

Groton Daily Independent

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Official Notices

- Brown County (updated 8-31)**
- Frederick Area School (updated 8-29)**
- Groton City (updated 8-29)**
- Groton Area School (updated 8-29)**
- Westport Town (updated 8-21-17)**
- Other Notices (updated 8-21)**
- Frederick Town (Updated 8-15)**
- Groton Area School (updated 8-7)**
- Claremont Town Official Notices Book**

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

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

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Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship at Rosewood Court, 10 a.m.

Heaven Bound Ministries: Worship in Pierpont at 5:30 p.m.

Catholic Parish: Mass at SEAS in Groton, 4:30 p.m.; Mass at St. Anthony, Bristol, 6 p.m.

Soccer: Girls at Garretson at 1 p.m.; Boys host Freeman Academy at 3 p.m.

Youth Football: 9 a.m., Groton 5th/6th at Milbank Jamboree; 9:30 a.m., Groton 3rd/4th hosts Sisseton Black.

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Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with communion, 9 a.m.; Sunday School, 10 a.m.; WELCA serves at Groton Care & Rehab at 3 p.m.

United Methodist Church: Conde worship, 9 a.m.; Back to Sunday School Bash, 10 a.m.; Coffee Fellowship Time, 10 a.m.; Groton Worship, 11 a.m.; Back-to-Sunday School Picnic, Noon.

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.

Christian & Missionary Alliance: Sunday School for children, youth and adults, 9:15 a.m.; Worship at 10:45 a.m.

Midwest Masonry & Concrete Pumping

Greg Heilman, owner

405 E 1st Ave., Groton

Greg: 253/929-9137

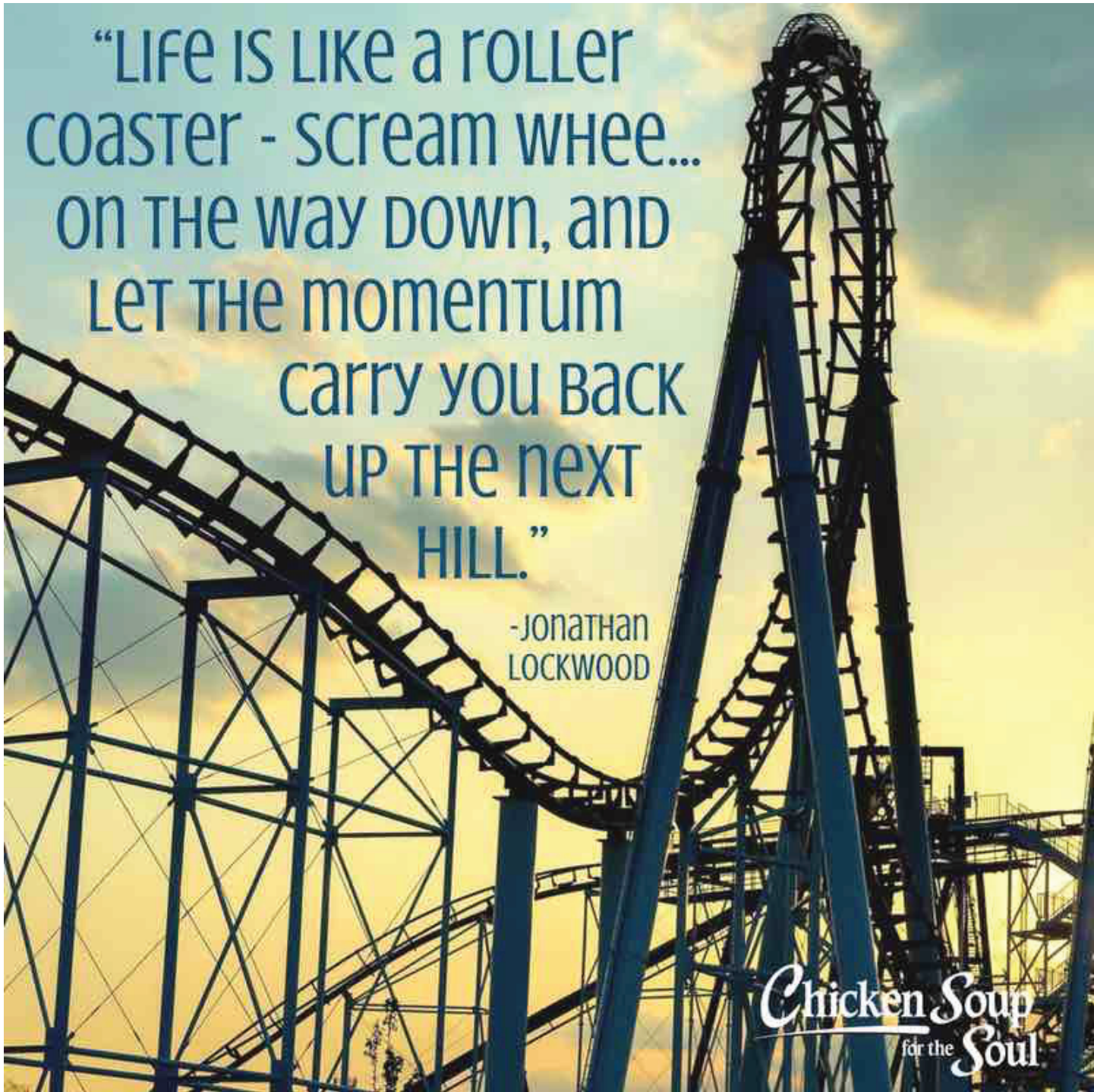
Mike: 605/492-7041

midwestmasonry1@yahoo.com



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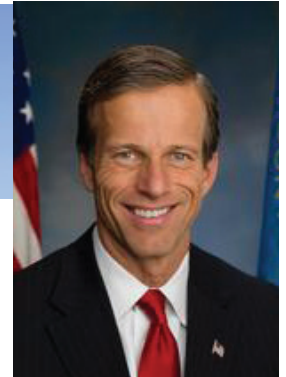
A photograph of a roller coaster track against a sunset sky. The track is dark and silhouetted against the bright, orange and yellow light of the setting sun. The sky is filled with soft, wispy clouds. The roller coaster track curves and rises, creating a sense of height and movement.

“LIFE IS LIKE a roller
coaster - scream whee...
on THE way DOWN, and
LET THE momentum
carry you BACK
UP THE next
HILL.”

-JONATHAN
LOCKWOOD

Chicken Soup
for the Soul

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



Service Academies Offer Students a Unique Opportunity to Serve

President Reagan once said, "Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same." For nearly 250 years, America has been blessed because from each new generation of Americans have come leaders and warfighters who have not only protected freedom and liberty on their watch, but have helped ensure those pillars of American democracy are preserved and strengthened for those to whom they've passed the torch of freedom.

South Dakota has been home to many of these leaders over the years – it still is today – and I'm humbled to play a small role each year in helping South Dakota's future leaders take the next step in life by nominating them to one of the service academies throughout the country, including the Military Academy, Naval Academy, Air Force Academy, and Merchant Marine Academy. Any South Dakotan who meets the requirements (age, marital status, etc.) can apply for a nomination through my office.

There are many well-known leaders and pioneers in their field who graduated from one of America's service academies. Astronauts like Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins, who both flew to the moon, graduated from the Military Academy, as did U.S. Presidents Ulysses S. Grant and Dwight D. Eisenhower. Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), who I'm fortunate to serve with in the U.S. Senate, graduated from the Naval Academy. Generations of other Americans who went on to serve in countless other fields, including business, academia, and athletics, have all gone through the ranks of one academy or another.

If you're interested in beginning your career at a service academy, now is the time to act. You can find more information on my website, www.thune.senate.gov, under the "services" tab. Once there, you'll be able to determine if you're eligible to apply. You can also write, email, or call any of my offices for more information or to discuss this opportunity with a member of my staff.

The class of 2018 has already been selected, but the deadline to apply for the class of 2019 is on October 31, 2017, which is right around on the corner. I'll review all of the applicants and will announce my selections early next year.

The men and women who choose to pursue this path deserve our respect and gratitude, and those who are selected will have their names etched among some of the most prominent leaders our nation has known. I want to thank all of the young South Dakotans in advance who will consider this opportunity, and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

2017 Groton Area Elementary

Preschool Developmental Screening for 3 year olds

September 20 and 21

Parents of children age 3 in the Groton Area School District are asked to contact Heidi Krueger at the Groton Area Elementary School during school hours at 397-2317 to either confirm their screening time or set up a time. Letters will be send out the week of September 10. If your child is already receiving services or enrolled at Groton Elementary School they will not need to be screened. If your child has already been screened but you have concerns please contact the elementary school. If you are new to the district and have a child under the age of 5, we also ask you to contact the elementary school.

The Developmental Screening will take place at the Groton Area High School Arena. Please park and use the east entrance to the arena.



Netters take down Hamlin in fifth game

It was an exciting night of volleyball action at the Groton Area Arena. The Lady Tigers posted a 3-2 win over the Hamlin Chargers.

The first game featured the game being tied twice and there were two lead changes. Groton Area had rallies of eight and six points for the 25-14 win. Hamlin jumped out to a 3-0 lead in the second game and held a 5-1 lead. Groton would rally to come back and tie the game at 10 and the Tigers took an 11-10 lead. The game was tied at 11, 12, 13, 15 and 17 before Hamlin regained the lead and jumped out to a 24-19 lead. Groton Area closed to within one point, 24-23, but the Chargers got the last point for the win, 25-23.

The third game was tied eight times and there were four lead changes. Groton held a 13-8 lead, but Hamlin came back and took a 22-19 lead and went on to win, 25-22.

Hamlin took a 6-3 lead in the fourth game, but Groton scored six straight points to take a 9-6 advantage. The Tigers took a 10-point lead, the biggest of the match by either team, at 19-9 and 20-10. Then Hamlin scored six straight points to close to within four, 20-16, and then within two, 22-20. Groton would close off the game with a 25-21 win, to tie the match at two games apiece.

Hamlin posed no threat in the final game as Groton never trailed and ended with a 15-8 win.

In serving, Groton Area was 106 of 108 with eight ace serves. Eliza Wanner was 16 of 16 with four ace serves and Jennie Doeden was 20 of 21 with three ace serves. Hamlin was 86 of 91 with three ace serves. Logan Keszler had two ace serves.

In attacks, Groton Area was 181 of 214 with 54



Jennie Doeden gets ready to return the ball. (Photo

by Jeslyn Kosel)



kills. Gia Gengerke was 38 of 39 with 19 kills and Taylor Holm was 30 of 35 with 11 kills. Hamlin was 121 of 139 with 40 kills. Lexi Wadsworth had 14 kills and Faith Leiseth had 10.

Groton Area was 210 of 213 in sets with 49 assists. Miranda Hanson was 188 of 192 with 48 assists and Jessica Bjerke was two of two

Brian Schuring and Lynette Grieve are busy at the scorer's table. (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

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with one assist. Hamlin's Logan Keszler had 19 assists and Kylee Wadsworth had 17.

Groton had 129 digs with Payton Maine having 32, Jessica Bjerke 27 and Jennie Doeden 23. Hamlin had 67 digs with Ashtyn Abraham having 22.

Gia Gengerke had six solo and two assists blocks.

Groton Area, now 6-1, will travel to Warner on Tuesday and will host Sisseton on Thursday.

The junior varsity team won its match, 25-19 and 15-11, and the C team made it a clean sweep by winning its match, 19-25, 26-24 and 16-14.



Miranda Hanson sets up the play for Taylor Holm. (Photo by

Jeslyn Kosel)



Miranda Hanson serves the ball. (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)



Peyton Maine gets the dig for the Tigers. (Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

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The C team shows their excitement after winning the third game, 16-14, in the photo above. The photo on the right shows the varsity players who were cheering them on during the game. (Photos by Paul Kosel)



G i a Gengerke returns the ball to the Hamlin side.

(Photo by Jeslyn Kosel)

Help Wanted

We are Hiring Nurses – RN or LPN, Full or Part Time.

NEW WAGE PACKAGE!!!

Contact Jessica Lindskov or Nellie Peterson at 605-397-2365 or apply in person.

EOE/AA/M/F/V/D-Drug Free Workplace



GROTON
CARE & REHABILITATION CENTER

1106 N. 2nd Street, Groton
605-397-2365



Real, Genuine Accountability

Trust in government is at an all-time low – and who could blame folks? Fraud, mismanagement, and abuse are rampant within government agencies. Taxpayer dollars are too often misspent by bureaucrats. And many people aren't given basic courtesies when they interact with some federal employees. We need accountability in government – and I mean real, genuine accountability.

A few weeks ago, after speaking to the Watertown Rotary, a local radio commentator summarized my remarks like this: "If you don't like the IRS, it probably doesn't compare to Rep. Kristi Noem's disgust with the agency." It's true – and the agency's lack of accountability has a lot to do with that disgust. This should be a "service first" agency, but customer service at the IRS is appalling. During 2015, only 38 percent of callers could reach an IRS representative. Meanwhile, they targeted conservative groups and wasted millions of dollars on conferences and "Star Trek" parody videos.

Through the House, we've passed legislation to prevent the IRS from targeting taxpayers for political gain. We've passed a Taxpayer Bill of Rights. And we've passed legislation I wrote to stop the IRS from rehiring employees who have already been fired for misconduct. Unfortunately, Senate Democrats and President Obama blocked much of this agenda from moving forward.

Thankfully, we turned a new leaf with President Trump's election. Alongside the previously mentioned reforms, one of the best ways to hold the IRS accountable is by drastically reducing its role. By simplifying the tax code, we're hopeful most Americans' tax returns could fit on a postcard once tax reform goes through. That leaves little room for the IRS to take advantage of hardworking South Dakotans.

But I have a problem with federal agencies beyond the IRS too. Today, a wanted felon can evade prosecution for months – even years – and yet somehow still receive a check from the Social Security Administration every 30 days or so. Let's be clear: taxpayers shouldn't be asked to make payments to people who are running from the law. Period.

I've introduced legislation to stop these payments, which is making quick progress in the House. This is not simply a fairness issue either. Staci Ackerman, the Executive Director for the South Dakota Sheriffs' Association points out: "This bill will also limit [wanted felons and parole violators'] ability to avoid justice using taxpayer dollars to evade capture." On top of it all, the legislation is estimated to save more than \$2 billion.

I've also introduced legislation to bring greater integrity to the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, which is the country's primary assistance program for low-income individuals and families. Today's program often perpetuates poverty, rather than opportunity. With my legislation, we realign TANF with its core mission: offering upward mobility and the opportunity for greater financial independence to hardworking Americans.

Additionally, I'm fighting to make sure the Indian Health Service (IHS) is held responsible for the care it delivers. Whether it's a drug testing program for employees or strengthening fiscal accountability measures, greater accountability will better keep the IHS focused on serving tribal communities.

I've also voted to expand whistleblower protections within the VA and streamline the process required to fire any VA employee, reforms President Trump signed into law. All of this only scratches the surface of what's being done, which highlights just how broken the federal government is.

As we continue to work toward fixing agencies across the board, I encourage you to reach out to my office if you need assistance with the IRS, VA, Social Security, or any other federal bureaucracy. We can help you navigate the process and, when necessary, hold them directly accountable on your behalf.

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All auto owners!
Save \$2-\$4 /tank
& grow your local economy
by choosing low carbon
Super Premium E30's
94 octane, more power,
same mileage, fewer
carbon deposits, lower
maintenance costs,
slashed benzene & related
genotoxic, carcinogenic
tailpipe emissions;
*see sdfu.org's E30 tab for
info, E30 prices/locations.

***Farmers Union's
PSA: Courtesy Merle
Anderson (Merle is 94
year old founder of Ace
and legendary ethanol
supporter... "because it is
the right thing to do")**



The flashing lights at US12 and SD37 were officially turned on late on Thursday. (Photos by Paul Kosel)



Tiger gridiron on a 3 game winning streak

Lucas Hinman rushed for 135 yards and caught for 23 yards to help propel Groton Area to a 17-7 win over Chamberlain in Friday night's football game played in Groton.

Groton Area scored first on a four yard run by Marshall Lane with 8:31 left in the first quarter. The PAT kick was blocked and Groton Area took a 6-0 lead. On a fourth down, but close to the end zone, Groton opted to kick a 35-yard field goal and Hunter Schaller made it through the uprights as Groton took a 9-0 lead with 4:26 left in the first quarter.

Chamberlain would score with 11:16 left in the second quarter on a nine-yard pass from Jazz Dominguez to Riggs Priebe. The PAT kick by Max Donovan was good and it was 9-7. The Tigers would score once more before the end of the first half on a 13-yard pass play from Marshall Lane to Jonathan Doeden. The PAT kick was no good and it was 15-7 at half time.

A couple of big plays pushed Chamberlain way back in their territory. On fourth down and attempting to punt with the ball right at the goal line, the Cubs bobbled the ball and Luke Thorson was right there to get the safety for Groton to make it 17-7 which stood for the final score.

First Downs: Groton Area 16, Chamberlain 14.

Rushing: Groton Area 46-201 (Lucas Hinman



Andy Rintala carries the ball as he is led by Lucas Hinman. (Photo by Julianna Kosel)



Marshall Lane gets ready to throw the ball. (Photo by Julianna Kosel)

22-135, Marshall Lane 18-28, Andy Rintala 3-27, Brandon Keith 3-11). Chamberlain 24-8 (Jett Evans 16-57, Jazz Dominguez 6-(-25), Marc Schwenk 2-(-24).

Passing: Groton (Marshall Lane) completed 4 of 8 passes for 46 yards, 1 interception, 1 touchdown. Chamberlain (Jazz Dominguez) completed 16 of 31 for 172 yards, 1 interception, 1 touchdown.

Receivers: Groton: Lucas Hinman 2-23, Jonathan Doeden 1-13, Brandon Keith 1-10. Chamberlain: Carson Powers 4-56, Riggs Priebe 4-46, Marc Schwenk 5-47.

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Peyton Johnson get ready to punt the ball. (Photo by Julianna Kosel)

Fumbles: Groton had 2, lost 1. Chamberlain had 1, lost 1.

Penalties: Groton Area: 10-120, Chamberlain: 8-70.

Defense: Groton Area: Brandon Keith 14 tackles and 1 fumble recovery, Luke Thorson 10 tackles and 2 sacks for a minus 14 yards, Peyton Johnson 3 sacks for a minus 7 yards, Brandyn Anderson 1 sack for a minus 4 yards and Andy Rintala 1 interception returned for 7 yards.

Record: Groton Area: 3-2. Chamberlain: 2-2.

Next Games: Groton Area hosting Mobridge-Pollock (homecoming). Chamberlain hosting Woonsocket/Wessington Springs/Sanborn Central



The Groton Area and Chamberlain lines prepare to engage each other. (Photo by Julianna Kosel)

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Peyton Johnson brings down Chamberalin's Jazz Dominguez. (Photo by Julianna Kosel)



The Tigers are off and running as Hunter Schaller kickoff after a Groton Area touchdown.

(Photo by Julianna Kosel)

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Weekly Road Work Update

Work continues on the SD37 and US12 highway project as the October 15th deadline nears. The blinking lights at the junction of SD37 and US12 were activated on Thursday. It was reported at the Webster Scale weekly meeting on Thursday that the street lights for US12 will not be done for some time. There has been a delay from the manufacture in delivering the anchors for those poles.

Phase six has started with dirt work between Railroad Avenue and Aspen Avenue. In the near future, a milling machine will arrive to take off the asphalt in that area.

Meanwhile on the north end of the project, Lien Transportation is expected to arrive Tuesday or Wednesday to start laying down asphalt. First the patch work will be done and the asphalt will be laid. The road between US12 and Fifth Avenue is ready for asphalt and dirt work will also be beginning as the final stretch of work begins.

Groton City Council Meeting Agenda September 18, 2017 – 7:00pm Groton Community Center

Minutes

Bills

Finance Report for August

Payable concerns

Second reading of ordinance #714 regarding pex tubing as it pertains to water

Safe Routes to School purchases

October 13 Festival of Bands Request – Street Closing & Viewing Stands

October 7 Pumpkin Festival update – McGannon

Safety Training – November 8 & 9 – Mitchell – Paul

Heartland Budget Meeting Langford October 25 – Hope & Shawn

Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)

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Granary Rural Cultural Center - Groton, S.D.

LIVING HISTORY FALL FESTIVAL

See The Past Come Alive!



Saturday, September 23, 2017

11:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

FREE ADMISSION

COME DRESSED IN FRONTIER COSTUME—GET A PRIZE!

*Fun for All Ages! Reenactment, Demonstrations,
Hands On Activities, Spelling Bee at 2:30 p.m.,
Square Dance Lessons with Art Marmorstein
Pie Social from 1-4 p.m., Music & More!*

NEW!

... As if you were there!

**PRESIDENT TEDDY
ROOSEVELT**

Played by Arch Ellwein of Flyin' Lion Productions



PERFORMANCES at 1 & 3 p.m.

Program made possible by: South Dakota Humanities Council
(An affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities)



Stop by for Lunch! Concessions by: **THE BRASS KETTLE**



THE GRANARY - Physical Address: 40161 128th St., Rural Groton
The Arts & Culture Campus of Dacotah Prairie Museum
Museum Website: www.dacotahpraiemuseum.com • Granary Website: granaryfinearts.org



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Today in Weather History

September 16, 1965: A heavy snow event brought widespread snowfall across the region with snowfall accumulations of 1 inch in Colony and Devils Tower, 2.6 inches at the Rapid City Airport, 4 inches in Oelrichs, 5.1 inches in Redig, and 8 inches in Lead, Spearfish, and Sundance.

1881: Iowa's earliest measurable snow of record fell over western sections of the state. Four to six inches was reported between Stuart and Avoca.

1888: An estimated F2 tornado struck Washington, DC. The tornado first touched down on the south side of the city then moved up Maryland Avenue. The National Museum and Botanical Gardens were damaged before the tornado lifted off the ground.

1928 - Hurricane San Felipe, a monster hurricane, which left 600 dead in Guadeloupe, and 300 dead in Puerto Rico, struck West Palm Beach FL causing enormous damage, and then headed for Lake Okeechobee. When the storm was over, the lake covered an area the size of the state of Delaware, and beneath its waters were 2000 victims. The only survivors were those who reached large hotels for safety, and a group of fifty people who got onto a raft to take their chances out in the middle of the lake. (David Ludlum)

1984 - The remains of Tropical Storm Edourd began to produce torrential rains in the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. Port Isabel reported more than 21 inches. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Overnight rains soaked Arkansas, with 5.25 inches reported at Bismarck. In the town of Malvern, up to four feet of water was reported over several downtown streets, with water entering some homes and businesses. Thunderstorms in Texas drenched Lufkin with 4.30 inches of rain in just three hours. Evening thunderstorms produced severe weather in Missouri. A small tornado near Kirksville lifted a barn thirty feet into the air and then demolished it. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)




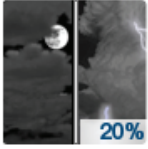



1988 - Hurricane Gilbert moved ashore into Mexico. The hurricane established an all-time record for the western hemisphere with a barometric reading of 26.13 inches. Winds approached 200 mph, with higher gusts. Gilbert devastated Jamaica and the Yucatan Peninsula. (The Weather Channel) Hurricane Gilbert made landfall 120 miles south of Brownsville TX during the early evening. Winds gusted to 61 mph at Brownsville, and reached 82 mph at Padre Island. Six foot tides eroded three to four feet off beaches along the Lower Texas Coast, leaving the waterline seventy-five feet farther inland. Rainfall totals ranged up to 8.71 inches at Lamar TX. Gilbert caused three million dollars damage along the Lower Texas Coast, but less than a million dollars damage along the Middle Texas Coast. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Showers and thunderstorms, representing what remained of Hurricane Octave, brought locally heavy rains to California, impeding the drying process for raisins and other crops. Sacramento CA was soaked with 1.53 inches of rain in six hours. At Phoenix AZ, the afternoon high of 107 degrees marked a record seventy-six days with afternoon highs 105 degrees or above. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2004: Hurricane Ivan turned northward over cooler waters, and made landfall in southern Alabama on September 16 as a Category 3 storm. Hurricane Ivan had a very unusual track almost making a very large circle.

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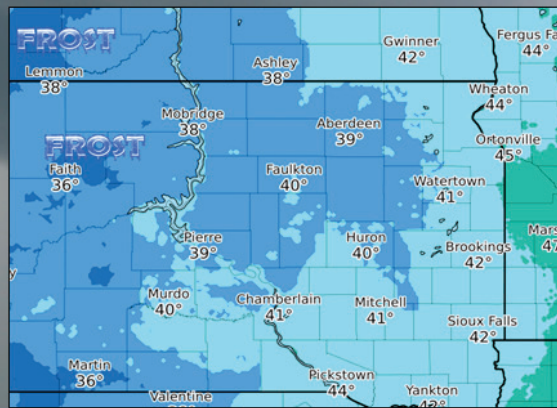
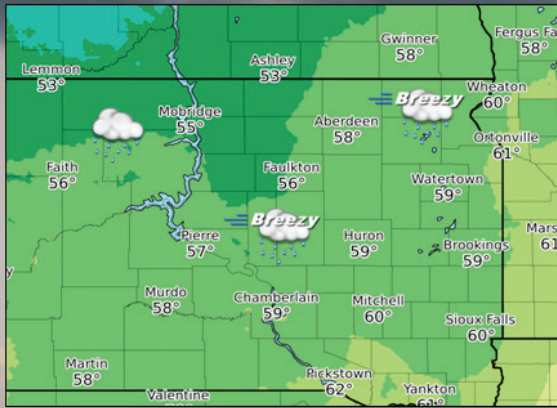
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This Afternoon	Tonight	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday	Monday Night	Tuesday
						
Slight Chance Showers	Gradual Clearing	Sunny	Mostly Cloudy then Slight Chance T-storms	Mostly Sunny	Partly Cloudy	Partly Sunny then Chance T-storms
High: 55 °F	Low: 37 °F	High: 67 °F	Low: 49 °F	High: 76 °F	Low: 57 °F	High: 79 °F

Showers This Morning, Cool Temps Today

Highs only in the 50s today with a cool northwest breeze

Lows in the 30s & 40s tonight - Patchy frost north central SD?



National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD



Updated: 9/16/2017 5:28 AM Central

Published on: 09/16/2017 at 5:33AM

An upper level disturbance will move northeast across the region this morning and bring showers and thunderstorms. No severe weather is expected today as all the instability is well east of the area. Plenty of clouds and cool temperatures will be observed today, along with a northwest breeze. Highs will only be in the 50s this afternoon, with the wind making it feel cooler. Lows tonight will drop into the 30s and 40s as winds become light for many areas. There could even be some patchy frost across north central South Dakota as temps approach the mid 30s.

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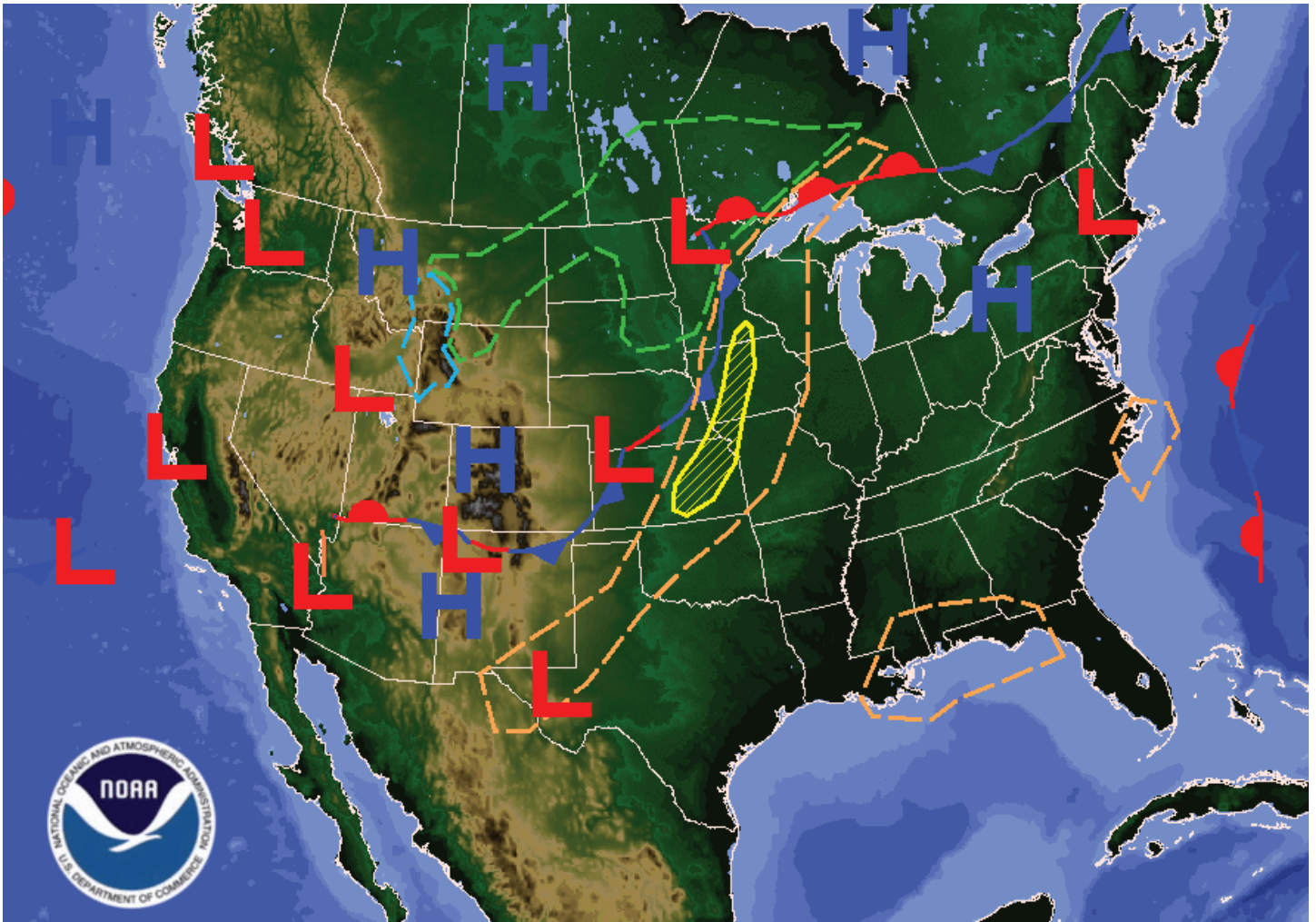
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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 60.4 F at 12:00 AM
Low Outside Temp: 54.0 F at 10:23 AM
High Gust: 20.0 Mph at 10:59 AM
Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 96° in 1925
Record Low: 20° in 1916
Average High: 72°F
Average Low: 46°F
Average Precip in Sept: 1.20
Precip to date in Sept: 0.11
Average Precip to date: 17.49
Precip Year to Date: 9.63
Sunset Tonight: 7:42 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:14 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Sat, Sep 16, 2017, issued 4:57 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Krekeler with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

Rain
Rain and T'Storms
Rain and Snow
Snow

Flash Flooding Possible (hatched)
Severe T'Storms Possible (hatched)
Freezing Rain Possible (hatched)
Heavy Snow Possible (hatched)

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HELP WHEN YOU NEED IT

There are few things that are more important to us than our safety and security. We depend on rules and regulations for our well-being and protection. We have the police to protect us and the military to guard us. We rely on individuals we have never met to enforce laws and be alert if there is an emergency. Yet, in spite of all of the layers of defense that have been placed around us, the threats of life continue to surround us. We search for a moment of peace in these times of turbulence.

However, as Christians we must always remember that we have a resource that is always available. The Psalmist reminds us that "God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble." Not only are we reminded that God is our refuge and strength but that He is ever-present!

The word refuge means shelter. When the rains fall and the rivers rise we find a place of security in the arms of God. When days are dark and nights long we have His light to shine around us and keep us from falling. When sickness strikes and illness lingers we have the assurance of His presence and peace.

And His strength – His mighty power – is there as our shield and sword. No one would go into any battle without the proper equipment to protect and defend himself. Here, however, we are reminded that the battle belongs to our God and He will not only fight for us but will protect us from anyone who would hurt or harm us, destroy or defeat us.

And we can take great assurance that His refuge and strength are ever-present. He is with us – not He might be with us – wherever we are. We have no reason to be frightened when the world seems to be closing in on us and the pressures of life are about to overcome us. God: our refuge and strength – here, now.

Prayer: Help us to realize, Lord, Your presence in our lives and involvement in anything and everything that concerns us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 46:1 God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble.

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News from the Associated Press

South Dakota woman to plead guilty in emaciated kids case

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A Kyle woman is expected to plead guilty after two of her children were found emaciated on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

Court records indicate 34-year-old Darcel Featherman will plead guilty to felony child abuse and neglect Sept. 29.

The Rapid City Journal reports she admitted to leaving the girls with her mother and sister, knowing they wouldn't properly care for them due to alcohol and meth use.

Tribal police found the girls, ages 3 and 2, nearly starved to death in November. They both weighed about 13 pounds and could barely move. Court documents show the older girl was later found to be blind due to "chronic non-accidental" brain trauma.

The children were placed in custody of the Oglala Sioux Tribe. They've gained weight in foster care.

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

Ponca Tribe receives grant to address elder abuse

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A Nebraska tribe has received a more than \$17,000 grant meant to help address elder abuse throughout its 15-county service area in Nebraska, Iowa and South Dakota.

The Ponca Tribe received the Elder Abuse Innovation Grant Award through the National Indigenous Elder Justice Initiative Innovation program, the Press & Dakotan reported .

Andrea Rodriguez, the tribe's domestic violence program coordinator, said the grant allows the tribe to offer outreach and prevention work on elder abuse.

"We've been seeing an average of about six cases of elder abuse a year, most of it for financial exploitation," she said.

Rodriguez said the tribe can also develop a section of the Ponca tribal code that'll better serve indigenous elders.

She hopes the awareness and outreach effort helps the domestic violence program discover undetected or unserved cases because of a lack of resources.

The program's services range from advocacy, transportation and legal action to counseling, medical care and other resources.

"We advise victims who are ready to leave, so they know the safe time to leave and what to take with them," Rodriguez said. "Also, we advise them who to contact and who not to contact."

Under the grant, program staff will make presentations at weekly congregate elder lunches, Circle of Elders monthly meetings and Northern Ponca Elders Council quarterly meetings.

"We are promoting our domestic violence program," Rodriguez said. "We take this (problem) seriously."

Information from: Yankton Press and Dakotan, <http://www.yankton.net/>

South Dakota governor supports habitat work group

MITCHELL, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota governor says he believes his habitat work group is making a difference despite a 45 percent drop in pheasant numbers seen in an annual survey earlier this year.

In December 2013, Gov. Dennis Daugaard hosted a Pheasant Habitat Summit due to concerns from the public over declining numbers in the species across the state, The Daily Republic reported. The summit resulted in the formation of the habitat work group.

Daugaard said the group's recommendations have "set the stage for important long-term habitat efforts." Many of the recommendations have been fully or partially established.

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The formation of the Habitat Pays website and an increased Federal Duck Stamp are among the recommendations completed.

The stamp was hiked up from \$15 to \$25. The funds acquired from the stamp are allocated to conservation projects nationwide.

Daugaard said nearly 15,670 visitors have viewed at least one session on the website since its launch.

Matt Morlock, acting director for Pheasants Forever in South Dakota, recognized the strides made to elevate wildlife habitat in the state.

"The recommendations provided an elevated platform to work from, but the work is far from complete," Morlock said. "And we — Pheasants Forever — are committed not just to working on those eight components, but all other programs and initiatives that can help establish upland habitat in South Dakota."

The annual statewide pheasant-per-mile report released last month showed the decline from 2016 followed the state's drought.

Daugaard said the weather will always have a significant effect on pheasant numbers.

"Because weather can impact a single year, the true measurement of the (pheasant habitat work group) will be assessed through long-term numbers knowing year-to-year volatility will occur due to conditions which cannot be controlled," Daugaard said.

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

Friday's Scores By The Associated Press

PREP FOOTBALL

Avon 52, Centerville 0

Bon Homme 54, Lower Brule 0

Brandon Valley 55, Rapid City Central 23

Bridgewater-Emery/Ethan 49, Elk Point-Jefferson 3

Burke/South Central 60, Tripp-Delmont/Armour 6

Canistota 38, Viborg-Hurley 33

Canton 37, Beresford 6

Colman-Egan 47, Estelline 13

Colome 60, Gayville-Volin 6

Corsica/Stickney 44, Scotland 6

Dakota Valley 42, Tri-Valley 41, OT

DeSmet 36, Dell Rapids St. Mary 8

Dell Rapids 35, West Central 13

Deubrook 27, Elkton-Lake Benton 0

Deuel 32, Florence/Henry 0

Douglas 14, Harrisburg 13

Dupree 46, Standing Rock, N.D. 0

Faith 44, Edgemont 16

Faulkton 50, Hitchcock-Tulare 6

Garretson 41, Hanson 0

Gordon/Rushville, Neb. 63, Bennett County 0

Gregory 52, Rapid City Christian 0

Groton Area 17, Chamberlain 7

Hamlin 41, Great Plains Lutheran 0

Harding County 20, Herreid/Selby Area 16

Hill City 42, Lyman 36

Hot Springs 44, Custer 0

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Irene-Wakonda 42, Howard 36
Jones County/White River 66, Crazy Horse 12
Madison 42, Vermillion 0
McCook Central/Montrose 54, Wagner 0
Milbank Area 32, Aberdeen Roncalli 7
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 48, Flandreau 20
North Border 40, Langford 6
Parker 46, Menno/Marion 18
Parkston 32, Platte-Geddes 6
Pierre 43, Huron 0
Pine Ridge 36, McLaughlin 0
Placeholder 50, Ipswich/Edmunds Central 6
Rapid City Stevens 14, Aberdeen Central 0
Sioux Falls O'Gorman 47, Sioux Falls Lincoln 7
Sioux Falls Roosevelt 34, Yankton 17
Sioux Falls Washington 45, Mitchell 7
Sioux Valley 21, Sioux Falls Christian 14
Sisseton 40, Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 0
Spearfish 36, Belle Fourche 13
St. Thomas More 36, Sturgis 0
Stanley County 17, Mobridge-Pollock 14
Sully Buttes 24, Warner 18
Sunshine Bible Academy 30, Iroquois 6
Tea Area 34, Lennox 7
Timber Lake 47, Bison 14
Watertown 14, Brookings 13
Waverly-South Shore 27, Tri-State 12
Winner 24, Valentine, Neb. 12
Wolsey-Wessington 59, Tiospa Zina Tribal 8
Woonsocket/Wessington Springs/Sanborn Central 41, Redfield/Doland 21

Some scores provided by Scorestream.com, <http://scorestream.com/>

Keywords: South Dakota, Boys, Football, Prep Scores, High School

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Mega Millions

18-24-34-38-58, Mega Ball: 3, Megaplier: 4

(eighteen, twenty-four, thirty-four, thirty-eight, fifty-eight; Mega Ball: three; Megaplier: four)

Estimated jackpot: \$86 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$132 million

South Dakota governor scolds school district

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota governor has accused a school district of trying to scam the state funding formula by inviting home-school families to visit the district on the day enrollment is counted.

Tri-Valley Superintendent Mike Lodmel sent a letter to home-school families this week, inviting them to receive a free computer and lunch Sept. 29, the Argus Leader reported.

"In total transparency, school districts in South Dakota receive funding based on the number of students enrolled in the district on this date (Sept. 29)," Lodmel said in the letter. "Our district would be willing to purchase new laptop computers for each student who attends school on this date."

Lodmel also said in the letter that the more students that attend school the day of the enrollment count the "more funding for our district and less of a tax burden on our patrons."

Tony Venhuizen, a spokesman for Gov. Dennis Daugaard, called the invite a tactic to scam the state funding formula.

The governor asked Lodmel to rescind the invitation and removed him from a school finance accountability board.

Lodmel said the idea for to invite home-school families was his, but he declined to confirm whether it was an effort to pad enrollment. He said he had been fielding calls on the letter "all morning" Thursday.

"We're just going to drop it," Lodmel said.

Lodmel said he discussed the offer with the district's legal counsel before sending the letter.

Attorney General Marty Jackley said his office is investigating the situation.

Venhuizen said legislation may be brought forward to discourage attempts to inflate enrollment numbers.

"If this is the new bright idea, we'll have to look at new legislation next session to make this crystal clear," Venhuizen said.

Rep. Sue Peterson, R-Sioux Falls, said she was concerned and plans to bring legislation in 2018 to prohibit similar efforts.

Tri-Valley schools saw a small increase in enrollment this year and is expected to see more tax revenue due to a planned 820-acre industrial park in the area. Lodmel has estimated \$55,000 in new property tax revenue from the park.

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

Indian Health Service sets standards for patient wait times

By FELICIA FONSECA, Associated Press

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. (AP) — The Indian Health Service has set standards for patient wait times more than a year after being criticized by a government watchdog for doing a poor job tracking them.

American Indians and Alaska Natives seeking appointments for routine or preventative care will be scheduled within 28 days and be seen in urgent care within 48 hours, on average, the agency recently announced. The standards are part of an effort to improve health care and have consistency within the agency that's been labeled "high-risk" by the U.S. Government Accountability Office for inadequate oversight of its hospitals and clinics.

"Our aim is that patients receiving care in IHS direct-service facilities have access to timely, comprehensive and quality health care services to promote and maintain health, avoid preventable disease, manage disease, reduce unnecessary disability and premature death and achieve health equity," IHS Chief Medical Officer Capt. Michael Toedt wrote in an email.

The standards in place since late August apply only to IHS facilities run by the federal government, and the IHS plans eventually to include emergency room visits and other services. Most Indian Health facilities are run by tribes or tribal entities under contract with IHS and can set their own standards.

The IHS said it worked with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, another federal health care agency, on a patient management system that's being phased out. But Toedt said the VA will support the system for several years while the IHS transitions to a new one.

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The U.S. Government Accountability Office reported last year that patient wait times at IHS service areas were reviewed inconsistently or not at all, hindering the agency's ability to tell whether it's best serving its patients. Some Navajo Nation members, for example, waited four months to see a physician. Other tribal members in Billings, Montana, waited up to a month for a routine vision check, according to the report.

William Bear Shield, the tribal administrator for the Rosebud Sioux Tribe in South Dakota, said he understands the challenges IHS faces with recruitment and retention of providers but would like to see wait times in line with the private sector.

"If they're saying that's the norm, they're probably right," he said. "To me, it can be better."

The IHS said it wants all patients to be seen in a timely manner, but the standards aren't guaranteed. The wait times can change due to resources at hospitals and clinics, patient needs and emergency response without the patient being notified, the agency said.

U.S. Sen. Tom Udall of New Mexico highlighted the Albuquerque, New Mexico, service area in a hearing Wednesday on high-risk programs that serve Indian Country. He said wait times there are tracked electronically and patients are asked to fill out surveys about their experience.

"When promising innovations like that are being done at the local facility level, I'd like to ensure they get recognized and shared across the Indian health system," Udall said in a statement.

Rear Adm. Michael Weahkee, acting director of IHS, said the agency will collect data on wait times to continually improve them and take action if they're not met. The ability to measure and report the standards should be implemented by the end of the year, the agency said.

South Dakota tech schools get funding for new equipment

MITCHELL, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota's four technical institutes are receiving more than \$860,000 in funding to purchase up-to-date equipment to ensure students are properly trained for today's workforce.

Gov. Dennis Daugaard announced the funding Thursday for equipment needs in programs that are eligible for the Build Dakota Scholarship program.

Mitchell Technical Institute was awarded \$400,000. The Daily Republic reported the money will allow the school's welding and manufacturing technology and machining automation programs to buy new equipment, specifically a CNC milling machine.

The state's three other tech schools also received funding. Lake Area Technical Institute will receive more than \$226,000, Southeast Technical Institute was awarded nearly \$170,000 and Western Dakota Technical Institute will receive \$68,000.

The Build Dakota Scholarship program supports students entering high-need workforce areas to fill the state's technical career fields.

Homicide victim's ashes being sent to Britain 40 years later

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The cremated remains of a homicide victim kept at a South Dakota funeral home for 40 years are being taken to relatives in England.

Wade Wilson, who owns Behrens-Wilson Funeral Home in Rapid City, says a local pastor making a trip to England in November will take Lena White Hat's ashes to her relatives there. White Hat was killed in Rapid Valley in 1977. She had no relatives in the U.S. Her American husband died in 1979.

The Rapid City Journal says no one ever took possession of her remains until her English niece recently began trying to discover what happened to them.

With the help of volunteer researchers in Rapid City, she learned the ashes had been kept in a small box at the funeral home all these years.

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

Mayor pushes for new arena, not remodel

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Rapid City's mayor is among those who support building a new arena instead of renovating the old one.

Mayor Steve Allender says remodeling Barnett Arena would be like fixing a broken window — it would solve the immediate problem, but add no long-term value.

Allender said during a presentation Thursday night that remodeling the arena would cost about \$25 million and with added handicapped access, would reduce the number of seats below the current 10,500.

The Rapid City Journal reports the mayor says building a new arena would cost between \$100 million and \$130 million and would seat about 13,000. City leaders want to reverse a trend of declining events and attendance.

The decision about the arena's future will ultimately fall to the city council, and possibly to voters in a referendum.

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

Expedition League founder says he'll own 2 franchises

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The owner of a startup collegiate wood bat baseball league, the Expedition League, says he will own the franchises in Pierre and Dickinson.

Steve Wagner is launching the Rapid City-based league with plans to start play in 2018.

The Pierre Capital Journal reports Wagner will be at Hyde Stadium on Monday to announce more details about the franchise and league. One task is choosing a team name and opening a local office.

The league has facility leases signed in Brandon, Manitoba; Minot, North Dakota; and Gering/Scottsbluff and Hastings in Nebraska. Agreements are pending are in Dickinson, North Dakota, and the South Dakota cities of Aberdeen, Spearfish and Rapid City. Casper, Wyoming, might also get a team.

Information from: Pierre Capital Journal, <http://www.capjournal.com>

Wind Cave National Park wildfire now 90 percent contained

HOT SPRINGS, S.D. (AP) — Firefighters are making progress in containing a wildfire that's burned nearly 1,200 acres in Wind Cave National Park in southwestern South Dakota.

The Rankin wildfire is now 90 percent contained. The blaze started with a lightning strike on Monday.

KOTA-TV reports the nearby Beaver wildfire grew to 400 acres Thursday afternoon. No structures have been burned, but 10 are threatened and another 20 are within a mile of the fire.

This story has been corrected to show structures threatened are near Beaver wildfire.

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

Iraq could use force if Kurdish referendum leads to violence

By SUSANNAH GEORGE and QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA, Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraq is prepared to intervene militarily if the Kurdish region's planned independence referendum results in violence, Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi told The Associated Press in an exclusive interview Saturday.

If the Iraqi population is "threatened by the use of force outside the law, then we will intervene militarily," he said.

Iraq's Kurdish region plans to hold the referendum on support for independence from Iraq on Sept. 25 in three governorates that make up their autonomous region, and in disputed areas controlled by Kurdish forces but which are claimed by Baghdad.

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"If you challenge the constitution and if you challenge the borders of Iraq and the borders of the region, this is a public invitation to the countries in the region to violate Iraqi borders as well, which is a very dangerous escalation," al-Abadi said.

The leaders of Iraq's Kurdish region have said they hope the referendum will push Baghdad to come to the negotiating table and create a path for independence. However, al-Abadi said such negotiations would likely be complicated by the referendum vote.

"It will make it harder and more difficult," he said, but added: "I will never close the door to negotiations. Negotiations are always possible."

Iraq's Kurds have come under increasing pressure to call off the vote from regional powers and the United States, a key ally, as well as Baghdad.

In a statement released late Friday night the White House called for the Kurdish region to call off the referendum "and enter into serious and sustained dialogue with Baghdad."

"Holding the referendum in disputed areas is particularly provocative and destabilizing," the statement read.

Tensions between Irbil and Baghdad have flared in the lead-up to the Sept. 25 vote.

Masoud Barzani, the president of Iraq's autonomous Kurdish region, has repeatedly threatened violence if "any force" attempts to move into disputed territories that are now under the control of Kurdish fighters known as Peshmerga, specifically the oil-rich city of Kirkuk.

"It's chaotic there," Muhammad Mahdi al-Bayati, a senior leader of Iraq's mostly Shiite fighters known as the popular mobilization forces, said earlier this week, describing Kirkuk in the lead up to the vote.

Al-Bayati's forces — sanctioned by Baghdad, but many with close ties to Iran — are deployed around Kirkuk as well as other disputed territories in Iraq's north.

"Everyone is under pressure," he said, explaining that he feared a rogue group of fighters could trigger larger clashes. "Anything could be the spark that burns it all down."

Al-Abadi said he is focused on legal responses to the Kurdish referendum on independence. Earlier this week Iraq's parliament rejected the referendum in a vote boycotted by Kurdish lawmakers.

Iraq's Kurds have long held a dream of statehood. Brutally oppressed under Saddam, whose military in the 1980s killed at least 50,000 Kurds, many with chemical weapons, Iraq's Kurds established a regional government in 1992 after the U.S. enforced a no-fly zone across the north following the Gulf War.

After the 2003 U.S.-led invasion ousted Saddam, the region secured constitutional recognition of its autonomy, but remained part of the Iraqi state.

When asked if he would ever accept an independent Kurdistan, Al-Abadi said "it's not up to me, this is a constitutional" matter.

"If (Iraq's Kurds) want to go along that road, they should work toward amending the constitution," al-Abadi said. "In that case we have to go all the way through parliament and a referendum to the whole Iraqi people."

"For them to call for only the Kurds to vote," he continued, "I think this is a hostile move toward the whole of the Iraqi population."

Nursing home tragedy unfolded days after Irma's initial hit

By **TERRY SPENCER, JENNIFER KAY and TIM REYNOLDS, Associated Press**

HOLLYWOOD, Fla. (AP) — The first 911 call from the Rehabilitation Center at Hollywood Hills didn't sound ominous: A nursing home patient had an abnormal heartbeat.

An hour later, came a second call: a patient had trouble breathing. Then came the third call. A patient had gone into cardiac arrest — and died.

Over the next few hours of Wednesday morning, the dire situation at the Rehabilitation Center for fragile, elderly people would come into clearer view. Three days after Hurricane Irma hit Florida, the center still didn't have air conditioning, and it ultimately became the grimmest tragedy in a state already full of them. Eight people died and 145 patients had to be moved out of the stifling-hot facility, many of them

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on stretchers or in wheelchairs.

Authorities launched a criminal investigation to figure out what went wrong and who, if anyone, was to blame. Within hours of the tragedy, Gov. Rick Scott and U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson made no effort to hide their anger and frustration that something like this could happen.

Judy Frum, the chief nursing officer at the air conditioned hospital just across the street, was working in the Irma command center when the emergency room notified her that three patients had been brought in from the nursing home.

"It set off a red flag that something might be going on," said Frum, who grabbed a colleague and hurried across the street.

When they arrived, paramedics were treating a critically ill patient near the entrance. She saw harried staff members trying to get patients into a room where fans were blowing.

The center had some electricity, but not enough to power the air conditioning.

Frum called her facility, Memorial Regional Hospital, to issue a mass casualty alert. As many as 100 hospital employees rushed over to help.

"The scene on site when I got there was chaotic," said Randy Katz, Memorial's emergency services director.

Word of the crisis soon reached relatives. Vendetta Craig searched frantically for her 87-year-old mother for 25 minutes. She finally found her mother, with doctors from Memorial already applying ice and giving her intravenous fluids.

"She opened her eyes — she looked in my eyes— oh my God, that was the best thing that ever came into my soul," Craig said.

The Rehabilitation Center said the hurricane knocked out a transformer that powered the air conditioning. The center said in a detailed timeline of events released Friday that it repeatedly was told by Florida Power and Light that it would fix the transformer, but the utility did not show up until Wednesday morning, hours after the first patients began having emergencies.

The utility refused to answer any specific questions about the nursing home case.

State and local officials said the nursing home had contacted them, but did not request any help for medical needs or emergencies.

Paulburn Bogle, a member of the housekeeping staff, said employees fought the lack of air conditioning with fans, cold towels, ice and cold drinks for patients.

Rosemary Cooper, a licensed practical nurse at the rehabilitation center, defended the staff's work but declined to discuss specifics.

"The people who were working there worked hard to make a good outcome for our patients," she said in a brief interview before hanging up on a reporter. "We cared for them like family."

Certified nursing assistant Natasha Johnson, who left the facility weeks ago for another job, said she didn't understand why the center didn't transfer patients to the hospital sooner. "I'm as shocked as you. I just don't understand it," she said.

Craig, whose mother was sickened at the nursing home, said the center's administrators should "be prosecuted to the full extent that the law allows and then some."

Owner Jack Michel's attorney didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

State records showed problems with fire and safety standards, as well as more serious issues with generator maintenance and testing, according to February 2016 reports by Florida Agency for Health Care Administration inspectors.

Inspectors also said they didn't see a clean, well-supplied facility, noting peeling paint, chipped and scratched doors and floors and furniture in disrepair. There were overflowing trash bins, rusty air conditioning vents, soiled bathtubs and cracked or missing bathroom floor tiles.

The facility's directors told inspectors that staff needed a refresher course on reporting maintenance and housekeeping issues.

Evangelina Moulder hired an attorney after her 93-year-old mother became severely dehydrated on Wednesday. Moulder's mother was released from the hospital to a new nursing home.

Moulder's attorney, Bill Dean, said Moulder visited her mother on Monday and worried about the heat.

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"She said, 'It's very hot in here,' and the staff said, 'Yes, it is,'" Dean said. "She opened her mom's windows, and she said, 'Mom, it's going to be OK.'"

Kay reported from Miami. Associated Press writer Michael Melia in Hartford, Connecticut, and AP researcher Rhonda Shafner contributed to this report.

Bangladesh accuses Myanmar of violating its airspace

By JULHAS ALAM, Associated Press

COX'S BAZAR, Bangladesh (AP) — Bangladeshi authorities summoned Myanmar's envoy to protest what they said were violations of their airspace as the number of Rohingya Muslims fleeing violence in western Myanmar in the past three weeks reached more than 400,000.

Myanmar's presidential spokesman on Saturday said there's no evidence of any trespassing and that Dhaka should have reached out to discuss its concerns instead of issuing public statements.

The Bangladesh Ministry of Foreign Affairs said Friday that Myanmar drones and helicopters flew into Bangladeshi airspace on Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday. It said a protest note was handed to Myanmar's envoy Friday evening. Bangladesh warned that the "provocative acts" could lead to consequences.

In Yangon, presidential spokesman Zaw Htay said that while Myanmar's military denied crossing into Bangladesh's airspace, the matter was being investigated. "We don't know exactly if they released that statement for political reasons," he said of Bangladesh's protest.

He added that Myanmar was "transporting rations for displaced people for emergency assistance" to areas close to the border and that Bangladesh "needs to understand that as well."

United Nations agencies say an estimated 409,000 Rohingya Muslims have fled to Bangladesh since Aug. 25, when deadly attacks by a Rohingya insurgent group on police posts prompted Myanmar's military to launch "clearance operations" in Rakhine state. Those fleeing have described indiscriminate attacks by security forces and Buddhist mobs.

The Myanmar government says hundreds have died, mostly Rohingya "terrorists," and that 176 out of 471 Rohingya villages have been abandoned. Myanmar has insisted that Rohingya insurgents and fleeing villagers themselves are destroying their villages. It has offered no proof to back these charges.

The U.N. has described the violence against the Rohingya in Myanmar as ethnic cleansing — a term that describes an organized effort to rid an area of an ethnic group by displacement, deportation or killing.

Ethnic Rohingya have faced persecution and discrimination in majority-Buddhist Myanmar for decades and are denied citizenship, even though many families have lived there for generations. The government says there is no such ethnicity as Rohingya and say they are Bengalis who illegally migrated to Myanmar from Bangladesh.

Rights groups like Amnesty International and Human Rights watch have said that they have evidence that Myanmar troops were systematically targeting and setting Rohingya villages on fire over the last three weeks.

U.N. agencies fear continued violence in Myanmar may eventually drive up to 1 million Rohingya into Bangladesh.

As hundreds of thousands of Rohingya have crossed into Bangladesh, relief camps are overflowing and food, medicine and drinking water have been in short supply.

Mohammed Shahriar Alam, Bangladesh's junior foreign minister, said Saturday that India, Turkey, Morocco, Indonesia, Iran and Malaysia have already sent relief and the goods are waiting in an airport in nearby Chittagong. He said more aid was also expected to come via ships soon.

"The United Nations and many other private organizations are working there to support hundreds of thousands who are in dire need of assistance," said Khaled Mahmud, a top official in Cox's Bazar. He acknowledged that aid distribution remained haphazard three weeks into the crisis.

"Our work must be very organized and systematic," he said. "We are working on that."

Questions of gun planting, outburst key in officer's verdict

By ROXANA HEGEMAN, Associated Press

WICHITA, Kan. (AP) — A judge's decision to acquit an officer of murder in the death of a black suspect came down to two major questions: Did the officer plant a gun, and did his outburst about killing the man seconds before the shooting signal premeditation?

St. Louis Circuit Judge Timothy Wilson determined Friday that prosecutors failed to prove beyond a reasonable doubt that Jason Stockley's use of deadly force was not justifiable self-defense. Anthony Lamar Smith was killed in the 2011 encounter.

"Ultimately when people argue about this case, they are going to be arguing whether the judge drew the right conclusion from the evidence and probably less about the law," said Ben Trachtenberg, an associate professor of law at the University of Missouri.

Here's a look at how the judge parsed those arguments in his ruling:

DID THE OFFICER PLANT THE GUN?

The officers were investigating what appeared to be a drug transaction in the parking lot of a fast food restaurant. The car sped away and a high-speed chase ensued. Police slammed their SUV into Smith's car. Stockley then got out and fired five shots into Smith's car, killing him. A handgun was found in the car after the shooting.

Prosecutors argued the presence of Stockley's DNA — and absence of Smith's DNA — on the gun proved the gun must have been planted by the officer.

But the defense countered that Stockley heard his partner yell "gun" and saw the driver's hand on a gun as the car sped by him. Stockley testified he did not draw his service revolver and fire until he saw Smith reaching around inside the vehicle after it was stopped. He said Smith changed his demeanor, suggesting he found the gun.

Stockley testified that after the shooting he found the gun tucked down between the seat and the center console, and he rendered the gun safe by unloading cartridges from the cylinder and then left the gun and cartridges on the passenger seat.

In his ruling, Wilson wrote that "a fact issue that is central" to the case is whether Smith had the gun when he was shot. He found the state's contention that the officer planted the gun is not supported by evidence.

A full-sized revolver was too large for the officer to hide in his pants pockets and he was not wearing a jacket, the judge said. If the gun had been tucked into his belt, it would have been visible on a bystander's video that showed Stockley walking between the police car and Smith's car, he found.

Wilson also noted none of the officers standing next to the vehicle were called to testify that Stockley planted a gun. And he recounted witness testimony that the absence of a person's DNA on a gun does not mean that person did not touch the gun.

"Finally, the Court observes, based on its nearly thirty years on the bench, that an urban heroin dealer not in possession of a firearm would be an anomaly," the judge wrote.

DID THE OFFICER'S OUTBURST INDICATE PREMEDITATION?

Smith drove at speeds of up to 87 miles per hour on wet roads, endangering other drivers and pedestrians. About 45 seconds before the chase ended, police dashcam video captured Stockley saying, "going to kill this (expletive), don't you know it."

Prosecutors argued that statement proved the officer deliberated about killing Smith even before the pursuit ended.

When questioned about his statement at trial, Stockley said he could not remember saying those words. The ruling noted Stockley testified he had not made a decision to kill Smith and could not recall the context in which the statement was made.

The judge said in his decision that it was apparent from the dashcam audio and video that the pursuit was stressful, both because of its high speed and the confusion caused by multiple radios and commu-

nications with the dispatcher.

"People say all kinds of things in the heat of the moment or while in stressful situations, and whether Stockley's statement ... constituted a real threat of action or was a means of releasing tension has to be judged by his subsequent conduct," the judge wrote.

The court does not believe the officer's conduct following the end of the pursuit is consistent with the conduct of a person intentionally killing another person unlawfully, Wilson wrote. He noted testimony by the state's witnesses that Stockley ordered Smith to open the door and show his hands.

It was not until 15 seconds after Stockley arrived the driver's side door that he took his service revolver out of its holster and fired several shots.

This story has been updated to correct the spelling of Ben Trachtenberg's last name, which had been misspelled Trachtenbert.

St. Louis braces for more protests over cop's acquittal

By JIM SALTER, Associated Press

ST. LOUIS (AP) — Hundreds of people protesting the acquittal of a white former St. Louis police officer in the fatal shooting of black man marched for hours in mostly peaceful demonstrations, until a broken window at the mayor's home and escalating tensions led riot police to lob tear gas to disperse the crowds.

For weeks, activists had been threatening civil disobedience if Jason Stockley were not convicted of murder for killing Anthony Lamar Smith, prompting authorities to take precautions. With the large protests that followed the 2014 killing of Michael Brown in nearby Ferguson still fresh in everyone's minds, barricades were erected around police headquarters and the courthouse, among other sites, in anticipation of the verdict.

Within hours of St. Louis Circuit Judge Timothy Wilson acquitting Stockley of first-degree murder, a racially diverse crowd of protesters took to the streets — some legally carrying weapons and others toting children and waving posters.

More than 20 arrests were made by early evening, and some protesters were pepper-sprayed during confrontations with authorities. St. Louis police reported that 10 officers had suffered injuries by the end of the night, including a broken jaw and dislocated shoulder, and some journalists reported being threatened by protesters.

Activists said they would meet again Saturday to plan further demonstrations. The band U2 canceled its Saturday night concert in St. Louis because the police department said it wouldn't be able to provide its standard protection for the event, organizers said.

The 2011 confrontation began when Stockley and his partner tried to arrest Smith for a suspected drug deal in a fast-food restaurant. Smith sped off, leading to a chase that ended when he crashed.

At the trial, Stockley testified that he saw the 24-year-old Smith holding a silver revolver as he sped away at the start of the chase. He said when he shot Smith, he felt he was in imminent danger.

Prosecutors said Stockley planted a gun in Smith's car after the shooting — Stockley's DNA was on the weapon but Smith's wasn't.

Dashcam video from Stockley's police car captured him saying he was "going to kill this (expletive), don't you know it." Less than a minute later, he shot Smith five times.

Stockley's lawyer dismissed the comment as "human emotions" uttered during a dangerous pursuit.

In his decision, Wilson wrote that the statement "can be ambiguous depending on the context."

"This court, in conscience, cannot say that the State has proven every element of murder beyond a reasonable doubt or that the State has proven beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant did not act in self-defense," the judge wrote.

In an interview with the St. Louis Post-Dispatch after the verdict, Stockley, 36, said he understands how video of the shooting looks bad, but that he did nothing wrong.

"I can feel for and I understand what the family is going through, and I know everyone wants someone

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to blame, but I'm just not the guy," said Stockley, who left St. Louis' police force in 2013 and moved to Houston.

St. Louis Circuit Attorney Kim Gardner acknowledged the difficulty of winning police shooting cases but said prosecutors believe they proved that Stockley intended to kill Smith.

Friday's protests began with largely unsuccessful efforts at civil disobedience. Demonstrators were blocked on an entrance ramp before they could rush onto an interstate, and found the city's convention center's doors locked when they tried to enter.

Early confrontations erupted when protesters blocked a bus full of officers in riot gear and later surrounded a police vehicle that was damaged with rocks, prompting police to deploy pepper spray. A freelance Associated Press videographer said a protester threw his camera to the ground and damaged it, and he was later threatened with a beating if he didn't put another camera away. A KTVI reporter said water bottles were thrown at him after a protester taunted him, drawing a crowd.

As night fell, hundreds of demonstrators walked through the streets to the upscale Central West End section of the city, where they chanted and marched as people looked on from restaurants and hospital windows lining busy Kingshighway.

Tensions escalated after protesters broke a front window and splattered red paint on the home of St. Louis Mayor Lyda Krewson, who had called for calm ahead of the verdict and later said she was appalled by what happened to Smith and "sobered" by the outcome.

Police in bulletproof vests and helmets closed in and demanded protesters get off the lawn and the street in front of the house, eventually using tear gas to clear the area over the next two hours.

Smith's death is just one of several high-profile U.S. cases in recent years in which a white officer killed a black suspect, including the killing of Brown in Ferguson. The officer who killed the unarmed 18-year-old wasn't charged and eventually resigned.

Associated Press writer Summer Ballentine contributed to this report.

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UK police make 'significant' arrest in London subway blast

By GREGORY KATZ, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British police made a "significant" arrest Saturday in the manhunt for suspects a day after the London subway was hit by a partially-exploded bomb and launched a heavily armed search of a home southwest of London.

The fast-moving inquiry into the subway blast that wounded 29 people has shifted to Sunbury, on the outskirts of the British capital, where neighbors were evacuated amid the police operation as a precaution.

A no-fly zone was established over the area to keep out small planes and drones as police moved in and police cordons were put in place to keep the public well away.

No details about the police search were released, but it came after the arrest of an 18-year-old man who is being held under the Terrorism Act. The man was arrested Saturday morning by Kent police in the port of Dover on the English Channel.

Dover is a major ferry port for travel between Britain and France — and it was not clear if the suspect was trying to board a ferry for France when he was taken into custody.

"We have made a significant arrest in our investigation this morning," Deputy Assistant Police Commissioner Neil Basu said. But he warned that the investigation was ongoing and the terrorist threat level remains at "critical," meaning that top British security services believe that another attack is imminent.

Basu's comments suggested that other dangerous suspects may still be at large.

Police Commissioner Cressida Dick called the arrest "very significant" but said the public should still be vigilant.

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The 18-year-old suspect hasn't been charged or identified. Police say he was being brought to a south London police station for more questioning. Police haven't said if he is suspected of planting the bomb or of playing a supporting role in a possible plot.

Authorities had increased Britain's terrorism threat level to "critical" late Friday — the highest possible level — after a bomb partially exploded on a subway train during the morning rush hour.

Police are combing through closed-circuit TV images and have extensively studied the remains of the explosive device. Images from inside the subway car showed that it was contained in a bucket with wires hanging out of it and concealed in a plastic shopping bag.

The train hit by the bomber at Parsons Green station in southwest London had video cameras in each car, and the London Underground network has thousands of cameras at the entrances to stations and along its labyrinth of subterranean and aboveground passageways.

Officials have hinted there may be more than one person involved, but haven't released details in what is termed an ongoing and covert inquiry.

Prime Minister Theresa May said raising the threat level to its highest point was a "proportionate and sensible step." Police called on the public to be vigilant.

The soldiers will add to the armed police presence Saturday at public places to deter further attacks.

The bomb went off around 8:20 a.m. Friday as the District Line train, carrying commuters from the suburbs — including many school children — was at the Parsons Green station. In all, 29 people were wounded, some with burns, but none of the injuries were believed to be life-threatening.

The station was reopened Saturday, officials said, restoring some normalcy to London's transport network after a day of severe disruption. There was no sign of panic among Londoners and the weekend life of the multicultural city continued undeterred by the raised threat level.

Officials said the bomb was intended to do grave harm to commuters. Analysts said the carnage would have been far worse had the entire device exploded.

"They were really lucky with this one. It could have really become much worse," said terrorism specialist Magnus Ranstorp of the Swedish Defense University.

The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the attack, which it said was carried out by an affiliated unit.

Britain has endured four other attacks this year, which have killed a total of 36 people. The other attacks in London — near Parliament, on London Bridge and near a mosque in Finsbury Park in north London — used vehicles and knives.

In addition, a suicide bomber struck a packed concert hall in Manchester in northern England, killing 22 people. That attack in May also briefly caused the threat level to be set at "critical."

Defiant N. Korea leader says he will complete nuke program

By KIM TONG-HYUNG and EDITH M. LEDERER, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said his country is nearing its goal of "equilibrium" in military force with the United States, as the United Nations Security Council strongly condemned the North's "highly provocative" ballistic missile launch over Japan on Friday.

The North's official Korean Central News Agency carried Kim's comments on Saturday — a day after U.S. and South Korean militaries detected the missile launch from the North Korean capital of Pyongyang.

It traveled 3,700 kilometers (2,300 miles) as it passed over the Japanese island of Hokkaido before landing in the northern Pacific Ocean. It was the country's longest-ever test flight of a ballistic missile.

The North has confirmed the missile as an intermediate range Hwasong-12, the same model launched over Japan on Aug. 29.

Under Kim's watch, North Korea has maintained a torrid pace in weapons tests, including its most powerful nuclear test to date on Sept. 3 and two July flight tests of intercontinental ballistic missiles that could strike deep into the U.S. mainland when perfected.

The increasingly frequent and aggressive tests have added to outside fears that the North is closer than

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ever to building a military arsenal that could viably target the U.S. and its allies in Asia. The tests, which could potentially make launches over Japan an accepted norm, are also seen as North Korea's attempt to win greater military freedom in the region and raise doubts in Seoul and Tokyo that Washington would risk the annihilation of a U.S. city to protect them.

The KCNA said Kim expressed great satisfaction over the launch, which he said verified the "combat efficiency and reliability" of the missile and the success of efforts to increase its power.

While the English version of the report was less straightforward, the Korean version quoted Kim as declaring the missile as operationally ready. He vowed to complete his nuclear weapons program in the face of strengthening international sanctions, the agency said.

Photos published by North Korea's state media showed the missile being fired from a truck-mounted launcher and a smiling Kim clapping and raising his fist while celebrating from an observation point. It was the first time North Korea showed the missile being launched directly from a vehicle, which experts said indicated confidence about the mobility and reliability of the system. In previous tests, North Korea used trucks to transport and erect the Hwasong-12s, but moved the missiles on separate firing tables before launching them.

The U.N. Security Council accused North Korea of undermining regional peace and security by launching its latest missile over Japan and said its nuclear and missile tests "have caused grave security concerns around the world" and threaten all 193 U.N. member states.

Kim also said the country, despite "limitless" international sanctions, has nearly completed the building of its nuclear weapons force and called for "all-state efforts" to reach the goal and obtain a "capacity for nuclear counterattack the U.S. cannot cope with."

"As recognized by the whole world, we have made all these achievements despite the U.N. sanctions that have lasted for decades," the agency quoted Kim as saying.

Kim said the country's final goal "is to establish the equilibrium of real force with the U.S. and make the U.S. rulers dare not talk about military option for the DPRK," referring to North Korea's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

He indicated that more missile tests would be forthcoming, saying that all future drills should be "meaningful and practical ones for increasing the combat power of the nuclear force" to establish an order in the deployment of nuclear warheads for "actual war."

Prior to the launches over Japan, North Korea had threatened to fire a salvo of Hwasong-12s toward Guam, the U.S. Pacific island territory and military hub the North has called an "advanced base of invasion."

The Security Council stressed in a statement after a closed-door emergency meeting that all countries must "fully, comprehensively and immediately" implement all U.N. sanctions.

Japan's U.N. Ambassador Koro Bessho called the missile launch an "outrageous act" that is not only a threat to Japan's security but a threat to the whole world.

Bessho and the British, French and Swedish ambassadors demanded that all sanctions be implemented.

Calling the latest launch a "terrible, egregious, illegal, provocative reckless act," Britain's U.N. Ambassador Matthew Rycroft said North Korea's largest trading partners and closest links — a clear reference to China — must "demonstrate that they are doing everything in their power to implement the sanctions of the Security Council and to encourage the North Korean regime to change course."

France's Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the country is ready to work on tougher U.N. and EU measures to convince Pyongyang that there is no interest in an escalation, and to bring it to the negotiating table.

Friday's launch followed North Korea's sixth nuclear test on Sept. 3 in what it described as a detonation of a thermonuclear weapon built for its developmental ICBMs.

The Hwasong-12 and the Hwasong-14 were initially fired at highly lofted angles to reduce their range and avoid neighboring countries. The two Hwasong-12 launches over Japan indicate North Korea is moving toward using angles close to operational to evaluate whether its warheads can survive the harsh conditions of atmospheric re-entry and detonate properly.

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While some experts believe North Korea would need to conduct more tests to confirm Hwasong-12's accuracy and reliability, Kim Jong Un's latest comments indicate the country would soon move toward mass producing the missiles for operational deployment, said Kim Dong-yub, an analyst at Seoul's Institute for Far Eastern Studies. He also said that the North is likely planning similar test launches of its Hwasong-14 ICBM.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in, a liberal who initially pushed for talks with North Korea, said its tests currently make dialogue "impossible."

"If North Korea provokes us or our allies, we have the strength to smash the attempt at an early stage and inflict a level of damage it would be impossible to recover from," said Moon, who ordered his military to conduct a live-fire ballistic missile drill in response to the North Korean launch.

Lederer reported from the United Nations.

22 and through: Indians' AL record win streak stopped at 22

By TOM WITHERS, AP Sports Writer

CLEVELAND (AP) — When reality set in, the ovation steadily grew as the Cleveland Indians emerged from their dugout.

With the scoreboard showing a loss and the Kansas City Royals shaking hands and high-fiving each other nearby, the Indians tipped their caps to salute fans who came hoping to see more late-inning magic and a record streak continue.

You can't win 'em all.

Cleveland's historic run is over.

The Indians, who captured America's attention during a dominating three-week run, had their AL-record winning streak stopped at 22 straight on Friday night with a 4-3 loss to the Royals, who became the first team to conquer the defending league champions since Aug. 23.

Jason Vargas (16-10) pitched into the sixth and Brandon Moss homered off Trevor Bauer (16-9) as the Royals, who were beaten five times by Cleveland over the past few weeks, ended baseball's longest win streak in 101 years.

But when it ended, there was a celebration as a crowd of 34,025 fans saluted a team that took them on an improbable ride they are unlikely to see again in their lifetimes.

"They've been so supportive," said Indians manager Terry Francona, who led his team out of the dugout to return the love to the crowd. "The atmosphere around here is incredible and I think our players wanted to show their appreciation. It's by no means the last game of the year or anything like that, it's just been pretty incredible how they've reacted and we just wanted to show our appreciation because we don't take it for granted.

"I don't think anything is over."

The Indians set a new league mark and came within four of matching the overall record held by the 1916 New York Giants, a 26-game string that became the subject of scrutiny because it included a tie in the middle.

But despite the loss, Cleveland's magic number for clinching the AL Central dropped to two after second-place Minnesota was beaten by Toronto.

Following a magical, walk-off win in extra innings on Thursday night, the Indians couldn't muster another late rally.

When Francisco Lindor, one of the stars in Cleveland's 3-2 win on Thursday, struck out with a runner on first to end it, the crowd experienced the slightest moment of disappointment before appreciating what they had just seen. And as they stood and cheered, the Indians clapped in return.

"It's been great," Bauer said. "They came out, they supported us. The atmosphere last night and tonight was spectacular. Shoot, even tonight after the loss, everyone was standing and stuff like that. It was a pretty cool moment."

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The Indians, who are already assured a playoff spot, not only broke the previous AL record of 20 held by the 2002 "Moneyball" Oakland Athletics, but they served notice that they well could be the team to beat in the postseason as they attempt to get back to the World Series and perhaps end their 68-year title drought after the Chicago Cubs halted their 108-year dry spell at Cleveland's expense in 2016.

Jose Ramirez, who has forced his way into the MVP conversation, hit a two-run homer and the Indians took a 3-1 lead before the Royals scored a run in the fourth, fifth and sixth.

With one last chance in the ninth, the Indians put the tying run on base before Royals reliever Mike Minor struck out the side for his first pro save, fanning Lindor on a pitch in the dirt.

That touched off a wild celebration, which shook Progressive Field and gave Cleveland fans a chance to get ready for bigger games to come.

"I think it was appropriate. We haven't lost a game in three weeks. We played a good game," Cleveland outfielder Jay Bruce said. "It wasn't like we got just blown out or anything. I think (it was important) to have a bit of a light-hearted attitude about it all, and not take it too hard, obviously, because we're in a great position.

"We just did something that, depending on who you ask, one or no teams have ever done. So, it's one of those deals where we understand what the situation is, and this is not something that would happen very often."

For the better part of a month, the Indians had no equals.

"What they did over there was amazing. I mean, it's utterly amazing," Royals manager Ned Yost said. "It's just unfathomable for me that you can go three weeks without losing a game. I mean, it was a tremendous accomplishment."

"I mean, we've got a runner on first, two outs, two strikes on Lindor, and I told Jirsch (third base coach Mike Jirschele), 'man, we've been here before.' Luckily we got through it tonight," he said.

On their way to making AL history, the Indians romped through the league like no team has before.

They outscored opponents 145-41, led in all but 12 of 207 innings, hit 42 homers and captured the attention of baseball fans fixated on the hot-then-cold Los Angeles Dodgers, Houston Astros and seeing how far Giancarlo Stanton and Aaron Judge could hit homers.

Francona kept his players focused throughout the streak, mindful that it could become too big. They'll likely wrap it up their division this weekend and can start looking ahead to a postseason where the only streak that will matter is winning the last game they play.

"To me, it's just kind of a jumping off point," Francona said. "Where do we go from here? It's up. Common sense said you're going to lose a game. It was a lot of fun. We'll show up tomorrow and my guess is we'll have real good energy and see if we can beat the Royals."

TRAINER'S ROOM

Royals: C Salvador Perez sat out with a pulled muscle in his side and is considered day-to-day. He was injured taking a swing Thursday. ... RHP Joakim Soria is expected to join the team Saturday after returning to Arizona for the birth of his son.

Indians: OF Lonnie Chisenhall had his calf re-examined by the medical staff after leaving with tightness on Thursday night. The club is hoping the injury is nothing serious after Chisenhall missed more than two months with a calf injury. ... OF Jason Kipnis is expected to play five innings in center field on Sunday when he's activated after his second DL stint with a calf injury. The Indians are lacking outfield depth following injuries to Chisenhall and rookie Bradley Zimmer (broken hand).

UP NEXT

RHP Carlos Carrasco tries to get the Indians to their ninth division title since 1995 on Saturday, when he faces Royals RHP Jason Hammel.

More AP baseball: <https://apnews.com/tag/MLBbaseball>

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Tax cuts quiet once-deafening GOP call for fiscal discipline

By ANDREW TAYLOR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republicans spooked world markets in their ardor to cut spending when Democrat Barack Obama occupied the White House. Now, with a GOP president pressing for politically popular tax cuts and billions more for the military, few in the GOP are complaining about the nation's soaring debt.

The tea partiers and other conservatives who seized control of the House in 2010 have morphed into Ronald Reagan-style supply siders while the GOP's numerous Pentagon pals run roughshod over the few holdouts. Tax cuts in the works could add hundreds of billions of dollars to the debt while bipartisan pressure for more money for defense, infrastructure, and domestic agencies could add almost \$100 billion in additional spending next year alone.

The bottom line is the \$20 trillion national debt promises to spiral ever higher with Republicans controlling both Congress and the White House.

"Republicans gave up on caring about deficits long ago," bemoaned Republican Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky, who was elected in the 2010 tea party class.

It's a far cry from the Newt Gingrich-led GOP revolution that stormed Washington two decades ago with a mandate to balance the budget and cut taxes at the same time. Or even the GOP of 2001, which enthusiastically cut taxes under former President George W. Bush, but only at a moment when the government was flush with money.

Now, deficits are back with a vengeance. Medicare and Social Security are drawing closer to insolvency, and fiscal hawks and watchdogs like the Congressional Budget Office warn that spiraling debt is eventually going to drag the economy down.

But like Obama and Bush before him, President Donald Trump isn't talking about deficits. Neither much are voters.

"Voters, frankly, after these huge deficits, are saying, 'Well, how much do deficits really matter?'" said former Pennsylvania Sen. Rick Santorum, a two-time GOP presidential candidate. "We're not Greece yet, right?"

Topping the immediate agenda, however, is a debt-financed drive to overhaul the tax code. Top Capitol Hill Republicans like House Speaker Paul Ryan of Wisconsin and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell of Kentucky had for months promised that tax overhaul would not add to the deficit, with rate cuts financed by closing loopholes and other steps.

Instead, Republicans are talking about tax cuts whose costs to the debt — still under negotiation — would be justified by assumptions of greater economic growth.

"We want pro-growth tax reform that will get the economy going, that will get people back to work, that will give middle-income taxpayers a tax cut and that will put American businesses in a better competitive playing field so that we keep American businesses in America," Ryan said in an AP Newsmakers interview this past week. "That's more important than anything else."

He backed off months of promises that the Republicans' tax plan won't add to the nation's ballooning deficit.

The GOP moves could justify \$800 billion or so in tax cuts over 10 years, but the administration is pressing behind the scenes to push the envelope well beyond that range.

"They're starting to talk about tax cuts instead of tax reform," said former Sen. John Sununu, R-N.H. "When people are desperate to find legislation that they can pass they tend to take the easy path."

Among the few deficit hawk holdouts is Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn., a key vote on the Senate Budget Committee, who's been pumping the brakes on taxes, a stand that's earned him face-to-face meetings with both Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Trump himself. Corker says he believes in some adjustments but doesn't want to "let this just be party time that just takes us no place but massive deficits down the road."

Meanwhile, the election of Trump has GOP military hawks pressing to shovel enormous amounts of money into the Pentagon — about \$90 billion over the stringent spending limits set by the hard-won 2011 deficit control effort. Republican demands for spending cuts as the price of lifting the government's debt limit and averting a market-rattling default on U.S. obligations pushed negotiations perilously close to a

market crisis that summer.

The unpopular leftover from the 2011 agreement are those spending limits, which if violated would be enforced by across-the-board spending cuts known as sequestration. Republicans want to scrap them, at least for military money.

"There's so much pressure on our side for additional defense spending," said Rep. Tom Cole, R-Okla. "Believe me there's more defense hawks than budget hawks in the Republican conference right now."

But it takes Democratic help to lift the limits and their price, unsurprisingly, is more money for domestic programs.

That leaves GOP deficit hawks frustrated. They've won, for now, a \$200 billion package of spending cuts as part of the House budget resolution, which has stalled after committee approval this summer. The Senate hasn't acted yet, but no one in that chamber is taking the lead in pressing for a companion package of cuts.

And conservatives demanding that spending cuts accompany any extension of the government's borrowing ability were undercut by Trump, who agreed last week to add temporary borrowing approval to a must-pass Harvey relief bill.

Anger over Trump's debt bargain, though, has conservatives vowing that issues of spending and deficits won't be kicked to the curb for long.

"It's not going to be shoved aside much longer because this (debt limit) deal last week ... has got people all riled up, and justifiably so," said longtime GOP Rep. Joe Barton of Texas.

"We'll be ready next time."

Protests follow ex-St. Louis officer's acquittal in killing

By JIM SALTER, Associated Press

ST. LOUIS (AP) — A white former police officer was acquitted Friday in the 2011 death of a black man who was fatally shot following a high-speed chase, and hundreds of demonstrators streamed into the streets of downtown St. Louis and later an upscale neighborhood to protest the verdict that had stirred fears of civil unrest for weeks.

Ahead of the acquittal, activists had threatened civil disobedience if Jason Stockley were not convicted, including possible efforts to shut down highways. Barricades went up last month around police headquarters, the courthouse where the trial was held and other potential protest sites. Protesters were marching within hours of the decision.

More than a dozen arrests were made, and several officers were hurt as the day went on.

The case played out not far from the suburb of Ferguson, Missouri, which was the scene of the fatal shooting of Michael Brown, the unarmed black 18-year-old who was killed by a white police officer in 2014. That officer was never charged and eventually resigned.

Stockley, who was charged with first-degree murder, insisted he saw 24-year-old Anthony Lamar Smith holding a gun and felt he was in imminent danger. Prosecutors said the officer planted a gun in Smith's car after the shooting.

In an interview with the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Stockley said he understands how the video of him fatally shooting Smith looks bad to investigators and the public, but he said the optics have to be separated from the facts and he did nothing wrong.

"I can feel for and I understand what the family is going through, and I know everyone wants someone to blame, but I'm just not the guy," he said.

Stockley, 36, asked the case to be decided by a judge instead of a jury. Prosecutors objected to his request for a bench trial.

"This court, in conscience, cannot say that the State has proven every element of murder beyond a reasonable doubt or that the State has proven beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant did not act in self-defense," St. Louis Circuit Judge Timothy Wilson wrote in the decision.

In a written statement, St. Louis Circuit Attorney Kim Gardner acknowledged the difficulty of winning

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police shooting cases but said prosecutors believe they "offered sufficient evidence that proved beyond a reasonable doubt" that Stockley intended to kill Smith.

Assistant Circuit Attorney Robert Steele emphasized during the trial that police dashcam video of the chase captured Stockley saying he was "going to kill this (expletive), don't you know it."

Less than a minute later, the officer shot Smith five times. Stockley's lawyer dismissed the comment as "human emotions" uttered during a dangerous police pursuit. The judge wrote that the statement "can be ambiguous depending on the context."

Stockley, who left St. Louis' police force in 2013 and moved to Houston, could have been sentenced to up to life in prison without parole.

The case was among several in recent years in which a white officer killed a black suspect. Officers were acquitted in recent police shooting trials in Minnesota, Oklahoma and Wisconsin. A case in Ohio twice ended with hung juries, and prosecutors have decided not to seek a third trial.

"It's a sad day in St. Louis, and it's a sad day to be an American," the Rev. Clinton Stancil, a protest leader, said regarding the acquittal.

The crowd of protesters included blacks, whites and other races. Some people carried guns, which state law allows.

Efforts at civil disobedience were largely unsuccessful. When several demonstrators tried to rush onto Interstate 64, they were blocked on an entrance ramp by police cars and officers on bikes. When they tried to enter the city's convention center, the doors were locked.

At times, things escalated. Earlier in the day, protesters stood in front of a bus filled with officers in riot gear, blocking it from moving forward. When officers began pushing back the crowd, protesters resisted and police responded with pepper spray. Later, protesters surrounded a police vehicle and damaged it with rocks. Some in the crowd threw rocks and pieces of curbing at police who tried to secure the vehicle. That led to officers using pepper spray again.

As night came, hundreds of protesters moved to St. Louis' upscale Central West End section, where they marched and chanted as people looked on from restaurants and hospital windows lining busy Kingshighway. The group tried marching onto I-64 again, but police blocked their path.

Following a mostly silent sit-in, protesters resumed marching. Some demonstrators burned an American flag as others cheered.

After protesters broke a front window and splattered red paint at St. Louis Mayor Lyda Krewson's home, police in bulletproof vests and helmets arrived and demanded they get off the lawn and out of the street in front of the house. Officers used tear gas to try to move the crowd out of the area.

Krewson had called for calm and understanding ahead of the verdict and later said she was appalled by what happened to Smith and "sobered" by the outcome.

Some journalists covering the protests said they were targets of threats and violence from demonstrators. A freelance Associated Press videographer said a protester threw his camera to the ground and damaged it. He said later he was using a different camera and protesters told him they would beat him if he didn't put it away. A KTVI reporter said water bottles were thrown at him after a protester taunted him, drawing a crowd.

The St. Louis area has a history of unrest in similar cases, including after Brown's death, when protests, some of them violent, erupted.

In Smith's case, the encounter began when Stockley and his partner tried to corner Smith in a fast-food restaurant parking lot after seeing what appeared to be a drug deal. Stockley testified that he saw what he believed was a gun, and his partner yelled "gun!" as Smith backed into the police SUV twice to get away.

Stockley's attorney, Neil Bruntrager, argued that Smith tried to run over the two officers. Stockley fired seven shots as Smith sped away. A chase ensued.

At the end of the chase, Stockley opened fire only when Smith, still in his car, refused commands to put up his hands and reached along the seat "in the area where the gun was," Bruntrager said. Stockley said he climbed into Smith's car and found a revolver between the center console and passenger seat.

But prosecutors questioned why Stockley dug into a bag in the back seat of the police SUV before re-

turning to Smith's car.

The gun found in Smith's car did not have his DNA on it, but it did have Stockley's.

Associated Press Writer Summer Ballentine contributed to this report.

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<http://apne.ws/2u1RMfv> .

Judge: Sessions can't deny grant money for sanctuary cities

By DON BABWIN, Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Attorney General Jeff Sessions can't follow through — at least for now — with his threat to withhold public safety grant money to Chicago and other so-called sanctuary cities for refusing to impose new tough immigration policies, a judge ruled Friday in a legal defeat for the Trump administration.

In what is at least a temporary victory for cities that have defied Sessions, U.S. District Judge Harry D. Leinenweber ruled that the Justice Department could not impose the requirements.

He said the city had shown a "likelihood of success" in arguing that Sessions exceeded his authority with the new conditions. Among them are requirements that cities notify immigration agents when someone in the country illegally is about to be released from local jails and to allow agents access to the jails.

Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel called the ruling a victory for cities, counties and states nationwide and "a clear statement that the Trump administration is wrong."

"It means essential resources for public safety will not come with unlawful strings attached, and the Trump justice department cannot continue to coerce us into violating and abandoning our values," Emanuel said.

The city had asked the judge for a "nationwide" temporary injunction this week, asking the judge not to allow the Justice Department to impose the requirements until the city's lawsuit against the department plays out in court.

City officials have said such a ruling would prevent the Justice Department from withholding what are called Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grants to the cities based on their refusal to take the steps Sessions ordered.

Chicago has applied for \$2.2 million in the federal grant money — \$1.5 million for the city and the rest for Cook County and 10 other suburbs. But in a recent court hearing, attorneys representing the city said that more than 30 other jurisdictions across the United States filed court briefs supporting Chicago's lawsuit and have up to \$35 million in grants at stake. At least seven cities and counties, including Seattle and San Francisco, as well as the state of California, are refusing to cooperate with the new federal rules.

Leinenweber's ruling was not welcomed at the Justice Department.

"By protecting criminals from immigration enforcement, cities and states with 'so-called' sanctuary policies make their communities less safe and undermine the rule of law," spokesman Devin O'Malley said. "The Department of Justice will continue to fully enforce existing law and to defend lawful and reasonable grant conditions that seek to protect communities and law enforcement."

Though the \$1.5 million is just a tiny fraction of the city's budget, the ruling could be a major victory for a city that has been in a public fight with Sessions. Mayor Rahm Emanuel has said the city would not "be blackmailed" into changing its values as a city welcoming of immigrants, and Sessions responded that the Trump administration would not "simply give away grant money to city governments that proudly violate the rule of law and protect criminal aliens at the expense of public safety."

The city argued that it would suffer "irreparable harm" if it lost the funds that are earmarked to expand the city's use of "ShotSpotter" technology to detect when someone fires a gun. And it has made a similar argument if the city were to follow the new requirements. Doing so, Emanuel said Friday, would "drive a wedge of distrust" between the immigrant community and the police force, which needs that community to trust police enough to come forward to report crimes and help officers solve them.

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The judge agreed, saying, "The harm to the City's relationship with the immigrant community if it should accede to the conditions is irreparable," wrote the judge.

The ruling is another blow to Sessions, a longtime champion of tougher immigration laws. Earlier this month, Sessions announced that the administration would end a program that protects young immigrants who were brought to the U.S. illegally as children or came with families who overstayed their visas. Trump later announced he was working on an agreement to protect them.

Whether or not the ruling means that Leinenweber will ultimately decide in favor of the city is unclear, but he did make clear the city has a good case.

During a hearing, Ron Safer, an attorney representing the city, said that if the Justice Department prevailed, it could use the same argument to "seize" even more authority to tie grant money to doing what he wants.

On Friday afternoon, Emanuel declined to speculate on whether the Trump administration would find another rationale to deny the city the grant — something that has never happened. Nor would he say if he thought that the administration would find another way to punish the city, such as pull the 20 Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives agents that were recently assigned to the city this year as part of a new Chicago Crime Gun Strike Force.

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Transgender troops can re-enlist in military _ for now

By RICHARD LARDNER and LOLITA C. BALDOR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — New guidance released Friday by the Pentagon makes it clear that any transgender troops currently in the military can re-enlist in the next several months, even as the department debates how broadly to enforce a ban on their service ordered by President Donald Trump.

In a memo to top military leaders, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said a high-level panel will determine how to implement Trump's ban on transgender individuals in the military. Trump directed the military to indefinitely extend the ban on transgender individuals enlisting in the service, but he left it up to Mattis to decide if those currently serving should be allowed to stay.

Members of Congress have already sent a letter to Trump calling on him to reconsider the ban.

Sen. John McCain, the Republican chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said Friday he backed legislation that would bar the Trump administration from forcing transgender troops out of the armed forces.

McCain of Arizona said in a statement that any service member, including those who are transgender, who meets the standards for military readiness and medical fitness should be permitted to serve.

"When less than 1 percent of Americans are volunteering to join the military, we should welcome all those who are willing and able to serve our country," McCain said.

The bill is an attempt to establish protections for transgender troops in law, cutting off Trump's efforts to kick service members out based on their gender identity. Trump tweeted in July that he would ban transgender troops from serving anywhere in the U.S. military. The directive caught the Pentagon flat-footed as defense officials struggled to explain what they called Trump's guidance.

About a month later the president issued more formal instructions, directing the Pentagon to indefinitely extend a ban on transgender individuals joining the military. But Trump also gave Mattis six months to come up with a policy on how to address those currently serving, leaving the door open to permitting their continued service.

Mattis has said the Pentagon will develop a plan that "will promote military readiness, lethality and unit cohesion."

In his memo released Friday, Mattis said the deputy defense secretary and the vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs will lead a panel that will determine how the department will implement the ban. Outside experts

may be included to provide additional advice. The Pentagon refused to release the memo, but provided a summary.

According to the Pentagon, Mattis made clear in his memo that the current policies on transgender troops remain in effect. He said transgender individuals can continue to serve in the military and continue to receive any required medical care.

That interim guidance laid out in the memo will stay in effect until Feb. 21, when the Pentagon must complete its final plan on how and when transgender individuals may serve in the military.

The Obama administration in June 2016 changed longstanding policy, and declared that troops could serve openly as transgender individuals. And it set a July 2017 deadline for determining whether transgender people could be allowed to enter the military. Mattis delayed any decision on enlistments until Jan. 1, 2018. But that plan was upended when Trump tweeted in July that transgender individuals were not welcome in the armed forces.

Since then, officials have been working to figure out a new policy, including whether transgender troops currently in the military should be thrown out. Many of them have been deployed to warzones multiple times.

The issue raises a number of thorny legal questions, such as whether the Pentagon can say in 2016 that transgender individuals can serve openly and then a year later threaten to throw out anyone who came out publicly.

The bill supported by McCain is also sponsored by Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand, D-N.Y., and Jack Reed of Rhode Island, the top Democrat on the Armed Services panel, and Republican Sen. Susan Collins of Maine.

Gillibrand said she had planned to offer the measure protecting transgender troops as an amendment to the annual defense policy bill the Senate has been considering over the last several days. But she said the Senate's Republican leadership "cut off debate" and blocked the amendment from getting a vote.

"Thousands of brave transgender Americans love our country enough to risk their lives for it, fight for it, and even die for it, and Congress should honor them and let them serve," said Gillibrand, who thanked McCain for his support.

The legislation also requires Mattis to complete his policy review by end of the year and to provide the results to Congress.

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

Demonized Schumer and Pelosi now deal-makers with Trump

By ALAN FRAM, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It's been a long eight months in the wilderness for Democrats, but if any two were going to find their way back to the action it was Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and his House counterpart, Nancy Pelosi.

Or "Chuck and Nancy," as President Donald Trump now calls them.

After the Republican-led Congress' failure to repeal President Barack Obama's health care law, when Trump cracked the door of bipartisanship, the two Hill veterans barged through full-force. They were looking for ways to "build some trust and confidence" with Trump, Pelosi, D-Calif., said in an interview Friday.

The willingness to engage with a president reviled by their party worried liberals like Rep. Raul Grijalva, D-Ariz., who warned against "proceeding toward normalizing him." But it surprised no one who's watched Schumer and Pelosi's combined 67 years of wheeling and dealing in Congress.

"Let's put it this way, it doesn't matter," Pelosi said about whether she likes Trump following two meetings that yielded a budget deal and progress on immigration. She said she doesn't know if Trump likes her, adding, "Right now, I want him to like the Dreamers," the nickname for young immigrants the two Democrats and Trump aim to protect.

Schumer, D-N.Y., inadvertently shared his impression of the duo's Wednesday parley with Trump, which moved an immigration agreement forward, catching uninvited Republican leaders flat-footed. At an open

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Senate microphone Thursday, Schumer said: "He likes us. He likes me, anyway." He described warning Trump he'd be "boxed" if he only works with one party, adding, "He gets that."

Both leaders' comments were instructive.

Pelosi, 77, who was the first female House speaker, is admired as a legislative tactician able to maximize minority Democrats' strength and as a prodigious fundraiser. Underscoring her penchant for finding allies, Sen. Mike Rounds, R-S.D., said that when as governor in 2009, he called congressional leaders to discuss President Barack Obama's pending health care bill — and only Pelosi called back.

Recounting the White House dinner that produced progress on immigration, the only woman among 11 people around the Blue Room's rectangular table said she was responding to Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross when "the others" interrupted.

"I said, 'Does anybody listen to women when they speak around here?'" Pelosi said Friday.

But critics say that forcefulness also means Pelosi holds power too tightly, not consulting widely enough with junior lawmakers, and is part of an aging cluster of party leaders that's frustrating younger, ambitious members.

Schumer, 66, has been Senate Democratic leader since January and is viewed by colleagues as a people person. He's memorized senators' telephone numbers, perhaps because of his flip phone's limitations, and is known for emotional visits and calls with lawmakers who've experienced personal losses. Schumer has arranged dates for staffers and said this week that his life's big gap was lacking grandchildren, of which Pelosi has nine.

The progressive end of the Democratic spectrum has shown wariness of Schumer, and thousands of liberals protested outside his Brooklyn apartment after Trump's January inauguration. They demanded he aggressively oppose Trump's appointees and agenda and accused him of being too close to the financial industry, which is centered in New York.

With Schumer's saggy suits contrasting with Pelosi's tailored wardrobe, the two leaders have known each other since serving in the House in the late 1980s. Then-Rep. George Miller, D-Calif., invited Pelosi to join a group of lawmakers who dined weekly and already included Schumer. Pelosi says she and Schumer now meet or speak "as necessary," often daily.

Pelosi's four years as speaker began in 2007 and included two years under Obama that saw enactment of his health care law, an economic stimulus package and overhauled financial regulations. She also produced legislation under President George W. Bush and Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, including a bank bailout, a revamping of how Medicare pays doctors and several budget deals.

Schumer is still new on the national scene, and few GOP campaign ads have used him as a foil. Thanks to her high profile and unabashed liberal views, Republicans have starred Pelosi in thousands of spots to vilify Democrats.

The National Republican Congressional Committee, the House GOP's campaign arm, says that in this spring's special Georgia election for an open House seat, Pelosi was mentioned in 90 percent of the nearly 7,500 negative ads that helped defeat Democratic candidate Jon Ossoff. One by the Congressional Leadership Fund, which is aligned with GOP leaders, flashed pictures of Pelosi, liberal filmmaker Michael Moore and violent protesters opposing Trump's inauguration as the announcer said, "Jon Ossoff is one of them."

Pelosi is from Baltimore Democratic royalty, daughter of the city's congressman and then mayor. She moved to her husband's hometown of San Francisco and plunged into local politics, entering Congress in 1987 and leading House Democrats since 2003. She's raked in hundreds of millions of dollars for candidates over the years, cementing loyalty from many colleagues.

But in a tea party-fueled backlash to the health care law and other big-spending measures, Republicans recaptured the House in the 2010 elections. Shoved back into the minority, handfuls of Democrats have tried ousting her ever since but fallen short.

"No one can deny that she's an effective leader," said Rep. Kathleen Rice, D-N.Y., one dissident. Rice said "fair or not," Republicans have painted Pelosi with a negative reputation that's hurting Democrats' efforts to win elections.

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The son of a Brooklyn exterminator, Schumer attended Harvard after scoring nearly a perfect 1600 on college entrance exams. He credits a summer job with neighbor Stanley Kaplan, a test preparation industry pioneer.

At age 23, Schumer became the youngest member of the New York State Assembly since Theodore Roosevelt in the 1880s. He was elected to the House in 1980 and the Senate in 1998, climbing leadership ranks and leapfrogging into the top post over his one-time housemate in Washington, No. 2 Senate Democratic leader Richard Durbin of Illinois.

Schumer helped write crime and gun control bills in the 1990s and aid for the New York region after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and 2012's Hurricane Sandy. He was among eight senators who pushed bipartisan immigration legislation through the Senate in 2013, and this year helped strike compromises temporarily financing government and slapping sanctions on Russia.

He's also kept minority Democrats unanimously opposed to the failed GOP drive to repeal Obama's health law, blocked money for Trump's wall with Mexico and pressured Trump by railing against his firing of FBI chief James Comey. That's earned tweets from Trump, who's called him the Democrats' "head clown" and "Cryin' Chuck."

"We've surpassed most reasonable expectations" this year, said Sen. Brian Schatz, D-Hawaii.

Associated Press writer Matthew Daly contributed to this report.

UN condemns North Korea's 'highly provocative' missile test

By EDITH M. LEDERER and KIM TONG-HYUNG, Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The U.N. Security Council strongly condemned North Korea's "highly provocative" ballistic missile test on Friday and demanded that Pyongyang immediately halt its "outrageous actions" and demonstrate its commitment to denuclearizing the Korean peninsula.

The U.N.'s most powerful body accused North Korea of undermining regional peace and security by launching its latest missile over Japan and said its nuclear and missile tests "have caused grave security concerns around the world" and threaten all 193 U.N. member states.

North Korea's longest-ever test flight of a ballistic missile early Friday from Sunan, the location of Pyongyang's international airport, signaled both defiance of North Korea's rivals and a big technological advance. After hurtling over Japan, it landed in the northern Pacific Ocean.

Since U.S. President Donald Trump threatened North Korea with "fire and fury" in August, the North has conducted its most powerful nuclear test, threatened to send missiles into the waters around the U.S. Pacific island territory of Guam and launched two missiles of increasing range over Japan. July saw the country's first tests of intercontinental ballistic missiles that could strike deep into the U.S. mainland when perfected.

The intermediate-range missile test came four days after the Security Council imposed tough new sanctions on the North for its Sept. 3 missile test including a ban on textile exports and natural gas imports — and caps on its import of oil and petroleum products. The U.S. said the latest sanctions, combined with previous measures, would ban over 90 percent of North Korea's exports reported in 2016, its main source of hard currency used to finance its nuclear and missile programs.

North Korea's Foreign Ministry denounced the sanctions and said the North would "redouble its efforts to increase its strength to safeguard the country's sovereignty and right to existence."

The Security Council stressed in Friday's press statement after a closed-door emergency meeting that all countries must "fully, comprehensively and immediately" implement all U.N. sanctions.

Japan's U.N. Ambassador Koro Bessho called the launch an "outrageous act" that is not only a threat to Japan's security but a threat to the world as a whole.

Bessho and the British, French and Swedish ambassadors demanded that all sanctions be implemented.

Calling the latest launch a "terrible, egregious, illegal, provocative reckless act," Britain's U.N. Ambassador Matthew Rycroft said North Korea's largest trading partners and closest links — a clear reference

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to China — must “demonstrate that they are doing everything in their power to implement the sanctions of the Security Council and to encourage the North Korean regime to change course.”

France’s Foreign Ministry said in a statement that the country is ready to work on tougher U.N. and EU measures to convince Pyongyang that there is no interest in an escalation, and to bring it to the negotiating table. It said North Korea will also be discussed during next week’s annual gathering of world leaders at the General Assembly.

The Security Council also emphasized the importance of North Korea working to reduce tension in the Korean Peninsula — and it reiterated the importance of maintaining peace and stability on the territory divided between authoritarian North Korea and democratic South Korea.

The council welcomed efforts by its members and other countries “to facilitate a peaceful and comprehensive solution” to the North Korean nuclear issue through dialogue.

Russia’s U.N. Ambassador, Vassily Nebenzia, strongly backed the need for dialogue saying the United States needs to start talks with North Korea, which the Trump administration has ruled out.

Nebenzia told reporters after the meeting that Russia called on the U.S. and others to implement the “political and diplomatic solutions” called for in the latest sanctions resolution.

“Without implementing this, we also will consider it as a non-compliance with the resolution,” Nebenzia said, adding that it also may be time for the council to “think out of the box” on how to deal with North Korea.

The growing frequency, power and confidence displayed by Pyongyang’s nuclear and missile tests seem to confirm what governments and outside experts have long feared: North Korea is closer than ever to its goal of building a military arsenal that can viably target U.S. troops both in Asia and in the U.S. homeland.

This, in turn, is meant to allow North Korea greater military freedom in the region by raising doubts in Seoul and Tokyo that Washington would risk the annihilation of a U.S. city to protect its Asian allies.

South Korea’s Joint Chiefs of Staff said the latest missile traveled about 3,700 kilometers (2,300 miles) and reached a maximum height of 770 kilometers (478 miles). Guam, which is the home of important U.S. military assets, is 3,400 kilometers (2,112 miles) away from North Korea.

Despite its impressive range, the missile probably still is not accurate enough to destroy Guam’s Andersen Air Force Base, said David Wright, a U.S. missile expert with the Union of Concerned Scientists.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in, a liberal who initially pushed for talks with North Korea, said its tests currently make dialogue “impossible.”

“If North Korea provokes us or our allies, we have the strength to smash the attempt at an early stage and inflict a level of damage it would be impossible to recover from,” he said.

North Korea has repeatedly vowed to continue its weapons tests amid what it calls U.S. hostility — by which it means the presence of nearly 80,000 U.S. troops stationed in Japan and South Korea.

Robust international diplomacy on the issue has been stalled for years, and there’s so far little sign that senior officials from North Korea and the U.S. might sit down to discuss ways to slow the North’s determined march toward inclusion among the world’s nuclear weapons powers.

South Korea detected North Korean launch preparations Thursday, and President Moon ordered a live-fire ballistic missile drill if the launch happened. This allowed Seoul to fire missiles only six minutes after the North’s launch Friday. One of the two missiles hit a sea target about 250 kilometers (155 miles) away, which was approximately the distance to Pyongyang’s Sunan, but the other failed in flight shortly after launch.

Kim reported from Seoul. Associated Press writers Foster Klug in Seoul and Mari Yamaguchi in Tokyo contributed to this report.

Aided by Russia, Syrian forces consolidate military gains

By NATALIYA VASILYEVA, Associated Press

OKEIRBAT, Syria (AP) — Government troops and their allies intensified an offensive Friday against Islamic State militants in central Syria, trying to consolidate their control on the area.

The Syrian troops and Russian military police patrolled the dusty and desolate streets of Okeirbat, which was recaptured from the extremists on Sept. 2.

A militant counteroffensive was crushed Thursday amid intense Russian airstrikes. Distant thuds of artillery were heard in Friday afternoon and evening, indicating the persistence of the fighting.

The militants had controlled Okeirbat since 2014, and Russian military officials showed visiting journalists a bombed-out warehouse that was used by the extremists to repair and fortify tanks in the once-thriving town of 10,000 people, the largest held by IS in Hama province.

The fight for Okeirbat, which lies on a strategic route linking western Syria to IS strongholds in the east, reflects the group's desperation to retain its presence in Hama province in central Syria.

It also shows the determination of the government of President Bashar Assad to uproot the group from the area, which had been a launching pad for attacks.

The Russian military has provided extensive air cover for Assad, Moscow's longtime ally, in the civil war. It sought to portray the capture of Okeirbat as a major breakthrough, helping an offensive in which Syrian government forces broke a siege by IS militants on the strategic city of Deir el-Zour only two weeks ago.

"Their defeat here helped to carry out the offensive on Deir el-Zour, reach the Euphrates River and break the siege and liberate Deir el-Zour," said Lt. Gen Alexander Lapin, chief of staff of the Russian forces in Syria.

"All the conditions are in place for the final stage of defeating IS in the western and eastern corners of Syria," Lapin told a group of international reporters brought to Okeirbat on a tour organized by the Russian Defense Ministry. He spoke while standing on a dusty street next to a building with IS slogans written on the walls of what used to be an Islamic law court.

After Assad's troops besieged Okeirbat in mid-August, a Russian missile strike on Aug. 29 destroyed the tank factory, which had been in operation since 2015 providing armored vehicles for suicide missions, Lapin said. Extremist leaflets and ammunition crates still sat on the factory floor.

The militants also had an extensive network of underground tunnels, some of them 800 meters (nearly a half-mile) long.

"The town was prepared for a siege and had a network of underground bunkers, and the Syrian army was fighting the militants for practically every house," Lapin said, adding that the population had dwindled to 2,500, all of whom fled by the time the town was recaptured.

More than two weeks of fighting in central Syria has left hundreds dead on both sides, the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said. The extremists still hold some villages around it and fighting still continues there.

The area is important because it is near villages loyal to Assad. Earlier this week, the extremists shelled the government stronghold of Salamiyeh that is home to members of the minority Ismaili sect, a branch of Shiite Islam.

Okeirbat was the last stop on the media tour, designed to show the strength of Russia's role in Syria, including its naval and air power. But the Defense Ministry also highlighted Moscow's humanitarian role in providing basic assistance and security for residents returning to towns recaptured in the civil war, now in its seventh year.

Backed by Russian warplanes and fighters from Iranian-backed militias, the Syrian government has enjoyed a series of battlefield successes in recent weeks. It has seen an increase in the territory it controls from a low of only 19 percent of the country earlier this year to currently about 48 percent, according to the Observatory.

Following a series of local cease-fires that were negotiated by Russia since May, Syrian and allied troops went on the offensive against IS militants as well as some U.S.-backed fighters, the Observatory said. This thrust the Syrian government into the battle against IS, raising the pressure on the militants. They now

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control only about 12 percent of Syria, down from about 39 percent months ago, it added.

Also on Friday, a newly negotiated "de-escalation zone" in the mostly rebel-held province of Idlib was announced during talks in Astana, the capital of Kazakhstan.

Alexander Lavrentiev, Russia's representative at the talks that are co-sponsored by Turkey and Iran, said 500 soldiers from Russia, Turkey and Iran will probably be deployed to observe and control Idlib, although details are still being worked out. The province is largely controlled by al-Qaida-linked militants and is home to nearly 1 million internally displaced Syrians.

In eastern Syria, government forces kept up their offensive on the city of Deir el-Zour, capturing a new neighborhood from IS and increasing their hold to over 60 percent of the city.

If the offensive in central Syria quells the remaining militants, it would mean IS will be mostly left in the eastern province of Deir el-Zour as well as a third of the northern city of Raqqa, once the group's de facto capital.

The Russian-backed offensive in eastern Syria is complicated by a separate and simultaneous campaign of Syrian opposition fighters backed by the U.S.-led coalition. The coalition spokesman said there are no plans to enter Deir el-Zour, indicating there will be no clash over who controls it.

Syrian government forces have been marching from western parts of the city while U.S.-backed fighters of the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces have been approaching from the north. Mohammed Ibrahim Samra, governor of Deir el-Zour province, said basic services have been restored and a hospital has been reopened.

Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov, a spokesman for the Russian Defense Ministry, said there are still IS fighters on the west bank of the Euphrates River in Deir el-Zour, but most have fled to the east bank.

An Associated Press reporter in Deir el-Zour, Syria, and Sarah El Deeb in Beirut contributed.

Trump's tough talk on London bomb irks British leader

By CATHERINE LUCEY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's suggestion that London police could have done more to prevent Friday's homemade bomb explosion drew a quick rejoinder from British Prime Minister Theresa May, who said it's never helpful "to speculate on what is an ongoing investigation."

Trump turned the London subway bomb explosion into an opportunity to highlight his tough talk on terror and promote his travel ban.

The president's series of early-morning tweets about the still-unfolding investigation stood in contrast to his delay last month in firmly condemning Neo-Nazis and white supremacists after racial violence broke out in Charlottesville, Virginia, and left one person dead. At the time, he said: "When I make a statement, I like to be correct. I want the facts. ... I don't want to rush into a statement."

The London bomb exploded on a packed train during morning rush hour Friday, leaving at least 29 people injured but no one with life-threatening injuries. Police said the explosion was a terrorist attack, the fifth in Britain this year.

On Twitter, Trump called the explosion another attack "by a loser terrorist." He also offered implied criticism of law enforcement, saying "these are sick and demented people who were in the sights of Scotland Yard. Must be proactive!"

Asked about Trump's comments, May said, "I never think it's helpful for anybody to speculate on what is an ongoing investigation."

Trump told reporters Friday morning that he had been briefed on the explosion, but did not provide further details.

National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster suggested later that Trump was speaking generally. Noting that law enforcement has been working to combat terrorism for years, McMaster said, "If there was a terrorist attack here, God forbid, that we would say that they were in the sights of the FBI."

"I think he means generally that this kind of activity is what we are trying to prevent," McMaster said.

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The White House said Trump and May spoke Friday. White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said Trump's tweet "may have come up" but gave no further detail.

At an event at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland, Trump said he offered prayers for London and said "radical Islamic terrorism it will be eradicated, believe me."

As a candidate, Trump routinely railed against President Barack Obama and Democratic campaign rival Hillary Clinton for failing to use the phrase "radical Islamic terrorism." He has used the phrase more sparingly since taking office, avoiding it during his remarks on the anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks.

Trump also used the moment to argue on Twitter that his travel ban targeting six mostly Muslim nations should be "far larger, tougher and more specific - but stupidly, that would not be politically correct!"

And Trump promoted his handling of extremist militants, saying the government should cut off internet access for such groups.

"Loser terrorists must be dealt with in a much tougher manner. The internet is their main recruitment tool which we must cut off & use better!" he wrote on Twitter. He argued that his administration has "made more progress in the last nine months against ISIS than the Obama Administration has made in 8 years."

Trump concluded, "Must be proactive & nasty!"

The president has used attacks before to argue for his ban and to lob trans-Atlantic criticism.

After attacks in the London Bridge in June that claimed seven lives, he said on Twitter: "We need the courts to give us back our rights. We need the Travel Ban as an extra level of safety!"

The president also has had dust-ups with allies over the use of intelligence.

May protested to Trump after U.S. officials leaked information about a deadly bombing in Manchester in May. Photos showing crime scene evidence appeared in U.S. media; the bombing suspect's name was revealed while British officials were still withholding it. Trump said May was "very angry" over the leaks.

Around that time, the president himself came under fire for reportedly disclosing classified material gathered by close ally Israel. Trump shared the information with Russian officials in an Oval Office meeting.

Dangers linger as Florida recovery picks up momentum

By JENNIFER KAY and TIM REYNOLDS, Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — Nearly a week after Hurricane Irma walloped Florida, the recovery mission picked up momentum as more people had electricity and schools made plans to reopen.

Still, the dangers lingered, mostly in the form of noxious gas from generators serving those who still didn't have power. North Carolina reported its first Irma-related death on Friday after a man died from carbon monoxide poisoning, and two more people died in Florida from the dangerous fumes, including a woman in Palm Beach County.

Near Miami, a family of four was treated for exposure to the fumes from a generator outside of their apartment.

At least 36 people have died in the U.S. under Irma-related circumstances, the vast majority in Florida. The death toll across the Caribbean stood at 38.

Meanwhile, the state made urgent efforts to protect its vulnerable elderly residents. Eight people died at a nursing home when the hurricane knocked out power and the facility lost air conditioning. The deaths at the Rehabilitation Center at Hollywood Hills were believed to be heat-related.

Several other nursing homes were evacuated because of a lack of power or air conditioning, and workers scrambled to keep patients cool with emergency stocks of ice and Popsicles.

Officials said about 1.9 million homes and businesses were without power, including 64 nursing homes.

Florida Gov. Rick Scott announced Thursday night that he directed the Agency for Health Care Administration to terminate the Hollywood Hills center as a provider for Medicaid, which helps low-income people receive health care.

Older people can be more susceptible to heat because their bodies do not adjust to temperatures as well as younger people. They don't sweat as much and they are more likely to take medication that af-

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fects body temperature.

"The thing that hits them first is dehydration and then their temperature increases and then respiratory issues kick in," Broward County Commissioner Nan Rich said.

Schools in some areas made plans to welcome back students. In the hard-hit southwestern part of the state, Lee County schools Superintendent Greg Adkins announced classes will begin Sept. 25. Three of the district's buildings needed extensive roof repair.

Reynolds reported from Aventura. Also contributing to this report were Associated Press writers Jay Reeves in Naples; Tim Reynolds in Aventura; Brendan Farrington, Gary Fineout and Joe Reedy in Tallahassee; Adriana Gomez Licon in Homestead; Michael Melia in Hartford Connecticut and Freida Frisaro in Miami.

What's changed with NKorea in 5 weeks since 'fire and fury'

By DEB RIECHMANN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — How has North Korea responded in the five weeks since President Donald Trump threatened Pyongyang with "fire and fury?" A trio of missile launches and a hydrogen bomb test that is the communist nation's most powerful to date.

And what have the U.S. and its allies achieved? A new set of U.N. sanctions that even Trump declared a "small step," extensive talks and a rhetorical two-step that leaves them where they have been for years. While Washington warns of military options, it says it still wants a peaceful solution.

"We will defend our people and our civilization from all who dare to threaten our way of life," Trump said at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland on Friday after Pyongyang conducted its longest-ever test flight of a ballistic missile. "This includes the regime of North Korea, which has once again shown its utter contempt for its neighbors and for the entire world community."

Diplomacy on the North Korean nuclear standoff has been stalled for years. And there's little sign that talks involving the U.S., North Korea and other interested countries can be arranged amid the almost weekly barrage of weapons tests and threats, let alone stop the North's determined nuclear march.

Trump heads to the U.N. General Assembly meeting next week with the same suitcase of bad options as his predecessors. Only now, the threat is heightened. North Korea is closer than ever to its goal of building a military arsenal that can viably target both U.S. troops in Asia and the American homeland.

"We've been kicking the can down the road, and we're out of road," H.R. McMaster, Trump's national security adviser, told reporters on Friday.

U.S. options range from everything to accepting North Korea as a nuclear power to using military force in a bid to destroy its arsenal and even oust leader Kim Jong Un. Like his predecessors, Trump has opted for choices somewhere in between: economic sanctions and talk of eventual diplomacy or military action, depending on how North Korea responds.

On Friday, the U.N. Security Council condemned North Korea's "highly provocative" test of an intermediate-range missile, which hurtled over U.S. ally Japan into the northern Pacific Ocean. But the North has ignored countless international reproaches previously.

At the White House, McMaster called on nations to aggressively enforce recent U.N. sanctions to increase economic pressure.

"For those who have said and have been commenting about the lack of a military option, there is a military option," he insisted. "Now, it's not what we would prefer to do."

Experts have long questioned if the U.S. could indeed attack North Korea, given its ability to cause massive casualties south of the border. Some 25 million people live in the metropolitan area of Seoul, U.S. ally South Korea's capital, well within range of the North's extensive artillery. North Korea also has the world's largest standing army.

Those arguments were buttressed from within Trump's administration last month when Steven Bannon concurred that America was essentially bluffing about military options, shortly before he was pushed out as the president's strategic adviser.

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Trump's U.N. envoy called North Korea "reckless."

"At that point, you know, there's not a whole lot the Security Council is going to be able to do," Ambassador Nikki Haley said, claiming global sanctions already have cut off 90 percent of North Korea's trade and 30 percent of its oil.

Lisa Collins, a fellow at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, said other nations will be watching the United States at the U.N. next week to determine Trump's next steps. She expected a Trump call for maximum pressure on North Korea.

"I don't think that he'll stray too much outside of the boundaries of that," Collins said. "Hopefully there will be coordination with allies on their policy lines before he adds anything to the speech about North Korea."

Cuba mystery: Even Castro baffled by harm to US diplomats

By JOSH LEDERMAN, MICHAEL WEISSENSTEIN and ROB GILLIES, Associated Press

HAVANA (AP) — Raul Castro seemed rattled.

The Cuban president sent for the top American envoy in the country to address grave concerns about a spate of U.S. diplomats harmed in Havana. There was talk of futuristic "sonic attacks" and the subtle threat of repercussions by the United States, until recently Cuba's sworn enemy.

The way Castro responded surprised Washington, several U.S. officials familiar with the exchange told The Associated Press.

In a rare face-to-face conversation, Castro told U.S. diplomat Jeffrey DeLaurentis that he was equally baffled, and concerned. Predictably, Castro denied any responsibility. But U.S. officials were caught off guard by the way he addressed the matter, devoid of the indignant, how-dare-you-accuse-us attitude the U.S. had come to expect from Cuba's leaders.

The Cubans even offered to let the FBI come down to Havana to investigate. Though U.S.-Cuban cooperation has improved recently — there was a joint "law enforcement dialogue" Friday in Washington — this level of access was extraordinary.

"Some countries don't want any more FBI agents in their country than they have to — and that number could be zero," said Leo Taddeo, a retired FBI supervisor who served abroad. Cuba is in that group.

The list of confirmed American victims was much shorter on Feb. 17, when the U.S. first complained to Cuba. Today, the number of "medically confirmed" cases stands at 21 — plus several Canadians. Some Americans have permanent hearing loss or mild brain injury. The developments have frightened Havana's tight-knit diplomatic community.

At least one other nation, France, has tested embassy staff for potential sonic-induced injuries, the AP has learned.

But several U.S. officials say there are real reasons to question whether Cuba perpetrated a clandestine campaign of aggression. The officials weren't authorized to discuss the ongoing investigation and demanded anonymity.

When the U.S. has accused Cuba in the past of misbehavior, such as harassing diplomats or cracking down on local dissidents, Havana has often accused Washington of making it up. This time, although Castro denied involvement, his government didn't dispute that something troubling may have gone down on Cuban soil.

Perhaps the picture was more complex? Investigators considered whether a rogue faction of Cuba's security forces had acted, possibly in combination with another country like Russia or North Korea.

Nevertheless, anger is rising in Washington. On Friday, five Republican senators wrote to Secretary of State Rex Tillerson urging him to kick all Cuban diplomats out of the United States and close America's newly re-established embassy in Havana.

"Cuba's neglect of its duty to protect our diplomats and their families cannot go unchallenged," said the lawmakers, who included Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida, a prominent Cuban-American, and the No. 2 Senate Republican, John Cornyn of Texas.

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For decades, Cuba and the U.S. harassed each other's diplomats. The Cubans might break into homes to rearrange furniture or leave feces unflushed in a toilet. The Americans might conduct obvious break-ins and traffic stops, puncture tires or break headlights.

Yet those pranks were primarily to pester, not to harm.

What U.S. diplomats started reporting last November was altogether different.

Diplomats and their families were getting sick. Some described bizarre, unexplained sounds, including grinding and high-pitched ringing. Victims even recounted how they could walk in and out of what seemed like powerful beams of sound that hit only certain rooms or even only parts of rooms, the AP reported this week.

At the time, Washington and Havana were in cooperation mode, working feverishly to lock in progress on everything from internet access to immigration rules before Barack Obama's presidency ended. Donald Trump's surprise election win on Nov. 8 meant the U.S. would soon be led by a president who'd threatened to reverse the rapprochement.

As America awaited an unpredictable new administration, Cuba faced a pivotal moment, too.

Fidel Castro died on Nov. 25. The revolutionary had reigned for nearly a half-century before ceding power to his brother, Raul, in his ailing last years. It was no secret in Cuba that Fidel, along with some supporters in the government, were uneasy about Raul Castro's opening with the U.S.

"There is a struggle going on for the soul of their revolution," said Michael Parmly, who headed the U.S. diplomatic post in Havana from 2005 to 2008. "It's entirely possible there are rogue elements."

When the first diplomats came forward with their inexplicable episodes and symptoms, the U.S. didn't connect the dots. It took weeks before embassy officials pieced together "clusters" of incidents, and multiple victims with confirmed health damage.

By the time Obama left the White House on Jan. 20, talk of mysterious maladies had reached some officials in Washington. Word of sonic attacks hadn't reached the top echelons of the White House or U.S. State Department, three former U.S. officials told the AP.

As Trump took office, a clearer picture started to emerge.

On Feb. 17, the U.S. complained to Cuba's embassy in Washington and its foreign ministry in Havana. Soon came Castro, seeking out DeLaurentis directly.

The attacks halted for a time. But several U.S. officials said it wasn't clear why.

It wasn't long before the incidents started again, as mysteriously as they'd stopped.

Then the Canadians got hit.

Between March and May, between five and 10 households were hit with symptoms including nausea, headaches and nosebleeds, said a Canadian official with knowledge of his country's investigation.

Then those attacks, too, ended.

What culprit would want to attack both the U.S. and its northern neighbor?

Cuba has no obvious grievances with Canada. The two countries have close ties. But perhaps Canadians were targeted to muddle the motive and throw investigators off the trail, another possibility U.S. authorities haven't eliminated.

The Canadians tested some of their staff in Havana and recalled others home temporarily, the Canadian official said.

Searching for its own answers, the U.S. Embassy conducted medical tests on staffers. Many were sent to the University of Miami for further examination. The State Department consulted with doctors at Johns Hopkins University and the University of Pennsylvania. The U.S. encouraged those institutions to keep what they knew private.

In Havana's diplomatic circles, anxiety spread. The French Embassy tested employees after a staff member raised health concerns, according to a French diplomat familiar with the matter. False alarm; the

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tests turned up no signs of damage consistent with a sonic attack.

The FBI traveled to Havana and swept some of the rooms where attacks were reported — a list that included homes and at least one hotel: the Spanish-run Hotel Capri, where visiting U.S. officials occasionally stay. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police flew down, too. Neither law enforcement agency found any sonic device, several officials told the AP.

By May 23, the U.S. still had no answers. But something had to be done. The Trump administration expelled two Cuban diplomats from Washington to protest the communist government's failure to protect the safety of American diplomats.

Neither country disclosed the expulsion at the time. Cuba didn't retaliate.

The next month, Trump imposed some barriers to travel between the former Cold War foes. But there was no hint it was to punish Castro's government for the attacks. Trump left much of Obama's broader detente intact, including the two nations' re-opened embassies.

The diplomats suffered in private, until Aug. 9.

News reports finally prompted the State Department to publicly acknowledge "incidents which have caused a variety of physical symptoms" and were still under investigation. The AP learned they included concentration problems and even trouble recalling commonplace words.

Two weeks later, the U.S. announced at least 16 Americans showed symptoms. At that point, the State Department said the incidents were "not ongoing."

Still, the tally continued to rise — first to 19 victims, and then this week to 21.

In the meantime, the State Department had to withdraw its assurance the attacks had long ceased. There had been another incident, on Aug. 21.

"The reality is, we don't know who or what has caused this," State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said Thursday. "And that's why the investigation is underway."

Lederman reported from Washington and Gillies from Toronto. Associated Press writers Angela Charlton in Paris, Jake Pearson in New York, and Matthew Lee, Bradley Klapper and Eric Tucker in Washington contributed.

Trump honors resolve of the nation's Air Force

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press

JOINT BASE ANDREWS, Md. (AP) — President Donald Trump honored the resolve of the nation's Air Force on Friday, warning foes and international terrorist groups that the U.S. military would respond to any threats.

"America and our allies will never be intimidated. We will defend our people, our nations and our civilization from all who dare to threaten our way of life," Trump told military personnel at Joint Base Andrews, marking the 70th anniversary of the Air Force.

Trump and first lady Melania Trump met with military families and watched an air show demonstration at the base that serves as the home of Air Force One, the presidential plane. Marveling at the capabilities of the Air Force, Trump made a reference to one of the more enduring films about America's military — even though it involved the Navy.

"I just met a lot of these folks," Trump said, referring to the airmen and women standing behind him. "They're better looking than Tom Cruise and we know they can fight better and we know they can fly better," he said, referring to Cruise's 1986 film "Top Gun."

Speaking in a hangar that housed a B-2 stealth bomber, an F-35 and an F-22 fighter jet, Trump outlined his efforts to bolster military spending and reiterated his call for repealing the "defense sequester," or across-the-board budget cuts instituted by Congress.

The president said he was "honored to join you on this really, really historic occasion, the 70th anniversary of the United States Air Force. The greatest air force on the face of this Earth. By far."

Earlier, Melania Trump tried her hand at paper airplanes during a visit with students at an afterschool program at the Joint Base Andrews Youth Center.

The Trumps visited the base ahead of a trip to the president's New Jersey golf club for the weekend and next week's United Nations General Assembly in New York.

Associated Press writers Laurie Kellman and Ken Thomas contributed to this report.

UK threat level raised to "critical" after subway bombing

By JILL LAWLESS and GREGORY KATZ, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — A homemade bomb planted in a rush-hour subway car exploded in London on Friday, injuring 29 people and prompting authorities to raise Britain's terrorism threat level to "critical," meaning another attack may be imminent.

The early morning blast sparked a huge manhunt for the perpetrators of what police said was the fourth terrorist attack in the British capital this year.

Prime Minister Theresa May, acting on the recommendation of the Joint Terrorism Analysis Center, raised the country's threat level from "severe" to "critical" — its highest possible level. May said military troops would augment the police presence in a "proportionate and sensible step."

Earlier, May said the device had been "intended to cause significant harm."

Still, to the relief of authorities and Londoners, experts said the bomb — hidden in a plastic bucket inside a supermarket freezer bag — only partially exploded, sparing the city much worse carnage.

"I would say this was a failed high-explosive device," Chris Hunter, a former British army bomb expert, said of the blast, which caused no serious injuries.

The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the attack, which it said was carried out by an affiliated unit.

The bomb went off around 8:20 a.m. as the train, carrying commuters from the suburbs — including many school children — was at Parsons Green station in the southwest of the city.

Witness Chris Wildish told Sky News that he saw "out of the corner of my eye, a massive flash of flames that went up the side of the train," followed by "an acrid chemical smell."

Commuter Lauren Hubbard said she was on the train when she heard a loud bang.

"I looked around and this wall of fire was just coming toward us," Hubbard said. She said her instinct was "just run," and she fled the above-ground station with her boyfriend.

Chaos ensued as hundreds of people, some of them suffering burns, poured from the train, which can hold up to 800 people.

"I ended up squashed on the staircase. People were falling over, people fainting, crying. There were little kids clinging onto the back of me," said another commuter, Ryan Barnett.

Passenger Luke Walmsley said it was "like every man for himself to get down the stairs."

"People were just pushing," he added. "There were nannies or mums asking where their children were."

Police and health officials said 29 people were treated in London hospitals, most of them for flash burns. None of the injuries were serious or life-threatening, the emergency services said.

Trains were suspended along a stretch of the Underground's District Line, and several homes were evacuated as police set up a 50-meter (150-foot) cordon around the scene while they secured the device and launched a search for those who planted it.

The Metropolitan Police said hundreds of detectives, along with agents of the domestic spy agency MI5, were looking at surveillance camera footage, carrying out forensic work and speaking to witnesses.

Speaking to reporters late Friday, Assistant Commissioner Mark Rowley said police were making "good progress" and that the public should be reassured that more police and troops will be on the streets.

"We are only aware of one device," he said. "We have remnants of that device. We are chasing down suspects." He refused to provide further details, except to say the bomb involved the "detonation of an improvised explosive device."

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Among the questions authorities were seeking to answer: What was the device made from, and was it meant to go off when it did, in a leafy, affluent part of the city far from London's top tourist sites?

British media reported that the bomb included a timer. Lewis Herrington, a terrorism expert at Loughborough University, said that would set it apart from suicide attacks like those on the London subway in 2005 or at Manchester Arena in May, in which the attackers "all wanted to die."

Photos taken inside the train showed a white plastic bucket inside a foil-lined shopping bag, with flames and what appeared to be wires emerging from the top.

Terrorism analyst Magnus Ranstorp of the Swedish Defense University said that from the photos it appeared the bomb did not fully detonate, as much of the device and its casing remained intact.

"They were really lucky with this one, it could have really become much worse," he said.

Hunter, the explosives expert, said it appeared that "there was a bang, a bit of a flash, and that would suggest that, potentially, some of the explosive detonated, the detonator detonated, but much of the explosive was effectively inert."

Police and ambulances were on the scene within minutes of the blast, a testament to their experience at responding to violent attacks in London. The city has been a target for decades: from Irish Republican Army bombers, right-wing extremists and, more recently, attackers inspired by al-Qaida or the Islamic State group.

Britain has seen four other terrorist attacks this year, which killed a total of 36 people. The other attacks in London — near Parliament, on London Bridge and near a mosque in Finsbury Park in north London — used vehicles and knives. Similar methods have been used in attacks across Europe, including in Nice, Stockholm, Berlin and Barcelona.

The last time the country's threat level was raised to critical, was after the May 22 suicide bombing at Manchester Arena that killed 22 people.

British authorities say they have foiled 19 plots since the middle of 2013, six of them since the van and knife attack on Westminster Bridge and Parliament in March, which killed five people. Police and MI5 say that at any given time they are running about 500 counterterrorism investigations involving 3,000 individuals.

London Mayor Sadiq Khan said there had been a "shift" in the terrorism threat, with attackers using a wide range of methods to try to inflict carnage. Khan, who belongs to the opposition Labour Party, said London police needed more resources to fight the threat. Police budgets have been cut since 2010 by Britain's Conservative government.

The London Underground, which handles 5 million journeys a day, has been targeted several times in the past. In July 2005, suicide bombers blew themselves up on three subway trains and a bus, killing 52 people and themselves. Four more bombers tried a similar attack two weeks later, but their devices failed to fully explode.

Last year Damon Smith, a student with an interest in weapons and Islamic extremism, left a knapsack filled with explosives and ball bearings on a London subway train. It failed to explode.

U.S. President Donald Trump weighed in on Friday's attack, tweeting that it was carried out "by a loser terrorist," and adding that "these are sick and demented people who were in the sights of Scotland Yard."

The British prime minister gently rebuked the president for his tweets. "I never think it's helpful for anybody to speculate on what is an ongoing investigation," May said.

Lori Hinnant in Paris contributed to this report.

Vatican diplomat recalled amid child porn investigation

By NICOLE WINFIELD and MATTHEW LEE, Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — A high-ranking priest working in the Vatican's embassy in Washington has been recalled after U.S. prosecutors asked for him to be charged there and face trial in a child pornography investigation, Vatican and U.S. officials said Friday.

The diplomat was suspected of possessing, but not producing or disseminating, child pornography in-

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cluding images of pre-pubescent children, a U.S. source familiar with the case said. The source was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

The Vatican declined to identify the priest, but said he was currently in Vatican City and that Vatican prosecutors had launched their own probe and sought evidence from the U.S.

If the accusations pan out, the case would be a major embarrassment for the Vatican and Pope Francis, who has pledged "zero tolerance" for sexual abuse. The diplomat would be the second from the Vatican's diplomatic corps to face possible criminal charges for such crimes during Francis' papacy. And any trial in the Vatican would come as Francis' own financial czar, Cardinal George Pell, is on trial in his native Australia for alleged historic sex abuse cases.

The State Department said it had asked the Vatican to lift the official's diplomatic immunity on Aug. 21, and said the request was denied three days later. For the State Department to make such a request, its lawyers would have needed to be convinced that there was reasonable cause for criminal prosecution.

The circumstances that prompted prosecutors to make the request, however, weren't clear. The Justice Department, which would have brought any charges, didn't immediately comment, and the Vatican gave no details about what, if any, evidence had been provided to persuade it to recall the priest.

In a statement, the Vatican said the State Department had notified the Vatican on Aug. 21 of a "possible violation of laws relating to child pornography images" by one of its diplomats in Washington.

A U.S. official familiar with the case said the priest was a senior member of the Vatican embassy staff. The Vatican yearbook lists three counselors who work under the nuncio, or ambassador.

Priests who are diplomats in the Vatican's Washington embassy usually receive authorization from the archdiocese of Washington to preside at Mass or perform other clergy functions in local parishes, although they only do so on very limited occasions, a spokesman for the archdiocese said.

Under the U.S. bishops' child protection policy, local church officials must review allegations of child porn possession against their priests. However, the requirements in the diplomat's case are unclear. The Archdiocese of Washington doesn't know the name of the accused priest, the spokesman said.

Still, the archdiocese plans to give all local clergy copies of public statements about the case from the Vatican and the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops so priests can answer any questions from parishioners, the spokesman said.

The Vatican said recalling the priest was consistent with diplomatic practice of sovereign states. In declining to identify him, the Vatican said the case was subject to confidentiality while still under investigation. It said the Vatican had asked for information about the case from the U.S; it wasn't clear if any had been provided.

The Vatican has recalled envoys before, including its then-ambassador to the Dominican Republic, who was recalled in 2013 after being accused of sexually abusing young boys on the Caribbean island.

The Vatican justified its decision to remove Monsignor Jozef Wesolowski from Dominican jurisdiction by submitting him first to a canonical court proceeding at the Vatican, and then putting him on trial in the Vatican's criminal court, which has jurisdiction over the Holy See's diplomatic corps.

Wesolowski was defrocked by the church court. But he died before the criminal trial got underway. Dominican prosecutors initially balked at the recall, and they never filed charges because of his immunity.

After he was defrocked, Wesolowski lost his diplomatic immunity and the Vatican said he could be tried by other courts. However, it refused to provide Dominican authorities with information about his whereabouts or how even he had pleaded to the charges.

The Vatican doesn't have extradition treaties.

The Vatican in 2013 specifically criminalized child porn possession, distribution and production in its criminal code. Possession carries a possible jail term of up to two years and a 10,000-euro fine. Distribution can be punished with a term of up to five years and a 50,000-euro fine, while the most serious offense of production can bring a 12-year term and 250,000-euro fine.

The head of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Cardinal Daniel N. DiNardo of Galveston-Houston, said the case was serious and that he hoped the Vatican would be "forthcoming with more details."

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"We reaffirm that when such allegations occur, an immediate, thorough and transparent investigation should begin in cooperation with law enforcement and immediate steps be taken to protect children," DiNardo said in a statement.

Francis has a spotty record on handling sex abuse cases. He won praise from advocates of survivors of abuse for having established a commission of experts to advise the church on keeping pedophiles out of the priesthood and protecting children. But the commission has floundered after losing the two members who themselves were survivors of abuse.

Francis' promotion of Pell to be his finance czar when allegations abounded in Australia about his past conduct, as well other appointments, in-house decisions and his scrapping of a proposed tribunal to prosecute negligent bishops also have raised questions.

Lee reported from Washington; Rachel Zoll contributed from New York.

Irma wipes out dreams across independent-minded Florida Keys

By JASON DEAREN, Associated Press

BIG PINE KEY, Fla. (AP) — Tim Stanton emerged from his ruined workshop off Highway 1 on Big Pine Key and collapsed to the ground, his sunburned, tear-covered face contorted in anguish.

The skeleton-thin 58-year-old with long, stringy gray hair sat under an old gas station awning, overcome by his personal loss in this idyllic place that was one of the hardest hit by Hurricane Irma. A tree fell on the trailer where he lives, and his shop was destroyed, along with an old BMW convertible he had just bought with saved money.

Like many people who drop out of more traditional lives to come to the Keys and forge their own path, Stanton moved here eight years ago from Pennsylvania with plans to cobble together a living based on his own ideas and entrepreneurship. First he sold fresh-pressed lime and sugarcane drinks on the roadside, then gained a local name for crafting ukuleles out of old cigar boxes and worked in a fruit grove. He managed to stitch together an income in one of the nation's most expensive places and was just getting by when Irma roared into town.

"It's great here if you're rich, but for the rest of us it's a struggle," said a sobbing Stanton, who goes by the nickname "Ukulele Tim." Now "it's going to be a while before it's paradise again. I had just scraped up enough to buy a car. Destroyed."

Those who live here know the bargain: turquoise waters and powdery sand but also hurricanes. Still, locals consider themselves hardy souls who are willing to gamble on escaping a direct hit. The last hurricane to make landfall here was Charley in 2004. Irma destroyed at least 25 percent of homes on the Keys, according to FEMA, and badly damaged systems for delivering water and electricity.

The storm's savagery assaults the senses. The sour, fishy stench of seaweed thrown ashore by Irma fills the air. The main road is dotted with dead iguanas smashed by work trucks and first responders. Sirens wail constantly from emergency crews racing from one end of the Keys to the next. All around is debris and ruin.

For Stanton and other residents, the reality of the task before them is starting to take root. And it's too much to bear.

"I feel so beat now. It's just insult to injury," he said.

Across the road from Stanton's shop, homes and trailers are toppled. Electricity is out, and a boil-water notice is in effect. A mobile cellphone tower was erected Thursday, bringing the first communications for some who had been cut off from their families since the storm.

Patrick Garvey drove into the neighborhood, his car full of meals-ready-to-eat and cases of water from a distribution hub run by the Florida National Guard nearby. He sent his wife and twin daughters to Brazil to be with family and stayed on Big Pine during the storm.

Like Stanton, Garvey gave up his previous life to come to Big Pine Key and forge his own path, inspired by famous Keys iconoclasts like Ernest Hemingway and treasure hunter Mel Fisher, who reflected the is-

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lands' live-by-your-own-rules mentality. He bought the Keys' only tropical fruit grove and spent six years lovingly restoring and replanting it.

The 41-year-old former Department of Children and Families employee drained his retirement savings and put everything into the grove. He had help from Stanton, who worked there part-time, and others in the small community. He had started getting customers for his unusual, locally grown tropical fruits like the Abiu, lychee, durian and others cultivated nowhere else in the U.S.

"There's a pioneering spirit in the Keys. It's going against the grain," Garvey said.

On Thursday, his footsteps made a crunching sound from the dry, dead vegetation of his once-thriving enterprise called The Grimal Grove. The trees, some planted decades ago by an experimental grower named Adolf Grimal, had been bowled over by the storm or were killed by the saltwater storm surge.

"I don't have anything now," Garvey said looking around. He had been sleeping outside since the storm and was wrestling mentally with whether he could start again. He had been scraping by before the storm, but was able to live cheaply in the neighborhood of trailers and mobile homes that was now laid to waste.

"Affordable housing here is trailers. And if you lose your trailer, you can't put another one on the lot, according to the local building code. They were grandfathered in," Garvey said. "It's tough for the working class. There's a high cost of living, but low wages."

Garvey hopped in his car and drove across the street to offer food and water to Stanton and some others who stuck the storm out.

Many neighbors fled Big Pine and the Keys to go north, and residents still were not being let back in until the water system and electricity could be at least partially restored. At a checkpoint near Lower Matecumbe Key, an officer said Thursday that every fourth or fifth car was someone trying to get back in, and they were all being turned away.

With the hot sun burning and the air thick with humidity, the two men looked at each other with sadness as they discussed everything they lost. They hope FEMA and others will come through for them and allow their businesses and homes to be rebuilt.

Garvey said he would try to restore the grove, hoping the community that rallied behind him to help get it started will do so again.

For Stanton, rebuilding seemed a dream as faded as his once-idyllic Keys.

"I'm not a lucky guy, and chances are I'm not going to qualify for all that FEMA aid and stuff. And at least before when things went (bad), I could go to the little grove across the street. It was a little slice of heaven," he said through tears.

Follow Jason Dearen on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/JHDearen>

Video links:

After Irma: A Keys resident surveys the damage

<https://youtu.be/tHLIeBoI-uI>

After Irma: Keys residents contend with the storm's aftermath

<https://youtu.be/lZkkha6BDio>

Farewell Cassini: Saturn spacecraft makes fiery, final dive

By **MARCIA DUNN, AP Aerospace Writer**

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — NASA's Cassini spacecraft disintegrated in the skies above Saturn on Friday in a final, fateful blaze of cosmic glory, following a remarkable journey of 20 years.

Confirmation of Cassini's expected demise came about 7:55 a.m. EDT. That's when radio signals from the spacecraft — its last scientific gifts to Earth — came to an abrupt halt. The radio waves went flat, and the spacecraft fell silent.

Cassini actually burned up like a meteor 83 minutes earlier as it dove through Saturn's atmosphere,

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becoming one with the giant gas planet it set out in 1997 to explore. But it took that long for the news to reach Earth a billion miles away.

The only spacecraft to ever orbit Saturn, Cassini showed us the planet, its rings and moons up close in all their splendor. Perhaps most tantalizing, ocean worlds were unveiled on the moons Enceladus and Titan, which could possibly harbor life.

Dutiful to the end, the Cassini snapped its last photos Thursday and sampled Saturn's atmosphere Friday morning as it made its final plunge. It was over in a minute or two.

Program manager Earl Maize made the official pronouncement:

"This has been an incredible mission, an incredible spacecraft and you're all an incredible team," Maize said. "I'm going to call this the end of mission."

Flight controllers wearing matching purple shirts stood and embraced and shook hands. Project scientist Linda Spilker also had a purple handkerchief to wipe away tears.

"It felt so much like losing a friend," she told reporters a couple of hours later.

More than 1,500 people, many of them past and present team members, had gathered at California's Jet Propulsion Laboratory for what was described as both a vigil and celebration. Even more congregated at nearby California Institute of Technology, which runs the lab for NASA.

The spacecraft tumbled out of control while plummeting at more than 76,000 mph (122,000 kph). Project officials invited ground telescopes to look for Cassini's last-gasp flash, but weren't hopeful it would be spotted against the vast backdrop of the solar system's second largest planet. The radio link actually held on a half-minute longer than expected.

"There are times in this world when things just line up, when everything is just about perfect. A child's laugh, a desert sunset and this morning. It just couldn't have been better," said Maize. "Farewell, faithful explorer."

This Grand Finale, as NASA called it, came about as Cassini's fuel tank started getting low after 13 years exploring the planet. Scientists wanted to prevent Cassini from crashing into Enceladus or Titan — and contaminating those pristine worlds. And so in April, Cassini was directed into the previously unexplored gap between Saturn's cloud tops and the rings. Twenty-two times, Cassini entered the gap and came out again. The last time was last week.

Cassini departed Earth in 1997 and arrived at the sixth planet from our sun in 2004. The hitchhiking European Huygens landed on big moon Titan in 2005. Nothing from Earth has landed farther. Three other spacecraft previously flew past Saturn, but Cassini was the only one to actually circle the planet.

In all, Cassini collected more than 453,000 images and traveled 4.9 billion miles. It was an international endeavor, with 27 nations taking part. The final price tag was \$3.9 billion.

European space officials joined their U.S. colleagues to bid Cassini farewell. Seventeenth-century astronomers supplied the spacecraft names: Italy's Giovanni Domenico Cassini, who discovered four moons and the wide division in Saturn's rings, and Holland's Christiaan Huygens, who spotted the first and biggest moon, Titan.

The latest count is 62 moons, six of them found by the spacecraft Cassini.

There were some lighthearted touches during the morning. At one point in the broadcast, NASA played a video clip of the Cassini Virtual Singers, spacecraft team members who belted out, "Tonight, tonight, we take the plunge tonight ..." to the music from "West Side Story." Parties were planned for the teams throughout the weekend, complete with Champagne.

Scientists are already eager to go back and delve into the wet, wild worlds of Enceladus and Titan. Proposals are under consideration by NASA, but there's nothing official yet. In the meantime, NASA plans sometime in the 2020s to send an orbiter and lander to Europa, a moon of Jupiter believed to have a global ocean that might be compatible for life.

"These (water) worlds that they found, we never knew were there, are changing how we think about life itself," said NASA's science mission director, Thomas Zurbuchen. "And so for me, that's why it's truly a civilization-scale mission, one that will stand out among other missions, anywhere."

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Julie Webster, spacecraft operations manager for Cassini, said she's been blasting the Moody Blues' "Your Wildest Dreams" in her car the last few days.
"This has truly been beyond my wildest dreams."

Online:

NASA: <https://saturn.jpl.nasa.gov/>

Colleges offering legal tips, hotlines amid DACA uncertainty

By JOCELYN GECKER and SOPHIA TAREEN, Associated Press

BERKELEY, Calif. (AP) — Mixed signals from Washington over a possible agreement to preserve protections for young immigrants are increasing anxiety and confusion on college campuses, where the stakes are high.

Amid the uncertainty, colleges and universities are stepping up efforts to protect students enrolled in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, or DACA, telling them to be hopeful but plan for the worst.

Harvard University has opened a round-the-clock emergency hotline for immigrants in the program. The University of Illinois at Chicago has posted advice on what to do if federal agents show up on campus. UC Berkeley, the University of San Francisco and many other campuses are offering free legal advice to immigrant students now facing fears of deportation.

Nearly sixty college and university presidents sent a letter urging congressional leaders to make the program permanent out of "moral imperative and a national necessity."

An estimated 350,000 of the country's nearly 800,000 DACA recipients are enrolled in school, most at colleges or universities, according to a 46-state survey this year by the advocacy group Center for American Progress. Under the program, they were protected from deportation and allowed to legally work in the United States with two-year permits.

The top congressional Democrats, Sen. Chuck Schumer of New York and Rep. Nancy Pelosi of California, emerged from a White House dinner Wednesday to say they had reached a deal with President Donald Trump to save DACA. But amid backlash from conservative Republicans, Trump said Thursday that they were "fairly close" but nothing had been agreed to.

It was the latest in a confusing back-and-forth on the subject that started last week when the Trump administration announced it was rescinding the program, but gave Congress six months to come up with a legislative fix.

"I don't think anybody can put much faith in the statement that there is a deal, because so much can change," said John Trasvina, dean of the University of San Francisco School of Law and an immigration expert who worked in Washington under the Clinton and Obama administrations. "I've seen tons of times when people think they have an immigration deal, and then it goes away."

Under the Trump administration plan, those already enrolled in DACA remain covered until their two-year permits expire. If their permits expire before March 5, 2018, they can renew them for another two years as long as they apply by Oct. 5. But the program isn't accepting new applications.

The University of San Francisco, which has about 80 DACA recipients, is advising students to adhere to that deadline and is raising money to help pay the \$495 renewal fee.

Despite reassurances from schools that they'll be able to continue attending classes, many students are anxious. They're worried about how they'll pay for school if they can't work.

Ana Maciel, a 23-year-old who works full time to put herself through a University of San Francisco education Master's program, says she's been on "an emotional roller coaster." She fears being deported to Mexico, the country she left at age 3, and wonders if it's smart to keep investing in school if she can't work afterward.

"Is this what I should spend my money on?" Maciel says about her \$8,000 tuition. "Everything is up in the air."

Trump's DACA announcement on Sept. 5 came after 10 Republican attorneys general threatened to sue

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in an attempt to halt the program. They were led by Attorney General Ken Paxton in Texas, which has the second-highest number of DACA recipients after California.

Three days after Trump announced the administration was phasing out the program, the Arizona attorney general brought a separate lawsuit that claims the state's universities cannot provide in-state tuition rates for DACA recipients. Attorney General Mark Brnovich says the schools are violating Arizona law which makes it clear in-state tuition is eligible only to those with legal immigration status. The schools are vowing to fight back.

And critics of the program were swift to denounce the possibility of a deal in Congress. Numbers USA denounced the prospect of making a deal on border security to provide "amnesty for the so called 'dreamers' to compete and take jobs from Americans and those here legally."

Meanwhile, immigrants are fearful of being sent back to countries they don't consider home.

Andrea Aguilera, a Dominican University junior in suburban Chicago, worries about being deported and separated from family members, some of whom are citizens. She was illegally brought across the Mexican border at age 4.

"You never know what can happen under this administration. We do want to feel relief. We've been fighting for something more permanent for a really long time," she said. "It seems like it's a game (to political leaders). They don't realize how many peoples' lives are being affected by this."

At UC Berkeley, Burmese-Taiwanese national Amy Lin, a 23-year-old doctoral student in the university's ethnic studies department, has set up an emergency phone tree for DACA students. She fears Immigration and Customs Enforcement officials might come knocking.

"The university says it doesn't allow ICE agents on campus, but that doesn't mean they won't come in," said Lin, who was brought to the U.S. illegally at age 12.

University of California President Janet Napolitano filed a lawsuit last Friday that's one of several high-profile legal challenges to Trump's decision.

Napolitano helped create the program in 2012 as Homeland Security secretary under President Barack Obama. The 10 schools in the UC system have about 4,000 students without legal permission to stay in the U.S.

UC schools are among those offering student loans to DACA students, and they've directed campus police not to question or detain individuals based on their immigration status.

The University of Illinois at Chicago, which has hundreds of DACA students, has posted online instructions for students and security staff to call campus police immediately if anyone, including federal agents, comes on campus and starts asking questions.

"We have to follow the law, obviously," said UIC Provost Susan Poser, but "we're going to do everything we can to support (students)."

At Agnes Scott College in Decatur, Georgia, president Elizabeth Kiss plans to invite DACA students to her home to meet with an attorney. Georgia bars in-state tuition rates for students without legal immigration status.

"I have no intention of picking a fight with the Georgia Legislature," said Kiss. "I also have to keep students safe and support their well-being."

Tareen contributed to this report from Chicago.

Dirty money? Wads of cut-up cash found in Geneva toilets

GENEVA (AP) — Talk about flush with cash.

A Geneva official has confirmed a newspaper report that said wads of cut-up 500-euro notes (about \$600 each) mysteriously turned up jammed into the toilets of three neighborhood restaurants and a bank in separate episodes in recent months.

Prosecutor's office spokesman Henri Della Casa confirmed Friday's report in the Tribune de Geneve, saying the shredded notes were once worth tens of thousands of euros in total.

Preliminary clues from an investigation suggested the bounty once belonged to unnamed "Spanish women who had placed the loot in a Geneva vault several years ago," the report said.

At one pizzeria, police were informed after the clogged toilet had overflowed.

Della Casa said the origins of the cash were unknown.

11-year-old boy gets lawn-mowing gig at White House

By CATHERINE LUCEY and KEN THOMAS, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — An 11-year-old boy in khaki shorts and a red polo shirt got the lawn-mowing gig of a lifetime Friday when President Donald Trump put him to work in the Rose Garden.

Frank Giaccio, who goes by the initials FX, was so focused on doing his job that he didn't even notice when Trump emerged from the White House to check out his work.

FX, who lives in the Washington suburb of Falls Church, Virginia, kept right on pushing the mower in a long, straight row as Trump walked alongside him.

When the boy finally paused, the president called him the "future of the country right here" and asked what he wants to be when he grows up. "A Navy seal!" Trump exclaimed. "Well, he'll make it."

Standing with FX and his father, Trump added: "We'll bring them into the Oval Office. Maybe he'll be president."

Just how did FX make it to the Rose Garden? The White House said FX had written to Trump to say he admires the president's business acumen and runs his own neighborhood lawn-care business.

"It's probably the biggest day of my life so far," FX said afterward.

He added that his day was "jam-packed" with media interviews, watering plants, mowing the lawn and visiting the Oval Office with his dad. "It was a lot bigger than I thought," he said.

FX said he normally charges \$8 per lawn but decided to mow the White House lawn free of charge.

According to a letter that White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders read to reporters, the boy wrote that it would be his "honor to mow the White House lawn." He also enclosed a menu of his services, which include weed-whacking.

For this job, FX donned goggles and ear plugs and pushed a mower belonging to the National Park Service. He got to keep the black gardening gloves he used as a souvenir.

"My dad didn't think I was going to meet the president at all — I was just going to mow the Rose Garden. But the president came by and said hi," FX said.

Trump later tweeted: "THANK YOU for doing a GREAT job this morning! @NatlParkService gives you an A+!"

The tweet included video highlights of FX's White House visit — complete with a photo of him posing with his elbows on the Resolute Desk in the Oval Office next to Trump.

On Twitter follow Lucey at https://twitter.com/catherine_lucey and Thomas at <https://twitter.com/KThomasDC>.

Fleeing Rohingya Muslims watch as homes burn in Myanmar

By JULHAS ALAM, Associated Press

TUMBRU, Bangladesh (AP) — Days after fleeing their village on the Myanmar side of the border fence, a group of Rohingya Muslims watched from just inside Bangladesh as yet another house went up in flames.

"You see this fire today," said Farid Alam, one of the Rohingya who watched the fire burn from about 500 meters (yards) away. "That is my village."

The villagers said they had escaped days ago, crossing into Bangladesh at the border point of Tumbru and joining thousands of other ethnic Rohingya huddling in the open in the district of Bandarban to escape recent violence in Buddhist-majority Myanmar.

When they crossed the border, they saw land mines that had been newly planted by Myanmar forces,

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Alam said.

Thousands of Rohingya are continuing to stream across the border, with U.N. officials and others demanding that Myanmar halt what they describe as a campaign of ethnic cleansing that has driven nearly 400,000 Rohingya to flee in the past three weeks.

That number includes an estimated 240,000 children, UNICEF said in Geneva on Friday.

"We had a big house, we are 10 people in the family, but they burned our home," Alam said as he watched the other house burning Friday. "My father was a village doctor, we had a medical store. We had land and cattle, all are gone."

Ethnic Rohingya have long faced discrimination in Myanmar and are denied citizenship, even though many families have lived there for generations.

After a Rohingya insurgent group attacked police posts in Myanmar's Rakhine state on Aug. 25, the military responded with "clearance operations." Fleeing Rohingya say security forces shot indiscriminately, burned their homes and threatened them with death. The government says hundreds died, mostly Rohingya, and that 176 out of 471 Rohingya villages are now abandoned.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Wednesday described the violence against Rohingya as "ethnic cleansing" — a term that describes an organized effort to rid an area of an ethnic group by displacement, deportation or killing.

Amnesty International said Thursday it has evidence of an "orchestrated campaign of systematic burnings" by Myanmar security forces targeting dozens of Rohingya villages over the last three weeks. In a separate report, Human Rights Watch said Friday that high-resolution satellite images showed 62 villages where fires had occurred, including 35 with extensive damage.

Abul Bashar, a 73-year-old Rohingya in Bandarban, said he traveled 15 days on foot to reach Bangladesh on Wednesday, and was separated from the rest of his family.

He took nothing with him as he fled.

"I have lost everything," he said. "Our homes were burned. ... It was painful, very painful."

Elsewhere, along a fence near the Kutupalong refugee camp in Bangladesh's border district of Cox's Bazar, men, women and children ran after aid trucks as volunteers tossed clothing and packets of dry food.

With refugee camps overflowing and hundreds of thousands of Rohingya struggling to find shelter, food and other essential services, aid workers say they are deeply worried by the continuing influx of people by land and water.

"This is desperate. It's one of the biggest man-made crises and mass movements of people in the region for decades," Martin Faller, a deputy regional director of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, said in a statement.

"People have no food, water or shelter and they are in desperate need of support. No one should have to live like this," Faller said.

U.N. refugee agency spokesman Joseph Tripura said that, unless authorities address health concerns, "we might see a very bad situation in coming days" with disease outbreaks.

The International Organization for Migration in Geneva believes "thousands of people are waiting to take boats to Cox's Bazar," according to Asia-Pacific spokesman, Chris Lom. "There is no sign that this flow is going to dry up."

U.N. agencies fear continued violence in Myanmar may eventually drive up to 1 million Rohingya into Bangladesh.

On Friday, one of the recently arrived men, Moulana Arif Ullah, led about 300 other Rohingya Muslim men in weekly prayer.

"There are soldiers over there ... we can't have freedom there," he said to worshippers at a makeshift mosque at the Kutupalong refugee camp.

"Who can save us? Who can give us food?" he asked, shouting and sobbing.

"Allah," they shouted back.

"What can we do? We pray to Allah. He will save us," Mohammed Ashikur said as the prayers ended.

Associated Press writer Jamey Keaten in Geneva contributed to this report.

Key Equifax executives departing after huge data breach

By KEN SWEET, AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Equifax announced late Friday that its chief information officer and chief security officer would leave the company immediately, following the enormous breach of 143 million Americans' personal information.

The credit data company — under intense pressure since it disclosed last week that hackers accessed the Social Security numbers, birthdates and other information — also released a detailed, if still muddled, timeline of how it discovered and handled the breach.

Equifax said that Susan Mauldin, who had been the top security officer, and David Webb, the chief technology officer, are retiring. Mauldin, a college music major, had come under media scrutiny for her qualifications in security. Equifax did not say in its statement what retirement packages the executives would receive.

Mauldin is being replaced by Russ Ayers, an information technology executive inside Equifax. Webb is being replaced by Mark Rohrwasser, who most recently was in charge of Equifax's international technology operations.

Equifax also provided its most detailed timeline of the breach yet, although it raised as many questions as it answered.

The tale began on July 29, when the company's security team detected suspicious network traffic associated with the software that ran its U.S. online-dispute portal. After blocking that traffic, the company saw additional "suspicious activity" and took the portal's software offline.

At this point, Equifax's retelling grows cloudy. The company said an internal review then "discovered" a flaw in an open-source software package called Apache Struts used in the dispute portal, which it then fixed with a software patch. It subsequently brought the portal back online.

But that vulnerability had been known publicly since early March 2017, and a fix was available shortly thereafter — facts that Equifax acknowledged in its Friday statement. The company did not say why the software used in the online-dispute portal hadn't been patched earlier, although it claimed that its security organization was "aware" of the software flaw in March, and that it "took efforts" to locate and fix "any vulnerable systems in the company's IT infrastructure."

It apparently missed at least one vulnerable system. The closest Equifax gets to explaining that? "While Equifax fully understands the intense focus on patching efforts, the company's review of the facts is still ongoing," according to its statement.

After patching the dispute-portal's software, Equifax hired Mandiant, a computer-security firm, to do a forensic review. That effort determined that hackers had access to Equifax systems from May 13 through July 30.

Equifax has been castigated for how it has handled the breach, which it did not disclose publicly for weeks after discovering it.

Consumers calling the number Equifax set up initially complained of jammed phone lines and uninformed representatives, and initial responses from the website gave inconsistent responses. The company says it has addressed many of those problems. Equifax also said Friday it would continue to allow people to place credit freezes on their reports without a fee through Nov. 21. Originally the company offered fee-free credit freezes for 30 days after the incident.

Equifax is also facing several inquiries and class-action lawsuits, including Congressional investigations, queries by the Federal Trade Commission and the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, as well as several state attorneys general. The company's CEO Richard Smith is scheduled to testify in front of Congress in early October.

Three Equifax executives — not the ones who are departing — sold shares worth a combined \$1.8 million just a few days after the company discovered the breach, according to documents filed with securities regulators.

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Equifax shares have lost a third of their value since it announced the breach.

AP Technology Editor David Hamilton in San Francisco contributed to this report.

S&P 500 tops 2,500 mark as tech and bank stocks climb

By MARLEY JAY, AP Markets Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — U.S. stocks edged higher Friday as technology companies and banks rose. The Standard & Poor's 500 index closed above 2,500 for the first time as stocks had one of their best weeks this year.

Stocks wobbled in early trading after the Commerce Department said retail sales slipped in August and the Federal Reserve said industrial production dropped last month, mostly because of Hurricane Harvey. But big names like Apple and Boeing took the market higher. Stocks made big gains Monday and as Hurricane Irma weakened, and they didn't do too much after that, but still wound up with their biggest weekly gain since the beginning of January.

Rick Rieder, the chief investment officer for BlackRock's global fixed income business, said retail sales and inflation have been weak because technological changes keep reducing the prices of clothes, food, travel, and phone plans. That lowers measurements of sales revenue, like the one the government released Friday, but Rieder said they keep people buying — even though the same technological changes can also lower people's wages.

"We get everything cheaper than we used to because of the internet and delivery mechanisms," he said. "The price is coming down so quickly that it's helping demand."

The Standard & Poor's 500 index gained 4.61 points, or 0.2 percent, to a record 2,500.23. The Dow Jones industrial average rose 64.86 points, or 0.3 percent, to 22,268.34, its fourth record close in a row. The Nasdaq composite added 19.38 points, or 0.3 percent, to 6,448.47. The Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks picked up 6.69 points, or 0.5 percent, to 1,431.71.

Industrial production in the U.S. fell 0.9 percent in August, the biggest drop in eight years, as Harvey knocked numerous oil refining, plastics and chemicals factories out of business for a time. Many of those factories are based in the Gulf Coast region that Harvey hit. The Federal Reserve said the weather and flooding was responsible for almost all of the loss.

Apple picked up \$1.60, or 1 percent, to \$159.88 after three days of declines. Chipmaker Nvidia jumped \$10.71, or 6.3 percent, to \$180.11 and hard drive maker Western Digital gained \$2.73, or 3.2 percent, to \$88.52.

However shares of software maker Oracle absorbed their biggest loss in four years. The company's first-quarter profit and sales were better than investors expected, but analysts were concerned about forecasts for its cloud computing business. Oracle lost \$4.05, or 7.7 percent, to \$48.74.

Boeing rose \$3.77, or 1.5 percent, to \$249 as the aerospace company continued to set record highs. Its stock is up 60 percent in 2017.

Stocks in the U.K. slumped to a four-month low and the pound rose to its highest level since mid-2016, after Bank of England officials confirmed they are close to raising interest rates for the first time in a decade. The first step could happen as soon as November. Many companies on the British FTSE 100 are multinationals whose overseas earnings are diminished in value when the pound appreciates against other currencies.

The pound surged to \$1.3571 from \$1.3398, its highest since mid-2016. The FTSE 100 fell 1.1 percent after a 1.1-percent loss Thursday.

U.K. stocks did not appear to be affected by a bomb attack on a London subway train. Police said an improvised explosive device hurt more than 20 people, but none of the injuries appeared to be life-threatening.

Credit monitoring companies continued to fall as Senate Democrats introduced a bill that would prevent the companies from charging fees to consumers who want their credit frozen. In many states, the companies collect fees in return for freezing accounts.

Some consumers have chosen to freeze their credit after Equifax said the personal information of 143

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million Americans was exposed after a breach of its systems. Those consumers are trying to prevent identity thieves from using their information to open fraudulent accounts.

Equifax fell \$3.68, or 3.8 percent, to a two-year low of \$92.98. The stock began plunging last Friday after the company disclosed the breach, and this week it took its biggest weekly loss since the end of 1998. Rival TransUnion lost \$1.47, or 3.4 percent, to \$41.61 and Experian fell 0.9 percent in London.

Bond prices dipped. The yield on the 10-year Treasury note rose to 2.20 percent from 2.19 percent. Interest rates also rose, which helped banks, as they stand to make more money from lending.

U.S. crude oil finished unchanged at \$49.89 a barrel in New York. It's at its highest price since the end of July. Brent crude, the standard for international oil prices, gained 15 cents to \$55.62 a barrel in London.

Wholesale gasoline rose 3 cents to \$1.66 a gallon. Heating oil added 2 cents to \$1.80 a gallon. Natural gas fell 5 cents to \$3.02 per 1,000 cubic feet.

Gold fell \$4.10 to \$1,325.20 an ounce. Silver sank 9 cents to \$17.70 an ounce. Copper lost 1 cent to \$2.95 a pound.

The dollar advanced to 110.88 yen from 110.54 yen. The euro rose to \$1.1938 from \$1.1914.

Germany's DAX lost 0.2 percent and France's CAC 40 sagged 0.2 percent. Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 index added 0.5 percent. South Korea's Kospi recouped initial losses to end 0.4 percent higher. Hong Kong's Hang Seng edged up 0.1 percent.

AP Markets Writer Marley Jay can be reached at <http://twitter.com/MarleyJayAP> His work can be found at <https://apnews.com/search/marley%20jays>

Doubts arise on whether corporate tax cut would boost growth

By JOSH BOAK, AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — For President Donald Trump, what's good for General Motors is great for American workers. Same for Boeing. And AT&T. Not to mention small businesses.

Trump insists that slashing the corporate tax rate from 35 percent to as low as 15 percent would free up valuable cash. Companies would use the money to boost investment, increase employees' pay, accelerate hiring and speed economic growth. What's more, corporations that now keep trillions overseas to avoid U.S. taxes would bring the money home. American companies could better compete with rivals based in countries with lower tax rates.

"We're going to have magnificent growth," Trump declared aboard Air Force One on Thursday. "We're going to go like a rocket ship."

Would we? Many economists, tax experts and even some business owners say it's unlikely. Rather than hire, companies might use much of their tax savings to buy back their stock or increase their dividends to investors. Many companies, they note, have already been able to borrow at historically low rates to expand their businesses yet have chosen not to.

"The mainstream economic evidence is that the bulk of corporate tax cuts go exactly to whom you would expect — which is wealthy investors and executives," said Chye-Ching Huang, deputy director of federal tax policy at the left-leaning Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

Many economists foresee some benefits from overhauling and simplifying the corporate tax code, just not the extreme growth Trump is promising.

One reason corporate tax cuts might provide little overall benefit is the relative health of today's economy. Unemployment is already unusually low at 4.4 percent. The economy is in the ninth year of a slow but steady expansion, rather than in a downturn in which tax cuts might deliver a major boost.

In a 2014 paper, two economists — Alexander Ljungqvist of New York University and Michael Smolyansky of the Federal Reserve — concluded that state corporate tax cuts did little to strengthen economic activity unless the cuts were made during a recession. (The flip side is that they found corporate tax increases to be "uniformly harmful.")

Nor have previous efforts to reduce corporate taxes generally delivered as advertised. Kansas, for example, exempted hundreds of thousands of businesses from corporate taxes and cut individual rates in

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2012, only to face a revenue squeeze as the intended economic growth never materialized.

The federal government provided a tax "holiday" on overseas profits in 2004 to bring money back into the United States at a discount to the 35 percent rate. But the Obama administration observed later that the move had diminished tax revenue and unintentionally led companies to hoard cash abroad in hopes of receiving that discount.

There is also concern that a corporate tax cut would swell the federal budget deficit. When the nonpartisan Tax Policy Center published an analysis this week, it found that even if virtually all tax breaks were eliminated, the corporate rate could drop only to 26 percent without increasing the deficit.

Still, many companies stress that lower business taxes would lead to more hiring. John Stephens, AT&T's chief financial officer, said his company faces a typical tax rate of 34 percent — including federal, state, foreign and deferred taxes — in any given year.

Stephens estimates that lower rates would lead the company to immediately invest more money in its phone network, which he said would lead to more hiring by companies that work with AT&T.

"When we buy more equipment, our vendors hire more," Stephens said. "When we build more extensive networks, we have people — hard-hat jobs — building those networks."

The AT&T executive added that "anything" would be an improvement on the current corporate tax rate of 35 percent.

But like many corporations, AT&T also benefited substantially from tax breaks between 2008 and 2015, saving as much as than \$38 billion, according to an analysis by the left-leaning Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy. The administration has yet to spell out all the possible tax breaks that would be eliminated to pay for lower rates.

Even if the tax rates were slashed substantially, not all companies would see much of a reason to hire more workers. Bill Parks, who owns NRS, an Idaho-based boating gear company, says the tax cuts championed by Trump would no longer do much to help his business.

Years ago, the lower rates would have helped him because he was maxing out his personal credit cards and taking a second mortgage to fund NRS. But today's borrowing rates are so low that investing in workers isn't a burden, and tax changes would make little difference to his plans based on how his company is structured.

Gary Cohn, Trump's top economic adviser, has argued that the planned tax cuts would help small businesses. By cutting taxes on profits that typically double as the owners' personal income, those companies would then be able to hire more freely. This assumes that business owners want to expand their payroll rather than just enjoy higher profits.

Larry Summers, a Democratic former Treasury secretary, this month rattled off a list of reasons to reporters why lower corporate tax rates wouldn't deliver as promised.

Though U.S. companies do face a high rate compared with other countries, Summers said, the fraction of profits being paid in federal taxes is low by historical standards. Corporate income taxes collected last year equaled just 1.6 percent of the economy, according to government records. That compares with 4 percent during the economic boom that followed World War II, an era of growth that Trump appears to want to revive.

Nor, in Summers' view, would rising stock prices from a lower corporate tax rate shore up the pensions of firefighters, police officers and blue collar workers, as Cohn has argued.

Those few Americans who still have traditional "defined benefit" pensions don't receive any additional income if the stock market rises, Summers said.

"The argument being made that the corporate tax cuts will somehow benefit workers is weak by the standards of 'trickle-down' arguments," Summers said.

AP writer Catherine Lucey in Washington contributed to this report.

Bitcoin ... the way to the future or path to financial ruin?

By The Associated Press

Bitcoin, hailed in some quarters as the future of currency, is having a rough week, with a flurry of rumors that China will shut down exchanges and the head of a major U.S. bank calling bitcoin a "fraud."

Plummeting prices have again raised questions about the wisdom of owning it, if not its legitimacy.

The digital, or cryptocurrency, tumbled 15 percent Thursday to about \$3,300 against the dollar. Bitcoin, which has had bouts of volatility in the past, has shed about a third of its value since Sept. 1. But it's still up about \$600 compared with last year at this time.

Still getting up to speed on bitcoin? Here's a quick rundown.

What is bitcoin?

Bitcoin is a digital currency created and exchanged without the involvement of banks or governments. Transactions allow anonymity, which has made it popular with people who want to keep their financial activity, and their identities, private. The digital coins are created by so-called "miners", who operate computer farms that verify other users' transactions by solving complex mathematical puzzles. These miners receive bitcoin in exchange. Bitcoin can be converted to cash when deposited into accounts at prices set in online trading.

Is this bitcoin's swansong?

Not necessarily. Let's take a look at recent data: In mid-July the value of bitcoin was around \$1,900 per dollar, dropping from nearly \$2,500 at the end of June. Users forced a change in the computer code, which was designed to improve capacity on the increasingly clogged network. The maneuver worked, helping to avoid a split in bitcoin and driving the value up to roughly \$2,800 by the end of July.

Bitcoin's value has fluctuated since then. At the beginning of August bitcoin's value stood at about \$2,710 and shot up to more than \$4,700 by month's end. But there's been a steady decline this month, with the value slipping to approximately \$3,300 on Thursday, according to Blockchain.info.

What happened this week?

One of China's biggest bitcoin exchanges announced that it will cease trades following reports that Beijing will order all Chinese exchanges to close. And on Tuesday, JPMorgan Chase CEO Jamie Dimon called bitcoin a fraud, saying that if any of his traders were dealing in the currency, he'd fire them.

Bitcoin tumbled 6 percent between Tuesday and Wednesday.

How are sovereign nations dealing with bitcoin?

In the U.S., the IRS has issued guidelines on the currency, calling it an "intangible asset" subject to taxation. But in the end, cash talks.

According to IRS guidance:

"Virtual currency that has an equivalent value in real currency, or that acts as a substitute for real currency, is referred to as 'convertible' virtual currency. Bitcoin is one example of a convertible virtual currency. Bitcoin can be digitally traded between users and can be purchased for, or exchanged into, U.S. dollars, Euros, and other real or virtual currencies."

And it's a hotly pursued asset by U.S. intelligence agencies, which see bitcoin as a funding vehicle in some instances for groups or individuals that intend to do harm.

China's central bank has yet to respond to questions about bitcoin's future, but it has warned in the past that the digital currency is being traded without regulatory oversight and might be linked to fraud. The bank banned initial offerings of new digital currencies last week.

Following the failure of a bitcoin exchange in Japan called Mt. Gox, that country has enacted new laws to regulate bitcoins and other cryptocurrencies. Mt. Gox shut down in February 2014, saying it lost about 850,000 bitcoins, possibly to hackers.

The Japanese government has also spelled out regulations to help prevent misuse of bitcoins and other virtual currencies for terrorism or other illegal activities, including requiring banks and other businesses to verify identities, keep records and report suspicious transactions. The regulations implemented in April require virtual currency traders to keep customers' assets separate from their own, partly because of the losses suffered in the Mt. Gox bankruptcy.

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Viva Las Vegas as celebs pack Sin City for Mexican holiday

By REGINA GARCIA CANO, Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Las Vegas never needs an excuse to party, and as an entertainment oasis a short trip from Mexico, the city will roll out the red, white and green carpet starting Friday to celebrate Mexican Independence Day.

A premier boxing match, a bell-ringing ceremony and more than a dozen performances by Latin megastars, including Ricky Martin and Alejandro Fernandez, were expected to attract tens of thousands of visitors, making the weekend once again one of Sin City's busiest.

The holiday, often mistaken in the U.S. for Cinco de Mayo, over time has become a star-studded celebration of Hispanic culture.

"It has developed over two decades or more to become a staple. Las Vegas has the 'ambiente' — the fun, the excitement — all year long, and then you bring in Alejandro Fernandez, Pepe Aguilar and the ones who have the residencies like Ricky Martin and Jennifer Lopez," said Rafael Villanueva, senior director of international business sales for the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority.

The celebration is so much wider it includes those superstars who aren't Mexican, including Martin and Lopez, who both have Puerto Rican roots.

"If you talk to many people in Mexico, they'll say if we are not going to the Ciudad de Mexico, we are coming to Las Vegas because of all the fun and all the entertainment," he said.

The holiday on Saturday marks Father Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla's call to arms that sparked the Mexican uprising against Spanish rulers in 1810. The rebel priest was killed the next year, but his words, known as the "Cry of Dolores" or "Grito de Dolores," eventually led to independence from Spain in 1821.

What started as private entertainment shows for high rollers from Latin America has evolved into one of the city's busiest weekends, with companies booking performers a year in advance and airlines adding direct flights from Mexico.

The concert lineup aims to appeal to a range of musical tastes and generations and includes Marc Anthony, Ricardo Arjona, Emmanuel, Enrique Iglesias, Carlos Santana, Mana, Marco Antonio Solis, Jesse and Joy, Gloria Trevi and Alejandra Guzman.

"Probably over the past 15-20 years, we have really embraced the holiday, bringing top-level, A-level acts and fights," said Sid Greenfeig, vice president of entertainment and booking for MGM Resorts International, which is hosting seven shows and a megaboxing match across its properties. "We look definitely at diversity within the artists, and having arenas and large venues, we also look at acts that can fill these rooms."

San Diego resident Esthela Pedrin is seeing Fernandez's yearly Mexican Independence Day concert Friday for the 10th time. With so many options to choose from, she said she's having a difficult time picking a Saturday concert to attend.

"I love celebrating it in Las Vegas, especially because so many people from all over our country of Mexico gather there," said Pedrin, a dual citizen of Mexico and the U.S. "(Fernandez) brings out the flag. We all sing."

The city's signature offering is a boxing match. So much so, Floyd Mayweather Jr., before he retired, made Mexican Independence Day his own holiday, fighting multiple times over the years. Promoters have traditionally offered fights featuring Mexican boxers on the El Grito and Cinco de Mayo weekends.

Mexico's popular Saul "Canelo" Alvarez squares off Saturday against Gennady Golovkin in a long-anticipated middleweight bout at the sold-out T-Mobile Arena.

For the past three years, the tourist bureau's occupancy rate records show hotels reached above 96 percent capacity during the three-day period associated with the holiday. In 2016, 98.4 percent of the city's 149,000 hotel and motel rooms were booked, making it the year's fourth busiest weekend.

The festivities begin Friday night with a celebratory ringing of a bell by Mexican Consul Alejandro Madrigal Becerra at The Forum Shops at Caesars Palace. Hidalgo, the rebel priest, rang a bell when he gave his famous speech, and Mexico's president does it in Mexico City every year.

Mariachi bands will perform at casino-resorts, including one from a high school that will welcome travel-

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ers at the airport Friday. Properties, of course, will serve Mexican food and tequila.

"This is basically a citywide event that is anchored on entertainment plus, typically, the biggest fight of the year," said Fedor Banuchi, vice president of entertainment at The Cosmopolitan, whose theater will host two concerts. "We provide something for everyone because really the Mexican Independence Day holiday has become so large and so popular that we need to be mindful of all the different groups that come."

Follow Regina Garcia Cano on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/reginagarciaKNO>

Harvey sends US industrial production down most in 8 years

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER, AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. industrial output plunged 0.9 percent in August, the most in eight years, mostly because of Hurricane Harvey's damage to the oil refining, plastics and chemicals industries.

The storm, which slammed into the Gulf Coast in Texas and Louisiana late last month, lowered industrial production by about 0.75 percentage point, the Federal Reserve said Friday. That suggests production would have slipped without the hurricane.

The Gulf Coast is home to many of the nation's oil refiners, and petroleum is a key component in the manufacturing of plastics and chemicals.

Manufacturing has picked up since last summer as the dollar has fallen in value, which makes U.S. goods cheaper overseas, boosting exports. Manufacturing production fell 0.3 percent last month, though the Fed said that without the hurricane, it would have increased roughly 0.5 percent.

And a survey of manufacturing firms that preceded Harvey found that factory activity rose to a six-year high in August.

Still, the report illustrates how Harvey has disrupted the wider U.S. economy. Jennifer Lee, senior economist at BMO Capital Markets, said the data included signs of weakness, even excluding the impact of Harvey.

"The August decline was widespread, with only the auto industry surprisingly gaining in the month," she said.

Lee cut her estimate for third-quarter growth to 2 percent at an annual rate, from an earlier forecast of 2.4 percent. A drop in retail spending last month was also a factor. But she also expects growth to rebound in the fourth quarter as rebuilding from Harvey and Irma gets underway.

Industrial production includes mining and utilities as well as manufacturing. Utility output tumbled 5.5 percent as milder temperatures on the East Coast reduced air conditioning use.

And mining production fell 0.8 percent last month as Harvey temporarily shut down the drilling of oil and natural gas and refining operations.

Today in History

By The Associated Press

Today is Saturday, Sept. 16, the 259th day of 2017. There are 106 days left in the year.

Today's Highlights in History:

On September 16, 1940, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Selective Training and Service Act. Samuel T. Rayburn of Texas was elected Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives.

On this date:

In 1498, Tomas de Torquemada, notorious for his role in the Spanish Inquisition, died in Avila, Spain.

In 1857, the song "Jingle Bells" by James Pierpont was copyrighted under its original title, "One Horse Open Sleigh." (The song, while considered a Christmastime classic, was actually written for Thanksgiving.)

In 1893, more than 100,000 settlers swarmed onto a section of land in Oklahoma known as the "Cherokee Strip."

In 1908, General Motors was founded in Flint, Michigan, by William C. Durant.

In 1919, the American Legion received a national charter from Congress.

In 1925, the Irving Berlin song "Always" (written for his future wife, Ellin Mackay) was published.

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In 1953, "The Robe," the first movie presented in the widescreen process CinemaScope, had its world premiere at the Roxy Theater in New York.

In 1967, the TV series "Mannix," starring Mike Connors as a private investigator, premiered on CBS.

In 1977, Maria Callas, the American-born prima donna famed for her lyric soprano and fiery temperament, died in Paris at age 53.

In 1982, the massacre of between 1,200 and 1,400 Palestinian men, women and children at the hands of Israeli-allied Christian Phalange militiamen began in west Beirut's Sabra and Shatila refugee camps.

In 1987, two dozen countries signed the Montreal Protocol, a treaty designed to save the Earth's ozone layer by calling on nations to reduce emissions of harmful chemicals by the year 2000.

In 1994, a federal jury in Anchorage, Alaska, ordered Exxon Corp. to pay \$5 billion in punitive damages for the 1989 Exxon Valdez (val-DEEZ') oil spill (the U.S Supreme Court later reduced that amount to \$507.5 million). Two astronauts from the space shuttle Discovery went on the first untethered spacewalk in ten years.

Ten years ago: Contractors for the U.S. security firm Blackwater USA guarding a U.S. State Department convoy in Baghdad opened fire on civilian vehicles, mistakenly believing they were under attack; 14 Iraqis died. A One-Two-Go Airlines passenger plane crashed on the island of Phuket (poo-KET'), Thailand, killing 90 people. O.J. Simpson was arrested in the alleged armed robbery of sports memorabilia collectors in Las Vegas. (Simpson was later convicted of kidnapping and armed robbery and sentenced to nine to 33 years in prison; he's due to be released on parole in October 2017.) The Phoenix Mercury beat the Detroit Shock 108-92 to win their first WNBA title. "The Sopranos" claimed its final Emmy award as best dramatic series; "30 Rock" won best comedy series.

Five years ago: In appearances on Sunday news shows, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Susan Rice, said there was no evidence that the attack on the U.S. diplomatic outpost in Benghazi, Libya, was premeditated. But Libya's interim president, Mohammed el-Megarif, told CBS he had no doubt attackers spent months planning the assault and purposely chose the date, September 11.

One year ago: After five years of promoting a false conspiracy theory about Barack Obama's birthplace, Republican Donald Trump abruptly reversed course, acknowledging that the president was born in America, but then claiming the "birther movement" was begun by his Democratic rival, Hillary Clinton. (While the question of Obama's birthplace was raised by some backers of Clinton's primary campaign against Obama eight years earlier, Clinton had long denounced it as a "racist lie.") Three-time Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright Edward Albee, 88, died in Montauk, New York. Author W.P. Kinsella, 81, died in Hope, British Columbia, Canada.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Janis Paige is 95. Actor George Chakiris is 85. Bluesman Billy Boy Arnold is 82. Movie director Jim McBride is 76. Actress Linda Miller is 75. Rhythm-and-blues singer Betty Kelley (Martha & the Vandellas) is 73. Musician Kenney Jones (Small Faces; Faces; The Who) is 69. Actress Susan Ruttan is 69. Rock musician Ron Blair (Tom Petty & the Heartbreakers; Mudcrutch) is 69. Actor Ed Begley Jr. is 68. Country singer David Bellamy (The Bellamy Brothers) is 67. Country singer-songwriter Phil Lee is 66. Actor-comedian Lenny Clarke is 64. Actor Kurt Fuller is 64. Jazz musician Earl Klugh is 64. Actor Christopher Rich is 64. Singer Frank Reed (The Chi-Lites) is 63. TV personality Mark McEwen is 63. Baseball Hall of Famer Robin Yount is 62. Actor Mickey Rourke is 61. Magician David Copperfield is 61. Country singer-songwriter Terry McBride is 59. Actress Jennifer Tilly is 59. Retired MLB All-Star pitcher Orel Hershiser is 59. Baseball Hall of Famer Tim Lincecum is 58. Actress Jayne Brook is 57. Singer Richard Marx is 54. Comedian Molly Shannon is 53. Singer Marc Anthony is 49. Comedian-actress Amy Poehler is 46. Actress Toks Olagundoye (tohks oh-lah-GOON'-doh-yay) is 42. Country singer Matt Stillwell is 42. Singer Musiq (MYOO'-sihk) is 40. Actor Michael Mosley is 39. Rapper Flo Rida is 38. Actress Alexis Bledel is 36. Actress Sabrina Bryan is 33. Actress Madeline Zima is 32. Actor Ian Harding is 31. Actress Kyla Pratt is 31. Actor Daren Kagasoff is 30. Rock singer Teddy Geiger is 29. Actress-dancer Bailey Buntain is 28. Rock singer-musician Nick Jonas (The Jonas Brothers) is 25. Actress Elena Kampouris is 20.

Thought for Today: "Stoicism is the wisdom of madness and cynicism the madness of wisdom." — Bergen Evans, American lexicographer (1904-1978).