an audio recording posted by the Guardian, the reporter asks the congressional candidate about the GOP's health care bill, which was just evaluated hours earlier by the Congressional Budget Office.

"We'll talk to you about that later," Gianforte says on the recording, referring Jacobs to a spokesman.

When Jacobs says that there won't be time, Gianforte says "Just--" and there is a crashing sound. Gianforte yells, "The last guy who came here did the same thing," and a shaken-sounded Jacobs tells the candidate he just body-slammed him.

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"Get the hell out of here," Gianforte says.

The incident is a last-minute curveball in Thursday's race, which was partly seen as a referendum on Donald Trump's presidency. The majority of voters were expected to have already cast ballots through early voting, and it was unclear how much of an effect the assault charge would have on the election results.

Gianforte and Democrat Rob Quist, who declined to comment, are seeking to fill the state's seat in the U.S. House left vacant when Ryan Zinke resigned to join Trump's Cabinet as secretary of the Interior Department.

Gianforte, a wealthy businessman, lost a race against Montana's Democratic governor in November while Trump won the state by 20 points. In the congressional race, Gianforte has tried to tie himself to the president and been boosted by visits from Vice President Mike Pence and Donald Trump, Jr.

Hours before Wednesday's assault, the Gianforte campaign sent out a last-minute fundraising appeal to its supporters, saying the outcome "will determine whether we pass Donald Trump's America First agenda or if the fake news media and the national Democrats will win, keeping Obama's reckless policies in place."

Democrats were hoping an upset would send a message to the GOP that Trump's souring approval ratings could damage their political fortunes even in deep red states.

The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee announced that it would launch as many Facebook ads as possible about the assault, targeting Montana Democrats who might not otherwise vote Thursday. The Committee called for Gianforte to quit the race and for the Republican Party to denounce him publicly.

Requests for comment went unanswered Wednesday night from House Speaker Paul Ryan and the National Republican Congressional Committee.

Scott Sales, the Republican president of Montana's state senate, unsuccessfully vied against Gianforte for his party's congressional nomination. On Wednesday evening, he said he could not understand why the scuffle took place.

"There's always two sides to a story, but this doesn't look good," Sales said. "It's not what you want to see happen on the eve of an election."

The Gianforte campaign Wednesday night released a statement blaming the incident on Jacobs. It contends he "aggressively shoved a recorder in Greg's face and began asking badgering questions" before being asked to leave.

Gianforte asked Jacobs to lower a phone that was being used as an audio recorder, then tried to grab it, the campaign said in a statement. Jacobs then grabbed Gianforte's wrist and both fell to the ground, Scanlon said.

The 45-second recording does not contain a request from Gianforte that Jacobs lower his phone. Acuna, the Fox News reporter, wrote that "at no point did any of us who witnessed this assault see Jacobs show any form of physical aggression toward Gianforte."

The sheriff's office said Gianforte has until June 7 to appear in court on the charge.

Federal records show that the sheriff donated \$250 to Gianforte's congressional campaign in March. In his statement, Gootkin confirmed the donation but said, "This contribution has nothing to do with our investigation, which is now complete."

As a candidate, he has already had to apologize for his treatment of the press after an incident last month at a meeting of a Christian group where a man complained about reporters and said he wanted to "wring their necks."

Gianforte pointed out a reporter covering the meeting and said, "It seems like there is more of us than there is of him," according to the Helena Independent Record newspaper. He later said it was a joke and the reporter in the room laughed with everyone else.

The Guardian is a British liberal newspaper that opened a U.S. edition 10 years ago. Its U.S. editor, Lee Glendenning, said in a statement: "The Guardian is deeply appalled by how our reporter, Ben Jacobs, was treated in the course of doing his job as a journalist while reporting on the Montana special election. We are committed to holding power to account and we stand by Ben and our team of reporters for the questions they ask and the reporting that is produced."

Trump meeting with EU leaders

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and JULIE PACE, Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — Visiting a city he once called a “hellhole” to meet with the leaders of one alliance he threatened to abandon and another whose weakening he cheered, President Donald Trump will address a continent Thursday still reeling from his election and anxious about his support.

Trump traveled Thursday morning to the European Union headquarters in Brussels for meetings with Donald Tusk, the president of the European Council, Jean-Claude Juncker, the president of the European Commission, and other EU officials.

Trump appeared to be greeted warmly by the leaders, despite his past comments publicly cheering the United Kingdom’s vote to leave the EU last summer and slamming the alliance during his transition as “a vehicle for Germany.” Trump has taken a less combative tone since taking office, praising the alliance as “wonderful” and saying a strong Europe is very important to him and the United States.

After meeting with Trump on Thursday at the EU, European Council president Donald Tusk said he and the U.S. precedent agreed on the need to combat terrorism but some differences loomed large.

“Some issues remain open, like climate and trade. And I am not 100 percent sure that we can say today -- we means Mr. President and myself -- that we have a common position, common opinions about Russia,” said Tusk, who said unity needed to be found around values like freedom and human rights and dignity.

“The greatest task today is the consolidation of the whole free world around those values,” he said.

Later in the day, Trump is slated to meet with France’s new president and attend his first meeting of NATO, the decades-long partnership that has become intrinsic to safeguarding the West but has been rattled by the new president’s wavering on honoring its bonds. Trump has mused about pulling out of the pact because he believed other countries were not paying their fair share and he has so far refused to commit to abiding by Article 5, in which member nations vow to come to each other’s defense.

But the European capitals that have been shaken by Trump’s doubts may soon find a degree of reassurance. Just like his position on the EU, the president has recently shifted gears, praising NATO’s necessity. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said Wednesday that “of course” the United States supports Article 5, though Trump still wants other nations to meet their obligation to spend 2 percent of their gross domestic product on defense.

“I think you can expect the president to be very tough on them, saying, ‘Look the U.S. is spending 4 percent. We’re doing a lot,’” Tillerson told reporters on Air Force One. He also said he thought it would be “a very important step” for NATO to join the 68-nation international coalition fighting the Islamic State. The move, which is expected during Thursday’s meeting, is symbolically important, especially since the terror group claimed responsibility Tuesday for a deadly explosion at an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester, England.

An anti-terror coordinator may also be named. But most changes will be cosmetic, as NATO allies have no intention of going to war against IS.

The 28 member nations, plus soon-to-join Montenegro, will renew an old vow to move toward the 2 percent figure for defense by 2024. Only five members currently meet the target: Britain, Estonia, debt-laden Greece, Poland and the United States, which spends more on defense than all the other allies combined.

Many are skeptical about this arbitrary bottom line that takes no account of effective military spending where it’s needed most. But putting some meat on the pledge, the leaders will agree to prepare action plans by the end of the year, plotting how to reach 2 percent over the next seven years.

European leaders have been particularly unnerved by Trump’s reticence about NATO due to renewed aggression by Russia, which seized Crimea from the Ukraine in 2014 and, intelligence officials believe, interfered in last year’s American elections.

While in Belgium, Trump will unveil a memorial to the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the only time in the alliance’s history that the Article 5 mutual defense pledge has been invoked. He will also speak at NATO’s gleaming new \$1.2 billion new headquarters.

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But while the Europeans greeted Trump warily, tens of thousands gathered in Berlin to hear his predecessor and German Chancellor Angela Merkel discuss democracy and global responsibility at a Protestant conference as the country marks the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. Barack Obama made a case for American involvement internationally, saying "we can't isolate ourselves, we can't hide behind a wall" in the hours before Merkel was set to meet Trump in Brussels.

In total, Trump will spend about 24 hours in Brussels, a city where he said making a home would be "like living in a hellhole" because of Muslim immigration and terror threats.

Brussels is the fourth stop on Trump's nine-day international trip, the first such trip of his presidency. Protests were slated to take place outside the heavily guarded security perimeter near the city's airport and downtown. In the wake of this week's Manchester bombing, Belgium remains on security Level 3 — meaning that the threat of an extremist attack "is possible and likely." The country has been on that level of alert since suicide-bomb attacks on the Brussels airport and subway killed 32 people last year.

Trump is slated to leave Brussels late Thursday for the final piece of his trip, a two-day stay in Sicily for G-7 meetings.

Associated Press writers Jill Colvin and Catherine Lucey contributed from Washington.

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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. UK ANGERED BY US BOMBING LEAKS

British security and law enforcement officials are reviewing whether other sensitive information involving the Manchester probe should still be shared.

2. TRUMP MEETING WITH NATO, EU IN BRUSSELS

The U.S. president is visiting a city he once called a "hellhole" to meet with the leaders of one alliance he threatened to abandon and another whose weakening he cheered.

3. WHAT NATO'S CHIEF IS AFFIRMING

Jens Stoltenberg says the alliance will join the international coalition fighting the Islamic State group, but will not wage direct war against the extremists.

4. REPUBLICAN CANDIDATE CHARGED WITH ASSAULTING REPORTER

Greg Gianforte, running for Montana's sole congressional seat, faces misdemeanor charges after witnesses say he grabbed a Guardian journalist by the neck and slammed him to the ground.

5. FILIPINO TROOPS CLOSE IN ON SOUTHERN CITY

Army tanks roll into Marawi to try to restore control after Islamic State-linked militants launch a violent siege that sent thousands of people fleeing.

6. WHY SENATE MAY NEED TO RECONCILE GOP HEALTH CARE BILL

Congress' nonpartisan budget analysts say it would leave 23 million more Americans uninsured and cause many people with preexisting medical conditions to pay more for coverage.

7. SOME OREGON VINEYARDS TRY HAND AT POT FARMING

Two years after the legalization of recreational marijuana in the state, some wineries are trying their hand at growing marijuana.

8. CONTROVERSIAL IVF DOCTOR GIVES HOPE TO OLDER WOMEN

An in-vitro fertilization clinic in India treats would-be mothers as old as 70, despite concerns about the health risks and parents dying before their kids reach adulthood.

9. WHAT PLAN COULD SERVE AS A NATIONAL MODEL

Gov. Scott Walker wants to make Wisconsin the first state in the country to require childless adults applying for Medicaid to undergo drug screening.

10. WHERE US CITIES ARE SEE POPULATION RISE

Four of the top five are in Texas with Conroe, a northern Houston suburb, the fastest-growing of the top 15, the U.S. Census Bureau says.

Soldiers launch attacks in besieged Philippine city

By **JIM GOMEZ** and **TERESA CEROJANO**, Associated Press

MARAWI, Philippines (AP) — Philippine government forces launched “precision attacks” Thursday to clear militants linked to the Islamic State group from a southern city that has been under siege since a raid to capture a militant on the U.S. list of most-wanted terrorists failed.

Since late Tuesday, militants have torn through the streets of Marawi, torching buildings, taking a priest and his worshippers hostage and sealing off much of the city. The violence sent thousands of people fleeing and raised fears of extremists gaining traction in the country.

Around 20 people have died in the fighting, including 13 militants and five soldiers, said Lt. Col. Jo-ar Herrera, a military spokesman. President Rodrigo Duterte said a local police chief was stopped at a militant checkpoint and beheaded.

It was not immediately clear whether civilians were among the dead.

“At night we can hear the gunfire,” said Mohammad Usman, who was among thousands of residents streaming out of the city Thursday, their belongings jammed into cars. He said he had spent the last few nights “praying that the bullets will not find their way to my house and hit us.”

Duterte imposed 60 days of martial law Tuesday on the island of Mindanao, which encompasses the southern third of the nation and is home to 22 million people. Marawi has a population of around 200,000.

Duterte warned he may expand martial law nationwide, an unnerving development for many in the Philippines who remember the rule of longtime dictator Ferdinand Marcos. Marcos declared martial law in 1972 and used it to maintain his grip on power for more than a decade.

The man at the center of the Marawi violence is Isnilon Hapilon. Washington has placed him on its list of most-wanted terrorists and offered a \$5 million reward for information leading to his capture. The army raided what it believed to be his hideout on Tuesday night, but the operation quickly went wrong. Militants called in reinforcements and quickly overpowered the authorities.

“Based on reports, he is still in the city,” Herrera told reporters in Marawi as gunfire crackled in the background.

Hapilon, an Arabic-speaking Islamic preacher known for his expertise in commando assaults, is a commander of the Abu Sayyaf militant group. He pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group in 2014. This week’s raid was not the first time the military went after him — he was wounded by an airstrike in January.

Much of Marawi, which is in Lanao del Sur province, was still a no-go zone Thursday. Automatic gunfire and explosions could be heard clearly and plumes of black smoke rose from the direction of the city center. Air force helicopters swooped overhead.

“Attack helicopters fired rockets in a precision attack,” Herrera said. “We want to finish this problem as soon as possible.”

As authorities try to gain more control over the city, disturbing details have emerged.

Militants forced their way into the Marawi Cathedral and seized a Catholic priest, 10 worshippers and three church workers, according to the city’s bishop, Edwin de la Pena. The black flags of the Islamic State group were planted atop buildings and flown from commandeered vehicles, including a government ambulance and an armored car, said Mamintal Alonto Adiong Jr., vice governor of Lanao del Sur province.

More than half of the population of Marawi has cleared out, Adiong said.

The problem of militancy in the south, the scene of decades-long Muslim separatist uprisings in the predominantly Catholic nation, is not new.

Besides the Abu Sayyaf, another, smaller militant group — the Maute — is heavily involved in the Marawi siege. The Maute is one of around a dozen new armed Muslim groups that have pledged allegiance to the Islamic State and formed a loose alliance, with Hapilon reportedly designated as the alliance’s leader.

The group has been blamed for a bombing that killed 15 people in southern Davao city, Duterte’s home-

town, last September and a number of attacks on government forces in Lanao, although it has faced setbacks from a series of military offensives.

Last month, troops backed by airstrikes killed dozens of Maute militants and captured their jungle camp near Lanao del Sur's Piagapo town. Troops found homemade bombs, grenades, combat uniforms and passports of suspected Indonesian militants in the camp, the military said.

Duterte has repeatedly threatened to place the region under martial law, which allows him to use the armed forces to carry out arrest, searches and detentions more rapidly. But human rights groups and others fear that martial law powers could further embolden the president, who already has been accused of allowing extrajudicial killings of thousands of people in his crackdown on illegal drugs.

Cerojano reported from Manila.

NATO chief says allies to join anti-IS coalition

By LORNE COOK, Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — NATO's chief affirmed Thursday that the alliance will join the international coalition fighting the Islamic State group but will not wage direct war against the extremists — an announcement timed for U.S. President Donald Trump's first appearance at a summit of the alliance's leaders.

In the wake of this week's suicide bomb attack at a concert in Manchester, NATO leaders are keen to show that the alliance born in the Cold War is responding to today's security threats as they meet in Brussels. Trump has questioned its relevance and pushed members to do more to defend themselves.

Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg said Thursday that joining the U.S.-led anti-Islamic State coalition "will send a strong political message of NATO's commitment to the fight against terrorism and also improve our coordination within the coalition."

But he underlined that "it does not mean that NATO will engage in combat operations."

All 28 NATO allies are individual members of the 68-nation anti-IS coalition. But some, notably France and Germany, have feared that NATO officially joining it might upset decision-making within the coalition or alienate Middle East countries taking part.

Stoltenberg said that joining would send a strong political signal.

As part of its efforts to respond to Trump's demand to do more to fight terrorism, NATO will also set up a counter-terrorism intelligence cell to improve information-sharing.

It will notably focus on so-called foreign fighters who travel from Europe to train or fight with extremists in Iraq and Syria.

After a working dinner at Thursday's summit, the leaders are also set to announce the appointment of an anti-terror coordinator to oversee their efforts, and increase the number of flight hours of a surveillance plane watching the skies over northern Iraq and Syria.

Another big item on the NATO agenda is Trump's challenge to other countries to up their military spending. Leaders will agree to submit annual action plans laying out how they plan to meet NATO's spending goals. The plans would also describe what kind of military equipment they intend to invest in, and what contributions they will make to operations.

Stoltenberg refused to be drawn into a row between the United States and Britain after leaked photos from the Manchester bomb scene appeared in The New York Times.

He said the dispute over leaked intelligence is a "bilateral issue," but noted that within NATO "sharing intelligence is based on trust."

GOP health bill: 23M more uninsured; sick risk higher costs

By ALAN FRAM and RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Congress' official budget analyst is projecting that the House Republican health care bill would produce 23 million more uninsured people and costly, perhaps unaffordable coverage for

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the seriously ill. Now Republicans in the Senate have to decide how to make their version different.

The Congressional Budget Office report, issued Wednesday, also found that average premiums would fall compared with President Barack Obama's health care overhaul, a chief goal of many Republicans. But that would be partly because policies would typically provide fewer benefits and sicker people would be priced out, it concluded.

The results gave Democrats ammunition to attack the GOP drive to scuttle former President Barack Obama's health care overhaul as damaging to patients.

Three weeks after the House narrowly approved the measure with GOP-only votes and after several embarrassing setbacks, Republican senators said they'd move in their own direction and dismissed the report's impact.

In closed-door meetings aimed at crafting a measure, GOP senators have discussed changing the House's proposed Medicaid cuts and aiming health care tax credits more toward low earners, but they've reported little progress.

"We'll get 'em," Senate Finance Committee Chairman Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, said when asked if GOP leaders would round up the votes they'll need to pass a bill. "But it's going to be difficult."

The report found that under the House measure, people in some regions with pre-existing medical conditions or the seriously ill "would ultimately be unable to purchase" robust coverage at premiums comparable to today's prices, "if they could purchase at all."

That was a knock on 11th-hour changes Republicans made in the bill to gain conservatives' votes by letting states get waivers to boost premiums on the ill and reduce coverage requirements.

The budget office said older people with lower income would disproportionately lose coverage. Over half of those becoming uninsured, 14 million people, would come from the bill's \$834 billion in cuts over 10 years to Medicaid, which provides health coverage to poor and disabled people.

"The report makes clear that Trumpcare would be a cancer on the American health care system," said Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., using the nickname Democrats have tried pinning on the bill.

Trump's Health and Human Services secretary, Tom Price, assailed the CBO for being inaccurate, and the White House issued a similar critique.

"The CBO was wrong when they analyzed Obamacare's effect on cost and coverage," Price said of the agency's report on Obama's law, "and they are wrong again."

Many congressional Republicans took a sharply different tack, emphasizing some of the report's more positive findings.

"This CBO report again confirms that the American Health Care Act achieves our mission: lowering premiums and lowering the deficit. It is another positive step toward keeping our promise to repeal and replace Obamacare," said House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis.

The analysis said the House bill, the American Health Care Act, would reduce federal deficits by \$119 billion over the next decade. The previous version of the bill reduced shortfalls by \$150 billion.

In a late compromise, House GOP conservatives and moderates struck a deal letting states get federal waivers to permit insurers to charge higher premiums to some people in poor health, and to ignore the standard set of benefits required by Obama's statute.

CBO said states adopting those waivers could destabilize coverage for people with medical problems. The agency estimated that about one-sixth of the population - more than 50 million people - live in states that would make substantial changes under the waivers.

The budget office projected that premiums in those states would be lower for healthy people than under current law because their coverage would be narrower, but did not estimate an amount.

For ill people in those states, "it would become more difficult" for seriously ill people to buy insurance "because their premiums would continue to increase rapidly," the report said.

Benefits likely to be excluded from required coverage in some states would include maternity, mental health and substance abuse services, the report said.

In states not getting waivers, where it estimated half the country lives, average premiums would be

about 4 percent lower in 2026 than under Obama's law, the report said. For the one-third of the nation in states modestly reducing coverage requirements, average premiums would be about 20 percent lower, the analysts estimated.

The budget office said average premiums in those states would go down because younger and healthier people would buy coverage and the policies would cover less.

The report said that under Obama's law, the nation's health insurance market is expected to remain "stable in most areas" because federal subsidies to millions of consumers largely rise with premiums. Citing markets where insurers have left or sought huge premium increases, Republicans have repeatedly said the statute must be dismantled because it is in a death spiral.

Facebook's Zuckerberg to give Harvard graduation speech

NEW YORK (AP) — Mark Zuckerberg is giving a commencement address at Harvard, where he dropped out 12 years ago to focus on Facebook.

Zuckerberg, 33, follows another famous Harvard dropout, Bill Gates, who spoke before its graduates a decade ago. Steve Jobs, who dropped out of Reed College in Oregon, gave Stanford's commencement speech in 2005.

Zuckerberg started Facebook in his Harvard dorm room in 2004. He also met his wife, Priscilla Chan, there.

The event will be livestreamed Thursday afternoon on Harvard's website and on Zuckerberg's Facebook page. On Tuesday, Zuckerberg and Chan live-streamed a video from Zuckerberg's old dorm room on his Facebook page.

Raids, arrests as on-edge UK seeks 'network' of attackers

By JILL LAWLESS, MAGGIE MICHAEL and GREGORY KATZ, Associated Press

MANCHESTER, England (AP) — Security forces rounded up more suspects Wednesday in the deadly Manchester concert blast and soldiers fanned out across the country to national landmarks as an on-edge Britain tried to thwart the possibility of additional attacks.

Officials scoured the background of the British-born ethnic Libyan identified as the bomber, saying he was likely part of a wider terrorist network. Additional arrests were made both in Britain and in Libya in the bombing that killed 22 people and wounded scores more.

Among those taken into custody in Libya were the suspected bomber's father and his younger brother, the latter of whom confessed to knowing "all the details" of the attack plot, Libyan anti-terror authorities said.

"I think it's very clear this is a network we are investigating," Chief Constable Ian Hopkins of the Manchester Police said as authorities raided British properties thought to be connected to Salman Abedi, the 22-year-old suspected bomber who grew up in Manchester and died in the attack.

British Home Secretary Amber Rudd said Abedi "likely" did not act alone in the strike at the close of an Ariana Grande concert Monday night and that he had been known to security forces "up to a point." Meanwhile, officials probed possible travel by the alleged bomber, looking for clues to new threats.

Government officials said nearly 1,000 soldiers were deployed to Buckingham Palace, Parliament and other high-profile sites across the country. Britain's terror threat level was raised to "critical" — the highest level — on Tuesday over concern another attack could be imminent.

French Interior Minister Gerard Collomb said Abedi was believed to have traveled to Syria and had "proven" links to the Islamic State group, which claimed responsibility for the attack. British officials, however, have not commented on whether Abedi had links to IS or other extremist groups.

British authorities were probing whether Abedi had ties to other cells across Europe and North Africa, according to two officials familiar with the case who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak about the ongoing investigation.

They said one thread of the inquiry involved pursuing whether Abedi was part of a larger terror cell that included Mohamed Abrini, otherwise known as "the man in the hat," with connections to the Brussels and

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Paris attacks. Abrini visited Manchester in 2015.

"It looks like we're not dealing with a lone wolf situation. There's a network — a cell of ISIS-inspired terrorists," said U.S. Rep. Mike McCaul, R-Texas, chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee. He said the bomb's construction suggested a "level of sophistication" that might indicate foreign training.

Six additional arrests were made in Britain on Wednesday as the sprawling investigation extended to Libya, where Abedi's father and 18-year-old brother were detained in Tripoli. The father, Ramadan Abedi, denied his son had links to militants in an interview with The Associated Press before he was taken into custody, saying, "We don't believe in killing innocents."

The elder Abedi was allegedly a member of the al-Qaida-backed Libyan Islamic Fighting group in the 1990s, according to a former Libyan security official, Abdel-Basit Haroun.

The Libyan anti-terror force that arrested the men said in a statement that the brother, Hashim Abedi, 18, confessed that he and his brother were linked to the Islamic State group and that he was aware of the arena bombing plan. The anti-terror force said the father had not been charged, but was taken in for questioning.

A second brother, Ismail Abedi, 23, was taken into custody in Manchester a day earlier.

The suspected bomber grew up in Manchester's southern suburbs and once attended Salford University there. Neighbors recalled him as tall, thin and quiet, and said he often wore traditional Islamic dress. Among investigators' areas of interest is how often Abedi traveled to Libya, which has seen an eruption of armed Islamist groups since dictator Moammar Gadhafi was overthrown and killed in 2011.

Before his arrest, Abedi's father said he had last spoken to his son five days ago and he sounded "normal." He said his son was getting ready to visit Saudi Arabia for a short Umrah pilgrimage then planned to head to Libya to spend the Islamic holy month of Ramadan with his family. He said his son last visited Libya about six weeks ago and had never gone to Syria. He denied ties to any militant groups or suggestions of extremism.

"We aren't the ones who blow up ourselves among innocents," he said. "We go to mosques. We recite Quran, but not that."

At Manchester's Didsbury Mosque, where the Abedi family worshipped, the bombing was condemned and reports that the suspected bomber had worked there were denied. Azhar Mahmoud, who prays at the mosque in southern Manchester, said it was "horrible" that Abedi was associated with it.

"Wherever he got that, he didn't get it from this mosque," he said, adding that the imam regularly preached against radicalization.

British Prime Minister Theresa May chaired a meeting Wednesday of her emergency security cabinet group to talk about intelligence reports on Abedi and concerns that he might have had outside support. Police raided homes believed to be connected with the investigation.

At one apartment building in Manchester, heavily armed police swarmed in and a controlled explosion was heard. At another property, a house a 10-minute walk from where Abedi lived, neighbors said they were awakened by a loud noise and saw a man hauled away in handcuffs.

"There was a policeman, armed policeman, shouting," neighbor Omar Alfa Khuri said. "And I realized there is something wrong here."

Across London, troops fanned out and authorities reconsidered security plans. The changing of the guard ceremony at Buckingham Palace was canceled so police officers could be re-deployed. The Palace of Westminster, which houses Parliament, was shuttered to those without passes, and tours and events were canceled until further notice. Armed police patrolled outside St. Paul's Cathedral in London, another popular tourist spot.

For a second night, a throng of people filled a Manchester square for a vigil for the victims. Muslim, Christian and Jewish leaders echoed a message that extremists wouldn't drive a wedge among the city's religious groups. People lifted their hands in the air during a moment of silence.

"There are no divisions here tonight," Irfan Chishti, the imam of Manchester's biggest mosque, told the crowd.

Officials said all of the bombing victims have been identified, but names were being withheld until au-

topsies were completed.

Still, their stories began to emerge: Michelle Kiss, a mother of three whose "family was her life;" Nell Jones, an "always smiling" teenager; Martyn Hett, who packed life "to the brim with his passions;" Jane Twedde, a "bubbly, kind, welcoming" receptionist. The youngest known of those killed was just 8. Besides the dead, the number of people who sought medical help after the attack was raised to 119. Officials said 64 people remained hospitalized, including 20 who were critically injured.

Michael reported from Cairo and Katz reported from London. Associated Press writers Sylvia Hui and Paisley Dodds in London, Rob Harris in Manchester, Angela Charlton in Paris; Deb Riechmann in Washington; and Matt Sedensky in New York contributed to this report.

Islamic State-linked militants besiege Philippine city

By **JIM GOMEZ** and **TERESA CEROJANO**, Associated Press

MARAWI, Philippines (AP) — Army tanks packed with soldiers rolled into a southern Philippine city Thursday as gunfire and explosions rang out after militants linked to the Islamic State group torched buildings, seized more than a dozen Catholic hostages and raised the black flag of ISIS.

At least 21 people have died in fighting that erupted late Tuesday, when the army raided the Marawi hideout of Isnilon Hapilon, who is on Washington's list of most-wanted terrorists and has a \$5 million bounty on his head.

The operation went wrong as the militants called in reinforcements and swept through the mostly Muslim city of 200,000 people. Hapilon's whereabouts were not clear, but there was no indication he was captured in the raid.

President Rodrigo Duterte declared martial law across the southern third of the nation — home to some 22 million people — and warned he may expand it nationwide.

He vowed to be "harsh."

"If I think that you should die, you will die," he said Wednesday. "If you fight us, you will die. If there is open defiance, you will die. And if it means many people dying, so be it."

As details of the attack in Marawi city emerged, fears mounted that the largest Roman Catholic nation in Asia could be falling into a growing list of countries grappling with the spread of influence from the Islamic State group in Syria and Iraq.

Thousands of people were fleeing the city Thursday, jamming their belongings into cars. Plumes of black smoke rose in the distance and two air force helicopters could be seen flying over the city center.

Mohammad Usman, a 49-year-old Marawi resident, said some people are likely trapped with no way out.

"At night we can hear the gunfire. I'm just praying that the bullets will not find its way to my house and hit us," he said as he left the city. "I hope that the bombs will not land nearby and harm us."

Although much of the city is sealed off, disturbing details were trickling out.

Duterte said a local police chief was stopped at a militant checkpoint and beheaded. Military chief of staff Gen. Eduardo Ano said the militants erected Islamic State flags at several locations.

Marawi Bishop Edwin de la Pena said the militants forced their way into the Marawi Cathedral and seized a Catholic priest, 10 worshippers and three church workers.

Martial law allows Duterte to use the armed forces to carry out arrests, searches and detentions more rapidly. He has repeatedly threatened to place the south, the scene of decades-long Muslim separatist uprisings, under martial law. But human rights groups have expressed fears that martial law powers could further embolden Duterte, whom they have accused of allowing extrajudicial killings of thousands of people in his crackdown on illegal drugs.

Hapilon, an Arabic-speaking Islamic preacher known for his expertise in commando assaults, pledged allegiance to the Islamic State group in 2014. He is a commander of the Abu Sayyaf militant group and was wounded by a military airstrike in January.

While pursuing peace talks with two large Muslim rebel groups in the south, Duterte has ordered the

military to destroy smaller extremist groups which have tried to align with the Islamic State group.

At least one of those smaller groups, the Maute, was involved in the Marawi siege. It's one of less than a dozen new armed Muslim groups that have pledged allegiance to the Islamic State and formed a loose alliance, with Hapilon reportedly designated as the alliance's leader.

Political analyst Ramon Casiple said the Maute is a clan-based group with members in Marawi who came to Hapilon's assistance, with some directly assisting in the fighting and others fanning out to different parts of the city, setting up checkpoints and burning some buildings and taking hostages from the cathedral.

"It is difficult to root out because they are from there," he said. "The Mautes are embedded in the population."

The group has been blamed for a bombing that killed 15 people in southern Davao city, Duterte's hometown, last September and a number of attacks on government forces in Lanao, although it has faced setbacks from a series of military offensives.

Last month, troops backed by airstrikes killed dozens of Maute militants and captured their jungle camp near Lanao del Sur's Piagapo town. Troops found homemade bombs, grenades, combat uniforms and passports of suspected Indonesian militants in the camp, the military said.

Cerojano reported from Manila.

Playmate tastes shame, ordered to clean up urban grit

By **BRIAN MELLEY, Associated Press**

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Dani Mathers earned fame posing as a nude model. She gained notoriety on the other side of the camera when she snapped a photo of an unwitting and unwilling subject — a naked 71-year-old woman in a gym locker room.

The firestorm of criticism that erupted after the Playboy model posted the pic online to mock the woman's body drew more attention than any centerfold of Mathers and led a judge Wednesday to order her to spend 30 days cleaning up graffiti on Los Angeles streets as punishment.

Mathers, 30, pleaded no contest to misdemeanor invasion of privacy in Los Angeles County Superior Court for the so-called body shaming case. Although she didn't admit guilt, the plea is recorded as a conviction.

The victim, who was not in court, was humiliated by the cruel act, prosecutors said.

"Body shaming can devastate its subject," Los Angeles City Attorney Mike Feuer said. "People are mocked, they're humiliated and in ways they can never fully get back."

Mathers, a petite blonde, had apologized for taking the photo at an LA Fitness club in July and posting it on Snapchat with the caption: "If I can't unsee this then you can't either."

The posting was accompanied by a selfie of Mathers in a tank top with her hand over her mouth as if she's gasping in horror.

The 2015 Playmate of the Year contended she intended to send the photo privately to a friend and accidentally posted it publicly.

The crime was amplified by the attention the photo got online and the backlash that erupted in the world of social media, which is often quicker to punish than reward. The shamer quickly became the shamed.

Mathers lost modeling jobs and work as a radio host, her lawyers said. She complained of being bullied online.

She was relieved to put the case behind her and was grateful to be spared a jail term, defense attorney Thomas Mesereau said outside court.

"She really apologizes from the bottom of her heart for what happened," he said. "She never thought this would come out like this. Never intended to hurt anyone."

After the case arose, Feuer promoted legislation to enhance penalties of the existing privacy invasion law for distributing partially or fully nude images without consent. The bill passed the state Senate this week.

Feuer criticized Mathers for fighting the case "tooth and nail" to avoid legal consequences. The defense argued unsuccessfully that the charge should be dismissed because the victim couldn't easily be identified in the photo shot from a distance.

It didn't take a great deal of detective work for the gym and police to track down the victim, said Deputy City Attorney Chadd Kim.

Mathers was ordered to pay her \$60 to replace a backpack seen in the photo so the woman wouldn't easily be identified.

Based on past conversations, Kim thought the victim would be pleased with the outcome.

Under terms of the plea, Mathers will be on probation for three years.

She must also curtail her photo-taking. She was ordered not to take photos or video of people or post them online without their permission and can't have a camera in places where people might be naked or expect privacy.

Culture critic: Cosby seeking new solidarity with blacks

By MARYCLAIRE DALE, Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — After two years of silence amid an onslaught of sexual assault allegations, comedian Bill Cosby is sending carefully targeted messages about racial bias across the media landscape ahead of his June 5 trial in suburban Philadelphia.

Cosby, 79, spoke to a black news outlet last month for a story that meandered from his self-described blindness to the racist history of the United States to his dream of returning to the stage.

His daughters sent audio statements to select radio stations last week in which Ensa Cosby said her father had been "lynched" in the media.

The messaging continued this week in the Pittsburgh courtroom where jury selection was conducted. After prosecutors struck two black women from the panel, defense lawyer Brian McMonagle attacked what he called the other side's "systemic exclusion of African-Americans."

Two blacks were among the 12 people chosen for the jury, and two more were among the six people chosen as alternates. They will be sequestered 300 miles from home in suburban Philadelphia for the trial. Cosby's lawyers had asked for an outside jury because the case was a 2015 campaign issue in Montgomery County, where Cosby is accused of drugging and molesting a Temple University employee in 2004.

Lawyers on both sides said late Wednesday they were satisfied with the jury's makeup, given that it exceeds the 13 percent black population in Allegheny County, where the jurors were chosen.

"The Cosby team (now) cares about how the public and maybe even how the black community feels about this whole situation, which is striking given his diatribes against the most vulnerable people in that community. But we've seen stranger things in these big trials," said James Braxton Peterson, director of Africana Studies at Lehigh University. "It's ironic how he makes that pivot, given that he's demonized poor black people in the past."

Cosby broke barriers as the first black actor to star in a network show, "I Spy," in the 1960s and created the top-ranked "Cosby Show" two decades later. But he has since alienated young blacks with his criticism of their clothes, music and lifestyle.

On his Facebook page, Cosby posted a photo this month of a bold, new portrait of a younger "Dr. Cosby" as the artist delivered it to his New York home. Cosby calls the portrait, "Restoration of Legacy."

And in a longer SiriusXM interview last week, he reiterated his desire to clear his name, resume his career and restore his legacy.

"I want to get back to the laughter and the enjoyment of things that I've written and things that I perform on stage," Cosby said. "I still feel that I have an awful lot to offer."

Loyola Law School professor Laurie Levenson wonders if Cosby is trying to signal to blacks on the jury with his recent comments, by sending the message "that you have a mission on this jury, to make sure he's not treated as a black man who's come on aggressively to white women."

At the same time, she said, Cosby is hardly the average black defendant.

"Bill Cosby is African-American. But he is the African-American celebrity who crossed the race divide. He had enormous appeal to white households," Levenson said.

The trial is expected to last about two weeks.

Fastest growing US cities are in South; 4 of top 5 in Texas

By TERRY WALLACE, Associated Press

DALLAS (AP) — Ten of the 15 fastest-growing cities with populations of 50,000 or more were spread across the South in 2016, with four of the top five found in Texas, according to new population estimates released Thursday by the U.S. Census Bureau.

Conroe, Texas, a northern Houston suburb, was the fastest-growing of the 15, seeing a 7.8 percent increase from 2015 to 2016, a growth rate more than 11 times that of the nation.

The rest of the top five fastest-growing large cities were Frisco, Texas, a northern Dallas suburb, with a 6.2 percent increase; McKinney, Texas, another northern Dallas suburb, saw a 5.9 percent increase; Greenville, South Carolina, ran up a 5.8 percent increase; and Georgetown, Texas, a northern Austin suburb, had a 5.5 percent increase.

"Overall, cities in the South continue to grow at a faster rate than any other U.S. region," said demographer Amel Toukabri of the bureau's population division.

Since the 2010 Census, the populations of large southern cities grew by an average of 9.4 percent, while cities in the West grew by 7.3 percent. Northeastern cities showed 1.8 percent growth, while populations of Midwestern cities grew by 3.0 percent.

Four cities in the West were among the top 15: Bend, Oregon; Buckeye, Arizona; Lehi, Utah; and Meridian, Idaho. One Midwestern city, Ankeny, Iowa, made the top 15, while the Northeast was shut out.

New York remains the largest U.S. city by a wide margin, its population of 8.5 million people being more than twice that of the 4 million of runner-up Los Angeles. Chicago trailed in third place with 2.7 million residents, despite a population loss of 8,638.

Phoenix showed the largest one-year numerical population increase of 32,113 from 2015 to 2016.

League City, Texas, situated between Houston and Galveston, was the lone city to cross the 100,000 population threshold, reaching 102,010 in 2016.

Only North Dakota and the District of Columbia saw the addition of housing units increase by more than the pre-2007 levels of 1.4 percent. North Dakota housing stock increased by 1.6 percent from 2015 to 2016, while that in D.C. grew by 1.4 percent.

Foreign meetings omitted from Sessions' security clearance

By DEB RIECHMANN and CHAD DAY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Attorney General Jeff Sessions did not disclose contacts with foreign dignitaries, including the Russian ambassador, on a security clearance form he submitted as a United States senator last year, the Justice Department acknowledged Wednesday.

The department said Sessions' staff relied on the guidance of the FBI investigator handling the background check, who advised that meetings with foreign dignitaries "connected with Senate activities" did not have to be reported on the form.

The news comes just two months after Sessions recused himself from a Justice Department investigation into potential ties between Russia and the Trump campaign after it was revealed that he had two previously undisclosed encounters, last summer and fall, with the Russian ambassador. Sessions said at his Senate confirmation hearing that he had not any communication "with the Russians."

In a statement, Justice Department spokesman Ian Prior said Sessions met with hundreds, if not thousands, of foreign dignitaries while in the Senate. Prior said Sessions' staff consulted with the FBI and others familiar with the disclosure process, and was told not to list those meetings connected to his Senate job. CNN first reported the omissions.

Also Wednesday, the FBI told a House committee that it would not be complying with a Wednesday deadline to turn over memos written by former FBI Director James Comey detailing his discussions with President Donald Trump. One memo reportedly recounts Trump pressuring Comey to shut down an investigation into the foreign ties of foreign national security adviser Michael Flynn.

Lawmakers conducting their own probe continued to pressure Flynn to cooperate by raising the prospect

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of additional subpoenas, while Carter Page, a Trump campaign foreign policy adviser, told The Associated Press he would testify next month before the House intelligence committee.

Meanwhile, The New York Times reported that U.S. intelligence services obtained information during the 2016 presidential election that showed senior Russian officials discussing how to influence Trump through his campaign advisers.

Citing three current and former American officials, the Times said U.S. intelligence officials collected information last summer showing Russians zeroed in on Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort and Michael Flynn, a former head of U.S. military intelligence who was a key Trump campaign adviser. The Russian officials thought Manafort and Flynn could be used to influence Trump's views on Russia.

The Times said some of the officials bragged about ties to Flynn. Others thought they could use Manafort's association with former Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich, who led a pro-Russian political party, to their advantage, the Times reported.

A day earlier, former CIA Director John Brennan told a House committee that he had seen intelligence that "revealed contacts and interactions" between Russian officials and Americans "involved" in the Trump campaign — a cause for concern in case the Russians could get the Americans to cooperate.

During a breakfast Wednesday, Rep. Adam Schiff of California, the House intelligence committee's top Democrat, told reporters that Flynn declined to turn over records to the committee, and he said it will be "following up with subpoenas." He did not elaborate on what materials the committee was seeking.

The attempts to compel Flynn to produce documents were just another sign of the intense focus on Trump's former national security adviser, who was fired in February after the White House said he misled administration officials, including Vice President Mike Pence, about his contacts with Russian officials.

In addition to the congressional scrutiny, Flynn is currently a target of an FBI counterintelligence investigation, a federal probe in Virginia and a Defense Department inspector general's inquiry into the propriety of foreign payments he accepted.

In a letter to the Senate committee on Monday, Flynn invoked his Fifth Amendment protection from self-incrimination in deflecting the panel's subpoena for a wide array of documents and information related to his contacts with Russians.

Flynn's attorneys argued that the Senate's request was too broad, and if Flynn were to comply, he could be confirming the existence of some documents and, in effect, providing testimony that could be used against him. They also said an "escalating public frenzy" against Flynn and the appointment of a special counsel had created a legally perilous environment for Flynn to provide the information.

In response, the Senate intelligence committee on Tuesday sent a letter narrowing its request for documents. It also issued subpoenas seeking documents from two of Flynn's businesses— Flynn Intel Group Inc., a consulting firm owned by Flynn and his business partners, and Flynn Intel Group LLC, a company he used for other projects, such as his paid speeches.

Flynn could choose to contest the congressional subpoenas seeking his business records, but legal experts said he would not prevail.

Solomon L. Wisenberg, a Washington defense lawyer who worked as a prosecutor during the Starr investigation of President Bill Clinton, said both of Flynn's corporate structures would likely have to turn over all business records sought by the committee. "The Fifth Amendment privilege does not apply to business entities, period," he said, adding that both Supreme Court and District of Columbia Circuit Court rulings would weigh on the committee's side.

While Flynn decides what, if anything, he'll provide to Congress, the chairman of the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform said the FBI will not be turning over memos and other materials that detail discussions between Comey and Trump.

Rep. Jason Chaffetz, R-Utah, said in an interview on CNN that the FBI sent his committee a two-sentence email saying that it would not be turning over the materials now that the Justice Department has appointed a special counsel. Former FBI Director Robert Mueller, who was appointed as special counsel, is overseeing an investigation into Russia's meddling in the election and whether there was any collusion

with Trump associates.

Chaffetz said he is considering issuing a subpoena for the documents, and he wants a better explanation from the FBI about why it's not turning them over.

The FBI declined comment.

Meanwhile, Page said Wednesday that details are still being worked out about his testimony before the House intelligence committee next month. Page said he expects to testify sometime during the week of June 6 and wants at least part of his testimony to be public. ABC News first reported Page's planned testimony.

Page is one of several people associated with Trump's campaign who are under investigation over their ties to Russia. Page has denied any involvement in Russian attempts to influence the election.

Associated Press writers Stephen Braun and Eric Tucker contributed to this report.

Why Melania Trump covers her head one day and not the next

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — To cover up or not to cover up?

Melania Trump wore a veil to the Vatican on Wednesday to meet the pope, but no head covering a few days earlier to meet the king of Saudi Arabia, a religiously conservative country where most women cover themselves up from head to toe.

Why the difference? The answer is a complicated mix of personal preference, diplomatic protocol and religious dictates.

Stephanie Grisham, a spokeswoman for the first lady, said Mrs. Trump's decision to wear a black lace veil known as a mantilla followed Vatican protocol that women who have an audience with the pope must wear long sleeves, formal black clothing and a veil to cover their head. In Saudi Arabia, however, the government did not request that Mrs. Trump wear a head covering known as a hijab, or a headscarf, Grisham said.

The Vatican's rules of attire are not strictly enforced. Many women, including high-ranking dignitaries, have visited the pontiff with their heads uncovered, including German Chancellor Angela Merkel in 2015 and Aung San Suu Kyi, Myanmar's top civilian leader, this month.

Many women wear veils out of respect. Mrs. Trump is Catholic, which likely made accompanying President Donald Trump for a meeting with the leader of the world's more than 1 billion Roman Catholics all the more meaningful to her.

When a Vatican official handed her a rosary, the first lady immediately gave it to the pope to bless. She spent time in front of a statue of the Madonna at the Vatican's children's hospital and laid flowers at its feet. She also prayed in the hospital chapel.

Every woman in the U.S. delegation wore a veil, including Ivanka Trump, the president's daughter who converted to Judaism before marriage.

In Saudi Arabia, the first lady dressed conservatively for her arrival Saturday in the capital of Riyadh. She wore a long-sleeved, high-necked, black pantsuit that mimicked the loose, black robes, or abayas, that Saudi women and female residents wear. Her attire during the two-day visit hewed to the protocol for high-level female visitors: modest dress, longer sleeves, higher necklines, pants and long dresses.

Ivanka Trump also dressed modestly, and left her head uncovered.

Most Western VIP women who visit Saudi Arabia don't cover their heads, including British Prime Minister Theresa May and Merkel. Laura Bush and Michelle Obama also left their heads bare when they visited as first ladies. Then-citizen Donald Trump criticized Mrs. Obama for doing so in 2015.

In Riyadh, Mrs. Trump didn't visit any Muslim holy sites or mosques where head coverings and other steps such as removing one's shoes would have been required.

In Israel, the Trumps visited the Western Wall, the holiest site where Jews can pray. Donald Trump, who

became the first U.S. president to visit the wall while in office, donned a yarmulke — a skullcap — which is customary; the site keeps stacks of them for visitors to wear.

The president also wore a yarmulke at Yad Vashem, Israel's Holocaust memorial, where it is not required. Trump likely wore one out of respect.

In keeping with Orthodox Jewish tradition, men and women pray separately at the wall. Ivanka Trump wore a black head covering to the wall, while Melania Trump wore no head covering. Many Orthodox Jewish women cover their hair as a sign of modesty.

At the Vatican, while Mrs. Trump strictly followed tradition and protocol by wearing black and a mantilla, other high-profile visitors have taken liberties with their attire.

In 2006, Cherie Blair, a practicing Catholic and wife of then-British Prime Minister Tony Blair, violated protocol outright when she wore white for a meeting with Pope Benedict XVI. Only royals are allowed the "privilege du blanc" — the so-called white privilege that dictates white outfits and white head coverings for queens and other royals when meeting the pontiff.

In 1989, during the landmark audience between Mikhail Gorbachev and Pope John Paul II following the fall of the Berlin Wall, it was the Soviet leader's wife, Raisa Gorbachev, who stole headlines: She wore a bright red dress.

Associated Press writers Nicole Winfield in Rome, Josef Federman in Jerusalem and Aya Batrawy in Dubai, United Arab Emirates contributed to this report.

Follow Darlene Superville on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/dsupervilleap>

Video appears to show Texas officer striking teenage girl

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — The San Antonio Police Department is reviewing police body camera footage after a bystander posted video online that appears to show an officer punching an eighth-grade girl three or four times outside a birthday party last weekend.

Mayor Ivy Taylor issued a statement saying the video "is hard to watch and listen to" and that the department is reviewing the police body camera footage to determine exactly what happened.

The grainy footage was shot late Saturday outside an event center where authorities say officers were called about two men fighting at a quinceanera, a Hispanic tradition of celebrating a girl's 15th birthday.

The 14-year-old girl was arrested on a charge of assaulting a public servant, a San Antonio police spokeswoman said.

Artessia House, a lawyer for the girl, denies that the teen struck the officer. She told the San Antonio Express-News that the girl is an honor roll student with no history of violence.

"An assault on a child is not called a 'scuffle,'" House said in a statement to The Associated Press. She said the incident "is best described as an 'act of abuse' against the child."

The girl was taken to a juvenile detention center Saturday and was released Monday after appearing in juvenile court.

Police Chief William McManus said in a statement that the teen's arrest is being reviewed "to ensure compliance with department policies."

Police officials have declined to release the officer's name.

An incident report described a volatile scene outside the event center, with multiple people fighting and onlookers angered by the police response. The report said many were "on the verge of interfering."

The girl was in the crowd with her mother and brother.

The video appears to show the girl step toward the officer before he strikes her for the first time. He lunges forward and delivers another blow, causing her to twist backward and fall into people standing nearby. He appears to hit her again before he and other officers grab her and arrest her.

The teen's mother can be heard screaming as other officers restrain her daughter.

Father and brother of alleged bomber detained in Libya

By MAGGIE MICHAEL, Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — The father and younger brother of the suspect in the Manchester concert bombing have been detained in Libya, where anti-terror authorities said the brother confessed to knowing “all the details” of the deadly plot.

Hashim Abedi, the 18-year-old brother of alleged British-born bomber Salman Abedi, 22, was detained in Tripoli Tuesday night, a spokesman for a Libyan anti-terror force said Wednesday.

The Special Deterrent force said in a statement on its Facebook page that Hashim Abedi had told investigators after his arrest that both he and his brother belonged to the Islamic State group.

“The brother was aware of all the details of the terrorist attack,” the statement said.

The father of both young men, Ramadan Abedi, 51, was detained on Wednesday shortly after telling The Associated Press in a phone interview from Tripoli that his son Salman, who British officials said died in the Manchester attack, was innocent and had been planning a religious pilgrimage to Mecca.

The father has not been charged and was only detained for questioning, Special Deterrent force spokesman Ahmed bin Salem said.

Prior to his detention Ramadan Abedi confirmed that British authorities had arrested another son, Ismail, 23, on Tuesday as part of the concert attack probe.

“We don’t believe in killing innocents. This is not us,” the senior Abedi said. “We aren’t the ones who blow up ourselves among innocents. We go to mosques. We recite Quran, but not that.”

Authorities say 22 people died and nearly 120 were wounded in the bombing of the arena where American pop star Ariana Grande was performing.

Ramadan Abedi said the last time he spoke to Salman was five days ago as he was getting ready for a trip to Saudi Arabia to perform Umrah, a smaller pilgrimage to the holy city of Mecca.

“He sounded normal. There was nothing worrying at all until two days ago (when) I heard the news that they suspect he was the bomber,” Abedi, a father of six, said.

He said Salman visited Libya a month-and-a-half ago and only returned to Manchester after winning a cheap ticket to Umrah. He said Salman, who was in his second year of studying economics, was planning to return to Libya to spend the holy month of Ramadan with the family. He denied that his son had ever been to Syria.

The senior Abedi worked as a security officer under dictator Moammar Gadhafi’s rule. In 1993, he fled the oil-rich North African country after he was accused of helping Islamists by tipping them off before police raids.

He denied having ties to any of Libya’s militant groups, including the Libya Islamic Fighting Group, which was linked to al-Qaida.

“This is nonsense,” he commented, adding that under Gadhafi, “anyone who went to a mosque raised question marks.”

After less than a year in Saudi Arabia, Ramadan Abedi said he fled to the U.K., where he sought political asylum and lived for 25 years.

In 2011, Abedi returned to Libya during the mass uprising that descended into a civil war and ended with Gadhafi’s ouster and death. Libya has since sank into lawlessness, with rebels turning into militias and undermining successive transitional governments.

The Abedi family, however, is close to the family of al-Qaida veteran Abu Anas al-Libi, who was snatched by U.S. special forces off a Tripoli street in 2013, then died in U.S. custody in 2015.

Al-Libi was on the FBI’s most wanted terrorist list and was accused of having links to the 1998 bombings of two American embassies in Africa.

The wife of Abu Anas told the AP that she went to college in Tripoli with Abu Ismail’s wife, who was studying nuclear engineering. The two women also lived together in the U.K. for years before they returned to Libya.

Even though the senior Abedi denied that he was a member of the Libyan Islamic Fighting group, former

Libyan security official Abdel-Basit Haroun told the AP on Wednesday that the elder Abedi was a member in the 1990s of the group, which had links to al-Qaida.

Although the LIFG disbanded, Haroun says the father belongs to the Salafi Jihadi movement, the most extreme sect of Salafism and from which al-Qaida and the Islamic State group both hail.

Abedi has been working as the appointed administrative manager of Tripoli Central Security forces, which answers to the U.N.-backed government.

"My message to the world is that there are hidden hands that want to tarnish the image of Muslims who live in the west," he said.

Throwing chaos aside, Trump aims for caution on big trip

By JULIE PACE, AP White House Correspondent

BRUSSELS (AP) — In his first big tour on the world stage, President Donald Trump is choosing caution over his usual brand of chaos.

The early morning Twitter rants that so often rattle Washington have disappeared as Trump travels through the Middle East and Europe. The president has traded his free-wheeling speaking style for tightly scripted remarks. And with most of the traveling press corps being kept at a distance, the opportunities for him to be pressed on the controversies engulfing his administration back home are dramatically lessened.

Trump did briefly respond to one shouted question about his meeting with Pope Francis on Wednesday, offering this indisputable assessment of the pontiff: "He is something."

The president appears likely to go his entire nine-day trip without holding a full news conference, a break from presidential foreign travel precedent. That's allowed him to steer clear of the steady stream of new revelations about his dealings with ousted FBI Director James Comey and the federal investigations into his election campaign's possible ties to Russia. And it's left no real opportunities to push the president beyond his talking points on some of the trip's most complex issues, including the prospect of restarting Middle East peace talks and strengthening regional alliances to combat terrorism.

The White House has been jubilant over the trip's results so far, and content to let the images of Trump meeting with world leaders tell the story instead of the president's own unpredictable words. The White House did not respond to questions Wednesday about whether he might squeeze in a news conference on the final legs of the trip, his meetings with NATO and European leaders in Brussels and the Group of 7 summit in Sicily.

Jen Psaki, who served as White House communications director for President Barack Obama, said every White House has to contend with the risks of letting events at home step on a trip's message. But she said there's also value in an American president engaging with the press on foreign soil.

"We always saw press conferences as part of our objective: to send the message in countries without a free press, or with limitations on freedom of speech that the United States valued these sometimes-unpredictable interactions as a part of democracy," Psaki said.

Not that Trump has gone silent on his five-stop trip abroad. He called on Arab and Muslim leaders to step up in the fight against terrorism during an address in Saudi Arabia, and he called on Israelis and Palestinians to get back to the negotiating table during remarks Tuesday in Jerusalem. In both instances, he hewed closely to his prepared text — a rarity given his normal pattern of veering not only off script but sometimes wildly off topic.

There have been some self-inflicted wounds, most notably Trump's decision to field a journalist's question to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu about concerns over the president's decision to share with Russia some classified intelligence that had been obtained by Israel. The president declared that he "never mentioned the word or the name Israel" in his discussions with the Russian officials.

In one short set of off-the-cuff remarks in Jerusalem, Trump told an Israeli delegation that he had just gotten back from the Middle East — despite the fact that Israel is squarely in the region. Ron Dermer, the Israeli ambassador to the U.S., can be seen in the video visibly reacting to the flub.

But some leaders Trump was slated to meet with on his trip had been preparing for far worse than the

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occasional Trump gaffe. At NATO headquarters, where he will visit Thursday, aides have prepped Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg for the possibility that the president could try to pull off a stunt such as passing around invoices to member countries who have not met the alliance's financial guidelines, according to a person with knowledge of the planning.

Trump has been a sharp critic of NATO countries that don't spend the agreed-upon 2 percent of their gross domestic product on defense, and Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said the president indeed planned to push allies hard on that issue. The person with knowledge of the NATO planning insisted on anonymity in order to disclose private discussions.

Trump advisers vigorously contest the idea that the president's more measured tenor abroad is the result of significant staff intervention, arguing that the president himself is behind the approach for his first foreign trip.

The final leg may be the most challenging. After warm embraces from the leaders of Saudi Arabia and Israel, Trump will be meeting with European leaders who are still skeptical of his untraditional approach to politics and his hard-to-pin-down policy positions. The arrangements for the summits will also put Trump's patience to the test, requiring him to spend hours locked in rooms listening to his foreign counterparts.

AP writers Jonathan Lemire in Brussels and Nicole Winfield in Rome contributed to this report.

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

Setting aside past rude talk, Trump and pope focus on peace

By JONATHAN LEMIRE, NICOLE WINFIELD and JULIE PACE, Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Handshakes, gifts, friendly small talk and big hopes for peace. Setting aside past differences and rude comments aside, President Donald Trump and Pope Francis put a determinedly positive face on their first meeting Wednesday at the Vatican.

The two global leaders, vastly different in temperament and views of the world, talked seriously and extensively in a 30-minute private meeting about terrorism, the radicalization of young people, immigration and climate change, officials said. Details were not revealed.

But all was upbeat in public, peace the overarching theme.

Francis gave Trump a medal featuring an olive branch.

"We can use peace," said the president, acknowledging the symbolism.

He gave the pope a custom-bound, first-edition set of Martin Luther King Jr.'s works, an engraved stone from the King Memorial in Washington and a bronze sculpture of a flowering lotus titled "Rising Above."

"I think you'll enjoy them. I hope you do," Trump said.

The pope's other gifts could be taken as offering a more pointed message, though Francis is known to give them to other visitors, too.

He gave Trump three bound papal documents that he has written that to some degree define his papacy and priorities. One focuses on the environment, demanding an end to a "structurally perverse" economic system that has turned Earth into an "immense pile of filth." He frames climate change as an urgent moral crisis and blames global warming on an unfair, fossil fuel-based industrial model that harms the poor the most.

Trump has expressed skepticism about global warming and possible causes, and he has promised changes to spur more coal and oil production in the U.S.

The president is midway through a grueling nine-day, maiden international journey which has included Middle East stops in the cradles of Islam and Judaism. In Saudi Arabia, he addressed dozens of Arab leaders and urged them to fight extremists at home and isolate Iran, which he depicted as a menace to the region. In Israel, Trump reaffirmed his commitment to strong ties with the longtime U.S. ally and urged Israelis and the Palestinians to work harder toward peace.

He arrived late Wednesday in Brussels.

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While Trump received warm welcomes in Riyadh and Jerusalem, the reception could grow cooler now that he's reached Europe, site of widespread protests after his election. Climate change activists projected the words "Planet Earth First" on the massive dome of St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican Tuesday night, and protests are expected when he attends a NATO meeting in Brussels and a G-7 gathering in Sicily.

As for the Trump-Francis relationship, during the presidential campaign the pope was sharply critical of the candidate Trump's pledge to build an impenetrable wall on the Mexican border and his declaration that the United States should turn away Muslim immigrants and refugees.

"A person who thinks only about building walls, wherever they may be, and not building bridges, is not Christian," Francis said.

Trump retorted that it was "disgraceful" for the pope to doubt his faith.

There was none of that on Wednesday.

The visit began with a handshake after each man arrived, Trump in a lengthy motorcade, Francis in a Ford Focus.

Their private meeting ended when Francis rang the bell in his study. The pontiff was then introduced to members of Trump's delegation, including his wife, Melania, his daughter Ivanka and son-in-law Jared Kushner, as well as aides Hope Hicks and Dan Scavino.

Francis had a light moment with the first lady, asking via translator, "What do you give him to eat, potica?" referring to a favorite papal dessert from her native Slovenia.

The first lady laughed and said "Yes." She and Ivanka covered their heads in a sign of papal respect, a gesture they did not make in Saudi Arabia.

"We had a fantastic meeting," the president said afterward. He tweeted later that it was the "honor of a lifetime."

A statement from the Vatican said that "satisfaction was expressed" at their "joint commitment in favor of life" and that there was hoped-for collaboration on health care, assistance to immigrants and protection of Christian communities in the Middle East.

In recent days, Francis and Trump have been in agreement on a need for Muslim leaders to do more against extremists in their own communities. But there are relatively few other areas where their views align.

Trump's predecessor, Barack Obama, had a private audience with Francis at the Vatican in 2014 that lasted 50 minutes. But the timing Wednesday was tight as Francis had his weekly general audience. The thousands of pilgrims on hand forced Trump's motorcade to enter Vatican City from a side entrance rather than the grand entrance through St. Peter's Square.

When Trump left, he told the pope: "Thank you, I won't forget what you said."

Trump, the 13th president to visit the Vatican, also toured the Sistine Chapel.

Follow Lemire on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/@JonLemire> , Winfield at <http://twitter.com/@nwinfield> and Pace at <http://twitter.com/@JPaceDC>

This story has been corrected to reflect the pope asked about potica, not pizza.

Trump budget faces Dem opposition, GOP doubts about math

By ANDREW TAYLOR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's budget chief delivered a spirited defense of the plan's deep spending cuts, but his agriculture secretary offered only a half-hearted endorsement of proposed reductions to farm subsidies and food stamps.

A day after the budget's release, a handful of senior administration officials fanned out on Capitol Hill on Wednesday, facing tough questions from Democrats opposed to the blueprint for the upcoming fiscal year and Republicans skeptical about the administration's math.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, meanwhile, gave Republicans the unwelcome news that they may have to cast a dreaded vote on increasing the government's borrowing authority before they break for

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the August recess. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos faced a grilling from Democrats over funding private schools with taxpayer money.

One House Budget Committee member, Rep. Tom Cole, R-Okla., told White House Budget Director Mick Mulvaney that Trump's proposed cuts to medical research are "penny-wise and pound-foolish" — and then excused himself to preside over DeVos' testimony.

Here's the rundown on the budget hearings:

BUDGET CHIEF

Mulvaney gave an unapologetic defense of Trump proposals to slash programs related to the environment, education, health care for the poor and foreign aid.

The former tea party congressman told the Budget Committee that he went line by line through the federal budget and asked, "Can we justify this to the folks who are actually paying for it?"

Democrats charged that Trump's cuts would rip apart the social safety net. Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Wash., told Mulvaney that the proposed cuts to food stamps, payments to the disabled, and other programs are "astonishing and frankly immoral."

"We are talking about half the births in the United States, 30 million children, and half of all nursing home and long-term care nationwide for senior citizens and people with disabilities," said Rep. Jan Schakowsky, D-Ill., citing Medicaid's extensive reach.

"When you say 'cut' are you speaking Washington or regular language?" Mulvaney shot back.

Rep. Mark Sanford, R-S.C., laced into the president's budget plan, saying it was based on fanciful economic predictions of high growth rates but low inflation and bond yields that would make managing the government's \$20 trillion debt less costly.

"This budget presumes a Goldilocks economy" that never goes into recession, Sanford said. "It assumes that the stars perfectly align."

FOOD AND FARM FIGHT

Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue was lukewarm in defending Trump's budget to Democrats and some Republicans who rejected proposed cuts to farm programs and food stamps.

"Many in agriculture and rural America are likely to find little to celebrate within the budget request," Alabama Rep. Robert Aderholt, the Republican chairman of the appropriations subcommittee that oversees agriculture spending, told Perdue.

Trump's budget would limit subsidies to farmers, including a cut in government help for purchasing popular crop insurance policies. Perdue said the nation has a dilemma in how to "right-size the budget" but acknowledged the concerns.

"I don't know that your priorities are much different from my priorities for USDA," he told Aderholt.

Democrats criticized a proposal for an almost 30 percent cut in food stamps. Connecticut Rep. Rosa DeLauro called the budget "cruel," "heartless," "evil" and "inhumane." Georgia Rep. Sanford Bishop said the cuts "fail the test of basic human decency."

The Trump budget would also eliminate a program that ships American commodities to hungry people abroad. Aderholt said that program "is something we should be proud of" and eliminating it "runs entirely counter to the idea of buy American, hire American" that Trump has championed.

Perdue had no defense: "I think your comments are essentially irrefutable," he said.

SCHOOL VOUCHER BATTLE

Education Secretary DeVos faced pointed questions from lawmakers on whether funding private schools with taxpayer money would condone discrimination of LGBT, special needs and other students.

Rep. Katherine Clark, D-Mass., asked DeVos whether a private school can receive voucher money even if it denies access to LGBT students. Trump's budget would cut several key K-12 programs, while boosting funding for charter and private school voucher programs.

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DeVos answered that that was not the federal government's business, but was for states and locales to decide. "They set up the rules around that," she said.

"We believe that parents are the best equipped to make choices about education for their children," she said.

Clark then asked whether DeVos saw a role for the federal government to intervene if a private school rejected African-American students, and DeVos repeated her answer. "I am shocked that you could not provide one example of discrimination" that warrants federal intervention, Clark said.

IMMIGRATION JAIL BEDS

Homeland Security Secretary John Kelly defended proposed budget cuts to state and local grant programs and a proposal to spend more than \$2.7 billion to add thousands of new immigration jail beds despite steep declines of arrests along the Mexican border.

In a hearing before a House panel, Kelly insisted that it made sense to cut roughly \$767 million from state and local grant programs, money intended to help local authorities prevent and respond to terrorist attacks and other disasters, because the funds are no longer needed.

"I wouldn't say these funds are not very helpful for these states and localities, but I would offer that it isn't as grim as you describe if we take it away," Kelly said, responding to criticism of the proposal by Rep. Nita Lowey, D-N.Y. "Their efforts against terrorism and other disasters won't immediately collapse."

Lowey said she worried that Kelly didn't fully understand how important that money is to local jurisdictions, including New York City.

"Your budget proposal would make communities ... less safe," Lowey said.

Rep. John Carter, a Texas Republican who chairs the subcommittee, described the proposed cuts as "worrisome" and also questioned the need to add thousands of new immigration jail beds.

Kelly told the panel that while arrests at the border have dropped to records lows in the months since Trump took office, arrests of immigrants living in the country illegally have increased and for now, at least, the added jail space is necessary. He suggested that in future budgets that may not be the case.

Asian shares gain, tracking Wall St advance, oil price rally

By The Associated Press

Shares in Asia are higher after an overnight advance on Wall Street spurred by the latest meeting minutes from the Federal Reserve.

KEEPING SCORE: The Nikkei 225 stock index in Tokyo climbed 0.5 percent to 19,849.10 and Hong Kong's Hang Seng added 0.5 percent to 25,559.00. South Korea's Kospi jumped 0.9 percent to 2,336.87 while the Shanghai Composite index slipped 0.2 percent higher to 3,057.69. The S&P ASX 200 rose 0.2 percent to 5,780.50. Shares were higher in Taiwan and Southeast Asia.

FED'S PLANS: According to the minutes released Wednesday, Federal Reserve officials discussed steps for shrinking the U.S. central bank's \$4.5 trillion in bond holdings. Wall Street liked what it saw. "They're going to do it in a very careful, slow, and, at least by Fed standards, transparent method," said Ed Keon, a portfolio manager at QMA, a fund manager owned by Prudential Financial. "They're not going to do it in a way that runs the risk of shocking the market."

ANALYST VIEWPOINT: Minutes from the U.S. Federal Reserve Open Market Committee's May meetings "confirm a benign approach from the Fed while emphasizing its commitment to normalization of monetary policy over the medium term," said Michael McCarthy of CMC Markets. "Rallies across U.S. stock exchanges support the perception that investors remain focused on the underlying economic strength rather than the consequent interest rate rises," he said in a commentary.

WALL STREET GAINS: U.S. stocks rose for the fifth consecutive day Wednesday, and the Standard & Poor's 500 index gained 0.2 percent to closed at a record high 2,404.39. The Dow Jones industrial average gained 0.4 percent to 21,012.42 and the Nasdaq composite also added 0.4 percent, to 6,163.02.

ENERGY: Benchmark U.S. crude jumped 47 cents to \$51.83 a barrel in electronic trading on the New

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York Mercantile Exchange. It lost 11 cents to settle at \$51.36 per barrel on Wednesday. Brent crude, used to price international oils, climbed 50 cents to \$54.46 a barrel in London. Oil prices have rallied lately as members of the OPEC cartel and other countries prepare to meet and discuss production. Those nations are expected to extend last year's production cut in a concerted attempt to prevent oil prices from falling.

CURRENCIES: The dollar rose to 111.60 yen from 111.50 yen. The euro edged up to \$1.1240 from \$1.1119.

AP Markets Writer Marley Jay contributed to this story. He can be reached at <http://twitter.com/MarleyJayAP>

His work can be found at <https://apnews.com/search/marley%20jay>

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Thursday, May 25, the 145th day of 2017. There are 220 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On May 25, 1977, the first "Star Wars" film (later renamed "Star Wars: Episode IV - A New Hope") was released by 20th Century Fox.

On this date:

In 1787, the Constitutional Convention began at the Pennsylvania State House (Independence Hall) in Philadelphia after enough delegates had shown up for a quorum.

In 1810, Argentina began its revolt against Spanish rule with the forming of the Primera Junta in Buenos Aires.

In 1916, the Chicago Tribune published an interview with Henry Ford in which the automobile industrialist was quoted as saying, "History is more or less bunk."

In 1935, Babe Ruth hit his last three career home runs — nos. 712, 713 and 714 — for the Boston Braves in a game against the Pittsburgh Pirates. (The Pirates won, 11-7.)

In 1942, U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Joseph Stilwell, frustrated over being driven out of Burma by Japanese forces during World War II, told reporters in Delhi, India: "I claim we got a hell of a beating."

In 1957, the third tube of the Lincoln Tunnel connecting New York and New Jersey was opened to traffic.

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy told Congress: "I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to the earth."

In 1968, the Gateway Arch in St. Louis was dedicated by Vice President Hubert Humphrey and Interior Secretary Stewart Udall.

In 1979, 273 people died when an American Airlines DC-10 crashed just after takeoff from Chicago's O'Hare Airport. Six-year-old Etan Patz (AY'-tahn payts) disappeared while on his way to a school bus stop in lower Manhattan. (In April 2017, former store clerk Pedro Hernandez, convicted of killing Etan, was sentenced to at least 25 years in prison.)

In 1981, daredevil Dan Goodwin, wearing a Spiderman costume, scaled the outside of Chicago's Sears Tower in 7 1/2 hours.

In 1986, an estimated 7 million Americans participated in "Hands Across America" to raise money for the nation's hungry and homeless.

In 1992, Jay Leno made his debut as host of NBC's "Tonight Show," succeeding Johnny Carson.

Ten years ago: President George W. Bush signed a bill to pay for military operations in Iraq that did not contain a timetable for troop withdrawals. Radical Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr (mook-TAH'-duh al SAH'-dur) resurfaced after nearly four months in hiding and demanded U.S. troops leave Iraq. Tony Award-winning actor Charles Nelson Reilly died in Los Angeles at age 76.

Five years ago: The private company SpaceX made history as its Dragon capsule docked with the International Space Station. In Syria, more than 100 people were killed in one day in a cluster of villages in central Homs province; U.N. investigators blamed pro-government gunmen for at least some of the killings,

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but the Syrian regime denied responsibility and blamed rebels for the deaths.

One year ago: President Barack Obama wrapped up his historic visit to Vietnam before heading to Japan, the site of a two-day summit of wealthy nations. It was announced that Texas and 10 other states were suing the Obama administration over its directive to U.S. public schools to let transgender students use the bathrooms and locker rooms that matched their gender identity. (The other states were Oklahoma, Alabama, Wisconsin, West Virginia, Tennessee, Maine, Arizona, Louisiana, Utah and Georgia.) Actor Johnny Depp's wife, actress Amber Heard, filed for divorce in Los Angeles, citing irreconcilable differences after 15 months of marriage.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Ann Robinson is 88. Former White House news secretary Ron Nessen is 83. Country singer-songwriter Tom T. Hall is 81. Actor Sir Ian McKellen is 78. Country singer Jessi Colter is 74. Actress-singer Leslie Uggams is 74. Movie director and Muppeteer Frank Oz is 73. Actress Karen Valentine is 70. Actress Jacki Weaver is 70. Rock singer Klaus Meine (The Scorpions) is 69. Actress Patti D'Arbanville is 66. Playwright Eve Ensler is 64. Musician Cindy Cashdollar is 62. Actress Connie Sellecca is 62. Rock singer-musician Paul Weller is 59. Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., is 57. Actor-comedian Mike Myers is 54. Actor Matt Borlenghi is 50. Actor Joseph Reitman is 49. Rock musician Glen Drover is 48. Actress Anne Heche (haych) is 48. Actresses Lindsay and Sidney Greenbush (TV: "Little House on the Prairie") are 47. Actor-comedian Jamie Kennedy is 47. Actress Octavia Spencer is 47. Actor Justin Henry is 46. Rapper Daz Dillinger is 44. Actress Molly Sims is 44. Singer Lauryn Hill is 42. Actress Erinn Hayes is 41. Actor Cillian Murphy is 41. Actor Ethan Suplee (soo-PLÉE') is 41. Rock musician Todd Whitener is 39. Actor Corbin Allred is 38. Actress-singer Lauren Frost is 32. Musician Guy Lawrence (Disclosure) is 26. Olympic gold medal gymnast Aly Raisman is 23.

Thought for Today: "A historian is a prophet in reverse." — Friedrich von Schlegel, German diplomat and writer (1772-1829).