

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 1 of 68

- 1- Recycling trailers
- 1- Reminder of traffic detour
- 1- Groton Chiropractic Clinic Ad
- 2- Chicken Soup for the Soul
- 3- Farmers Union PSA
- 3- Groton Care & Rehab Help Wanted
- 3- Groton Area Help Wanted
- 4- Langford Area netters beat Groton
- 4- Bowling Scores
- 5- Wet weather delays asphalt on SD37
- 7- Marshall County Land for Sale
- 8- Thinking About Health column
- 9- City Council Story
- 9- Service Notice: Gilbert Hinkelman
- 10- Governor Requests Flags At Half-Staff On Thursday To Honor Fallen Firefighter
- 10 Mickelson Pond To Be Stocked With Thousand Plus Rainbow Trout
- 10- Kiwanis News
- 11- School Surplus Auction
- 12- Today in Weather History
- 13- Today's Forecast
- 14- Yesterday's Weather
- 14- Today's Weather Info
- 14- National Weather Map
- 15- Daily Devotional
- 16- 2018 Community Events
- 17- News from the Associated Press

Reminder of Traffic Detour

Starting today, access to the west side of Groton will be on 9th Avenue East (north of elementary school), then south to Sixth Avenue West. Also, those gaining access to SD37 on those two avenues will be able to go all the way to US12.

Tuesday, Oct. 17

Northwestern Volleyball in Groton
7th and C team at 4:30 p.m.
8th and JV at 6 p.m. followed by Varsity

Wednesday, Oct. 18

12:30 to 2:50 p.m.:
6th Grade MathCounts at Warner

Thursday, Oct. 19

1st Round Football Playoffs
6:30 p.m.: Groton hosts Bennett County

Saturday, Oct. 21

State Cross Country in Rapid City
Robotics in Groton
School Surplus Auction at 1 p.m.

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


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

Groton Chiropractic Clinic

Carol McFarland-Kutter, D.C.
1205 N 1st St., Groton 397-8204

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 2 of 68



“There is no
greater
romance in
life than this
adventure in
realization.”

-Meher Baba

Chicken Soup
for the Soul

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 3 of 68



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")**

Groton Area Help Wanted

The Groton Area School District is seeking qualified applicants for a part-time Assistant Business Manager. Job description and application materials can be found under the employment tab at www.grotonarea.com. Questions should be directed to Joe Schwan, Superintendent at 605-397-2351.

Help Wanted

We are Hiring Nurses – RN or LPN,
Full or Part Time. Cooks/Dietary Aid.

NEW WAGE PACKAGE!!!

Contact Brynn Pickrel 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**

0913.1005

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 4 of 68

Langford pulls out win over Groton

Langford Area pulled out a 3-1 win over Groton Area Monday evening in a match played in Langford.

Langford went extra points to defeated Groton in the first game, 27-25. Groton Area came back to soundly beat Langford in the second game, 25-9. But the Lions came roaring back to take the next two games, 25-20 and 25-23.

Groton Area is still holding on to the number one position in the region. The Tigers will be hosting Northwestern tonight. The Wildcats are 27-1 on the season with their only loss to Parker.

In sets, Groton Area was 138 of 138 with 29 assists and Langford Area was 136 of 137 with 37 assists. Groton Area was led by Miranda Hanson with 111 of 111 with 25 assists. Langford Area was led by Chesney Olson with 86 of 86 with 21 assists and Addy Taylor was 50 of 51 with 15 assists.

In serves, Groton Area was 89 of 95 with 12 ace serves. Miranda Hanson was 21 of 23 with four ace serves and Eliza Wanner was 16 of 16 with three ace serves. The Lions were 75 of 83 with seven ace serves. Ady Dwight was 19 of 20 with two ace serves and Chesney Olson was 18 of 19 with two ace serves.

In spikes, Groton Area was 110 of 125 with 38 kills. Jennie Doeden was 26 of 39 with 12 kills and Gia Gengerke was 17 of 20 with eight kills. The Lions were 115 of 133 with 39 kills. Ady Dwight was 57 of 62 with 23 kills and Chesney Olson was 17 of 24 with eight kills.

The Tigers had 74 digs with Payton Maine having 18. Langford had 52 digs with Madi Nelson having 20, Ady Dwight nine and Maddie R. with nine. Gia Gengerke had seven solo and three assisted blocks. Langford Area had 22 blocks with Ady Dwight having 11.

Groton Area won the junior varsity match, 25-22 and 25-9.

| Region 1 | Seed Points | W-L |
|-----------------------------------|-------------|------|
| Groton Area | 43.00 | 16-4 |
| Redfield/Doland | 42.81 | 18-8 |
| Aberdeen Roncalli | 41.86 | 15-6 |
| Milbank | 38.33 | 8-13 |
| Sisseton | 37.82 | 5-17 |
| Webster Area | 37.08 | 4-20 |
| Tiospa Zina | 36.45 | 6-14 |

Groton Coffee Cup League

October 16 Team Standings: James Valley 16 1/2, Ten Pins 14, Kens 11 1/2, Jungle lanes 6

High Games: Vicki Walter 186, 167; Vickie Kramp 172; Mary Jane Jark 172; Arlowyn Spencer 155.

High Series: Vicki Walter 482, Vickie Kramp 466, Mary Jane Jark 464

Conde National League

October 16 Team Standings: Giants 16, Mets 14, Cubs 12 1/2, Colts 10, Braves 10, Pirates 9 1/2

Men's High Games: Russ Bethke 216, Topper Tastad 213, Lance Frohling 203.

Men's High Series: Russ Bethke 520, Larry Frohling 486, Lance Frohling 482

Women's High Games: Sandy Hoops 182, Joyce Walter 169, Vickie Kramp 160

Women's High Series: Vickie Kramp 467, Joyce Walter 455, Sandy Hoops 439



Wet Weather delays asphalt work on SD37

The plan was to start putting down asphalt starting at Sixth Avenue and moving south on SD37 on Monday. However, only one load was put down as the rain over the weekend made the road unstable for more asphalt. As a result, some of the gravel had to be removed and fresh gravel laid down and repacked. But all was not lost. The asphalt crew started on the south end of the project from Railroad Avenue south to Aspen Avenue. The alternate route on Sixth Avenue West and Ninth Avenue East may be opened today and Fourth Avenue closed. Just watch for the crossing.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 6 of 68



Concrete work on the intersections was done on Monday as the the SD37 project is getting close to its completion. You can also see the road grader laying out the gravel with the tractor and packer right behind as Webster Scale was quickly trying to SD37 ready once again for asphalt after the rain over the weekend.

Marshall County, South Dakota PRIVATE LAND SALE - 155 +/- ACRES

Legal Description: The Northeast Quarter (NE ¼) of Section Nine (9), Township One Hundred Twenty-six (126), Range Fifty-nine (59), West of the 5th P.M., except five acres of said land in the northeast corner of said land which is used for cemetery purposes, Marshall County, South Dakota.

155 acres with the total acres to be determined by survey or the acres used by Farm Service Agency in Marshall County, South Dakota.

SELLERS: Estate of Nancy L. Wright
Clark Wright & Elizabeth LaRocque Co- Personal Representatives

ATTORNEY FOR SELLERS: Rick A. Ribstein – Ribstein & Hogan Law Firm, 621 6th Street, Brookings, SD 57006. Phone: (605) 692-1818

REVISED SALE/AUCTION FORMAT: Preliminary written bids will be accepted by Rick A. Ribstein, Attorney for Sellers, until 5:00 o'clock p.m. on Friday, October 20, 2017. Prospective purchasers will be notified by mail that they are invited to a private auction to be held in Amherst, South Dakota, on Friday, November 3, 2017. Sellers reserve the right to reject any or all bids.

PRELIMINARY WRITTEN BID FORMAT: Preliminary written bids may be submitted in the form of a letter mailed or delivered to Seller's Attorney at the address printed above. Preliminary bid letters should include bidder's name and mailing address, the preliminary bid amount, and should be accompanied by a check for a down payment equal to 5% of the preliminary bid amount. Down payment checks should be payable to Ribstein & Hogan Trust Account.

TERMS: 5% down with preliminary written bid. A 10% additional nonrefundable earnest money payment required on the day of sale and balance at closing. Possession will be subject to existing tenant's rights under their current lease and their rights to harvest the 2017 crops, with Fall tillage privileges for a new buyer(s) to be permitted with approval of the current tenants. Cost of owner's policy of title insurance and closing fees split 50/50. Sellers will pay the 2016 taxes due in 2017, and all prior taxes. 2017 taxes will be prorated until the day of closing.

INQUIRIES: Informal packages available upon request from Seller's Attorney. Questions about the real estate or auction format should be directed to Seller's Attorney by mail, or by calling (605) 692-1818. Ask for Rick A. Ribstein, Attorney or Sheila Maffett, Legal Secretary.

THINKING ABOUT HEALTH

Nibbling Away at the Affordable Care Act

By Trudy Lieberman, Rural Health News Service

As annual enrollment for Obamacare insurance approaches on November 1, the law itself and the people who have come to depend on it for health coverage are both facing an uncertain future.

President Trump's recent executive actions affect the complicated insurance mechanics of the Affordable Care Act, and they haven't been well explained in the news media. This column will explain how those changes affect you.

Congress has tried but has not been able to "repeal and replace" the law that has brought health insurance to some 10 million Americans who buy insurance on the state shopping exchanges and about 10 million more who gained access through Medicaid expansion.

The failure of Congress to pass the "repeal and replace" legislation did not mean, though, that the law would remain intact.

In mid-October President Trump's executive action hollowed out a big chunk of the ACA, throwing insurance marketplaces into a tizzy and possibly resulting in higher prices and less coverage for many. In the end, the president's actions may succeed in gutting the law that has divided so many Americans.

To understand this, let's take a step back. Legislators who wrote the law knew that a big reason people did not buy health insurance was cost. Most middle class families without employer coverage struggled to pay the premiums in the so-called individual market where they had to shop. Those at the bottom of the income ladder either qualified for Medicaid or did without insurance. About 44 million Americans did not have insurance when the law took effect four years ago.

The ACA tried to make it easier to buy coverage, and Congress did that in two ways. It required insurers to cover all people - sick or well - who applied for coverage in the individual market and offered two kinds of subsidies to help those with lower incomes.

One comes in the form of tax credits the government advances to shoppers who buy Obamacare - compliant policies that meet certain rules and regulations, such as offering 10 essential benefits. Prescription drug coverage is one. Those subsidies are based on a family's income and phase out when a family's income exceeds 400 percent of the federal poverty level or about \$98,000 for a family of four and \$48,000 for a single person. People with lower incomes receive the largest subsidies. Those tax credit subsidies are not affected by Trump's order.

The other subsidy is called a cost-sharing subsidy, sometimes referred to as a CSR and aimed at Americans whose incomes are at or below 250 percent of poverty, about \$62,000 for a family of four and \$30,000 for an individual. They reduce the amount of out-of-pocket spending for people who get them. Those who qualify pay less for the coinsurance, deductibles and copayments a policy may require.

These are the subsidies on the chopping block. The president said the government will not continue funding them which means the government simply will not pay insurance companies for reducing the out-of-pocket costs to policyholders. Policyholders will still get the subsidies unless Congress changes the law. Insurers will have to swallow the losses, at least for now.

If you get those subsidies, you're not off the hook, though. Insurance companies anticipated that the president would axe the subsidies and they increased their premiums for most or all Obamacare policies, including the silver plans, the ones people must buy to receive the extra help with cost sharing.

The Congressional Budget Office just projected that premiums before the tax credits are applied would increase on average by about 20 percent. In some states average rate increases have been much higher.

So who will be hurt the most by the Trump administration's latest move which some experts argue undermines the stability of the health law?

Insurance companies have already prepared for this and have cushioned the blow to them by charging higher premiums to everyone who buys in the individual market. People with incomes under 400 percent of poverty will still receive their tax credits, which will reduce their higher premiums, and they will continue to get their CSRs.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 9 of 68

Those in the individual market who have higher incomes and receive no tax credits to lower their premiums will feel the most pain. The Kaiser Family Foundation reports that 44 percent of buyers in the Obamacare market did not qualify for tax credits. That's almost 7 million people.

"Ironically, it is these unsubsidized folks who have complained the loudest about Obamacare's big premiums and deductibles," says Washington D.C. insurance consultant Robert Laszewski. "They will now have even more to complain about."

The administration wants to let them buy cheaper policies that cover far less than Obamacare insurance. In a future column I will discuss this and other moves that will further unwind the Affordable Care Act.

If you buy coverage in the individual market, how will you and your family be affected? Write to Trudy at trudy.lieberman@gmail.com.

Council forgives penalties

The Groton City Council voted Monday evening to forgive the penalties for those who did not pay their September bill by October 10th. However, both the September and October bills will need to be paid by October 25th or penalties will be applied to both bills.

The baseball report was given and the 2017 net loss was \$49,438.91 which includes \$25,000 in new fencing and \$7,000 in light repairs. The loss last year was \$21,514.17, in 2015 was \$22,824.83 and in 2014 was \$26,242.49.

The pool report was also given with the pool losing \$66,357.46 this year compared to \$57,207.83 in 2016, \$63,639.07 in 2015 and \$45,658.31 in 2014.

The council went into executive session with Lee Buechler and family in attendance.



Service Notice: Gilbert Hinkelman

Gilbert Hinkelman 78 of Groton passed away surrounded by his immediate family on Sunday October 15, 2017 at his home near Groton.

Funeral services will be at 11:00 A.M. Thursday, October 19, 2017 at St. John's Lutheran Church in Groton, Rev. Craig Grams officiating. Burial will be at Sunset Memorial Gardens in Aberdeen.

Visitation will be in the church at Groton on Wednesday 5-7 P.M. ending with a 7 P.M. Prayer Service.

Governor Requests Flags At Half-Staff On Thursday To Honor Fallen Firefighter

PIERRE, S.D. – Gov. Dennis Daugaard asks that all flags in the state be flown at half-staff on Thursday, Oct. 19, from 8 a.m. until sunset, in honor of Presho Fire Chief Donald F. "Donny" Manger.

Manger died Sunday, Oct. 15, while responding to a structure fire in rural Lyman County.

"Linda and I offer our condolences to the Manger family. Donny's service to the Presho community will not be forgotten," Gov. Daugaard said.

Manger's funeral service will be held Thursday at the Lyman Gardens in Presho. Visitation is scheduled for Wednesday at 5 p.m. at the Presho United Methodist Church.

Mickelson Pond To Be Stocked With Thousand Plus Rainbow Trout

PIERRE, S.D. – Cleghorn Springs State Fish Hatchery staff will release 1,200 11-inch rainbow trout into Mickelson Pond on Wednesday, Oct. 18, in Pierre.

The water temperatures have cooled making it suitable for trout this fall and winter. A cooperative project between the City of Pierre and the South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks led to installation of an Americans with Disabilities Act accessible floating fishing pier, shore fishing areas, a vault toilet, parking area and other amenities.

The pond will be stocked with warm water fish like bass, bluegills and crappies in the spring and summer months and with trout when the water cools in the fall.

Mickelson pond was constructed by the city of Pierre in 1995. It is located on the north side of 4th Street.

KIWANIS CLUB

Sharon Simon was program leader for Kiwanis at the Wednesday noon dinner meeting. Sharon introduced Carla Imrie, from Groton's Subway. Carla spoke on her experiences as a Red Cross volunteer, and showed slides of her recent visits to Texas, and Puerto Rico, where she she was a Red Cross volunteer, assisting in the hurricane disasters there.

The Red Cross has been in America since 1881. Carla highly praised Scott Meints, Brown County emergency manager, and his team in this county.

Carla stated, "We are VERY prepared for ANY type of disaster in Brown county, tornadoes, school shootings, or ANYTHING.

Roger Rix reported on plans for the annual Kiwanis sponsored Snow Queen and talent contest, set for November 5. Tom and Barb Paepke have volunteered to prepare and serve the queens meal that evening.

Next week's program leader is Larry Schelle on October 25, and Lee Schinkel on November 1.

October 18 will be installation of new officers.

SCHOOL SURPLUS AUCTION

809 N 6th St, Groton SD (School Bus Barns)
Saturday, October 21, 2017 - 1:00 PM

1995 GMC 47 PASSENGER BLUE BIRD BUS

- 165,367 miles, 5 sp, Diesel Cat 6.6 L model 3116
- Tires 75%, 245/75R 22.5



OFFICE/CLASSROOM

- Swintec 4000 electric typewriter
- "Jumbo" 160M laminator with 4 wheel cart
- Blue swivel desk chair
- Office type chairs - several
- LaserJet printer
- Metal desks
- Teacher desks - several
- 2-black stools
- Dukane movie projector
- Overhead projectors - several
- Free standing A-frame chalk/bulletin boards - several
- Leapfrog learning system
- Lots of misc. teaching supplies/books etc.

KITCHEN/HOME

- Icemaker
- Maytag gas range stove with glass front (excellent condition)
- 2-Maytag electric stoves
- Whirlpool microwave
- Panasonic microwave
- Box of cooking pans/cutting boards
- Misc. cooking utensils
- 3- salad bar carts
- Handicapped shower chair
- Room fans - several
- Ceiling fans - several
- Small electric hanging heater
- Room dividers - several
- 6 ft and 8 ft folding tables - several
- 2 sanitizing stations
- Small iron and boards with box of misc.
- Box of sewing templates
- Baby carriers - several
- Realcare baby
- Child's pool/game table
- Assortment of kid's toys
- Playground equipment

CABINETS

- 2 wire baskets
- Steel and wood storage lockers - several
- Card catalogue storage box
- Circular book rack
- File cabinets - several
- Book cases - assortment of different sizes
- Assortment of wall hanging cabinets
- Storage cabinets on wheels - several
- 4 wheel steel utility carts - several
- Wood shelving and accessories - several
- Assortment of wood/steel doors

SCOREBOARD/ MAN CAVE SPECIAL

- Old school scoreboard with controller and bonus display



MUSIC

- "Fender" Amplifier
- "Gallen-Krueger" Amplifier and Speaker
- "Hohner Bass 3" Keyboard
- "Standel" bass amplifier
- "Alesis QS 8.2" keyboard
- AM/FM karaoke machine
- Record player
- Box of music recorders
- 4- music storage units
- Boxes of show choir clothing - several

MISCELLANEOUS

- 2 frames, matted, and numbered pictures - William Wilson - artist
- Framed/matted wall picture - B. Chipton, artist
- Golf pull-type caddy
- Wood shop clamps
- Several TV sets
- 7.4 fl. Fluorescent light fixtures
- 1- 8 ft fluorescent light fixture (new in box)
- Stage lighting fixtures
- Many misc. items

Owner: Groton Area School District 06-6

AUCTIONEERS: Steve Simon and Gerard Simon
SALE DAY CELL PHONE: Steve: 605-380-8506, Peggy: 605-380-8505
CLERK: Simon Auction Service
WEBSITE: www.stevesimongroton.com

The auction company, its employees and associates assume no responsibility for typographical or other errors, which may appear herein. Seller and Auctioneer make NO WARRANTIES, express or implied, to anyone about any aspect of any item, except that Seller will provide marketable title.

TERMS: Cash or bankable check. All items to be paid for and removed on day of auction. Announcements on sale day take precedence over printed material.



P.O. Box 705
Groton, SD 57445
605-397-8507 • 1-877-397-4245

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 12 of 68

Today in Weather History

October 17, 1910: The temperature in Aberdeen warmed to 90 degrees on this day. This reading is the latest day in the calendar year in which the high temperature reached 90 degrees.

October 17, 2011: A strong low-pressure system to the northwest and a strong high-pressure system to the southeast brought stiff southerly winds across central and north central South Dakota from the late morning until the early evening. South winds of 30 to 40 mph with gusts over 60 mph caused spotty damage across the region. The high winds created large waves on Lake Oahe near Pierre which damaged several docks along with some boats at a marina. There were also some tree branches downed across the region along with some damage to a few structures. With the high winds, warm temperatures, and low humidity several grassland fires also broke out across parts of the region. The maximum wind gust of 68 mph occurred in Corson County.

1781 - General Cornwallis attempted to escape encirclement by crossing York River, "but a violent storm arose" dispersing his boats causing him to ask for an armistice. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1910 - A hurricane made a loop off the southwest coast of Florida. Winds above 100 mph were reported at Fort Myers FL, and the barometric pressure at Sand Key reached 28.40 inches. (David Ludlum)

1950 - Small but powerful Hurricane King struck Miami, FL. The hurricane packs winded to 122 mph, with gusts to 150 mph. Hurricane King then moved up the Florida peninsula to Georgia. Four persons were killed and damage was 28 million dollars. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1971: Great balls of fire were observed just ahead of a tornado moving down the main street of Wray, Colorado. However, little other electrical activity accompanied the storm. Nine persons were injured in the storm, all at a trailer court at the edge of town.

1984: A snowstorm struck northern Utah producing a record 18 inches in 24 hours at Salt Lake City, and 40 inches at the nearby Alta Ski Resort. The town of Magna, located ten miles west of Salt Lake City, did not receive any snow at all. The storm was responsible for a fifty-vehicle pile-up along Interstate 15 near Farmington Utah.

1987 - It was a great day for an Oktoberfest, or to enjoy the colors of autumn, as much of the nation enjoyed sunny and mild weather. Columbia SC dipped to 34 degrees, marking their third morning in a row of record cold. Bakersfield CA reached 80 degrees for the 143rd day in a row to break a record established in 1940. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the Middle Mississippi Valley and the Lower Ohio Valley. Severe thunderstorms spawned three tornadoes in Indiana, including one which injured four persons. Strong thunderstorm winds at Connerville IND caused three million dollars damage. Thunderstorms in Illinois produced hail two inches in diameter Colfax. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)








1989 - Showers and thunderstorms representing the remnants of Hurricane Jerry deluged southeast Kentucky with four to six inches of rain in 18 to 24 hours, resulting in widespread flash flooding. Flooding resulted in more than five million dollars damage. Temperatures again warmed into the 80s and lower 90s in the southeastern U.S. Lakeland FL and Orlando FL reported record highs of 95 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

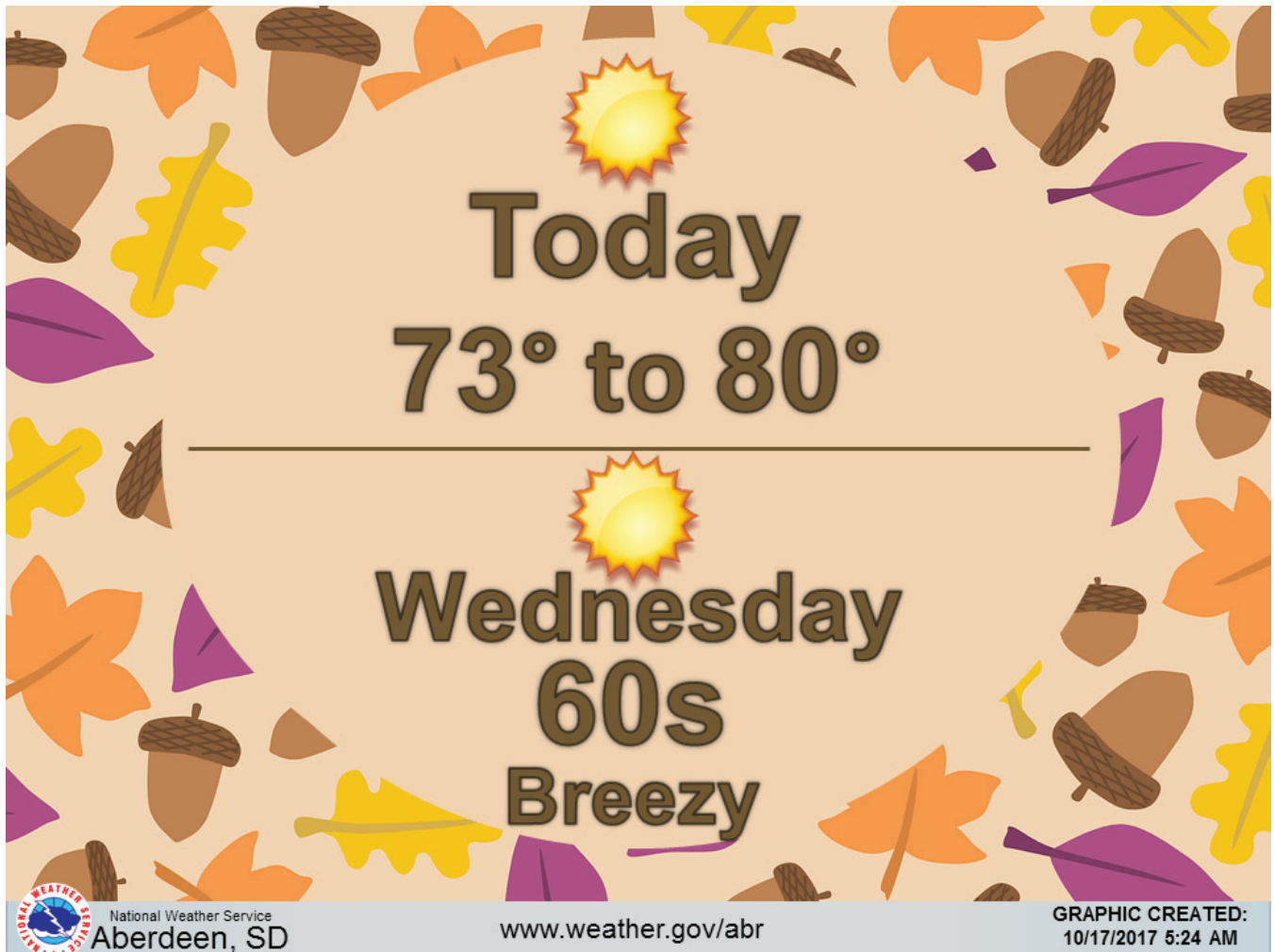
1997: Late on October 17, Super Typhoon Ivan attained its peak intensity with winds of 185 mph and an official barometric pressure of 905 mbar. On the same day, while near peak intensity, Typhoon Joan was located about 1300 miles east of Typhoon Ivan.

1998: During the weekend of October 17-18, 1998, torrential rains fell over south and southeast Texas. Up to 22 inches of rain fell which first resulted in deadly flash flooding from San Antonio to Austin followed by record-breaking river floods along several South Texas rivers the following week. Based on provisional data from the USGS, which is subject to revision, the flood peak for this event was the highest known peak stage at 15 locations. Tragically, a total of 31 people died during the event (26 drownings, two tornado deaths, two heart attacks, and one electrocution/drowning). At least 17 of the drowning victims were in vehicles which were either driven into water or were swept away by rapidly rising water. Preliminary property damage estimates approached three-quarters of a billion dollars.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 13 of 68

| Today | Tonight | Wednesday | Wednesday Night | Thursday | Thursday Night | Friday |
|---|---|---|---|--|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Sunny | Mostly Clear | Sunny then Sunny and Breezy | Mostly Clear | Sunny | Mostly Clear | Mostly Sunny |
| High: 77 °F | Low: 43 °F | High: 65 °F | Low: 37 °F | High: 77 °F | Low: 50 °F | High: 76 °F |



Today
73° to 80°

Wednesday
60s
Breezy

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

www.weather.gov/abr

GRAPHIC CREATED:
10/17/2017 5:24 AM

Published on: 10/17/2017 at 5:29AM

Dry, with well above normal temperatures, will continue through the work week! Temperatures will get knocked down slightly Wednesday, behind a cold front, but will jump right back into the 70s to around 80 degrees Thursday and Friday.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 14 of 68

Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 69.2

Low Outside Temp: 30.2

High Gust: 20

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 92° in 1910

Record Low: 15° in 1976

Average High: 57°F

Average Low: 32°F

Average Precip in Oct: 1.23

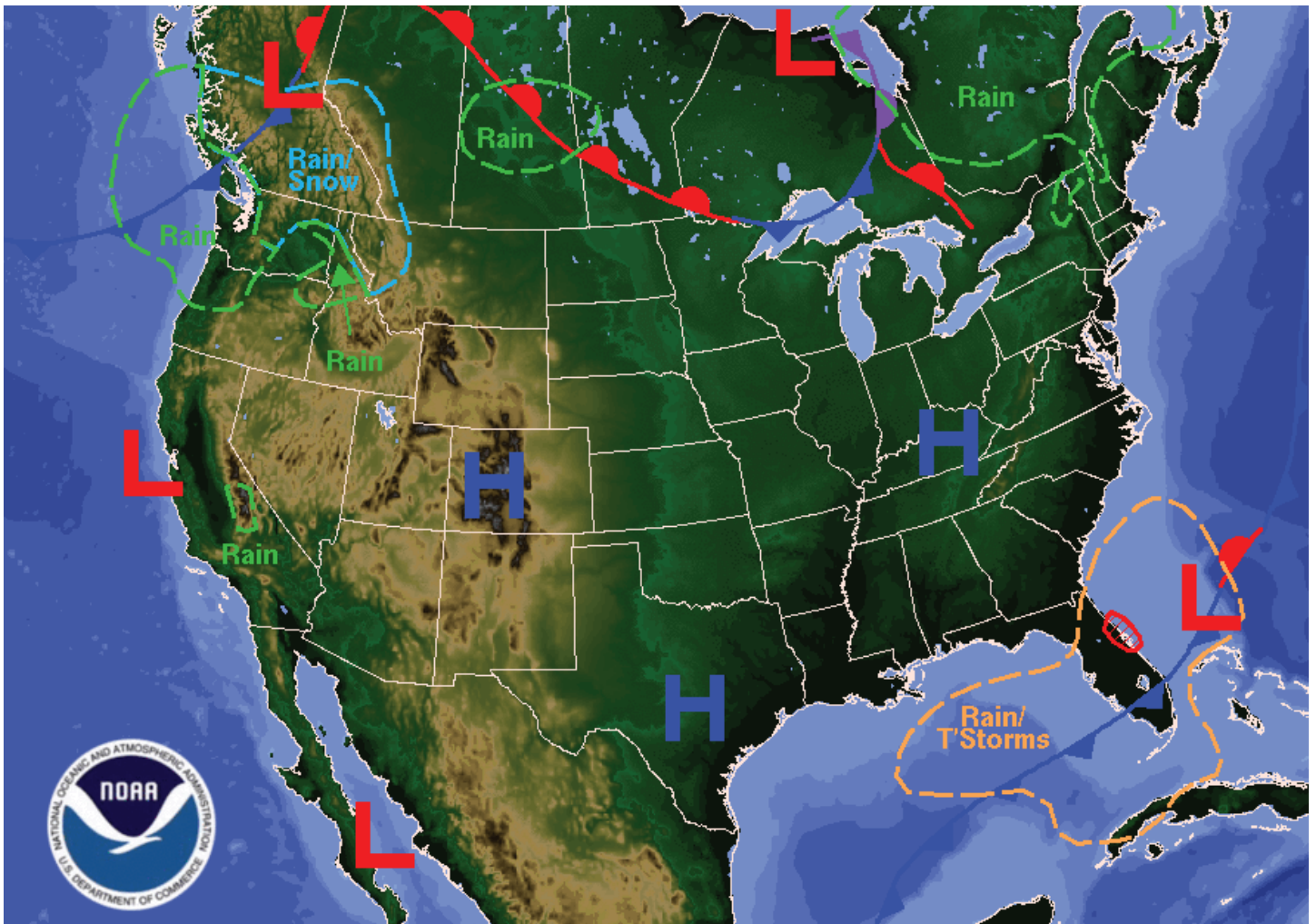
Precip to date in Oct: 0.67

Average Precip to date: 19.71

Precip Year to Date: 13.47

Sunset Tonight: 6:44 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:54 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Tue, Oct 17, 2017, issued 4:27 AM EDT

DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center

Prepared by McReynolds 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)

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 15 of 68



IS LIFE EVER FAIR?

"Why should Christians be good and help others and never get much wealth when so many who don't believe in Christ prosper and have so much?" he asked angrily. His wife died following a lengthy illness that drained all of the family's emotional, spiritual and financial resources. His anger, coupled with grief, was understandable. Most of us have experienced feelings like that to some degree.

However, let's think of Job for a moment. He was good and his friends were evil. He experienced much pain and suffering while his friends seemed to enjoy the good things of life

Then there is the story of Joseph. He was a good and decent man and his "superior's" wife was not. She had him arrested on an unjust charge and he was imprisoned.

Sometimes it seems as though being good has no reward. It is an end in itself. We receive no recognition or appreciation.

That is when we need to recall the words of the Psalmist: "The people will say 'Surely the righteous still are rewarded; surely there is a God who judges the earth.'"

Job's boils became his blessings and if Joseph had not been a prisoner he would not have become a prime minister.

God will take the worst events of our lives and ultimately transform them into our greatest blessings if we allow Him.

Prayer: Grant us patience, Father, knowing that You are faithful and will turn our tragedies into triumphs. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 58:11 Then people will say, "Surely the righteous still are rewarded; surely there is a God who judges the earth." Psalm 58:11

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 16 of 68

2018 Groton SD Community Events

- Groton Lion's Club Bingo- Wednesday Nights 6:30pm at the Groton Legion (Year Round)
- 11/18/2017-3/31/2018 Groton Lion's Club Wheel of Meat- Saturday Nights 7pm at the Groton Legion (Fall/Winter Months)
- 1/28/2018 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm
- 3/24/2018 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 5/5/2018 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)
- 5/28/2018 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Program at the Cemetery, Lunch to follow at the American Legion (Memorial Day)
- 6/14/2018 Transit Fundraiser (Middle Thursday in June)
- 6/15/2018 SDSU Golf at Olive Grove
- 6/16/2018 Triathlon (Saturday before Father's Day)
- 7/4/2018 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
- 7/22/2018 Summer Fest (4th Sunday in July)
- 9/8/2018 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 10/6/2018 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/12/2018 Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/31/2018 Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
- 11/10/2018 Groton American Legion Post #39 Turkey Shoot (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)

- Best Ball Golf Tourney
- SDSU Golf Tourney
- Sunflower Golf Tourney
- Santa Claus Day
- Fireman's Stag
- Tour of Homes
- Crazy Dayz/Open Houses
- School Events

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 17 of 68

News from the Associated Press

Monday's Scores By The Associated Press

Volleyball

Aberdeen Roncalli def. Ipswich, 25-22, 22-25, 25-19, 25-14
Andes Central/Dakota Christian def. Kimball/White Lake, 25-17, 23-25, 22-25, 25-23, 16-10
Belle Fourche def. Spearfish, 25-22, 25-18, 25-22
Canistota def. Irene-Wakonda, 25-22, 25-10, 25-27, 26-24
Cheyenne-Eagle Butte def. Dupree, 19-25, 11-25, 25-16, 25-22, 15-11
Edgemont def. Oelrichs, 25-10, 25-15, 25-6
Ethan def. Avon, 23-25, 25-21, 25-13, 25-16
Eureka/Bowdle def. Edmunds Central, 25-23, 25-20, 18-25, 25-18
Great Plains Lutheran def. Aberdeen Christian, 25-20, 25-17, 25-18
Hanson def. Scotland, 25-13, 25-19, 25-19
Herreid/Selby Area def. South Border, N.D., 25-15, 25-17, 21-25, 25-16
Highmore-Harrold def. Crow Creek, 25-12, 25-18, 25-22
Langford def. Groton Area, 27-25, 9-25, 25-20, 25-23
Newell def. Takini, 25-10, 21-25, 25-11, 25-21
Platte-Geddes def. Tripp-Delmont/Armour, 25-16, 22-25, 23-25, 26-24, 15-8
Potter County def. Mobridge-Pollock, 24-26, 25-13, 25-20, 25-11
Sanborn Central/Woonsocket def. Corsica/Stickney, 25-17, 25-17, 26-24
Warner def. Webster, 25-12, 25-8, 25-10
Wilmot def. Tri-State, N.D., 23-25, 25-9, 25-17, 25-16
Winner def. Mt. Vernon/Plankinton, 25-20, 25-21, 28-30, 25-15

Authorities suspend search for missing worker after blast

By KEVIN MCGILL, Associated Press

KENNER, La. (AP) — Authorities have suspended the search Monday for a Texas man who disappeared when an oil and gas platform exploded on a lake near New Orleans. Seven people were injured in the Sunday night blast and fire, including three who were in critical condition, authorities said.

The explosion happened on an oil and gas transfer facility in Lake Pontchartrain. The platform was on waters just north of the suburban city of Kenner in Jefferson Parish. The parish sheriff, Joe Lopinto, identified the missing man as Timothy Morrison, 44, of Katy, Texas, a subcontractor on the structure.

"The decision to suspend a search is never an easy one," said Cmdr. Zac Ford. "We send our thoughts and prayers to the Morrison family and all those affected by this incident."

The Coast Guard reported that a fire aboard the platform was out by midday and that aerial surveys showed no signs of pollution in the water or onshore. A Coast Guard helicopter, a Jefferson Parish helicopter, Coast Guard vessels and boats from local agencies, continued looking for Morrison.

Lopinto told reporters searching the platform itself was difficult.

"There is a lot of structural damage to the rig. We have a lot of metal, twisted metal that is covering certain areas and we're going to have to go back out there with different equipment when the weather permits," Lopinto said.

High winds made boarding the damaged structure difficult, he said.

The Clovelly Oil Co. platform exploded while maintenance was being done on the structure, sending a fireball high into the night sky, authorities and company officials said. The Kenner government Facebook page said authorities on the scene reported that cleaning chemicals had ignited on the structure, but

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 18 of 68

the company said the cause of the blast was unknown. Lopinto stressed that the cause remained under investigation.

Lopinto said that "cleaning" work on the structure could pertain to the processing of gas.

Residents along the shores of the lake said their homes shook about 7:15 p.m. Some reported that the air smelled of burning rubber.

"My house actually shook," Andrew Love, 32, told NOLA.com/The Times Picayune . "At first I thought it was a sonic boom or something, I had no idea what was happening."

Lopinto said there were no reports of structural damage to any homes.

Five of the injured were hospitalized with "blast-type injuries and burns," said Mike Guillot, director of East Jefferson Emergency Medical Services. Two of the three people in critical condition were in a burn unit, Guillot said.

A statement from Clovelly Oil said three oil wells near the platform were shut in at the time of the explosion and its one gas well was flowing, but was successfully shut-in shortly after the explosion. Clovelly does not know if any oil was released into the lake.

The platform is a storage and accumulation point for oil and gas from a number of wells, company spokesman Tim O'Leary said.

"It's basically an underwater storage tank. It takes oil and gas" from wells, he said. Once the tank is filled, the oil or gas is pumped into a barge and moved.

He said the four wells that feed the platform were drilled in the 1970s and are all in the lake, a brackish tidal basin that is fed both by the Gulf of Mexico and by fresh water from rivers and streams in 16 Louisiana parishes and four Mississippi counties.

Its water covers 630 square miles (1630 square kilometers) but it's generally only about 10 to 15 feet (3 to 4.5 meters) deep. It's 40 miles (64 kilometers) long and 25 miles (40 kilometers) wide.

The U.S. Geological Service describes it as one of America's largest estuaries and the waters support oysters, crabs and saltwater fish. There is no active drilling on the lake, according to Jean Kelly of the state environmental department.

The platform is located in Jefferson Parish. Authorities noted that the parish drinking water is safe because it is pulled from the Mississippi River.

Associated Press writer Janet McConnaughey in New Orleans contributed to this report.

South Dakota man who took guns to anti-Islam event sentenced

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota man who carried guns into an anti-Islam speaking event and livestreamed a Facebook video from outside afterward has been sentenced.

Ehab Jaber, of Sioux Falls, pleaded guilty in July to a federal firearms charge. On Monday, U.S. District Judge Lawrence Piersol sentenced the 46-year-old to seven months imprisonment with served time suspended, seven months in community or home detention and three years of probation.

Federal prosecutors say Jaber aimed to spark a violent reaction when he attended the April event with firearms in tow.

The Argus Leader reports that Jaber told the judge he was "heartbroken" by the high attendance at an event condemning his religion.

Jaber faces separate state charges of making terroristic threats and violating his bail conditions by testing positive for methamphetamine.

This story has been corrected to show that Jaber was sentenced to seven months imprisonment with served time suspended, not seven years in prison.

Colorado proposes new rules for oil-gas lines after blast

By DAN ELLIOTT, Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — Colorado energy regulators on Monday proposed tighter rules for shutting down oil and gas pipelines after a fatal explosion blamed on natural gas leaking from a line that was thought to be out of service but was still connected to a well.

The Colorado Oil and Gas Conservation Commission rules govern flow lines, which carry oil, gas and wastewater from wells to tanks and other gathering equipment.

A public hearing is scheduled for Dec. 11-12, and the commissioners could vote to approve the rules after that.

The rules are in response to an April 17 explosion in Firestone that killed two people and destroyed a house. Investigators said the explosion was caused by odorless, unrefined gas leaking from a severed flow line.

Investigators said the line was believed to be abandoned but was still connected to an operating well with the valve turned to the open position.

The flow line was severed about 10 feet (3 meters) from the house, and gas seeped into the home's basement, investigators said.

The well and pipeline were in place several years before the house was built.

The presence of homes and schools near oil and gas operations is a contentious issue in Colorado, where the booming Front Range urban corridor overlaps with an oil and gas field.

The 14-page draft of new regulations says flow lines that are permanently taken out of service must be disconnected, drained and sealed at both ends, and any above-ground portion must be removed. The rules also allow energy companies to simply remove the lines.

Bruce Baizel of the Oil and Gas Accountability Project, which advocates for environmental and community protections from energy development, said the rules should require energy companies to remove all abandoned flow lines to prevent explosions like the one in Firestone.

Removing them would also prevent the leak of any chemicals left in the lines, he said.

Dan Haley, president of the Colorado Oil and Gas Association, an industry group, said he hopes the new rules take into account the differences in energy company operations in the state. The Colorado Petroleum Council, another industry group, is still reviewing the rules and had no immediate comment, Executive Director Tracee Bentley said.

The proposals also require energy companies to provide information on the location of flow lines to the Call 811 program, which marks the site of underground utilities at a property owner's request. That's meant to help homeowners and construction companies avoid inadvertently severing a line.

The new rules also revise or add requirements for designing, installing, testing and documenting flow lines.

Follow Dan Elliott at <http://twitter.com/DanElliottAP> . His work can be found at <https://apnews.com/search/dan%20elliott>.

Wet autumn delays Minnesota harvest, worries farmers

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — A wet autumn has some Minnesota farmers working against the clock as they deal with a delayed harvest amid approaching winter weather.

Harvesting soybeans and other crops in a soggy field can compact the soil, which may stunt the growth of crops in the next growing season, the Minnesota Public Radio reported.

"Compaction doesn't go away when you pull the combine or the truck out of the field," said Dave Nicolai, educator at the University of Minnesota Extension.

Compaction is why John Schafer, a farmer near Buffalo Lake, is holding off on harvesting soybeans. He said conditions have improved, but channels are still apparent from when he tried to harvest silage to feed his cattle.

"If you look over here, you can see what I was dealing with a couple days ago," he said about his field.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 20 of 68

"It certainly is not ideal to be doing this, but when the cattle need feed, the cattle need feed."

In its weekly crop progress report for Minnesota, the U.S. Department of Agriculture said Monday that only 7 percent of the state's corn-for-grain crop has been harvested, which is 22 days behind the average pace. The state's soybean crop is only 45 percent harvested, compared with a five-year average of 82 percent. Fortunately for farmers, the forecast calls for sunny, relatively warm days through Friday across much of Minnesota.

Farmers said they're concerned that pushing the harvest too late can run the chance of snow. And even if crops get harvested before winter, farmers said there's a chance soybeans and corn will be wet, causing mold and fungus to grow.

"It's going to cost more money, and with low commodity prices, that just adds to the cost of production," Nicolai said.

Kenny Blumenfeld, a climatologist with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, said the weather trend is toward heavier rains. He said climatologists are researching whether October's rains are part of a changing pattern fueled by climate change.

"We have seen all the way back through the record in Minnesota episodes of heavy rainfall in October," he said. "We know we've seen things like this in the past, and what we probably need to figure out is, is it actually changing or was this just a bad year."

Information from: Minnesota Public Radio News, <http://www.mprnews.org>

Sutton, Jackley support opening access to government records

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Two candidates for South Dakota governor have committed to supporting legislation that would give the public access to additional government records including officials' correspondence, a major potential shift in state open records law.

Democratic state Sen. Billie Sutton recently proposed draft legislation that would remove exemptions restricting access to public employees' correspondence, memoranda, calendars, working papers and telephone call records. Attorney General Marty Jackley, a Republican also running for governor, said he would sign such legislation if elected.

Sutton said he would pursue the measure as governor — should he succeed outgoing GOP Gov. Dennis Daugaard — if it isn't approved before then. Daugaard can't run again next year because of term limits and leaves office in 2019.

The proposed changes would substantially expand the government records available to the public. Sutton said the push is about having an accountable government.

"I just get the sense out there that people are very distrusting of government as a whole, and I think more transparency will improve that," Sutton said. "That's one way to either root out the problems that we're having or to build trust that, in fact, things are being done correctly."

Jackley said that government transparency that helps prevent fraud and waste while protecting privacy rights is "good government."

"As Attorney General, I have demonstrated with action and not just words my support for government transparency," he said.

Jackley cited examples including open government task forces he's formed and a law passed this year that made booking photographs for felonies public records. Sutton voted against that bill.

Jackley said he intends to initiate another open government panel if he becomes governor.

U.S. Rep. Kristi Noem, another Republican in the race, in a statement called government transparency "essential," but didn't commit to supporting the measure. Noem said she would listen to state residents and focus on the "best, publicly-debated reforms" to make government more accountable to the people.

Sutton proposed the draft measure as a member of a legislative oversight committee that has examined South Dakota's GEAR UP scandal involving embezzled funds and a dead family.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 21 of 68

It could face difficulty advancing during the upcoming 2018 legislative session. Daugaard's chief of staff, Tony Venhuizen, said in an email that the governor supports transparency but understands how the proposal would affect the "nature and candor" of the records.

"He believes that a person who is in the fishbowl acts differently, and the apparent transparency is not genuine," Venhuizen said.

Shantel Krebs leads third-quarter congressional fundraising

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Federal campaign finance records show Shantel Krebs' congressional campaign outraised her Republican opponent, Dusty Johnson, in the third quarter of 2017.

Krebs, who now serves as South Dakota's secretary of state, reported raising more than \$130,000, while Johnson brought in nearly \$120,000. But Johnson currently has a cash advantage, reporting just over \$350,000 in the bank compared to Krebs' nearly \$311,000 war chest.

Johnson previously served as Gov. Dennis Daugaard's chief of staff.

Democratic candidate Tim Bjorkman collected over \$72,000 in contributions and loaned his campaign \$50,000 for a total haul of roughly \$122,000. The former circuit court judge reported more than \$95,000 on hand at the end of the period.

The reporting period covered July through September.

South Dakota Prep Polls By The Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) - The South Dakota Prep Media football polls for the week of Oct. 16 are listed below, ranking the top-five teams and listing the team's record, points received and ranking in the previous poll. First-place votes received are indicated in parentheses. (This week's poll is the final edition of the season for the Class 11B and nine-man classes.)

Class 11AAA

Rank-School;FPV;Rcd;TP;Pvs

1. Sioux Falls Washington;(32);8-0;160;1
2. Sioux Falls Roosevelt;-;7-1;127;2
3. Sioux Falls O'Gorman;-;6-2;96;3
4. Brandon Valley;-;6-2;65;4
5. RC Stevens;-;4-4;17;5

Others receiving votes: Aberdeen Central 14, SF Lincoln 1.<

Class 11AA

Rank-School;FPV;Rcd;TP;Pvs

1. Pierre;(29);6-2;157;1
2. Harrisburg;(3);5-3;129;3
3. Mitchell;-;5-3;97;2
4. Douglas;-;4-4;63;4
5. Brookings;-;2-6;23;5

Others receiving votes: Yankton 6, Huron 5.<

Class 11A

Rank-School;FPV;Rcd;TP;Pvs

1. Madison;(31);8-0;159;1
2. Dakota Valley;(1);8-0;128;2
3. Dell Rapids;-;7-1;96;3

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 22 of 68

4. St. Thomas More;-;6-2;51;5

5. Tea Area;-;5-3;29;4

Others receiving votes: Milbank 12, Todd County 4, Tri-Valley 1.<

Class 11B

Rank-School FPV;;Rcd;TP;Pvs

1. Sioux Valley (32);;8-0;160;1

2. SF Christian -;;7-1;121;3

3. Bridgewater-Emery-Ethan -;;6-2;91;2

4. Woon.-Wess. Spr-S. Central -;;7-1;73;5

5. Winner -;;6-2;34;3

Others receiving votes: None.<

Class 9AA

Rank-School FPV;Rcd;TP;Pvs

1. Gregory (32);8-0;160;1

2. Hamlin -;8-0;128;2

3. Britton-Hecla -;7-1;88;4

4. Warner -;6-2;71;2

5. Clark-Willow Lake -;6-2;25;5

Others receiving votes: Avon 7, Canistota/Freeman 3.<

Class 9A

Rank-School;FPV;Rcd;TP;Pvs

1. Corsica-Stickney;(32);6-0;160;1

2. Warner;-;6-1;119;2

3. Howard;-;5-1;101;3

4. Britton-Hecla;-;5-1;60;5

5. Clark-Willow Lake;-;6-1;27;RV

Others receiving votes: Canistota-Freeman 7, Avon 6.<

Class 9B

Rank-School FPV;;Rcd;TP;Pvs

1. Colman-Egan (29);;8-0;156;1

2. Sully Buttes (3);;8-0;126;3

3. Colome -;;7-1;90;2

4. Harding County -;;8-0;46;5

5. Castlewood -;;7-1;41;4

Others receiving votes: Wall 21.<

South Dakota Volleyball Polls By The Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) - Here is the South Dakota Media Prep Volleyball Poll for the week of Oct. 16, 2017. Teams are listed with first place votes in parenthesis, record, points and previous ranking.<

Class AA

Rank-School;FPV;Rcd;TP;Pvs

1. Harrisburg;(15);15-1;83;1

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 23 of 68

2. Mitchell;(2);17-1;70;2
3. R.C. Stevens;-;24-4;46;3
4. Aberdeen Central;-;12-4;38;4
5. S.F. O’Gorman;-;14-12;11;
Others receiving votes: Huron (10-8) 3, Watertown (8-7) 2, S.F. Washington (15-12) 2.<

Class A

Rank-School;FPV;Rcd;TP;Pvs

1. S.F. Christian;(17);24-4;85;1
2. Dakota Valley;-;22-3;68;2
3. Madison;-;20-4;47;3
4. Parker;-;21-6;24;4
5. Miller;-;21-4;17;5

Others receiving votes: Sioux Valley (22-3) 13, Belle Fourche (25-3) 1.<

Class B

Rank-School;FPV;Rcd;TP;Pvs

1. Northwestern;(17);27-1;85;1
2. Warner;-;23-4;66;2
3. Hanson;-;21-1;51;3
4. Chester Area;-;19-4;32;4
5. Phillip;-;25-2;18;5

Others receiving votes: Herreid-Selby Area (23-2) 2, Ethan (16-4) 1.<

Trump voters in storm-ravaged county confront climate change

By **CLAIRE GALOFARO, Associated Press**

PORT ARTHUR, Texas (AP) — The church was empty, except for the piano too heavy for one man to move. It had been 21 days since the greatest storm Wayne Christopher had ever seen dumped a year’s worth of rain on his town, drowning this church where he was baptized, met his high school sweetheart and later married her.

He had piled the ruined pews out on the curb, next to water-logged hymnals and molding Sunday school lesson plans and chunks of drywall that used to be a mural of Noah’s Ark. Now he tilted his head up to take in the mountain of rubble, and Christopher, an evangelical Christian and a conservative Republican, considered what caused this destruction: that the violent act of nature had been made worse by acts of man.

“I think the Lord put us over the care of his creation, and when we pollute like we do, destroy the land, there’s consequences to that,” he said. “It might not catch up with us just right now, but it’s gonna catch up. Like a wound that needs to be healed.”

Jefferson County, Texas, is among the low-lying coastal areas of America that could lose the most as the ice caps melt and the seas warm and rise. At the same time, it is more economically dependent on the petroleum industry and its emissions-spewing refineries than any other place in the U.S. Residents seemed to choose between the two last November, abandoning a four-decade-old pattern of voting Democratic in presidential elections to support Donald Trump.

Then came Hurricane Harvey. Now some conservatives here are newly confronting some of the most polarizing questions in American political discourse: What role do humans play in global warming and the worsening of storms like Harvey? And what should they expect their leaders — including the climate-skeptic president they helped elect — to do about the problem now?

Answers are hard to come by in a place where refineries stand like cityscapes. Nearly 5,000 people work in the petroleum industry. Some have described the chemical stink in the air as “the smell of money” — it

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 24 of 68

means paychecks, paid mortgages and meals.

Christopher, like most people in Jefferson County, believed that global warming was real before the storm hit. Post-Harvey, surrounded by debris stretching for block after block, he thinks the president's outright rejection of the scientific consensus is no longer good enough.

But how do you help the climate without hurting those who depend on climate-polluting industries?

"It's a Catch-22 kind of thing," he said. "Do you want to build your economy, or do you want to save the world?"

"Steroids for storms" is how Andrew Dessler explains the role global warming plays in extreme weather. Climate change didn't create Hurricane Harvey or Irma or Maria. But Dessler, a professor of atmospheric sciences at Texas A&M University, and most scientists agree that warming and rising seas likely amplify storms that form naturally, feeding more water and more intensity as they plow toward land.

"It will be 60 inches of rain this time, maybe 80 inches next time," Dessler said of Harvey's record-setting rainfall for any single storm in U.S. history.

As a private citizen and candidate, Trump often referred to climate change as a hoax, and since taking office he and his administration have worked aggressively to undo policies designed to mitigate the damage. He announced his intention to pull out of the Paris climate agreement, a global accord of 195 nations to reduce carbon emissions, and his administration has dismantled environmental regulations and erased climate change data from government websites. This month, his Environmental Protection Agency administrator promised to kill an effort to limit carbon emissions from coal-fired plants.

Anthony Leiserowitz, a Yale University researcher, traces the politicization of the climate to 1997, when then-Democratic Vice President Al Gore brokered a commitment on the world stage to reduce greenhouse gases. The political parties have cleaved further apart ever since, and climate change denial reached a fever pitch as the Tea Party remade the GOP during President Barack Obama's first term.

Americans tend to view the issue through their already established red-versus-blue lens, Leiserowitz said, but while there are fractions on each extreme, the majority still fall somewhere along a scale in the middle.

A new Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research poll finds that 63 percent of Americans think climate change is happening and that the government should address it, and that two-thirds of Americans disapprove of the way Trump is handling the issue. Most Americans also think weather disasters are getting more severe, and believe global warming is a factor.

As the downpour from Hurricane Harvey stretched into its second day, with no end in sight, Joe Evans watched from the window of his home in the Jefferson County seat of Beaumont, and an unexpected sense of guilt overcame him: "What have we been doing to the planet for all of these years?"

Evans, a Republican, once ran unsuccessfully for local office. He ignored climate change, as he thought Republicans were supposed to do, but Harvey's deluge left him wondering why. When he was young, discussions of the ozone layer were uncontroversial; now they're likely to end in pitched political debate.

"I think it's one of those games that politicians play with us," he said, "to once again make us choose a side."

Evans voted for Trump, but he's frustrated with what he describes as the "conservative echo chamber" that dismisses climate change instead of trying to find a way to apply conservative principles to simultaneously saving the Earth and the economy. Even today, some Republicans in the county complain about Gore and the hypocrisy they see in elite liberals who jet around the world, carbon emissions trailing behind them, to push climate policies on blue-collar workers trying to keep refinery jobs so they can feed their families.

Evans isn't sure if the disastrous run of weather will cause climate change to become a bigger priority for residents here, or if as memories fade talk of this issue will, too.

"I haven't put so much thought into it that I want to go mobilize a bunch of people and march on Washington," he said. "But it made me think enough about it that I won't actively take part in denying it. We can't do that anymore."

Most in Texas didn't believe climate change existed when Katharine Hayhoe, a climate scientist at Texas

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 25 of 68

Tech University, began evangelizing about the issue years ago. Now studies estimate that 69 percent of Texans believe that the climate is changing, and 52 percent believe that has been caused by human activity. Most resistance she hears now is not with the science itself but over proposed solutions that mean government intrusion and regulation.

Jefferson County's refineries produce 10 percent of the gasoline in the United States, 20 percent of diesel and half of the fuel used to fly commercial planes, said County Judge Jeff Branick, a Democrat who voted for Trump and then switched his party affiliation to Republican, in part because of his disagreement with the Democratic Party's climate policies.

Branick doesn't deny that climate change exists, but he calls himself a cheerleader for the petroleum industry and believes environmental policies are "job killers."

John Sterman, a professor at MIT Sloan School of Management, said addressing climate change will invariably lead to gradual job losses in the fossil fuels industry. But communities have lost a dominant industry before, and those able to diversify can prosper. Jefferson County could look to the renewable energy industry, with jobs that require many of the skills refinery workers have, he said. Texas already produces more wind power than any other state.

Angela Lopez's husband works in a refinery, so she understands the worry of the economic cost of addressing global warming. But her county is nicknamed "cancer alley" for its high levels of disease that residents have long attributed to living in the shadow of one of the largest concentrations of refineries in the world.

"It's our livelihood, but it's killing us," Lopez said, standing in what used to be her dining room. Now her house in Beaumont is down to the studs. As Harvey's floodwaters rose, she tried to save what she could. She piled the dresser drawers on the bed and perched the leather couch up on the coffee table. It did no good. The water didn't stop until it reached the eaves, and the Lopezes lost everything they own.

Just about all of her relatives are conservatives, and indeed the political divides in the county run deep: Even as most of the communities along the Gulf Coast turned red years ago, Jefferson County clung to its Democratic roots. The county is ethnically diverse — 41 percent white, 34 percent black and 20 percent Hispanic — with a historically strong union workforce. Trump won Jefferson by just 419 votes.

"To come up with real solutions, you have to be honest with yourself about what causes something to happen," Lopez said. "It's not just because some storm came, it was bad and unprecedented. It was unprecedented for a reason, so we have to acknowledge that and start working toward being better. And part of that conversation should be climate change."

On a porch outside another ruined house nearby, two neighbors who both lost everything to Harvey started having that conversation.

Gene Jones, a truck driver who didn't vote, asked Wilton Johnson, a Trump supporter, if he thought climate change intensified the storm.

"I don't think so, no," Johnson said.

"You don't? You don't think about the chemical plants and the hot weather? You don't think that has anything to do with it?"

"I can understand people believing that," Johnson replied. But he blames natural weather cycles for upending their lives so completely.

Jones now lives in a camper in his driveway; Johnson's father has been sleeping in a recliner in his yard to ward off looters.

Johnson feels like he's gone through the stages of grief. At first, as he fled his home, he denied how devastating the storm might be. Then he got angry, when he realized nothing could be saved — not the family photos or the 100-year-old Bible that fell apart in his hands. He grew depressed and now, finally, he thinks he's come to accept this new reality as something that just happened because nature is not always kind, and never has been.

And he remains unshaken in his support for Trump's environmental agenda.

"We need to be responsible human beings to the Earth, but at the same time we shouldn't sacrifice the

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 26 of 68

financial freedoms," he said. "What good is a great environment if we're poor and living like cavemen? And vice versa, I understand the other side of that: What's great about living in luxury when you can't go outside?"

"I just don't think we should look at two storms and say, 'We're ruining the Earth! Shut the plants down!'"

When Wayne Christopher was a boy in Jefferson County, it got so hot he remembers frying eggs on the sidewalk. It has always been hot here, and there have always been hurricanes.

But it seems to him that something is different now. There is a palpable intensity in the air, in the haze that hangs over the interstate. The region has warmed about two degrees in his lifetime, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, and annual rainfall has increased by about 7 inches on average. Christopher counts the number of times a beach road he's driven on all his life has had to be rebuilt because the ocean overtook it.

"The sea keeps moving in — water rising, land disappearing or eroding or whatever you want to call it — it's happening," said Christopher, who is 66 now and retired after toiling more than 40 years for the railroad. "I think Mother Nature can come back, but there's a point to where, if we just keep on and keep on, I don't know if she can come back."

He thinks the president he helped put in office should do something: take the threat seriously, research before he talks or tweets, not dismiss established science as a hoax because acknowledging it's real would mean acknowledging that something must be done.

But like many others here, Christopher is not pushing to stick with the Paris climate agreement or other global coalitions because he's not sure it's fair that the United States should invest in clean energy when other countries that pollute might not. He worries that could cause more job losses to overseas factories, put a squeeze on the middle class and forfeit a slice of American sovereignty.

His wife, who also supported Trump, cocked her head as she thought about that sentiment.

"I can see the pros, I can see the cons," Polly Christopher said. "But if you were to simplify it to your children, and they say, 'Well, everybody else is doing it, if I do it what difference is it going to make?' you would just get on them and say, 'You've got to do the right thing. Right is right, and wrong's wrong.'"

For weeks, the couple have been gutting Memorial Baptist Church, a place they consider their home. The congregation dwindled over time to about 45, mostly older people, and it was so hard to make ends meet the church canceled a \$19,000-a-year flood insurance policy just two months before Harvey hit. Now it could cost some \$1 million to rebuild, meaning the church may never be rebuilt at all.

So when Christopher's granddaughter came by to help, found the piano in the otherwise empty sanctuary, sat down and started to play, he was overcome with a sense of grief.

"In my head I was thinking the whole time, this could be the last time that piano is played inside the auditorium," he said. Then she started to sing: "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound ..."

"It did something to me," he said.

Both he and his wife believe President Trump has a responsibility to look at the destruction Harvey left them with and act accordingly.

"He's got a business mind. Whatever it takes to make money, that's what he's going to do to make America great again," Christopher said, and that's why he voted for Trump. "But it does make me wonder if he looks at global warming as a real harm. Because you can make all the money in the world here. But if you don't have a world, what good is it going to do you?"

Science writer Seth Borenstein, multimedia journalist Martha Irvine and data journalist Angeliki Kastanis contributed to this report.

Read more in the AP's Trump Country series here .

State expecting hundreds of applications for hay-hauling aid

By **BLAKE NICHOLSON**, Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — North Dakota's Agriculture Department is expecting hundreds of applications over the next three weeks from drought-stricken ranchers seeking money to help pay the cost of hauling in hay to maintain their herds through the winter.

With hay in short supply, the department also is expanding the aid program to include straw used for feed.

The state Emergency Commission in late August approved \$1.5 million in aid to help with hay-hauling costs, in response to the worst drought in decades over the summer. Alfalfa hay production in North Dakota is down 30 percent from last year, and production of all other hay is down 43 percent, according to the federal Agriculture Department.

The state Agriculture Department has received about 60 applications since the hay-hauling aid program began accepting them Sept. 5, but Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring is expecting as many as 700 by the Nov. 3 deadline, based on the number of ranchers who signed up for a separate hay donation lottery program last summer.

"People are still moving hay and getting their affairs in order for the end of the year," Goehring said. "In many respects, it's still early in the game."

Hay is essential to ranchers' efforts to get their herds through the often brutal North Dakota winter. An average adult cow eats about 3 tons of hay over the winter feeding season. The program will reimburse eligible ranchers for a portion of their hay transportation expenses between June 1 and this Friday. The amount that each will get will depend on how many ranchers are approved.

State officials late last week decided to also make eligible the transportation of straw used for feed. Straw can be mixed with hay or with feed supplements to stretch out feed supplies.

Straw is typically used for animal bedding, but it "is commonly used as a feed ingredient in rations during droughts," said Julie Ellingson, executive vice president of the North Dakota Stockmen's Association.

Follow Blake Nicholson on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/NicholsonBlake>

Researchers: Climate change could shorten Kansas tallgrass

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — Researchers say climate change could reduce an important forage grass in Kansas and other Great Plains states to less than half its current stature during the next 75 years.

Studies involving Kansas State University faculty indicate that revision of the climate would potentially shrink the plant size of big bluestem grass by 60 percent. The grass usually ranges from 4 feet (1.2 meters) to 6 feet (1.8 meters) in height in Kansas pastures, the Topeka Capital-Journal reported .

Researchers said that kind of reduction would disrupt the region's livestock economy because big bluestem grass covers millions of acres.

"Our results predict that climate change could greatly impact the tallgrass prairie as we currently know it, reducing forage for cattle in the drier parts of grasslands, in places like Kansas," said Loretta Johnson, professor of biology at Kansas State University.

Scientists believe most of the transformation would be driven by the change in rainfall rather than temperature.

Researchers at Kansas State, Southern Illinois University and Missouri Botanical Garden participated in several years of work on species modeling, plant growth studies and climatology. Scientists focused on big bluestem because it's a plentiful grass in natural and restored prairies. Researchers said the grass makes up 70 percent of plant biomass in some areas.

"If smaller forms come to dominate, it could cause a fundamental shift in the habitat and ecosystem services prairies provide, such as forage for cattle," said Adam Smith, the botanical garden's assistant scientist in global change.

Researchers said landowners making decisions about livestock production and prairie restoration may

have to adjust their perspective on which plants would thrive in new growing conditions.

Implications of the research extend beyond Great Plains states because scientists believe taller forms of bluestem grass could grow in the Great Lakes.

The study was reported in the journal *Global Change Biology*.

Information from: The Topeka (Kan.) Capital-Journal, <http://www.cjonline.com>

Lyft to begin ride-hailing operations in South Dakota

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The ride-hailing company Lyft has beat its competitor Uber to South Dakota. Department of Revenue spokesman Wade LaRoche says Lyft has gotten a sales tax license to allow it to begin operations in South Dakota. The San Francisco, California company recently said it had drivers in every state but Arkansas and South Dakota. The primary sticking point in South Dakota had been a state law requiring them to pay sales taxes.

The *Argus Leader* says the company is now advertising for driver jobs in the Sioux Falls metro, offering sign-up bonuses and up to \$35 an hour.

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

Renewable energy jobs up 16 percent in Minnesota

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — A nonprofit study shows renewable energy jobs in Minnesota grew by 16 percent from 2015 to 2016.

The research by Clean Energy Economy Minnesota says there are about 6,200 jobs in the state in renewable energy, most in solar or wind power.

Some traditional energy sectors, such as coal mining, have seen an exodus of jobs. In Minnesota, six coal-fired generators are set to close over the next decade. The coal plants are a major emitter of greenhouse gases.

The *Star Tribune* reports the fastest growing occupation in the nation is a wind technician. Workers willing to climb hundreds of feet in the air to keep turbines running smoothly are in high demand. Students in wind power training programs in Minnesota are getting jobs as soon as they graduate — or even before.

Information from: *Star Tribune*, <http://www.startribune.com>

Wisconsin committee to vote on burial sites bill

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — A Wisconsin legislative committee is set to vote on a bill that would require the state historical director to consider evidence for adding land to the state's burial sites catalog.

Catalog inclusion means developers need a permit from the Wisconsin Historical Society director. Republicans introduced a bill in 2015 that would have allowed quarry owners to excavate Ho-Chunk Nation burial mounds to prove human remains are buried there. The measure went nowhere but spurred legislative leaders to appoint a committee to study burial site protections.

The committee came up with a bill that requires the director to consider whether evidence of human remains exist before cataloguing a site and establishes a process for challenging decisions.

The Assembly Committee on Environment and Forestry is set to vote on the bill Thursday.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 29 of 68

Presho fire chief suffers medical problem at fire, dies

PRESHO, S.D. (AP) — Presho's fire chief died over the weekend after suffering a medical condition while fighting a fire.

Donald "Donny" Manger, 54, exited a vehicle and collapsed at a fire scene in rural Lyman County about 8:50 p.m. Saturday, according to a statement Monday from the Presho Fire Department and the state Fire Marshal's Office. He was given CPR at the scene and then taken to a Pierre hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

Details about the structure fire weren't immediately released.

Fire departments from across the state were sending their condolences over social media on Monday.

Manger's funeral will be 11 a.m. Thursday at the Lyman Gardens in Presho, with burial in the Presho Cemetery, according to Hickey Funeral Chapel in Chamberlain. Visitation will begin at 5 p.m. Wednesday with a prayer service at 7 p.m. at the United Methodist Church in Presho, a central South Dakota community of about 500 people.

Manger is the 44th firefighter killed in South Dakota since 1924, according to information the state Public Safety Department and the South Dakota Firefighters Association. He is the first to be killed in the state since Valley Springs volunteer Steven Ackerman, 38, who died of smoke inhalation battling a house fire in Brandon in April 2015.

David Ruhl, of Rapid City, a firefighter with the Mystic Ranger District of the Black Hills National Forest, died in July 2015 while helping battle a forest fire in California.

Cows killed, injured, lost in weekend crash near Mitchell

MITCHELL, S.D. (AP) — Several cows were killed, injured or lost in a weekend crash east of Mitchell.

The state Public Safety Department says a semitrailer hauling 99 cows went out of control on Interstate 90 about 2:30 a.m. Saturday. The semi rolled in the median, throwing cattle from the trailer.

Two pickup trucks and another semi struck cows walking on the interstate. No serious injuries to people were reported.

The Daily Republic reports that a stretch of the interstate was shut down for several hours.

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

Drought takes toll on row crop production in South Dakota

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The latest crop report from the federal Agriculture Department shows a drop in production of row crops in drought-plagued South Dakota.

Soybean production is forecast to be down 1 percent from last year, sorghum and corn production both down 7 percent, and sunflower production down 17 percent. The alfalfa hay crop is estimated to be down 15 percent.

The report shows a drop in average yield for all of the crops.

Inmate who killed trooper dies in prison

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Authorities say a South Dakota state prison inmate serving a life sentence for killing a Highway Patrol trooper has died behind bars.

Corrections Department officials say 54-year-old Wade Aikins was found unresponsive in his cell Saturday at the South Dakota State Penitentiary in Sioux Falls. A preliminary investigation shows the death is due to accidental asphyxiation. An autopsy will be conducted.

Trooper Oren Hindman was transporting two people to jail in Spearfish in 1985 when Aikins stabbed him in the throat. Aiken was sentenced to life in prison after being convicted of second-degree murder.

He was also sentenced in 1994 to consecutive 5-year sentences from Bon Homme County for attempted escape and possession of a weapon by an inmate.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 30 of 68

Judge, Sabathia help Yankees beat Astros 8-1, trail ALCS 2-1

By RONALD BLUM, AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Back in the Bronx, the big guys delivered.

Greeted by an array of "All Rise" signs in a ballpark that fits their style, Aaron Judge hit a three-run homer and made a pair of sparkling catches, leading CC Sabathia and the New York Yankees over the Houston Astros 8-1 Monday night and cutting their deficit to 2-1 in the AL Championship Series.

Todd Frazier hit a go-ahead, three-run homer into the short porch in right field in the second inning against Charlie Morton.

The 6-foot-7 Judge entered in a 4-for-31 (.129) postseason slump that included one home run, four RBIs and 19 strikeouts. The slugger capped a five-run fourth with a laser of a drive to left field off Will Harris and robbed Yuli Gurriel and Cameron Maybin of extra-base hits.

"You see a guy put his head basically through the wall and then dive," Frazier said. "The ground is going to shake when he hits the ground."

Sabathia, almost as big at 6-foot-6, allowed three hits over six scoreless innings for his first postseason win in five years. The Yankees stopped a seven-game ALCS losing streak dating to Sabathia's victory over Texas in 2010 — when Judge had just started his freshman year at Fresno State.

After a pair of 2-1 losses in Houston, the Yankees led 8-0 after four innings.

"Just the energy, the fans," Sabathia said. "We can kind of feed off their energy."

New York improved to 4-0 at home this postseason. The Yankees were an AL-best 51-30 at home this season.

"We're somewhat built for this ballpark," manager Joe Girardi said.

Houston scored on a bases-loaded walk in the ninth before postseason star Jose Altuve grounded into a game-ending double play with the bases loaded.

Sonny Gray starts Game 4 for New York in the best-of-seven series on 11 days' rest Wednesday against Lance McCullers Jr.

Frazier got the Yankees rolling, taking an awkward hack at a low, outside fastball and slicing an opposite-field drive over the right-field scoreboard.

"You don't think it's going, just because how unorthodox the swing was," Frazier said.

Judge used his height and long left arm to make a leaping catch with his left shoulder slamming into the right-field wall against Gurriel starting the fourth.

Being a rookie, he politely waited outside the dugout for all the veterans to descend the steps after the third out — as he always does — then capped a five-run bottom half with a laser of a line drive that just cleared the left-field wall.

Then in the fifth, he sprinted into short right for a diving backhand catch on Maybin.

On the first chilly night of the autumn with a game-time temperature of 57, Sabathia relied on the sharp, slow slider that has helped revive the former flamethrower's career.

Pitching with caution to Houston's dangerous lineup, he walked four, struck out five and pitched shutout ball for the first time in 21 career postseason starts. During the regular season, he was 9-0 in 10 starts following Yankees' losses.

"It's weird, me being 37, smoke and mirrors, getting a shutout," Sabathia said.

Adam Warren followed with two hitless innings, Dellin Betances walked his only two batters and Tommy Kahnle finished. Houston had four hits, leaving it with just 15 over the first three games, and is batting .169 in the matchup.

Morton was chased after 3 2/3 innings and allowed seven runs and six hits: three infield singles, a bloop single to center, a double that Maybin allowed to fall in left and Frazier's homer.

"If you were to show me a video of the swing, show the pitch speed and the location, I would have never thought that," Morton said. "That was unbelievable."

A New Jersey native who grew up a Yankees fan, Frazier entered 7 for 18 against Morton with two home runs. With Frank Sinatra's version of "Fly Me to the Moon" as his walk-up music, Frazier hit not-quite a

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 31 of 68

moonshot, driving a pitch just 18½ inches above the dirt 365 feet with pretty much just his left arm. That gave the Yankees their first lead of the series.

Frazier motioned to his family in the stands and looked at his left wrist.

"I'm pointing to them and saying: What time is it? It's my time," he said.

He remembers sitting in the seats at old Yankee Stadium watching Jim Leyritz's 15th-inning home beat Seattle in the 1995 playoffs.

"It's such a cool feeling," Frazier said. "I wish everybody could feel basically what I'm going through."

Houston loaded the bases with two outs in the third on a pair of two-out walks around Alex Bregman's single. But Carlos Correa popped out on a fastball in on his fists.

"I know he likes to get his hands extended," Sabathia said.

Sabathia raised both arms and pointed toward Judge after his catch in the fourth.

"I don't know what got hurt worse, the wall or him," plate umpire Gary Cederstrom was heard to say by one of Fox's microphones.

New York broke open the game in the bottom half. Chase Headley hit a run-scoring infield single — ending an 0-for-28 slide by New York designated hitters in the postseason. Brett Gardner was hit on a leg by a pitch, loading the bases, and Harris came in and threw a wild pitch that allowed Frazier to come home from third.

"Judge did what Judge has done 50-plus times, which is hit the ball out of the ballpark when he gets a pitch to hit," Astros manager A.J. Hinch said.

ALTUVE'S WEB GEMS

Altuve made two fine stops on Did Gregorius, first a backhand stop on his third-inning grounder and then a shuffle pass to Harris covering first for the final out of the fourth after a hard grounder off first baseman Marwin Gonzalez's glove.

APPLAUSE

Girardi, booed by fans after failing to call for a replay in Game 2 of the Division Series, was cheered when introduced.

"It's a reminder of how quickly things can change in your life," he said.

TRAINER'S ROOM

Yankees: RHP Luis Severino is on track to pitch a Game 6. He was removed after four innings and 62 pitches in Game 2 because Girardi felt he was "underneath" the ball. Girardi said Severino did not need any tests and is OK.

Asked whether Severino was understanding, Girardi said: "I think two days later, yes, a little bit more."

"I asked him if he still hated me, and he said, 'no,'" Girardi added.

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

Trump's claim about predecessors, fallen troops disputed

By CALVIN WOODWARD, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — For U.S. presidents, meeting the families of military personnel killed in war is about as wrenching as the presidency gets. President Donald Trump's suggestion Monday that his predecessors fell short in that duty brought a visceral reaction from those who witnessed those grieving encounters.

"He's a deranged animal," Alyssa Mastromonaco, a former deputy chief of staff to President Barack Obama, tweeted about Trump. With an expletive, she called Trump's statement in the Rose Garden a lie.

Trump said in a news conference he had written letters to the families of four soldiers killed in an Oct. 4 ambush in Niger and planned to call them, crediting himself with taking extra steps in honoring the dead properly. "Most of them didn't make calls," he said of his predecessors. He said it's possible that Obama "did sometimes" but "other presidents did not call."

The record is plain that presidents reached out to families of the dead and to the wounded, often with their presence as well as by letter and phone. The path to Walter Reed and other military hospitals, as

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 32 of 68

well as to the Dover, Delaware, Air Force Base where the remains of fallen soldiers are often brought, is a familiar one to Obama, George W. Bush and others.

Bush, even at the height of two wars, "wrote all the families of the fallen," said Freddy Ford, spokesman for the ex-president. Ford said Bush also called or met "hundreds, if not thousands" of family members of the war dead.

Obama's official photographer, Pete Souza, tweeted that he photographed Obama "meeting with hundreds of wounded soldiers, and family members of those killed in action." Others recalled his frequent visits with Gold Star families, and travels to Walter Reed, Dover and other venues with families of the dead and with the wounded.

Retired Gen. Martin E. Dempsey, the former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, confirmed these contacts, tweeting: "POTUS 43 & 44 and first ladies cared deeply, worked tirelessly for the serving, the fallen, and their families. Not politics. Sacred Trust."

Trump addressed the matter when asked why he had not spoken about the four soldiers killed in Niger. They died when militants thought to be affiliated with the Islamic State group ambushed them while they were patrolling in unarmored trucks with Nigerien troops.

"I actually wrote letters individually to the soldiers we're talking about, and they're going to be going out either today or tomorrow," he said, meaning he wrote to the families of the fallen soldiers. He did not explain why letters had not been sent yet, more than a week after the attack.

"If you look at President Obama and other presidents, most of them didn't make calls," Trump said.

Pressed on that statement later, he said of Obama: "I was told that he didn't often, and a lot of presidents don't. They write letters." He went on: "President Obama, I think, probably did sometimes, and maybe sometimes he didn't. I don't know. That's what I was told. ... Some presidents didn't do anything."

Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said later that Trump "wasn't criticizing predecessors, but stating a fact." She argued that presidents didn't always call families of those killed in battle: "Sometimes they call, sometimes they send a letter, other times they have the opportunity to meet family members in person."

She said anyone claiming a former president had called every family was "mistaken."

Bush's commitment to writing to all military families of the dead and to reaching out by phone or meeting with many others came despite the enormity of the task. In the Iraq war alone, U.S. combat deaths were highest during his presidency, exceeding 800 each year from 2004 through 2007. The number fell to 313 in Bush's last year in office as the insurgency faded. Bush once said he felt the appropriate way to show his respect was to meet family members in private.

Obama declared an end to combat operations in Iraq in August 2010 and the last U.S. troops were withdrawn in December 2011. As Obama wound down that war, he sent tens of thousands more troops into Afghanistan in 2009 and 2010, and the death count mounted. From a total of 155 Americans killed in Afghanistan in 2008, which was Bush's last full year in office, the number jumped to 311 in 2009 and peaked the next year at 498. In all, more than 1,700 died in Afghanistan on Obama's watch.

Among other rituals honoring military families, the Obamas had a "Gold Star" Christmas tree in the White House decorated with hundreds of photos and notes from people who had lost loved ones in war. Gold Star families visited during the holidays, bringing ornaments.

Trump visited Dover early in his presidency, going in February with his daughter Ivanka for the return of the remains of a U.S. Navy SEAL killed during a raid in Yemen, William "Ryan" Owens.

Trump's relations with Gold Star families have not always been smooth, dating from his belittlement of the parents of slain U.S. soldier Humayun Khan, who was Muslim. Trump was angered when the soldier's father, Khizr Khan, was given a platform to criticize him at the Democratic National Convention.

Owens' grieving father said he didn't want to talk with Trump at Dover. But the sailor's widow, Carryn, attended Trump's address to Congress and wept as he thanked her.

Associated Press writers Robert Burns and Jesse J. Holland contributed to this report.

Iraq: After losing Kirkuk, Kurdish forces pull out of Sinjar

By **BALINT SZLANKO**, Associated Press

KIRKUK, Iraq (AP) — Kurdish forces lost more territory in Iraq on Tuesday, withdrawing from the town of Sinjar a day after Iraqi forces pushed them out of the disputed city of Kirkuk.

It was the second hasty withdrawal for the Kurdish forces, known as the peshmerga, from territory they contest along with Iraq's central government and following the Iraqi Kurdish independence referendum last month.

The referendum, though not binding, reflected the Iraqi Kurds aspirations for independence for their autonomous northern region. The vote was rejected by the central government in Baghdad, as well as Turkey, Iran and the United States.

Masloum Shingali, commander of the local Yazidi militia in Sinjar, said the peshmerga left before dawn on Tuesday, allowing Iraqi militiamen to move in.

Yazidis were massacred by the Islamic State group when the jihadis seized the town in 2014. More than 2,000 were killed, and thousands of women and children were taken into slavery. Kurdish forces, supported by U.S. airstrikes, liberated the town in 2015.

Town Mayor Mahma Khalil said the Iranian-supported Popular Mobilization Forces, a coalition of mostly Shiite militias, were securing Sinjar. The militias are recognized by Iraq's government as a part of its armed forces but are viewed with deep suspicion by the country's Kurdish authorities, which see them as an instrument of Tehran and its Shiite-first policies.

The Kurdish forces "left immediately, they didn't want to fight," Shingali said.

Meanwhile, thousands of civilians were seen streaming back to Kirkuk, driving along a main highway to the city's east. The Kurdish forces had built an earthen berm along the highway, reinforced by armored vehicles, but were allowing civilians to return to the city.

Many returnees were seen with their children and belongings packed tight in their cars.

The Iraqi forces' retaking of Kirkuk came only two weeks after they had fought together with the peshmerga to neutralize the Islamic State group in Iraq, their common enemy.

Thousands of Kirkuk's Kurdish residents, fearful of federal and Shiite militia rule, packed the roads north to Irbil, the capital of the northern autonomous Kurdish region.

On Tuesday, they were going back.

Kurdish residents said they felt betrayed by the peshmerga's hasty retreat after they had promised to fight to the last for the city.

"Kirkuk was sold out, everyone ran away. But now the situation has stabilized, and people are returning to their homes. Nothing will happen, God willing, and Kirkuk will return to how it was," said Amir Aydn, 28.

When Iraq's armed forces crumbled in the face of an advance by Islamic State group in 2014, peshmerga forces moved into Kirkuk to secure the city and its surrounding oil wells though it was 32 kilometers (20 miles) outside the Kurds' autonomous region in northeast Iraq.

Baghdad has since insisted Kirkuk and its province be returned to the central government, but matters came to a head when the Kurdish authorities expanded their referendum last month to include Kirkuk. To the Iraqi central government, that looked like Kurdish expansionism.

The city of more than 1 million is home to Arabs, Kurds and Turkmen, as well as Christians and Sunni and Shiite Muslims.

By midday Monday, federal forces had moved into several major oil fields north of the city, as well as the Kirkuk airport and an important military base, according to Iraqi commanders. Kurdish party headquarters inside Kirkuk had been abandoned.

The peshmerga withdrew in the direction of their autonomous region in the northeast.

China's Xi looks to extend power at Communist Party congress

By CHRISTOPHER BODEEN, Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — Having bested his rivals, Chinese President Xi Jinping is primed to consolidate his already considerable power as the ruling Communist Party begins its twice-a-decade national congress on Wednesday.

From meetings largely cloaked in secrecy, powerful players will emerge publicly in new roles, and Xi will address the nation to lay out his political and economic vision for the world's second-largest economy over the next five years. Villages will broadcast news of the congress over loudspeakers, a security crackdown has been extended and monitoring of dissidents strengthened.

Xi, who is expected to get a second five-year term as party leader at the gathering, will kick off events with an address indicating whether his personal political theory will be entered into the party constitution alongside those of predecessors such as Mao Zedong and Deng Xiaoping. The honor was bestowed much later in office for most other leaders.

Such a proclamation, at this time, would broadcast that Xi, already China's most powerful leader in decades, will continue to dominate Chinese politics for the next five years - and possibly more - with virtually no domestic opposition.

Party congress spokesman Tuo Zhen on Tuesday said the party would continue structural reforms but ruled out any adoption of a multiparty democratic system.

"Political structural reform is not something that can be achieved overnight. China will not blindly copy or replicate the models of other countries," Tuo told reporters at a news conference to discuss the congress' agenda.

Xi, in his speech, is also expected to recommit the party to achieving the goals of a "moderately well-off society" by 2021 - the 100th anniversary of the party's founding - and even greater national power and prosperity by 2049 - the centenary of the founding of the Communist state.

Those achievements will depend on continued economic growth and the lifting of millions out of poverty, alongside the continued rapid expansion of Chinese military and political power, including its growing ability to dominate the Asia-Pacific region.

The meeting's immediate results, however, will be personnel appointments, rumors about which have swirled for months.

China is run by the party's Politburo Standing Committee, currently a seven-member body led by Xi, with Premier Li Keqiang his No. 2. Its size and composition have varied greatly over the years, although membership is generally restricted to the heads of state and party, the premier, the leader of the rubber-stamp parliament and officials in charge of propaganda, party discipline and other key sectors.

While Xi and Li are expected to stay, the fates of others are determined by loosely defined precedents governing retirement age. Four are expected to depart, while the status of party discipline boss and close Xi ally Wang Qishan appears to be in flux.

If Xi changes the rules or ignores precedents, such as that of the informal retirement age, he could risk a backlash inside the party from those who see respecting such norms as essential for a peaceful transfer of power.

Observers will also be looking for a potential successor to Xi after his traditional second five-year term as party leader. While the nation's presidency is limited to two five-year terms, the office of party general secretary is bound by no such restrictions. Xi, 64, could step aside for a younger leader while maintaining ultimate control from behind the scenes.

Whatever the outcome, most analysts say Xi has largely completed the task of sidelining his competitors in other cliques, including those surrounding his immediate predecessor, Hu Jintao, and former leader Jiang Zemin.

"Xi has been extremely successful in purging political rivals," said Feng Chongyi, an expert on Chinese politics at Sydney's University of Technology. "There will be only one faction left after the 19th congress."

The 2,287 carefully hand-picked delegates to the congress are drawn from 40 constituencies, including

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 35 of 68

the 31 provincial-level administrative districts, the government, the military, state industries and grass-roots organizations representing most of the party's 89 million members.

In a secret process, they will select a roughly 200-member Central Committee, along with more than 150 alternates, from a pool of around 400 candidates. The committee will then pick a 25-member Politburo and the elite Politburo Standing Committee, led by the general secretary. The makeup of the top body will only be known at the close of the weeklong meeting when its members reveal themselves on stage in front of journalists, according to past practice.

This year's congress is expected to usher in many new faces. Cheng Li, who studies Chinese politics at the Brookings Institution think tank in Washington, puts the turnover rate in the Central Committee at 70 percent, the highest since the peak of Mao's chaotic Cultural Revolution in 1969.

However, women continue to be underrepresented in the top bodies, pointing to the abiding highly masculine tone of Chinese politics. No woman has ever served on the Politburo Standing Committee and only two currently are on the Politburo. Just 10 are on the Central Committee, comprising 4.9 percent of members.

Extraordinary security measures are being imposed for the congress, and not just near the gathering. Already heavily restricted, access to foreign websites, social media platforms and messaging programs such as WhatsApp has been tightened and dissidents placed under increased scrutiny.

In Beijing, thousands of deputized citizens patrol the streets, and knife, fireworks and chemical sales have been suspended. In the restive far-northwestern region of Xinjiang, police have demanded that owners of any knives longer than 10 centimeters (4 inches) have them embossed with a QR code for identification.

And while many Chinese may seem blase, news about the congress is impossible to avoid.

Villages are revving up decades-old public address systems to broadcast developments. They aim to cut through "noise from the internet that left some beneficial policies misunderstood," the official Xinhua News Agency reported.

The speaker systems, Xinhua says, can "bring the CPC and Chinese people together better."

This story has been corrected to fix spelling of spokesman's name to Tuo Zhen instead of Guo Zheng.

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

Your daily look at late-breaking news, upcoming events and the stories that will be talked about today:

1. IN SYRIA'S RAQQA, ISLAMIC STATE GROUP MAKES LAST STAND

U.S.-backed, Kurdish-led forces battling the extremists in their de facto capital capture the city hospital, leaving militants holed up at the local stadium.

2. THE RISE AND FALL OF THE ISLAMIC STATE GROUP

Their brutally executed push for a "caliphate" in Syria and Iraq is no more, but forces battling the extremists will have to remain vigilant, while the battle for IS spoils have already begun.

3. TRUMP GETTING MORE OPEN TO CHATTING IN PUBLIC

The press-savvy president opines in the Oval Office, stops to talk on the South Lawn, chats on the tarmac as he boards Air Force One and gabs with reporters aboard the presidential plane.

4. HOW A 'GRAYING' SENATE IS IMPACTING LEGISLATION

The age and health issues of some senators are complicating Republican efforts to push through a partisan agenda.

5. WHERE COUNSELORS ARE PREPARING FOR AN ONSLAUGHT

A week after fleeing in fear of wildfire, tens of thousands of Californians are drifting back into their neighborhoods, facing damage both physical and emotional.

6. HASHTAG 'ME TOO' PLACES EMPHASIS ON VICTIMS

With a single tweet, actress Alyssa Milano has motivated thousands of women to tell their stories of rape, sexual assault and harassment on social media.

7. MCCAIN CONDEMNS 'HALF-BAKED, SPURIOUS NATIONALISM'

The ailing Arizona Republican senator jabs at unnamed pushers of isolationist politics at his National Constitution Center Liberty Medal ceremony in Philadelphia.

8. TECH GIANTS MAY FIND FUTURE SHAPED BY EUROPE

For companies like Facebook, Google and Apple, Europe's culture of tough corporate oversight, not America's light-touch regulation, may soon rule their industry.

9. RUTH BADER GINSBURG'S PERSONAL TRAINER SPEAKS OUT

In his new book, Bryant Johnson details the workout regimen that has kept the 84-year-old Supreme Court justice on the bench.

10. COMMISSIONER, NBA GREAT DIFFER

Adam Silver believes super teams — like the Warriors and Cavaliers — are good for business. Hornets owner Michael Jordan fears a league where the other 28 teams are "garbage."

In Syria's Raqqa, IS makes last stand at city's stadium

By SARAH EL DEEB, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — U.S.-backed, Kurdish-led forces battling the Islamic State group in Syria captured the city hospital in Raqqa on Tuesday, leaving IS militants holed up at the local stadium, their last stand in the fight over what was once the extremists' de facto capital.

The hospital was one of IS last holdouts in Raqqa and had doubled as a hospital and an IS command center. Its capture left IS militants cornered in and around the notorious municipal stadium, which they had turned into a huge prison where they incarcerated anyone who opposed their brutal rule.

Musafa Bali, a spokesman for the Syrian Democratic Forces, said 22 IS militants were killed in the advance on the hospital. The fighting was still underway with militants who had refused to surrender, he said.

Bali denied a report by the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights that Raqqa city was now completely empty of IS militants, saying IS fighters are still holed up inside.

"The stadium is a huge structure with underground rooms and tunnels. There are also buildings around it" still under the control of IS. He added that the fighting is ongoing "and there is nothing decisive today."

Losing Raqqa has been a huge blow for IS, which has steadily lost territory in Iraq and Syria, including Iraq's second largest city of Mosul few months ago. The group declared the city on the banks of the Euphrates River, which it seized from other Syrian rebels in early 2014, to be the capital of its self-styled "caliphate," transforming the one vibrant metropolis into the epicenter of its brutal rule where opponents were beheaded and terror plots were planned.

On Monday, the Kurdish-led SDF captured "Paradise Square," Raqqa's infamous public square where Islamic State militants used to perform killings and beheadings, forcing residents to watch after summoning them with loudspeakers.

Bodies and severed heads would linger there for days, mounted on posts. Residents described how the bodies of those slain would be labelled, each with his or her perceived crime, for the public to see.

The square previously known for its famous ice cream shop was quickly renamed from Paradise to Hell Square, Jahim in Arabic.

The Kurdish-run Hawar news agency said with the capture of the hospital, the last black IS flag raised in the city had been taken down. A video released by the news agency illustrated the clashes around the hospital building, which appeared riddled with bullets and partly blackened from a fire.

A senior Kurdish commander said clashes were ongoing around the stadium Tuesday with "a small group" of militants.

"We hope it won't take long. Our aim is to clear the stadium also today," the commander said, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to reporters.

He said there is no sign of civilians in the stadium or around it but that his troops are cautious because they expect IS has laid mines in the fortified stadium building. The stadium served as an arms depot,

a security headquarters and one of the Islamic State militants' largest jails in their self-styled caliphate. The U.S.-led coalition said it had not carried out any airstrikes in or around Raqqa for 24 hours, starting from noon Sunday.

The battle for Raqqa began in June and has dragged for weeks as the SDF fighters faced stiff resistance from the militants.

In the campaign, the city suffered major devastation, leaving most of its buildings leveled and in ruins.

Trump, McConnell make a show of unity, despite tensions

By ERICA WERNER, AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump and Mitch McConnell have reaffirmed their alliance of necessity in a raucous Rose Garden news conference that also underscored their sharp differences. The garrulous president claimed they were longtime friends, now closer than ever; the reserved Senate Republican leader allowed that they share goals and speak often.

It was a spectacle that mesmerized Washington, as Trump and McConnell appeared side by side for more than a half-hour, the president tossing off answers — sometimes mini-speeches — on all topics while McConnell, disciplined as always, delivered brief, scholarly explanations about the legislative process and the risks to their party of nominating candidates who can't win.

At various points, the president denounced the Russia-Trump campaign investigation, lauded himself for his record on judicial nominations, argued wrongly that "it took years for the Reagan administration to get taxes done," and claimed that past presidents hadn't necessarily contacted bereaved family members to mourn lost service members — before backtracking on that assertion when pressed. He also noted, as he often does, that he won the presidential election last fall, and he implored Hillary Clinton to run again.

In front of a hastily assembled White House press corps, jostling each other on the lawn because there wasn't time to bring out chairs, Trump began his remarks by saluting McConnell and, as he described it, their longstanding friendship.

"We're probably now closer than ever before," the president proclaimed as McConnell grinned stiffly at his side. "My relationship with this gentleman is outstanding."

Trump's former chief strategist, Steve Bannon, over the weekend declared all-out political war on the GOP establishment, including McConnell and incumbent Republican senators Bannon has deemed unsupportive of the president's agenda. Trump said earlier Monday during a Cabinet meeting that he "can understand fully how Steve Bannon feels" and even that some in the party "should be ashamed of themselves." But he later suggested he might try to talk Bannon out of challenging some Senate Republicans whom McConnell has pledged to defend.

"Some of the people that he may be looking at, I'm going to see if we talk him out of that, because frankly, they're great people," Trump said.

Trump's change in tone suggested that McConnell, whose allies regularly do battle with Bannon, might have talked Trump into intervening during their lunch together.

"Just so you understand, the Republican Party is very, very unified," Trump insisted.

McConnell took the opportunity to lay out, for the public and for the audience of one standing beside him, why he and GOP allies work to protect Senate incumbents. He argued that some conservative Republicans nominated in the 2010 and 2012 cycles didn't win because they weren't able to "appeal to a broader electorate in the general election."

"You have to nominate people who can actually win, because winners make policy and losers go home," McConnell said.

Trump briefly pursed his lips as McConnell made those remarks, then took a question on another topic.

Bannon, meanwhile, seemed in no mood to back down. "Senator McConnell and the GOP Establishment have 'sown the wind — now they reap the whirlwind,'" he said.

Bannon's Breitbart News site also reveled in the attention. "Bitter Mitch! Triggered by Bannon," one of its Monday headlines read.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 38 of 68

Trump spent August assailing McConnell for his inability to pass legislation to repeal the Affordable Care Act, calling the failure "a disgrace" and ordering McConnell over Twitter to "get back to work." For his part, McConnell has complained that Trump had "excessive expectations" for how quickly Congress could act.

Nevertheless the Kentucky senator seconded the president's latest views.

"Contrary to what some of you may have reported, we are together, totally, on this agenda to move America forward," McConnell said.

It was not clear what led to Monday's sudden question-and-answer session, which followed lunch between McConnell and Trump at the White House. Their meeting came at a critical time, with the Senate poised to vote this week on a budget that would set the stage for tax legislation that many Republicans view as make-or-break following the failure on health care. Both McConnell and Trump recommitted themselves to the goal of passing a tax bill by the end of this year.

The last time McConnell was at the White House was early last month. On that occasion, Trump bypassed him and Republican House Speaker Paul Ryan to cut a deal with the Senate's Democratic leader, Chuck Schumer, and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi on debt and spending.

That kicked off a brief period when bipartisanship was in the air in Washington, and it seemed possible that Trump would make common cause with Democrats at the expense of Republicans on other issues, too. But the suggestion of a deal on immigration appears to have fallen apart. Questioned Monday about Schumer and Pelosi, Trump replied: "Well, I hope to have a relationship. If we don't, we don't."

However, he claimed that his recent action to shut off certain payments to insurers under the Affordable Care Act, denounced by Democrats as sabotage, was forcing bipartisan talks. Indeed there may be a renewed focus on Senate bipartisan negotiations aimed at addressing the payments, which go to subsidize costs for low-income people.

"Because of that, people are talking now, Democrats are talking to the Republicans," Trump said, contending that a short-term fix would be followed next year by ultimate success in repealing "Obamacare," and asserting with no evidence, as he's done in the past, that the votes are there now to repeal the law.

Trump also denounced the investigation into his campaign's involvement with Russia, being conducted by a special counsel and GOP-led congressional committees.

"The whole Russia thing was an excuse for the Democrats losing the election," he said.

"There has been absolutely no collusion. It's been stated that they have no collusion. They ought to get to the end of it, because I think the American public is sick of it."

Associated Press writer Jill Colvin contributed to this report.

Trump getting more open to chatting in public

By **CATHERINE LUCEY and KEN THOMAS, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Reporters were seated in the White House briefing room awaiting an appearance by press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders on Monday when a call went out over a loudspeaker to head to the Rose Garden. There was no time to lose: President Donald Trump wanted to talk. Again.

Chaos briefly ensued as the press corps quickly repositioned itself along a rope line among the famous garden's fall mums and foliage in front of a podium marked by the presidential seal.

While Trump rarely holds formal, stand-alone news conferences, his freewheeling, last-minute Rose Garden scrum was the latest example of his penchant for talking to journalists on the fly. For nearly 40 minutes, the president held forth on everything from tax policy to the Russia investigations to Hillary Clinton. Trump reveled in the wild rumpus, gesturing to specific journalists with a "hello" or a wink as they screamed and jumped to get his attention.

Quietly standing by: Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who joined the president to affirm their working relationship.

The press-savvy president has been particularly chatty with reporters lately. He opines in the Oval Office. He stops to talk near the fluffy boom microphones on the South Lawn. He chats with the press on the

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 39 of 68

tarmac as he boards Air Force One. He comes back to gab with reporters aboard the presidential plane. Top correspondents now flood the South Lawn for Trump's entrances and exits, hoping to lure him over with shouted questions.

"If he can walk out of his office and command the most elite press corps in the world, that feels good to him. It's like going before a rally crowd," said Trump biographer Michael D'Antonio, the author of "The Truth About Trump."

Trump's Rose Garden exchange Monday was his second conversation with journalists that day. Earlier, he spoke with the press for nearly 20 minutes at the start of a Cabinet meeting, offering a monologue that touched on tax policy, drug prices, the wildfires in California and the Iran nuclear deal. He offered a tease of his meeting with McConnell, telling reporters he would "say a few words on the steps after that."

A former reality television star, Trump has long told associates that he's always been his best press secretary and spokesman. His impromptu press availabilities hark back to his days in New York real estate and on television, when he enjoyed talking to reporters and promoting his business ventures.

"The president is a media savant," said Sam Nunberg, a former Trump campaign aide. "He understands that access helps get your message out."

Nunberg added that Trump knows that by keeping the plans loose, it means "the press doesn't have time to prepare for a big takedown."

To be sure, Trump's media accessibility is paired with a steady stream of insults at what he dubs the "fake" media, with attacks on news outlets and individual journalists on Twitter and in his speeches. He also steers himself toward sympathetic interviewers — sitting down with conservative host Sean Hannity and former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee recently. And he's avoided some traditional media opportunities — declining, for example, to speak to reporters on his foreign trips.

Trump's approach represents a marked contrast with former President Barack Obama, who rarely made unplanned remarks or ventured over to talk to reporters on the South Lawn before boarding Marine One. Early on, former President Bill Clinton would frequently answer questions while out on his morning jog. But aides reined in that behavior, deeming it unpresidential for a sweaty, short-shorts-wearing Clinton to be commenting on issues of the day.

In the Rose Garden, Trump churned through questions at whiplash-inducing speed, leaving open the possibility he would dump his nominee for drug czar, Rep. Tom Marino, reaffirming his relationship with McConnell and discussing his judicial nominees. He claimed previous presidents did not sufficiently honor fallen soldiers. And he denounced the investigation into his campaign's involvement with Russia.

Always one to build suspense, the president offered a few cliffhangers, promising new details next week on the nation's opioid crisis and pledging to release a new economic development bill. Said Trump, "I haven't even told Mitch because I want to focus on tax cuts and some other things right now."

In all, the president took more than three dozen questions Monday during his Cabinet meeting and in the Rose Garden. Even as he wrapped up his remarks in the Cabinet Room, Trump couldn't resist taking a few more.

"So that will be it. Okay?" Trump said.

Then he added, "Any other questions?"

Associated Press writer Jill Colvin contributed to this report.

On Twitter follow Catherine Lucey at @Catherine_Lucey and Ken Thomas at @KThomasDC.

Book's challenge: Can you do squats like Justice Ginsburg?

By JESSICA GRESKO, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Personal trainer Bryant Johnson hears it all the time: Four more years.

That's how long fans of his client, 84-year-old Supreme Court justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, tell him he has to keep her healthy so that a one-term President Donald Trump doesn't get to name the liberal justice's replacement on the Supreme Court.

Johnson's response: Why just four years? Why not 14?

Interest in the workout of the Supreme Court's oldest justice and in the man behind it has only grown since the election of Trump, who — to be clear — says he'll occupy the White House for eight years. And it's resulted in a new workout book written by Johnson, out Wednesday: "The RBG Workout: How She Stays Strong ... and You Can Too!"

Johnson said he hopes the book will show people: "You're never too old to do something."

Ginsburg started working out with Johnson in 1999 after being treated for colorectal cancer. As Ginsburg tells the story, her husband told her she looked "like a survivor of a concentration camp" and needed to do something to rebuild her strength. That's when another judge referred her to Johnson, the records manager at a federal court in Washington who is also an Army reservist and trainer. Their twice-a-week workouts helped Ginsburg regain her strength after her first bout with cancer and again after she was treated for pancreatic cancer in 2009.

"Early on she saw the benefits of exercise," said Johnson, who has also trained two other liberal justices, Justice Elena Kagan and Justice Stephen Breyer of Ginsburg. Johnson says what he does isn't necessarily going to make anyone live longer but it will improve their quality of life. He calls Ginsburg "awesome" and "remarkable."

Ginsburg has called Johnson a "very important part of my life."

The idea for a book came about this year after Politico Magazine wrote a piece on the workout. Johnson, 53, took reporter Ben Schreckinger through Ginsburg's workout. The result was a piece titled, "I did Ruth Bader Ginsburg's Workout. It Nearly Broke Me."

An editor at Houghton Mifflin Harcourt wrote Johnson after it ran. Would he help with a book? He ran the idea by Ginsburg and she agreed, even writing the book's foreword. Schreckinger helped Johnson write the text.

The result is an approximately 120-page volume that walks readers through Ginsburg's hour-long workout with illustrations of the justice doing each exercise. Some illustrations show her in one regular workout sweatshirt, which reads "SUPER DIVA!" on the front.

Ginsburg is often asked at appearances about the fact she does the plank and push-ups, and not the modified ones where people put their knees on the ground. But the book makes clear she does a lot more, including chest and shoulder presses, bicep and leg curls, one-legged squats, knee raises and an exercise where she throws Johnson a weighted ball.

Ginsburg typically meets Johnson in the evenings at a gym at the court. The "PBS NewsHour" plays in the background while she works out. Occasionally, Johnson says, a clerk has come down with some important brief, and he'll move things around so Ginsburg can read, either while warming up on the elliptical or doing another exercise where he can hold the paper for her.

Johnson can tell when Ginsburg is tired or going strong. Sometimes he'll employ some "funny counting," to get her to do more repetitions of an exercise. Or, he'll cut her a break if she's fading. The justice, he says, never says "can't." He calls her TAN: Tough As Nails.

Three years ago, during a workout session, Johnson noticed something with Ginsburg was off, and she said she felt nauseous. Johnson got Ginsburg's assistants involved and they convinced her to go by ambulance to a hospital where she ultimately had a stent implanted to clear a blocked artery to her heart. As she was about to be driven away, Johnson said he joked: "Justice, don't think you're going to get out of these push-ups."

What was going on in his head was something else.

"I'm thinking, not on my watch," he said.

Follow Jessica Gresko on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/jessicagresko>

Cochran's illness shows risks to GOP leaders of aging Senate

By ALAN FRAM, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Top Republicans coping with a razor-thin majority as they try pushing a partisan agenda through the Senate are running smack into another complication — the sheer age and health issues of some senators.

When the office of the ailing Sen. Thad Cochran announced Monday that it was the Mississippi Republican's "intention to return to the Senate when his health permits," it underscored the challenges of navigating a chamber that's the second oldest ever. Cochran's absence narrows the GOP's margin for error on a pivotal budget vote this week, and the Appropriations Committee that he chairs hasn't churned out any spending bills for next year since he was last in Washington in mid-September.

Cochran isn't the only GOP senator with health issues that have caused them to miss time this year in Washington. In July, the Senate delayed votes for a week on repealing President Barack Obama's health care law after Sen. John McCain of Arizona, now 81, was diagnosed with brain cancer. And Georgia Sen. Johnny Isakson, 72, was away for two back surgeries early in 2017, two years after being diagnosed with Parkinson's disease, a degenerative neurological condition.

In addition, a pair of 80-somethings are up for re-election in 2018, one from each party. They're among 16 senators facing re-election who come Election Day 2018 will be at least 65 — an age when many people have already retired.

Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, 83, hasn't announced a final decision on whether he'll seek an eighth, six-year term next year. On the Democratic side, California's Dianne Feinstein — at 84 the oldest current senator — has announced she will run again next November. If re-elected, she might serve till she's 91 — an age reached by only four other senators while serving.

"The ability to get things done counts. And the compassion, vigor, and stamina to make a difference counts," she said last week, as if pre-emptively fending off questions about her age.

It didn't stop 50-year-old Kevin De Leon, the president pro tem of the California state Senate, who announced on Sunday his challenge to Feinstein.

Overall, senators averaged 61.8 years old when the current two-year Congress began in January, according to the Senate Historical Office. That's tied for second oldest with the Senate that began in 2007. That was surpassed only by the two-year session that began in 2009, when senators averaged 62.7 years of age.

Right now, the chamber has seven senators at least 80 years old — excluding Cochran, who reaches that age in December.

That's rarified air, even for the Senate. Of the nearly 2,000 people who have served as senators, just 42 were still in office at age 80, according to the historical office. The oldest: Sen. Strom Thurmond, R-S.C., who left office at age 100 in 2003, six months before he died.

The average age of senators was in the mid- to late 40s during the earliest Congresses. It's fluctuated but gradually risen since then, in part tracking a steady increase in life expectancy in the U.S. It also reflects a political reality — voters usually like to re-elect incumbents because they value them, so senators are serving longer.

"Most voters at one time or another say they wished senators would serve a term or two and get out," said Larry Sabato, who directs the University of Virginia's Center for Politics. But when it comes to their own senator they feel, "Seniority is really valuable, we don't want to lose that," he said.

This week, GOP leaders aim to push a budget through the Senate that would lay the groundwork for the chamber to approve huge tax cuts later this year. With a 52-48 majority, Republicans can normally afford just two defections and still approve legislation because Vice President Mike Pence can cast tie-breaking votes.

Cochran's absence means the budget would fail if more than one GOP senator votes "no." But in a sign of confidence, Senate leaders still planned the budget vote this week.

Cochran has a urinary tract infection and is remaining in Mississippi "on the advice of his physicians and other health care professionals," chief of staff Brad White said in a statement.

Cochran has been away from Washington since the week of Sept. 18.

Associated Press writer Andrew Taylor contributed to this report.

Californians brace for emotional toll from wildfires

By SUDHIN THANAWALA and TERRY CHEA, Associated Press

SANTA ROSA, Calif. (AP) — A week after fleeing wildfires, tens of thousands of Californians are drifting back into their neighborhoods.

Some will face the prospect of destroyed homes. All will face the possibility of lasting emotional damage.

"It's never going to be the same," said Rob Brown, a supervisor in Mendocino County, where all 8,000 evacuees were cleared to go home Monday. "You're going to have to seek a new normal."

The fires, the deadliest cluster in California history, have killed at least 41 people and destroyed nearly 6,000 homes.

The thousands of calls coming from concerned residents in neighboring Sonoma County "have shifted from questions about evacuation to questions about coping," Sonoma County Supervisor Shirlee Zane said.

"Many people who call are sad and worried, the shock has worn off and the sadness, depression and loss is setting in."

As a former grief therapist, she advised people with a family member or loved one who has lost everything to understand they can't fix this but they can offer support.

"Provide a compassionate listening ear right now, and let them feel whatever they're feeling," Zane said.

And those who must rebuild from nothing are in for a changed life.

"You're in for decades," Brown said. "You'll see benefits within years, but you're literally in for decades of recovery."

Jennifer Kelly and her husband and three sons lost their home and everything in it to a fire in Middletown in Lake County two years ago.

Now, with the new home 95 percent rebuilt, there are distant sirens, helicopters and tankers, plumes of smoke, on-again, off-again evacuation orders.

"I'm pretty anxious," she said Sunday in their new home, 95 percent complete. "We wake up a few times a night, one time last week we saw red on the horizon which was a little intimidating."

The Kellys are ready to evacuate. Since they started from scratch two years ago, aside from their pets there's not much to put in their van.

They have talked about what they'll do if it happens again: "We're moving far away, to Wyoming," she said.

The return home was emotional even for those whose properties were spared.

"When we came up to check on it, we were amazed it was here," said Tom Beckman. "All the trivial things we have to work on — cleaning up, replacing the stuff in the fridge and freezer — that's nothing compared to my friends who lost their homes."

In the hard-hit city of Santa Rosa, two hospitals were forced to close during the fires, leaving just one open, St. Joseph Health.

Eighty-three hospital employees and 51 doctors had homes destroyed during the fires, though many continued to report to work.

"We expect the number to go up," said St. Joseph Health spokeswoman Vanessa DeGier. "We have a bunch of folks going back tonight after evacuation was lifted."

There was also good news to report.

Vicki White, chief nursing officer, said that a total of 36 babies were born at St. Joseph during the week since wildfires started, which represents about three times the normal delivery rate.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 43 of 68

"All of those babies are doing very well," she said

Improving weather, the prospect of some light rain later in the week and tightening containment of the flames were tempered by the first death from the firefighting effort — a driver who was killed when his truck overturned on a winding mountain road.

The truck driver, who had been delivering water to the fire lines, crashed before dawn Monday in Napa County on a roadway that climbs from vineyards into the mountains. No other details were available about the accident, which was under investigation, said Mike Wilson, a fire spokesman.

In the historic main square of the wine and tourist town of Sonoma, a statue of the community's 19th-century founder was draped with signs thanking firefighters who have saved the town from disaster.

"The love in the air is thicker than the smoke," read a sign on the bench that displays the statue of Gen. Mariano Vallejo, which was wearing a face mask.

Associated Press writers Ellen Knickmeyer in Sonoma, Brian Skoloff in Napa, Andrew Dalton in Los Angeles, Martha Mendoza in Santa Cruz and Brian Melley, Janie Har and Jocelyn Gecker in San Francisco contributed to this report.

Follow the AP's complete wildfire coverage here: <https://apnews.com/tag/Wildfires>.

McCain condemns 'half-baked, spurious nationalism' in speech

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — U.S. Sen. John McCain jabbed Monday night at unnamed pushers of isolationist politics, saying at his National Constitution Center Liberty Medal ceremony in Philadelphia that abandoning America's role as an international leader is "unpatriotic."

The six-term Republican senator from Arizona made the remarks after receiving the award for a lifetime of service and sacrifice to the country. In addition to recalling his more than two decades of Navy service and his imprisonment in a Vietnam prisoner of war camp, McCain took a moment to go a step further than the night's other speakers, who lamented what many described as a fractured political climate.

"To abandon the ideals we have advanced around the globe, to refuse the obligations of international leadership for the sake of some half-baked, spurious nationalism cooked up by people who would rather find scapegoats than solve problems," he said, "is as unpatriotic as an attachment to any other tired dogma of the past that Americans consigned to the ash heap of history."

He continued: "We live in a land made of ideals, not blood and soil."

None of the speakers, who included former Vice President Joe Biden, mentioned any current or former government officials during their remarks. But many referenced a time when bipartisanship — namely, the friendship between McCain and the Democrat Biden — wasn't out of the ordinary.

"We often argued — sometimes passionately," McCain said of himself and the former vice president. "But we believed in each other's patriotism and the sincerity of each other's convictions. We believed in the institution we were privileged to serve in."

McCain joined the Navy in 1958 and rose to the rank of captain during his 22 years of service. In 1967, his plane was shot down over Hanoi, Vietnam, during a bombing mission, and he spent years in a Vietnamese prisoner of war camp. He recently revealed that he's fighting brain cancer.

Iraqi forces push into disputed Kirkuk as Kurds withdraw

By **BALINT SZLANKO** and **PHILIP ISSA**, Associated Press

KIRKUK, Iraq (AP) — Two weeks after fighting together against the Islamic State group, Iraqi forces pushed their Kurdish allies out of the disputed city of Kirkuk on Monday, seizing oil fields and other facilities amid soaring tensions over last month's Kurdish vote for independence.

The move by the Iraqi military and its allied militias so soon after neutralizing the Islamic State group in northern Iraq hinted at a country that could once again turn on itself after disposing of a common enemy.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 44 of 68

Civilians and federal troops pulled down Kurdish flags around the city. Kurdish Gov. Najmaddin Karim, who had stayed at his post despite being dismissed by Baghdad weeks ago, fled to Irbil, the capital of Iraq's autonomous Kurdish zone.

Revelers waving Iraq's national flag and the flag of its Turkmen minority flooded central Kirkuk in an evening celebration. But the Shiite sectarian chants heard above the din of the rally underscored the coming political battles between Iraq and its Kurdish region.

Iraqi forces were supported — as they always are now in major operations — by the Popular Mobilization Forces, a predominantly Shiite militia coalition that the Kurds see as an instrument of Iranian policy.

In their bid to keep Kirkuk and its oil-rich countryside, Kurdish leaders whipped up fears that the Baghdad government is dominated by Tehran and would oppress Kurds if they recaptured the city.

Their fears were further affirmed after Iran came out forcefully against the Kurdish region's nonbinding referendum for independence on Sept. 25 and then closed its official crossings to the region on Sunday.

Iraq's Kurds, too, remember the brutal campaigns waged by Saddam Hussein, himself an enemy of Tehran, against the minority, including a poison gas attack on the town of Halabja in 1988 that killed thousands.

As Arab and Turkmen revelers celebrated the change of power in Kirkuk, thousands of Kurdish residents, fearful of federal and militia rule, packed the roads north to Irbil.

But Baghdad was eyeing its Kurdish partners warily as well. Prime Minister Haidar al-Abadi said he was reclaiming a city that never was part of the Kurdish autonomous region.

When Iraq's armed forces crumbled in the face of an advance by Islamic State group in 2014, Kurdish forces moved into Kirkuk to secure the city and its surrounding oil wells. The city is 32 kilometers (20 miles) outside the Kurds' autonomous region in northeast Iraq.

Baghdad insisted the city and its province be returned, but matters came to a head when the Kurdish authorities expanded their referendum to include Kirkuk. To the Iraqi central government, that looked like Kurdish expansionism. The city of more than 1 million is home to Arabs, Kurds and Turkmen, as well as Christians and Sunni and Shiite Muslims.

Kurdish officials accused the Iraqi army of carrying out a "major, multiprong attack," and reported heavy clashes on Kirkuk's outskirts, but a spokesman for Iraq's state-backed militias said they met little resistance.

By midday, federal forces had moved into several major oil fields north of the city, as well as its airport and an important military base, according to Iraqi commanders. Kurdish party headquarters inside Kirkuk had been abandoned.

The U.S., which has armed, trained and provided vital air support to both sides in their shared struggle against the Islamic State group, described Monday's events as "coordinated movements, not attacks," while bemoaning the dispute as a distraction against a common enemy. It said the limited exchange of fire was a "misunderstanding."

After initial reports of clashes in and around the city, it appeared by afternoon as though the vastly outnumbered Kurdish forces, known as the peshmerga, were pulling out with hardly a fight.

Local police stayed in place in Kirkuk as al-Abadi urged civil servants to remain at their posts. "We have only acted to fulfill our constitutional duty and extend the federal authority and impose security and protect the national wealth in this city," he said.

Brig. Gen. Bahzad Ahmed, a spokesman for Kurdish forces, said federal forces seized an oil and gas company and other industrial areas south of Kirkuk in fighting with Kurdish forces that caused "lots of casualties," without providing a number.

He said Iraqi forces have "burnt lots of houses and killed many people" south of the city. His claims could not be verified.

A spokesman for Iraq's state-sanctioned militias said they had "achieved all our goals" in retaking areas from Kurdish forces. Ahmed al-Assadi said federal forces came under fire from "some rebels" and returned fire. He did not say whether they suffered any casualties.

He said federal forces were deployed in the area of the K-1 military base, the Kirkuk airport and a number of oil fields and installations. The Iraqi military said it seized two major oil fields outside the city.

Al-Abadi has said the militias will remain outside the city. Al-Assadi said the Popular Mobilization Forces have not entered central Kirkuk, but Associated Press reporters saw Turkmen PMF militiamen taking up posts in the western part of the city.

Tensions have risen since the Kurdish referendum on independence, which was rejected by the central government, Turkey, Iran, and the United States.

Baghdad and the autonomous Kurdish region have long disagreed over sharing oil revenue and the status of Kirkuk and other places controlled by Kurdish forces but outside the self-ruled region.

Baghdad has increased pressure on the region since the vote, pushing Kurdish leaders to disavow it and accept shared administration over Kirkuk.

Al-Abadi's Cabinet said Sunday that fighters from Turkey's Kurdish insurgency, the PKK, were beginning to appear in Kirkuk, and he declared that would be tantamount to an act of war.

Issa reported from Baghdad. Associated Press writer Emad Matti in Kirkuk, Iraq, contributed to this report.

911 calls on nursing home dying: 'Oh my God, this is crazy'

By TERRY SPENCER, ASSOCIATED PRESS

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — At first there was no hint of distress in the 911 calls, no sense of a crisis unfolding. But newly released emergency calls from a sweltering Florida nursing home that lost its air conditioning to Hurricane Irma showed staffers becoming increasingly agitated by a disaster that would eventually claim 14 elderly lives.

The six calls made from the Rehabilitation Center at Hollywood Hills between 3 a.m. and 6:30 a.m. on Sept. 13, the day the first eight patients died, show that several patients were in respiratory distress and at least two were in cardiac arrest. By the second call, an employee is heard muttering "Whatta night." On the fourth call, another tells someone, "Oh my God, this is crazy."

But it wasn't until the final call did one of the 911 dispatchers realize that the sick patient wasn't an individual event but part of a series. The dispatcher, seeing the earlier calls on his computer screen, questioned if this was the same patient. No, the unidentified employee replied, a different one.

The dispatcher then asks if additional paramedics are needed.

"You guys already have a few other paramedics here, so I'm not sure," the employee responds.

The Hollywood, Florida, Police Department released the tapes Monday. The department is conducting a criminal investigation into the deaths but no arrests have been made and no charges filed. After the eight initial deaths, six other patients injured by the heat have since died, the latest two last week. The dead ranged in age from 57 to 99, with most from their 70s to 90s.

Investigators have said they want to know why the home's approximately 150 patients were not evacuated to a fully functioning, air-conditioned hospital just across the street until after the first deaths had occurred. Some who died had body temperatures as high as 109.9 degrees Fahrenheit (48 Celsius) when they arrived at the hospital. The state has suspended the home's license and Gov. Rick Scott has issued an executive order requiring that nursing homes install generators that can power air conditioners.

Geoffrey D. Smith, the attorney representing the nursing home, had no comment Monday, saying in a statement he has not yet reviewed the calls.

Irma struck South Florida on Sept. 10, knocking out power to most of the region, including the nursing home. The home had generators to power its lights and equipment, but not its air conditioning.

The first 911 call came at 3 a.m. on Sept. 13. The unidentified hospital employee tells the dispatcher that an 84-year-old patient is in cardiac arrest.

"I saw her slouch over. I noticed she is not breathing," the employee says, adding that the patient's mouth and fingers are turning blue. "We are doing CPR." She then reports that the patient has resumed breathing on her own, but it's "very labored."

The second call came an hour later. Again, the patient is near death. At one point the employee mutters, "Whatta night." The dispatcher again sends paramedics.

The third call is short. Another patient in full cardiac arrest is receiving CPR. It is about this time that city officials say paramedics realized they might have a crisis developing.

The employee who makes the fourth call 30 minutes later is showing stress. She reports nurses are doing CPR on another male patient, sighing, "Oh my God, this is crazy."

The employee who makes the fifth call reported that another patient is not breathing. In an annoyed tone, she says to an interrupting co-worker, "Oh my God, I am on the phone."

At this point, no one from the home had told the 911 dispatchers, who work for Broward County, about the earlier patients. While the dispatchers are not identified, from their voices it is clear that most if not all of the calls were taken by different people.

Only in the final call, coming at 6:30 a.m., did the 911 dispatcher question the employee, asking if this is for a different patient. Yes, he is told. He soon asks if he should send more than just two paramedics. It's then that she tells him there are several already there.

About this time, emergency room employees at Memorial Regional Hospital had become concerned by all the patients coming in from across the street. Two employees went to investigate, saying they found patients dying and summoning help. Dozens of doctors, nurses and other employees swarmed across the street, treated the patients and evacuated them to the hospital.

Trump says predecessors didn't honor fallen; response heated

By CALVIN WOODWARD, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — For U.S. presidents, meeting the families of military personnel killed in war is about as wrenching as the presidency gets. President Donald Trump's suggestion Monday that his predecessors fell short in that duty brought a visceral reaction from those who witnessed those grieving encounters.

"He's a deranged animal," Alyssa Mastromonaco, a former deputy chief of staff to President Barack Obama, tweeted about Trump. With an expletive, she called Trump's statement in the Rose Garden a lie.

Trump said in a news conference he had written letters to the families of four soldiers killed in an Oct. 4 ambush in Niger and planned to call them, crediting himself with taking extra steps in honoring the dead properly. "Most of them didn't make calls," he said of his predecessors. He said it's possible that Obama "did sometimes" but "other presidents did not call."

The record is plain that presidents reached out to families of the dead and to the wounded, often with their presence as well as by letter and phone. The path to Walter Reed and other military hospitals, as well as to the Dover, Delaware, Air Force Base where the remains of fallen soldiers are often brought, is a familiar one to Obama, George W. Bush and others.

Bush, even at the height of two wars, "wrote all the families of the fallen," said Freddy Ford, spokesman for the ex-president. Ford said Bush also called or met "hundreds, if not thousands" of family members of the war dead.

Obama's official photographer, Pete Souza, tweeted that he photographed Obama "meeting with hundreds of wounded soldiers, and family members of those killed in action." Others recalled his frequent visits with Gold Star families, and travels to Walter Reed, Dover and other venues with families of the dead and with the wounded.

Trump addressed the matter when asked why he had not spoken about the four soldiers killed in Niger. They died when militants thought to be affiliated with the Islamic State group ambushed them while they were patrolling in unarmored trucks with Nigerien troops.

"I actually wrote letters individually to the soldiers we're talking about, and they're going to be going out either today or tomorrow," he said, meaning he wrote to the families of the fallen soldiers. He did not explain why letters had not been sent yet, more than a week after the attack.

"If you look at President Obama and other presidents, most of them didn't make calls," Trump said.

Pressed on that statement later, he said of Obama: "I was told that he didn't often, and a lot of presidents don't. They write letters." He went on: "President Obama, I think, probably did sometimes, and maybe sometimes he didn't. I don't know. That's what I was told. ... Some presidents didn't do anything."

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 47 of 68

Press Secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said later that Trump "wasn't criticizing predecessors, but stating a fact." She argued that presidents didn't always call families of those killed in battle: "Sometimes they call, sometimes they send a letter, other times they have the opportunity to meet family members in person."

She said anyone claiming a former president had called every family was "mistaken."

Bush's commitment to writing to all military families of the dead and to reaching out by phone or meeting with many others came despite the enormity of the task. In the Iraq war alone, U.S. combat deaths were highest during his presidency, exceeding 800 each year from 2004 through 2007. The number fell to 313 in Bush's last year in office as the insurgency faded. Bush once said he felt the appropriate way to show his respect was to meet family members in private.

Obama declared an end to combat operations in August 2010 and the last U.S. troops were withdrawn in December 2011. As Obama wound down that war, he sent tens of thousands more troops into Afghanistan in 2009 and 2010, and the death count mounted. From a total of 155 Americans killed in Afghanistan in 2008, which was Bush's last full year in office, the number jumped to 311 in 2009 and peaked the next year at 498. In all, more than 1,700 died in Afghanistan on Obama's watch.

Among other rituals honoring military families, the Obamas had a "Gold Star" Christmas tree in the White House decorated with hundreds of photos and notes from people who had lost loved ones in war. Gold Star families visited during the holidays, bringing ornaments.

Trump visited Dover early in his presidency, going in February with his daughter Ivanka for the return of the remains of a U.S. Navy SEAL killed during a raid in Yemen, William "Ryan" Owens.

Trump's relations with Gold Star families have not always been smooth, dating from his belittlement of the parents of slain U.S. soldier Humayun Khan, who was Muslim. Trump was angered when the soldier's father, Khizr Khan, was given a platform to criticize him at the Democratic National Convention.

Owens' grieving father said he didn't want to talk with Trump at Dover. But the sailor's widow, Carryn, attended Trump's address to Congress and wept as he thanked her.

Associated Press writers Robert Burns and Jesse J. Holland contributed to this report.

Houses spared by massive fires bring joy and sense of loss

By **SUDHIN THANAWALA** and **TERRY CHEA**, Associated Press

SANTA ROSA, Calif. (AP) — Tom and Catherine Andrews live on the edge of devastation.

On one side of their mid-century style home, the deadly wildfires that ravaged parts of Northern California for more than a week wiped away the houses of neighbors they have known as long as two decades. On the other side, were those like the Andrews, who were spared.

On Monday as calm winds gave an advantage to firefighters trying to tame the flames, the couple balanced their good fortune against the losses suffered by many friends.

"It was disbelief and just feeling like the luckiest guy on earth," Tom Andrews said. "I can't believe, I mean, total destruction 50 feet away and to have our house still standing here."

For his wife, a real estate agent who sold many of the homes to friends on Wikiup Drive, there was bitter along with the sweet.

"It's heartbreaking," she said. "I'm trying not to have survivor's guilt, I think they call it. But we've been here 20 years this week. We raised our kids in this house. So many of the families on this hill raised their kids."

After days of wind gusts that constantly fanned the fires, lighter wind offered a chance for crews to make greater gains, and thousands more people were allowed to go home more than a week after the blazes that have killed more than 40 people began.

Improving weather, the prospect of some rain later in the week and tightening containment of the flames were tempered by the first death from the firefighting effort — a driver who was killed when his truck overturned on a winding mountain road.

Many of those who returned knew in advance whether their homes were standing or reduced to ash.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 48 of 68

Satellite images, aerial photos and news reports with detailed maps of entire neighborhoods had given homeowners in populated areas a pretty clear idea of the fire's path. Some had seen the flames coming as they fled. Some families in rural areas had to wait until they laid eyes on their property.

The return home was emotional even for those whose properties were spared.

"When we came up to check on it, we were amazed it was here," said Tom Beckman, who credited his neighbor's two sheep with chomping vegetation surrounding his home and keeping the fires at bay.

"All the trivial things we have to work on — cleaning up, replacing the stuff in the fridge and freezer — that's nothing compared to my friends who lost their homes," Beckman said.

The smell of smoke remained thick in the air and spread to the San Francisco area, but skies were clearer in some places.

The truck driver, who had been delivering water to the fire lines, crashed before dawn Monday in Napa County on a roadway that climbs from vineyards into the mountains. No other details were available about the accident, which was under investigation, said Mike Wilson, a fire spokesman.

In the historic main square of the wine and tourist town of Sonoma, a statue of the community's 19th century founder was draped with signs thanking firefighters who have saved the town from disaster.

"The love in the air is thicker than the smoke," read a sign on the bench that displays the statue of Gen. Mariano Vallejo, which was wearing a face mask.

Although the weather was still hot and dry, the calmer winds and the possibility of rain should help crews tamp down the deadliest, most destructive cluster of blazes in California history.

"Any sort of moisture is welcome at this point," said Scott Rowe, a meteorologist with the National Weather Service. "In terms of fire, the weather outlook is looking to be improving."

A fraction of an inch is predicted to fall late Thursday in Sonoma and Napa counties, though fire officials noted that if showers bring more wind than moisture, it could spell trouble for firefighters.

Crews continued to battle flames that have crossed a mountain from Sonoma County to Napa County. Three helicopters repeatedly dipped water buckets into a reservoir and made drops to stop flames from crawling downhill toward historic wineries in the Napa Valley.

Most of the people reported missing have been located, and authorities said many were false reports from people far away who could not get in touch with friends or relatives.

About 100 people remained unaccounted for. Sonoma County Sheriff Rob Giordano said he expects some of those will be found dead in burned-out homes.

Before they let people return to view the damage to their homes, authorities want to search thoroughly for remains and make sure the area is safe — a process that could take weeks, Giordano said.

About 40,000 evacuees were still waiting for permission to go back to their communities, down from a high of 100,000 on Saturday.

While police kept people from burned-out neighborhoods, some managed to sneak past road blocks to view the damage.

Janis Watkins wasn't so lucky. She was turned back from Santa Rosa's Wikiup neighborhood, where she wanted to see if the home she grew up in — built by her father — had survived.

She was almost certain it was lost, as well as a home where she raised her family in another part of the city.

"It appears that both my family homes are gone," she said, tears in her eyes. "The landmarks of my life are gone. It's a big emotional loss."

Associated Press writers Ellen Knickmeyer in Sonoma, Brian Skoloff in Napa and Brian Melley, Janie Har and Jocelyn Gecker in San Francisco contributed to this report.

Follow the AP's complete wildfire coverage here: <https://apnews.com/tag/Wildfires>.

Venezuela opposition looks for answers after election loss

By **FABIOLA SANCHEZ** and **CHRISTINE ARMARIO**, Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Voting sites were shifted to distant neighborhoods with rampant crime. Ballots featured the faces of opposition candidates who lost in primaries. The government-stacked National Electoral Council denied monitoring accreditation to one of Venezuela's most important independent observers.

The opposition pointed on Monday to those irregularities and others that began the moment regional elections were called to explain a staggering loss in gubernatorial contests it had expected to win in Sunday's voting.

"We encountered an absolutely fraudulent system," said Carlos Ocariz, the opposition's candidate in Miranda, the nation's second most populous state where the candidate of the ruling socialist party won.

Opposition leaders vowed to contest the vote and called for protests, though there was no sign of the mass anti-government demonstrations that wracked Venezuela this year.

National Electoral Council officials stood by the results showing that socialist candidates won at least 17 of the country's 23 governorships despite widespread anger over a crumbling economy where triple-digit inflation, soaring crime, and food and medicine shortages make life a daily struggle for many Venezuelans.

Socialist party leader Diosdado Cabello said that if the opposition has proof of fraud they should share it. "We're still waiting," he said.

The contentious election threatened to further divide this already polarized nation and throw the strained opposition into deeper disarray. Some worried the election loss might strengthen the more radical elements of the opposition and jeopardize chances for a negotiated solution to the political conflict.

At least one of the losing opposition candidates accepted the results.

"We lost. We have to accept it," said Henri Falcon, a one-time socialist party politician who in recent years joined the opposition and lost his re-election bid as governor of Lara state. The official vote count said he trailed ruling party candidate Carmen Melendez by 18 points in the northern state.

Even before the election, the opposition was struggling against apathy and disillusionment among Venezuelans, though the official turnout figure of 61 percent seemed to indicate many people did vote.

"There is a lot of frustration," said Luis Vicente Leon, president of Datanalisis, a Caracas-based polling agency. "They (the opposition) are going to be divided between those who believe there was massive fraud, others who think it's the fault of the leadership, and some who believe 'chavismo' has come back."

That was certainly the ruling party's conclusion, claiming that the victory was a profound endorsement for the socialist ideals installed by the late President Hugo Chavez nearly two decades ago.

"Chavismo is more alive than ever," said Hector Rodriguez, who defeated Ocariz in the Miranda governor's contest.

Leaders with the opposition's main alliance pledged Monday evening, nearly 24 hours later, not to recognize the results until an independent, internationally verified audit is complete.

Angel Oropeda, a political coordinator for the opposition, said the election was ripe with irregularities. More than 1 million Venezuelans had difficulty voting because of issues like delays in the opening of polling sites and damaged machines, he said. At least 90,000 votes that should have gone to the opposition did not because election officials refused to remove from ballots candidates who lost in a September primary, he added.

"The regime chose the path of fraud," he said.

The U.S. State Department denounced many of the same irregularities, promising to wield the "full weight" of U.S. diplomatic and economic power in support of the Venezuelan people. The Trump administration has sanctioned dozens of Venezuelan leaders and prohibited U.S. banks from issuing new credit to the Maduro government.

"We condemn the lack of free and fair elections," State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said.

If there were irregularities in the vote count itself, Luis Lander, director of the independent Venezuelan Electoral Observatory, said the first place to look for evidence would be the thousands of cardboard boxes

containing paper printouts showing exactly how each person voted at the electronic voting machines

But any impact on the vote caused by moves like relocating voting sites would be more difficult to measure. "Of course it has an impact," Lander said. "But how much is hard to know."

Results for individual races published on the electoral council's website showed that even including votes that went to no-longer-running opposition candidates who remained on the ballot wouldn't have significantly changed results.

David Smilde, a Tulane University professor and expert on Venezuela, said despite whatever irregularities might have taken place the results also show many Venezuelans are not ready to vote for the opposition.

"Maybe the government is quite unpopular," he said. "But I think there's a good percentage of people out there that feel 'chavista.'"

Representatives with the Council of Latin American Electoral Experts, an international body that observed the vote but did not have access to the same data as a traditional independent observer, said the vote had proceeded normally. Some opposition members have previously criticized the council as being partial toward the government.

A defiant Cabello suggested the opposition might now turn inward.

"Take a spiritual retreat," he urged. "Reflect."

Associated Press writer Fabiola Sanchez reported this story in Caracas and AP writer Christine Armario reported from Bogota, Colombia.

North Korea says 'a nuclear war may break out any moment'

By EDITH M. LEDERER, Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — North Korea's deputy U.N. ambassador warned Monday that the situation on the Korean peninsula "has reached the touch-and-go point and a nuclear war may break out any moment."

Kim In Ryong told the U.N. General Assembly's disarmament committee that North Korea is the only country in the world that has been subjected to "such an extreme and direct nuclear threat" from the United States since the 1970s — and said the country has the right to possess nuclear weapons in self-defense.

He pointed to large-scale military exercises every year using "nuclear assets" and said what is more dangerous is what he called a U.S. plan to stage a "secret operation aimed at the removal of our supreme leadership."

This year, Kim said, North Korea completed its "state nuclear force and thus became the full-fledged nuclear power which possesses the delivery means of various ranges, including the atomic bomb, H-bomb and intercontinental ballistic rockets."

"The entire U.S. mainland is within our firing range and if the U.S. dares to invade our sacred territory even an inch it will not escape our severe punishment in any part of the globe," he warned.

Kim's speech follows escalating threats between North Korea and the United States, and increasingly tough U.N. sanctions.

Russian President Vladimir Putin said Monday that his country is curtailing economic, scientific and other ties with North Korea in line with U.N. sanctions, and the European Union announced new sanctions on Pyongyang for developing nuclear weapons and ballistic missiles.

U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson said Sunday that diplomatic efforts aimed at resolving the North Korean crisis "will continue until the first bomb drops." His commitment to diplomacy came despite President Donald Trump's tweets several weeks ago that his chief envoy was "wasting his time" trying to negotiate with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, whom he derisively referred to as "Little Rocket Man."

North Korea's deputy U.N. ambassador called his country's nuclear and missile arsenal "a precious strategic asset that cannot be reversed or bartered for anything."

"Unless the hostile policy and the nuclear threat of the U.S. is thoroughly eradicated, we will never put our nuclear weapons and ballistic rockets on the negotiating table under any circumstances," Kim said.

He told the disarmament committee that the Democratic People's Republic of Korea — North Korea's

official name — had hoped for a nuclear-free world.

Instead, Kim said, all nuclear states are accelerating the modernization of their weapons and “reviving a nuclear arms race reminiscent of (the) Cold War era.” He noted that the nuclear weapon states, including the United States, boycotted negotiations for the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons that was approved in July by 122 countries at the United Nations.

“The DPRK consistently supports the total elimination of nuclear weapons and the efforts for denuclearization of the entire world,” he said. But as long as the United States rejects the treaty and “constantly threatens and blackmails the DPRK with nuclear weapons ... the DPRK is not in position to accede to the treaty.”

Trump, McConnell: No matter what people say, we're friends

By ERICA WERNER, AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump and Mitch McConnell reaffirmed their alliance of necessity Monday in a raucous Rose Garden news conference that also underscored their sharp differences. The garrulous president claimed they were longtime friends now closer than ever; the reserved Senate Republican leader allowed that they share goals and speak often.

It was a spectacle that mesmerized Washington, as Trump and McConnell appeared side by side for more than a half-hour, the president tossing off answers — sometimes mini-speeches — on all topics while McConnell, disciplined as always, delivered brief, scholarly explanations about the legislative process and the risks to their party of nominating candidates who can't win.

At various points, the president denounced the Russia-Trump campaign investigation, lauded himself for his record on judicial nominations, argued wrongly that “it took years for the Reagan administration to get taxes done,” and claimed that past presidents hadn't necessarily contacted bereaved family members to mourn lost service members — before backtracking on that assertion when pressed. He also noted, as he often does, that he won the presidential election last fall, and he implored Hillary Clinton to run again.

In front of a hastily assembled White House press corps, jostling each other on the lawn because there wasn't time to bring out chairs, Trump began his remarks by saluting McConnell and, as he described it, their longstanding friendship.

“We're probably now closer than ever before,” the president proclaimed as McConnell grinned stiffly at his side. “My relationship with this gentleman is outstanding.”

Trump's former chief strategist, Steve Bannon, over the weekend declared all-out political war on the GOP establishment, including McConnell and incumbent Republican senators Bannon has deemed unsupportive of the president's agenda. Trump said earlier Monday during a cabinet meeting that he “can understand fully how Steve Bannon feels” and even that some in the party “should be ashamed of themselves.” But he later suggested he might try to talk Bannon out of challenging some Senate Republicans whom McConnell has pledged to defend.

“Some of the people that he may be looking at, I'm going to see if we talk him out of that, because frankly, they're great people,” Trump said.

Trump's change in tone suggested that McConnell, whose allies regularly do battle with Bannon, might have talked Trump into intervening during their lunch together.

“Just so you understand, the Republican Party is very, very unified,” Trump insisted.

McConnell took the opportunity to lay out, for the public and for the audience of one standing beside him, why he and GOP allies work to protect Senate incumbents. He argued that some conservative Republicans nominated in the 2010 and 2012 cycles didn't win because they weren't able to “appeal to a broader electorate in the general election.”

“You have to nominate people who can actually win, because winners make policy and losers go home,” McConnell said.

Trump briefly pursed his lips as McConnell made those remarks, then took a question on another topic. Bannon, meanwhile, seemed in no mood to back down. “Senator McConnell and the GOP Establishment

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 52 of 68

have 'sown the wind — now they reap the whirlwind,'" he said.

Bannon's Breitbart News site also reveled in the attention. "Bitter Mitch! Triggered by Bannon," one of its Monday headlines read.

Trump spent August assailing McConnell for his inability to pass legislation to repeal the Affordable Care Act, calling the failure "a disgrace" and ordering McConnell over Twitter to "get back to work." For his part, McConnell has complained that Trump had "excessive expectations" for how quickly Congress could act.

Nevertheless the Kentucky senator seconded the president's latest views.

"Contrary to what some of you may have reported, we are together, totally, on this agenda to move America forward," McConnell said.

It was not clear what led to Monday's sudden question-and-answer session, which followed lunch between McConnell and Trump at the White House. Their meeting came at a critical time, with the Senate poised to vote this week on a budget that would set the stage for tax legislation that many Republicans view as make-or-break following the failure on health care. Both McConnell and Trump recommitted themselves to the goal of passing a tax bill by the end of this year.

The last time McConnell was at the White House was early last month. On that occasion, Trump bypassed him and Republican House Speaker Paul Ryan to cut a deal with the Senate's Democratic leader, Chuck Schumer, and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi on debt and spending.

That kicked off a brief period when bipartisanship was in the air in Washington, and it seemed possible that Trump would make common cause with Democrats at the expense of Republicans on other issues, too. But the suggestion of a deal on immigration appears to have fallen apart. Questioned Monday about Schumer and Pelosi, Trump replied: "Well, I hope to have a relationship. If we don't, we don't."

However, he claimed that his recent action to shut off certain payments to insurers under the Affordable Care Act, denounced by Democrats as sabotage, was forcing bipartisan talks. Indeed there may be a renewed focus on Senate bipartisan negotiations aimed at addressing the payments, which go to subsidize costs for low-income people.

"Because of that, people are talking now, Democrats are talking to the Republicans," Trump said, contending that a short-term fix would be followed next year by ultimate success in repealing "Obamacare," and asserting with no evidence, as he's done in the past, that the votes are there now to repeal the law.

Trump also denounced the investigation into his campaign's involvement with Russia, being conducted by a special counsel and GOP-led congressional committees.

"The whole Russia thing was an excuse for the Democrats losing the election," he said.

"There has been absolutely no collusion. It's been stated that they have no collusion. They ought to get to the end of it, because I think the American public is sick of it."

Associated Press writer Jill Colvin contributed to this report.

Court jails 2 Catalan independence leaders in sedition probe

By ARITZ PARRA and CIARAN GILES, Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) — Spain's confrontation with its independence-seeking region of Catalonia intensified Monday when a judge ordered the leaders of two pro-independence groups jailed while they are investigated on possible sedition charges for organizing demonstrations before the region's disputed secession vote.

The jailing of Jordi Sanchez and Jordi Cuixart, the heads of grassroots organizations Catalan National Assembly and Omnium Cultural, sparked an immediate outcry in Barcelona, Catalonia's capital. People banged on pots and pans, honked car horns and clapped in the streets.

The judge's order came nearly 12 hours after a Monday morning deadline passed without the president of Catalonia clarifying whether he has declared independence from Spain.

The Spanish government Catalan President Carles Puigdemont now has until Thursday to backtrack on any steps the region has taken toward secession. If he refuses, the government has said it would invoke

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 53 of 68

constitutional authority to restrict or revoke the areas of self-governance Catalonia has now.

The judge ordered Sanchez and Cuixart jailed while their roles in organizing Sept. 20-21 demonstrations in Barcelona are investigated. Spanish police arrested several Catalan officials and raided offices on those two days to prevent an independence referendum from taking place on Oct. 1.

In Monday's court ruling, the Spanish National Court judge said Sanchez and Cuixart led the demonstrations, ignored some police recommendations for maintaining safety, and helped form a cordon to keep Spanish police from carrying out their duties, among other actions.

If indicted, tried and convicted of sedition, they could face prison terms of up to 15 years.

The actions of Catalonia's police chief and a senior deputy during the September demonstrations also are being investigated. However, the judge ruled Monday that police chief Maj. Josep Lluís Trapero and Lt. Teresa Laplana, could remain free with restrictions, including revocation of their passports and orders to appear come back to court every two weeks.

Earlier, Catalan President Carles Puigdemont and Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy exchanged letters but made no headway in the solving the region's conflict, one of the deepest political crises the country has faced in the four decades since democracy was restored.

Catalonia's government held the Oct. 1 referendum over the Spanish government's insistence the vote was illegal and a court suspending it so its constitutionality could be considered. Those who voted were overwhelmingly in favor of secession, but fewer than half of eligible voters cast ballots.

Based on the referendum results, Puigdemont made an ambiguous declaration of independence last week, but said he would not immediately move to put it into effect to allow time for talks and mediation.

Responding to the Spanish government's demand to state explicitly by Monday morning whether he had declared independence, Puigdemont instead sent a four-page letter seeking two months of negotiations and mediation.

"The priority of my government is to intensively seek a path to dialogue," Puigdemont said in his letter. "Our proposal for dialogue is sincere and honest."

The conservative prime minister, in a response less than two hours later, lamented that Puigdemont declined to answer the question and said he had until Thursday morning to fall in line.

"To extend this situation of uncertainty is only favoring those who are trying to destroy civic concord and impose a radical and impoverishing project in Catalonia," Rajoy wrote in his letter.

Spain has repeatedly said it's unwilling to sit down with Puigdemont if calls for independence are on the table. Deputy Prime Minister Soraya Saenz de Santamaria said Puigdemont's request for dialogue was "not credible."

"It wasn't very difficult to say yes or no," Saenz de Santamaria told reporters in Madrid. "That was the question that was asked, and the response shouldn't be complicated."

After the judge's decision in the sedition case, Puigdemont described the jailing of the pro-independence group leaders as "very bad news."

"They try to imprison ideas but they make stronger the need for freedom" he tweeted.

Catalonia is home to 7.5 million people and contributes a fifth of Spain's 1.1 trillion-euro (\$1.3 trillion) economy. Polls have shown about half of the people in the wealthy region don't want to break away from Spain.

The Spanish government is lowering the country's economic growth forecast for 2018 from 2.6 to 2.3 percent, blaming the political uncertainty in Catalonia for the slowdown.

The more modest growth target appears in the budget plan that Spain's conservative government has submitted to European authorities. It was shared with The Associated Press early Tuesday.

In the plan, Spanish authorities also forecast a public deficit level of 2.3 percent, 0.1 percent higher than earlier estimates. Authorities blame the revisions both on a slower global economic cycle and less consumer spending domestically as a result of the deadlock in Catalonia

Giles reported from Madrid.

Associated Press writer Frank Griffiths in London contributed to this report.

Weinstein Co., overwhelmed by backlash, may be up for sale

By DAMIAN J. TROISE, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The Weinstein Co., besieged by sexual harassment allegations against its namesake and co-founder, may be putting itself up for sale.

The company said Monday that it will receive an immediate cash infusion from Colony Capital and is in negotiations for the potential sale of all or a significant portion of the company responsible for producing films such as "Django Unchained," "The Hateful Eight" and "Lion."

Colony Capital, the private-equity arm of Colony NorthStar, was founded by Thomas Barrack, a close adviser to President Donald Trump. Barrack chaired Trump's presidential inaugural committee.

Harvey Weinstein was fired last week by the film production company he helped create. The allegations of sexual harassment and assault against Weinstein span decades and include many of the film industry's leading actresses.

The backlash has been severe as more women go public with their interactions with Weinstein.

Law enforcement in the U.S. and Europe are taking a new look at past allegations.

The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has revoked his membership, as has the British Academy of Film and Television Arts.

"This has got to be a fire sale," said Richard Levick, chairman and CEO of crisis-management firm Levick International. He added that while he doesn't think anyone would be interested in buying the Weinstein name, they might be interested in "buying the pieces."

Amazon Studios, the growing film arm of Amazon, cut ties with the Weinstein company last week. Robert De Niro, Julianne Moore and director David O. Russell scrapped an untitled Amazon Studios series that was being produced by The Weinstein Co.

Showtime has threatened to pull out of an Oliver Stone drama in development, "Guantanamo," because Weinstein Co. is a producer.

"The stink from this is so substantial that it makes almost anyone to try to defend them to become an untouchable," Levick said.

Word of a potential sale comes just three days after Bob Weinstein, who helped found the company with his brother, Harvey, said that a sale was not an option.

"We are pleased to invest in The Weinstein Company and to help it move forward," Colony said Monday. "We will help return the company to its rightful iconic position in the independent film and television industry."

Now, Colony will have to weigh a sale price against "brand liability," Levick said. This includes unknown things such as how many more women may come forward.

The list of women alleging harassment and assault by Harvey Weinstein continues to grow. More than 30 women, including actresses Angelina Jolie, Ashley Judd and Gwyneth Paltrow — have spoken out.

Business writers Stanley J. Choe and Barbara Ortutay contributed to this report.

What cosmic crash confirmed: Einstein was as good as gold

By SETH BORENSTEIN, AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — When two extremely dense neutron stars crashed together in a distant galaxy, astronomers struck scientific gold, confirming previously unproven theories, including some from Albert Einstein.

Scientists announced Monday that after picking up two faint signals in mid-August, they were able to find the location of the long-ago crash and see the end of it play out. Measurements of the light and other energy that the crash produced helped them answer some cosmic questions.

GRAVITATIONAL WAVES

Scientists, starting with Einstein, figured that when two neutron stars collide they would produce a

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 55 of 68

gravitational wave, a ripple in the universe-wide fabric of space-time. Four other times that these waves were detected they were the result of merging black holes. This is the first time scientists observed one caused by a neutron star crash.

WHERE GOLD COMES FROM

The Big Bang created light elements like hydrogen and helium. Supernovas created medium elements, up to iron. But what about the heavier ones like gold, platinum and uranium? Astronomers thought they came from two neutron stars colliding, and when they saw this crash they confirmed it. One astronomer described as a "giant train wreck that creates gold." They estimate that this one event generated an amount of gold and platinum that outweighs the entire Earth by a factor of 10.

GAMMA RAYS

Gamma ray bursts are some of the most energetic and deadly pulses of radiation in the universe. Astronomers weren't quite sure where short gamma ray bursts came from, but figured that a crash of neutron stars was a good bet. Watching this event confirmed the theory.

EXPANDING UNIVERSE

Astronomers know the universe is expanding, and they use a figure called the Hubble Constant to describe how fast. Two different ways scientists have of measuring this speed of expansion yields two numbers that are somewhat close to each other, but not quite the same. By measuring how far the gravitational wave had to travel, astronomers came up with another estimate that was between the earlier two, but it also comes with a large margin of error.

HOW FAST DO RAYS AND WAVES GO?

The crash showed that gravitational waves and gamma rays travel at nearly the speed of light — which is what Einstein's General Relativity theory says. NASA astrophysicist Julie McEnery said: "Yet again, Einstein passes another test."

Trump: Cuba 'is responsible' for attacks on US personnel

By JOSH LEDERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Monday that he believes Cuba is responsible for unexplained, invisible attacks in Cuba that have harmed American government workers.

Though Trump's comments appeared to be a new allegation, it wasn't clear whether he meant Cuba was behind the attacks or merely shared the onus because it failed to keep Americans safe on its soil. The United States has avoided casting blame on Cuban President Raul Castro's government for the attacks that began last year and have eluded an FBI investigation.

"I do believe Cuba's responsible. I do believe that," Trump said in a Rose Garden news conference. "And it's a very unusual attack, as you know. But I do believe Cuba is responsible."

The president did not elaborate. But in a cable sent Monday to all overseas U.S. diplomatic posts, the State Department said it has "not assigned blame to the Government of Cuba."

"We are still investigating these attacks and do not know who or what is behind them. We continue to exchange information with Cuban investigators," said the diplomatic cable. Marked "sensitive," the cable laid out the rationale for the steps the U.S. has taken in response to the attacks, including pulling more than half its diplomats from Cuba and kicking out 15 Cuban diplomats in the United States.

There was no reaction from the Cuban Embassy in Washington to Trump's remark. Castro's government has repeatedly denied both involvement in and knowledge of the attacks.

Trump offered no new details about what type of weapon might have caused damage ranging from permanent hearing loss to mild traumatic brain injury, or concussion. The State Department has said that despite the lengthy investigation and FBI visits to the island, the U.S. still can't identify either a culprit or a device.

Trump's ambiguous allegation against the Cubans was likely to increase tensions even further between the two former enemies. The U.S. and Cuba re-opened diplomatic relations in 2015 after a half-century of estrangement, but the attacks on Americans and steps taken by Washington in response have started

to unravel those budding ties.

The U.S. has not explicitly accused any actor of perpetrating the attacks, which in some cases involved mysterious, blaring sounds that led to investigators to consider whether a sonic weapon was involved.

Still, the U.S. has pointed to Cuba's tight control over security in Havana and its close surveillance of Americans working there are reasons to believe that Cuba might know more about what's transpired than it has let on. The State Department has also said that no matter who is attacking Americans, it's Cuba's responsibility under international law to protect U.S. embassy workers.

"We believe that the Cuban government could stop the attacks on our diplomats," White House chief of staff John Kelly said last week.

The State Department has said 22 Americans are "medically confirmed" to be affected and that the number could grow. The symptoms and circumstances reported have varied widely, making some hard to tie conclusively to the attacks. The incidents began last year and are considered "ongoing," with an attack reported as recently as late August.

AP Diplomatic Writer Matthew Lee contributed to this report.

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

NYC 'remains a target,' FBI says after bombing conviction

By LARRY NEUMEISTER, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The swift conviction Monday of a New Jersey man in a mostly botched bombing mission in Manhattan last summer was labeled a victory against terrorism by law enforcement officials, but they urged continued vigilance.

"It's very obvious that this city remains a target," said William F. Sweeney Jr., head of the city's FBI office, at a news conference outside Manhattan federal court after a jury that deliberated about four hours over parts of two days convicted Ahmad Khan Rahimi of all eight charges against him.

Sweeney credited hundreds of law enforcement officers in New Jersey and New York for an airtight case against the 29-year-old Afghanistan-born Rahimi. Evidence at his two-week trial showed he had set off a pipe bomb along a Marine Corps charity race in Seaside Heights, New Jersey, as a morning prelude to the Sept. 17, 2016, evening bombing in Manhattan's Chelsea neighborhood that injured 30 people.

"Most importantly, I want to thank the public for how engaged they were when this was going on last September," Sweeney said. "It's that engagement that's critical, especially as we go forward into this holiday season. So I wanted to remind everybody to please stay attentive, to please stay alert, and if you do see something, say something."

Prosecutors say Rahimi, inspired by propaganda from al-Qaida and the Islamic State group for four years, carefully planned a day of terror designed to kill Americans when he left his Elizabeth home with two pressure-cooker explosives and seven smaller bombs in a backpack.

They called it a miracle nobody died. The race had been delayed, and somehow a blast on Manhattan's 23rd Street that propelled a small trash bin 120 feet (37 meters), spread a rain of shrapnel and shattered apartment and car windows caused no fatalities.

Joon H. Kim, acting U.S. attorney in Manhattan, said Rahimi was "hoping to kill as many innocent people as possible" when he dropped off the 23rd Street explosive and a second pressure-cooker bomb on 27th Street that never went off.

"Today's verdict is a victory for New York City. It's a victory for America in its fight against terror. It's a victory for all who believe in the cause of justice," Kim said.

With federal court as a backdrop, the prosecutor led an outdoor news conference minutes after the jury returned a verdict on charges carrying a mandatory life prison term. Sentencing for the 29-year-old former employee of a fried chicken restaurant is set for Jan. 18.

A relaxed Rahimi sometimes looked at jurors as the verdict was read but smiled afterward as he spoke

with Sabrina Shroff, an assistant federal defender, and as he left court to return to prison. Shroff promised to appeal.

Defense lawyers did not challenge most of the evidence and seemed to catch prosecutors by surprise when Shroff said in closing arguments that the jury should exonerate Rahimi on charges related to the bomb that never detonated, which would have spared him from a mandatory life term.

The docile defendant was a transformation from what a Linden, New Jersey, police officer encountered when he tried to help Rahimi after finding him sleeping in a doorway two days after the bombing, said John Miller, counterterrorism chief of the New York Police Department.

Miller said Rahimi fired a gun at the officer. Rahimi has pleaded not guilty to New Jersey charges stemming from the shootout that left him hospitalized for weeks afterward. The case is pending.

Miller said Rahimi's attack was one of two dozen plots against New York City since Sept. 11, 2001.

A notebook stained by blood and pierced by a bullet was found on Rahimi and became a centerpiece of trial evidence. Prosecutors said words in it described Rahimi's terrorism inspirations and his intent to kill and terrorize.

The jury also saw dozens of surveillance videos of Rahimi as he dragged through Manhattan bombs containing his fingerprints and DNA. His backpack of bombs was found the next day near a train station in New Jersey.

Miller said the case should be a warning to would-be terrorists.

"This is the wrong place to try and carry out an act of terrorism. Witnesses will come forward. Evidence will be developed. Arrests will be made. Prosecutions will be brought forth and they will be successful," he said.

Scientists witness huge cosmic crash, find origins of gold

By **SETH BORENSTEIN, AP Science Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — It was a faint signal, but it told of one of the most violent acts in the universe, and it would soon reveal secrets of the cosmos, including how gold was created.

Astronomers around the world reacted to the signal quickly, focusing telescopes located on every continent and even in orbit to a distant spot in the sky.

What they witnessed in mid-August and revealed Monday was the long-ago collision of two neutron stars — a phenomenon California Institute of Technology's David H. Reitze called "the most spectacular fireworks in the universe."

"When these things collide, all hell breaks loose," he said.

Measurements of the light and other energy emanating from the crash have helped scientists explain how planet-killing gamma ray bursts are born, how fast the universe is expanding, and where heavy elements like platinum and gold come from.

"This is getting everything you wish for," said Syracuse University physics professor Duncan Brown, one of more than 4,000 scientists involved in the blitz of science that the crash kicked off. "This is our fantasy observation."

It started in a galaxy called NGC 4993, seen from Earth in the Hydra constellation. Two neutron stars, collapsed cores of stars so dense that a teaspoon of their matter would weigh 1 billion tons, danced ever faster and closer together until they collided, said Carnegie Institution astronomer Maria Drout.

The crash, called a kilonova, generated a fierce burst of gamma rays and a gravitational wave, a faint ripple in the fabric of space and time, first theorized by Albert Einstein.

"This is like a cosmic atom smasher at a scale far beyond humans would be capable of building," said Andy Howell, a staff scientist at the Las Cumbres Observatory. "We finally now know what happens when an unstoppable force meets an immovable object and it's a kilonova."

The crash happened 130 million years ago, while dinosaurs still roamed on Earth, but the signal didn't arrive on Earth until Aug. 17 after traveling 130 million light-years. A light-year is 5.88 trillion miles.

Signals were picked up within 1.7 seconds of each other, by NASA's Fermi telescope, which detects

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 58 of 68

gamma rays, and gravity wave detectors in Louisiana and Washington state that are a part of the LIGO Laboratory, whose founders won a Nobel Prize earlier this month. A worldwide alert went out to focus telescopes on what became the most well-observed astronomical event in history.

Before August, the only other gravity waves detected by LIGO were generated by colliding black holes. But black holes let no light escape, so astronomers could see nothing.

This time there was plenty to see, measure and analyze: matter, light, and other radiation. The Hubble Space Telescope even got a snapshot of the afterglow.

Finding where the crash happened wasn't easy. Eventually scientists narrowed the location down to 100 galaxies, began a closer search of those, and found it in the ninth galaxy they looked at.

It is like "the classic challenge of finding a needle in the haystack with the added challenge that the needle is fading away and the haystack is moving," said Marcelle Soares-Santos, an astrophysicist at Brandeis University.

"The completeness of this picture from the beginning to the end is unprecedented," said Columbia University physics professor Szabolcs Marka. "There are many, many extraordinary discoveries within the discovery."

The colliding stars spewed bright blue, super-hot debris that was dense and unstable. Some of it coalesced into heavy elements, like gold, platinum and uranium. Scientists had suspected neutron star collisions had enough power to create heavier elements, but weren't certain until they witnessed it.

"We see the gold being formed," said Syracuse's Brown.

Calculations from a telescope measuring ultraviolet light showed that the combined mass of the heavy elements from this explosion is 1,300 times the mass of Earth. And all that stuff — including lighter elements — was thrown out in all different directions and is now speeding across the universe.

Perhaps one day the material will clump together into planets the way ours was formed, Reitze said — maybe ones with rich veins of precious metals.

"We already knew that iron came from a stellar explosion, the calcium in your bones came from stars and now we know the gold in your wedding ring came from merging neutron stars," said University of California Santa Cruz's Ryan Foley.

The crash also helped explain the origins of one of the most dangerous forces of the cosmos — short gamma ray bursts, focused beams of radiation that could erase life on any planet that happened to get in the way. These bursts shoot out in two different directions perpendicular to where the two neutron stars first crash, Reitze said.

Luckily for us, the beams of gamma rays were not focused on Earth and were generated too far away to be a threat, he said.

Scientists knew that the universe has been expanding since the Big Bang. By using LIGO to measure gravitational waves while watching this event unfold, researchers came up with a new estimate for how fast that is happening, the so-called Hubble Constant. Before this, scientists came up with two slightly different answers using different techniques. The rough figure that came out of this event is between the original two, Reitze said.

The first optical images showed a bright blue dot that was very hot, which was likely the start of the heavy element creation process amid the neutron star debris, Drout said. After a day or two that blue faded, becoming much fainter and redder. And after three weeks it was completely gone, she said.

This almost didn't happen. Eight days after the signal came through, the LIGO gravitational waves were shut down for a year's worth of planned upgrades. A month later the whole area where the crash happened would have been blocked from astronomers' prying eyes by the sun.

Scientists involved with the search for gravitational waves said this was the event they had prepared for over more than 20 years.

The findings are "of spectacular importance," said Penn State physicist Abhay Ashtekar, who wasn't part of the research. "This is really brand new."

Almost all of the discoveries confirmed existing theories, but had not been proven — an encouraging result for theorists who have been trying to explain what is happening in the cosmos, said France Cordova,

an astrophysicist who directs the National Science Foundation.

"We so far have been unable to prove Einstein wrong," said Georgia Tech physics professor Laura Cadonati. "But we're going to keep trying."

___ Follow Seth Borenstein on Twitter at @borenbears . His work can be found here .

Somalia truck bombing toll over 300, scores remain missing

By ABDI GULED, Associated Press

MOGADISHU, Somalia (AP) — More than 300 people were killed in the weekend truck bombing in Somalia's capital and scores remained missing, authorities said Monday, as the fragile Horn of Africa nation reeled from one of the world's worst attacks in years.

As funerals continued, the government said the death toll was expected to rise.

Nearly 400 people were injured in the bombing Saturday that targeted a crowded street in Mogadishu. Somalia's government blamed the al-Qaida-linked al-Shabab, though the Islamic extremist group has not claimed responsibility for the attack. A new statement by the SITE Intelligence Group said al-Shabab posted claims of responsibility as recently as Monday for other attacks on Somali and African Union forces — but not for Saturday's blast.

Still, analysts said there was little doubt the Islamic extremist group carried out the bombing, one of the deadliest in sub-Saharan Africa. "No other group in Somalia has the capacity to put together a bomb of this size, in this nature," said Matt Bryden, a security consultant on the Horn of Africa.

Nearly 70 people remained missing, based on accounts from relatives, said police Capt. Mohamed Hussein. He said many bodies were burned to ashes in the attack.

As the death toll rose to 302, overwhelmed hospitals in Mogadishu were struggling to treat badly wounded victims, many burned beyond recognition. Exhausted doctors struggled to keep their eyes open as the screams from victims and bereaved families echoed in the halls.

Africa's deadliest Islamic extremist group, al-Shabab has waged war in Somalia for more than a decade, often targeting high-profile areas of the capital. Earlier this year, it vowed to step up attacks after both the Trump administration and Somalia's recently elected Somali-American president, Mohamed Abdullahi Mohamed, announced new military efforts against the group.

After Saturday's attack, Mohamed declared three days of mourning and joined thousands of people who responded to a plea by hospitals to donate blood.

Meanwhile, a Turkish military plane carrying 35 critically wounded people arrived in the Turkish capital, Ankara, where they were taken to hospitals for treatment. Countries including Kenya and Ethiopia have offered to send medical aid in response to what Somali's government called a "national disaster," Information Minister Abdirahman Osman said. A plane carrying a medical team from Djibouti also arrived to evacuate the wounded, according to health ministry official Mohamed Ahmed.

Mogadishu, a city long accustomed to deadly bombings by al-Shabab, was stunned by the force of Saturday's blast. The explosion shattered hopes of recovery in an impoverished country left fragile by decades of conflict, and it again raised doubts over the government's ability to secure the seaside city of more than 2 million people.

The United States condemned the bombing, saying "such cowardly attacks reinvigorate the commitment of the United States to assist our Somali and African Union partners to combat the scourge of terrorism." It tweeted a photo of its charge d'affaires in Somalia donating blood. But the U.S. Africa Command said U.S. forces had not been asked to provide aid. Pentagon spokesman Col. Robert Manning said Monday the U.S. currently has about 400 troops in Somalia, adding "we're not going to speculate" about sending more.

The U.S. military has stepped up drone strikes and other efforts this year against al-Shabab, which is also fighting the Somali military and over 20,000 African Union forces in the country.

Saturday's blast occurred two days after the head of the U.S. Africa Command was in Mogadishu to meet with Somalia's president, and two days after the country's defense minister and army chief resigned for undisclosed reasons.

The United Nations special envoy to Somalia called the attack "revolting." Michael Keating said the U.N.

and African Union were supporting the Somali government's response with "logistical support, medical supplies and expertise."

Goodell, union, players to meet on social issues and anthem

By BARRY WILNER, AP Pro Football Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — NFL Commissioner Roger Goodell, owners of each team, representatives of the players' union and players themselves will meet Tuesday to discuss ways to "move from protest to progress."

Among the topics will be enhancing their platforms for speaking out on social issues, and the league's policy that suggests but does not mandate players standing for the national anthem.

There is a quiet mandate, though, for those discussions: figuring out how to get the attention back on those social issues, not how they are being publicized.

And getting the attention back on football.

"We are proud to be able to work with our players to highlight these issues to really put focus on the issues and how the game and the NFL and our players bring communities together when we are divided," NFL spokesman Joe Lockhart said.

Goodell emphasized the need for productive dialogue among the owners and players when he sent a memo to the teams last week. He also invited players' union chief DeMaurice Smith and a group of players to attend the regularly scheduled meetings.

What are they likely to discuss before the owners get back to their usual October league business?

For one, demonstrations during the anthem will be a high-priority topic. Goodell has noted that the NFL will have a plan ready to present to the players regarding the anthem.

"Like many of our fans, we believe that everyone should stand for the national anthem," Goodell wrote last week. "It is an important moment in our game. We want to honor our flag and our country, and our fans expect that of us.

"We also care deeply about our players and respect their opinions and concerns about critical social issues. The controversy over the anthem is a barrier to having honest conversations and making real progress on the underlying issues. We need to move past this controversy, and we want to do that together with our players."

Certainly on Tuesday's agenda will be options presented by both sides on how to get the message across without it being misinterpreted.

While the backlash has been loud from those who believe the players have been protesting against the anthem or the American flag or the military, everyone involved with the league is seeking clarity.

As Lockhart has noted: "Owners across the league have spoken out on where they stand. The important thing now will be coming together as an ownership group to try to have a common position — a position that either affirms where we are now, or perhaps adjusts where we are now."

With input from the NFLPA and its members.

"I think there will be a discussion about the entire issue including the (anthem) policy, including all of the various elements that have been raised over the last four weeks," Lockhart said.

The league also will be supporting a bipartisan legislative bill in Congress that seeks reforms and targets enhanced mandatory minimums for prior drug felons; increases judicial discretion for sentencing; and reforms enhanced mandatory minimums and sentences.

"We felt that this was an issue over the last months as we have continued to work with our players on issues of equality and on issues of criminal justice reform that was surfaced for us," Lockhart said. And we thought it was appropriate to lend our support to it."

Asked about a potential pushback from the White House, Lockhart said he didn't know the president's position on the bill.

"I know that this has overwhelming bipartisan support and we think it's the right thing to do, so that is our focus right now," he said.

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

Army Sgt. Bergdahl pleads guilty to deserting his post

By JONATHAN DREW, Associated Press

FORT BRAGG, N.C. (AP) — Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, who was captured and held by the Taliban for five years after walking away from his post in Afghanistan, pleaded guilty Monday to desertion and endangering his comrades — charges that could put him behind bars for the rest of his life.

“I understand that leaving was against the law,” said Bergdahl, who admitted guilt without striking a deal with prosecutors, meaning his punishment will be up to a military judge when he is sentenced later this month.

The guilty plea brings the highly politicized saga closer to an end eight years after Bergdahl vanished.

President Barack Obama brought him home in 2014 in a swap for five Taliban prisoners at Guantanamo Bay, saying the U.S. does not leave its service members on the battlefield. Republicans roundly criticized Obama, and Donald Trump went further while campaigning for president, repeatedly calling Bergdahl a “dirty, rotten traitor” who deserved to be executed by firing squad or thrown out of a plane without a parachute.

Bergdahl, 31, has said he walked away from his remote post in 2009 with the intention of reaching other commanders and drawing attention to what he saw as problems with his unit.

He told the judge, Col. Jeffrey R. Nance, that he now understands that his actions prompted an intensive search during which some of his comrades were seriously wounded.

“At the time, I had no intention of causing search-and-recovery operations,” he said in court. “I believed they would notice me missing, but I didn’t believe they would have reason to search for one private.”

Bergdahl, who received a promotion due all missing-in-action soldiers while he was in captivity, pleaded guilty to desertion and misbehavior before the enemy, a relatively rare charge brought against him for endangering comrades sent to find him.

The misbehavior charge carries a maximum penalty of life in prison, the desertion charge up to five years.

Bergdahl’s answers to the judge’s questions represented some of his most extensive public comments yet.

He told the judge he tried to escape from his captors 12 to 15 times with varying degrees of success. Once, he was on his own for about a week — hoping U.S. drones would spot him — before he was recaptured. He said he also tried to escape on his first day in captivity.

“As I started running there came shouts, and I was tackled by people. That didn’t go so well,” said Bergdahl, who spoke in even tones and wore a blue dress uniform.

He also reflected on what he thought were questionable tactics by U.S. soldiers and their Afghan allies in guarding a remote crossroads that could be bypassed by the Taliban on other routes. He said the setup “seemed to be a bit of a joke.”

Pressed by the judge about his actions, Bergdahl acknowledged endangering his fellow service members.

“I left my platoon in a battlefield ... a situation that could easily turn into a life-or-death situation,” he said.

At his sentencing, set to begin Oct. 23, his years in captivity could be factored in, but the hearing is also likely to feature damning testimony from fellow service members.

A Navy SEAL who suffered a career-ending leg wound and an Army National Guard sergeant whose head wound put him in a wheelchair would not have been hurt in firefights had they not been searching for Bergdahl, the judge has ruled.

Earlier this year, the defense was rebuffed in an effort to prove Trump had unfairly swayed the case. The judge ruled in February that the new president’s comments were “disturbing and disappointing” but did not constitute unlawful influence by the soon-to-be commander in chief.

Bergdahl, who is from Hailey, Idaho, has been assigned to desk duty at a Texas Army base in the meantime.

White House: \$4,000 more for families with business tax cuts

By JOSH BOAK, AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — By slashing corporate tax rates, the Trump administration said Monday, the average U.S. household will get an estimated \$4,000 more a year.

This stunning 5 percent increase was met with skepticism from tax experts and Democratic lawmakers who said the math was flawed. Spread across every U.S. household, the White House analysis claims it would generate “conservatively” an income jump totaling \$504 billion, or about \$200 billion more than the revenues currently generated by the corporate income tax.

With this new report, the White House is making a populist argument for its proposal to cut the 35 percent corporate tax rate to 20 percent. Trump has pitched his tax plan as supporting the middle class even though the details point to major companies and the wealthy as the biggest winners. Polls suggest that voters generally frown upon the idea of cutting taxes for businesses — essentially rewarding these firms for avoiding taxes by exploiting loopholes and keeping profits overseas.

“President Trump complains about fake news — this fake math is as bad as any of the so-called fake news he has complained about,” said Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, a New York Democrat. “This deliberate manipulation of numbers and facts could lead to messing up the good economy the president inherited.”

The analysis by Kevin Hassett, chairman of the White House Council of Economic Advisers, said that the considerably lower rate would spur more investment by companies, which would then boost hiring and worker productivity. The average income gains from the reduced rate would range from \$4,000 to as high as \$9,000, the administration said. Those figures, however, rely on research arguing that workers — rather than investors — would primarily benefit from the lower corporate rates.

“I would expect to see an immediate jump in wage growth,” Hassett said in a phone call with reporters, saying that the salary gains would also come in part from companies bringing back profits held overseas to avoid the relatively high U.S. tax rates.

Separate studies, including a 2012 Treasury Department analysis, found that the vast majority of any savings would go to investors, making it unlikely to push up wages as much as the administration has argued. The administration removed the 2012 analysis from the Treasury Department’s website after releasing its tax framework last month with Republican congressional leaders.

Outside economists said the income growth projected by Hassett appears to assume that workers appear to bear more than 100 percent of the burden of U.S. corporate taxes — a mathematical impossibility.

Jason Furman, Hassett’s predecessor under President Barack Obama, said on Twitter that the numbers in the report suggest that workers bear 250 percent of the costs.

Mark Mazur, director of the non-partisan Tax Policy Center, called the estimated income gains “absurd.” “You’d have to have a tsunami of corporate capital coming into the United States — we’ve never seen that,” Mazur said.

Stocks surged after Trump’s election last year on the prospect of business tax cuts, but wage gains have been relatively tepid. The higher stock prices touted by Trump are a possible sign that investors would reap most of the benefits from lower corporate rates, although Hassett said he expects an increase in wages if the tax overhaul is passed.

For individuals and families, the Trump plan would reduce the number of tax brackets to three from seven and double the standard deduction. But it would also remove the personal exemption and possibly much of the deduction for state and local taxes — changes that could possibly increase taxes for many families. A preliminary analysis by the Tax Policy Center estimated that the proposal would cut business taxes by \$2.65 trillion over a decade while increasing the tax burden on families and individuals by \$471 billion.

Hassett criticized those findings in a speech this month as a “fiction” that is “scientifically indefensible” because critical details of the proposal remain unknown. But Hassett said enough details are now known about the plan to support his conclusion that it would lead to income gains and stronger economic growth.

Dodgers' dominant bullpen is baffling foes in NL playoffs

By GREG BEACHAM, AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A year ago, Dodgers manager Dave Roberts was attempting to get through the late innings of tight playoff games with long appearances by closer Kenley Jansen, a hodgepodge of veteran relievers and one desperate bailout from ace Clayton Kershaw.

One October later, Los Angeles' bullpen is downright dominant as the team steamrolls toward the World Series.

After excelling in the unbeaten Dodgers' three-game NL Division Series sweep of Arizona, those relievers have retired 24 of 25 batters without allowing a hit or a run in the NL Championship Series against the Chicago Cubs.

The bullpen hasn't allowed a hit in its last 8 2/3 innings of work overall, giving the Dodgers extraordinary faith in their relievers heading into Wrigley Field for Game 3 on Tuesday night.

"They're just executing pitches, and they're ready when called upon, and they're competing," Roberts said after his bullpen threw four hitless innings in Los Angeles' 4-1 victory in Game 2 Sunday night. "It's a close-knit group down there. ... Those guys know exactly what they want to do, and they're going out there and executing."

The Dodgers' domination has come from everywhere in the bullpen — not just Jansen, who remains among the top closers in baseball. Jansen has three saves, a victory and 10 strikeouts in six innings, appearing in all five games and allowing just one unearned run.

Jansen is still getting multiple-inning saves for Roberts. This year, it's out of desire rather than utter necessity.

"We've got a really good bullpen in the postseason," Jansen said. "I'm not just trying to be a hero, but whatever the team needs me to do, and whatever Doc (Roberts) wants me to do, I'm going to be ready to put myself in that position to win ballgames."

The Dodgers won 104 games in the regular season with a deep lineup and a talent-packed rotation, but their bullpen has been outstanding all year long, easily leading the NL with a 3.38 ERA.

In October, the relievers have been even better — particularly against the Cubs, who are still waiting for their first hit against the group.

After starter Rich Hill was pulled for a pinch hitter in the fifth inning of Game 2, first-year Dodgers right-hander Brandon Morrow faced six Cubs and retired them all, needing only 18 pitches.

The Cubs got their only baserunner of the series against the bullpen when Jansen hit Anthony Rizzo on the hand in the ninth inning of Game 2. The closer calmly got two more outs to set the stage for Justin Turner's walk-off homer.

"I've never had a bad feeling with our bullpen before, but I think at the same time we're realizing that it's one of our strengths of our team," Kershaw said after the bullpen backed him with four perfect innings in the Dodgers' Game 1 victory over Chicago on Saturday. "You still want to go as deep as you can in the game, but I guess handing the ball off to those guys makes it a little easier."

Last year, the Dodgers didn't have the same array of bullpen talent. They relied heavily on Jansen, Kershaw and Roberts' creativity, with some nights working out better than others.

Roberts was praised for his innovative use of his pitching staff last season, but he has said he doesn't want to use Kershaw as a reliever this October, preferring to keep his recently injured ace on a regular schedule.

So far, he hasn't even been tempted.

Last season's bullpen got problematic postseason appearances from Grant Dayton, who is out for the season with an elbow injury, and Joe Blanton, now with Washington. Pedro Baez, the hardworking right-hander who has been a target of Dodgers fans' ire for years, was left off the NLCS roster.

Ross Stripling also had trouble last October, but he is still in the Dodgers' bullpen, although he has yet to pitch in this postseason. Josh Fields is back and better than last season, while the imposing Morrow has appeared in all five games this month, yielding only one run to Arizona.

The Dodgers added two key relievers in midseason trades, picking up eighth-inning setup man Tony

Watson and left-hander Tony Cingrani. Both settled in quickly with the Dodgers, and they've combined to yield only two runs in seven postseason appearances.

And this month, the bullpen got Kenta Maeda, the Japanese right-hander who went 13-6 with a 4.22 ERA in 25 starts this season.

With no spot for him in the postseason rotation, Maeda willingly took a role as the bullpen's specialist against right-handed batters. He has been dominant, retiring all nine batters he has faced in three innings of work.

"Kenta just accepted how deep our roster is," Jansen said. "He could easily be a starter for us in the postseason, but he understood it's going to take little things for us to win. It's going to help us tremendously down the road."

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

Collins: Trump should back effort to resume health subsidy

By HOPE YEN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A key moderate Republican is urging President Donald Trump to support a bipartisan Senate effort to reinstate insurer payments, calling his move to halt the subsidies an immediate threat to millions of Americans who could now face rising premiums and lost health care coverage.

"What the president is doing is affecting people's access and the cost of health care right now," said Sen. Susan Collins of Maine, who has cast pivotal votes on health care in the narrowly divided Senate. "This is not a bailout of the insurers. What this money is used for is to help low-income people afford their deductibles and their co-pays."

"Congress needs to step in and I hope that the president will take a look at what we're doing," she added.

Her comments Sunday came amid rising attention on the bipartisan bid led by Sens. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., and Patty Murray, D-Wash., to at least temporarily reinstate the payments.

Congressional Republicans are divided over the effort. And White House budget director Mick Mulvaney has suggested that Trump may oppose the agreement unless he gets something in return — such as a repeal of former President Barack Obama's health care law or funding of Trump's promised wall on the U.S.-Mexico border.

The insurer payments will be stopped beginning this week, with sign-up season for subsidized private insurance set to start Nov. 1.

"The president is not going to continue to throw good money after bad, give \$7 billion to insurance companies unless something changes about Obamacare that would justify it," said Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., who golfed with Trump Saturday at the Trump National Golf Club in Sterling, Virginia.

"It's got to be a good deal," Graham said.

In his decision last week, Trump derided the \$7 billion in subsidies as bailouts to insurers and indicated he was trying to pressure Democrats into negotiating an Obamacare repeal, a bid that repeatedly crashed in the GOP-run Senate this summer.

The subsidies are designed to lower out-of-pocket costs for insurers, which are required under Obama's law to reduce poorer people's expenses — about 6 million people. To recoup the lost money, carriers are likely to raise 2018 premiums for people buying their own health insurance policies.

Alexander and Murray have been seeking a deal that the Tennessee Republican has said would reinstate the payments for two years. In exchange, Alexander said, Republicans want "meaningful flexibility for states" to offer lower-cost insurance policies with less coverage than Obama's law mandates.

On Sunday, House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., described Trump's demand for a sit-down with congressional Democratic leaders as "a little far down the road," noting that nothing in Trump's proposals to repeal Obamacare indicates what would replace it. Pelosi pointed to the bipartisan effort in the Senate and said ultimately it will be up to a Republican-controlled Congress and executive branch whether the federal government can avert a shutdown by year's end.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 65 of 68

The government faces a Dec. 8 deadline on the debt limit and government spending.

"We're not about closing down government. The Republicans have the majority," Pelosi said. "In terms of the health care, we're saying 'Let's follow what Sens. Murray and Alexander are doing.'"

"They're trying to find common ground, and that should be encouraged," she added.

The scrapping of subsidies would affect millions more consumers in states won by Trump last year, including Florida, Alabama and Mississippi, than in states won by Democrat Hillary Clinton. Nearly 70 percent of the 6 million who benefit from the cost-sharing subsidies are in states that voted for the Republican.

Republican Gov. John Kasich of Ohio said Sunday his state had anticipated that the insurer payments would be halted, but not so quickly. He called for the payments to be reinstated right away, describing a hit to Ohio — a state also won by Trump last November — for at least the "first two or three months."

"Over time, this is going to have a dramatic impact," Kasich said. "Who gets hurt? People. And it's just outrageous."

Nineteen Democratic state attorneys general have announced plans to sue Trump over the stoppage. Attorneys general from California, Kentucky, Massachusetts and New York were among those saying they will file the lawsuit in federal court in California to stop Trump's attempt "to gut the health and well-being of our country."

Collins appeared on ABC's "This Week" and CNN's "State of the Union," Pelosi spoke on ABC, Graham appeared on CBS' "Face the Nation," and Kasich was on NBC's "Meet the Press."

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Turner homers in 9th, Dodgers top Cubs 4-1 for 2-0 NLCS lead

By GREG BEACHAM, AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Justin Turner savored every last stride as he followed in Kirk Gibson's famous footsteps at Dodger Stadium.

The red-bearded slugger from Southern California knew all about the history attached to this home run trot.

On the 29th anniversary of Gibson's celebrated pinch-hit homer that shocked Oakland in the 1988 World Series opener, Turner added another landmark shot to Los Angeles Dodgers postseason lore.

Turner hit a three-run drive with two outs in the bottom of the ninth inning, and the Dodgers beat the Chicago Cubs 4-1 on Sunday to take a 2-0 lead in the NL Championship Series.

"One of my earliest baseball memories was being at my grandma's house and watching that game in '88 and seeing Gibby hit that homer," said Turner, who wasn't quite 4 years old at the time. "So yeah, it feels pretty cool. I thought about doing the fist-pump around the bases, but we'll wait until we get to the World Series for that, hopefully."

The dominant Dodgers are two wins away after Turner drove in all four runs in Game 2 to keep Los Angeles unbeaten in the postseason.

He delivered a tying single in the fifth before sending a long shot to center field off John Lackey in the ninth. Completing the poetry of the moment, a fan wearing a blue Dodgers jersey took a few steps onto a walkway and gracefully caught the ball in his glove on the fly.

"It's very cool, and J.T., we were talking about it in there after the game," Los Angeles manager Dave Roberts said. "Twenty-nine years to the day. It was special. Our guys feel it."

Another generation of Dodgers fans now has its own historic homer, and these Dodgers are growing increasingly confident they can earn their first trip to the World Series since 1988.

Turner got swallowed up at home plate by another pack of ecstatic Dodgers, just as Gibson did. Unlike Gibson, Turner spiked his batting helmet after rounding third, allowing his unruly red hair to go as wild as the crowd.

"What's not to enjoy about it?" Turner asked. "We have an opportunity to bring a championship back to LA. It's been a long time."

Game 3 in the best-of-seven series is Tuesday night at Wrigley Field in Chicago. Midseason acquisition

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 66 of 68

Yu Darvish starts for the Dodgers against Kyle Hendricks.

Yasiel Puig drew his third walk of the game leading off the ninth, and Charlie Culberson bunted him to second. After losing pitcher Brian Duensing struck out pinch-hitter Kyle Farmer, Chicago manager Joe Maddon went to the bullpen for the 38-year-old Lackey, who pitched on consecutive days for the first time in his 15-year career.

Lackey got the call over All-Star closer Wade Davis, and the veteran starter walked Chris Taylor on six tense pitches. Maddon said he wanted to save Davis for a potential save on the road, and Lackey would have pitched the 10th inning as well if the Cubs did not have a lead.

"Nobody is a really great matchup against Turner, so it just did not work out," Maddon said.

Turner stepped up and ended it with his fourth career playoff homer. After taking a slight free-agent discount to stay with the Dodgers last winter, he had another solid season before excelling again in October.

The All-Star third baseman is batting .377 with 22 RBIs in his postseason career. He is 13 for 18 with runners in scoring position (.722), including 6 for 8 this year.

And after a collective offensive effort drove the Dodgers to a 5-2 win in Game 1, Turner did it all in Game 2. He has 10 RBIs in the Dodgers' five postseason games, getting five in the playoff opener against Arizona.

Addison Russell homered in the fifth for the Cubs, who are down early in this rematch of the 2016 NLCS. Chicago won that series in six games after splitting the first two.

Dodgers closer Kenley Jansen got the win with a hitless ninth despite hitting Anthony Rizzo on the hand with a one-out pitch. That ended the Los Angeles bullpen's impressive streak of 22 straight Cubs retired to begin the NLCS, but the Dodgers have thrown eight hitless and scoreless innings of relief in the NLCS.

Jon Lester yielded three hits and five walks while failing to get out of the fifth inning in the shortest start of his long postseason career, but the Dodgers couldn't take advantage of a rare shaky night by the Cubs' star left-hander.

Rich Hill struck out eight in five more impressive innings for the Dodgers, but he was pulled for pinch-hitter Curtis Granderson in the fifth in a debatable decision by Roberts.

Russell was off to a 4-for-22 start in the postseason with nine strikeouts before the slugging shortstop put a leadoff homer into the short porch in left field.

Turner tied it moments later by poking a two-out single to right after a leadoff double by Culberson, the Dodgers' improbably successful replacement for injured All-Star shortstop Corey Seager.

The Dodgers chased Lester with two outs in the fifth, but reliever Carl Edwards Jr. came through after several recent postseason struggles, striking out pinch-hitter Chase Utley and then pitching a strong sixth.

Lester was the co-MVP of last season's NLCS, winning Game 5 at Dodger Stadium and yielding two runs over 13 innings in the series. He had nothing near the same success against the Dodgers' revamped lineup in this one, issuing four walks in the first four innings and repeatedly escaping jams.

Dodgers third base coach Chris Woodward held up Turner in the third when it appeared he could have scored from first on Cody Bellinger's double to the left-center gap.

Javier Baez, the other co-MVP of last season's NLCS for Chicago, got to third base in the third with one out, but also was stranded.

UP NEXT

Cubs: Hendricks dominated Chicago's playoff opener with seven scoreless innings against the Nationals, but yielded four runs in four innings during the team's wild Game 5 victory in Washington. He is starting on normal rest.

Dodgers: Darvish was outstanding in Game 3 against the Diamondbacks, earning his first career postseason victory with seven strikeouts over five innings of two-hit ball. He was acquired from Texas precisely for these moments, and he starts on seven days of rest.

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Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 67 of 68

Asian stocks little-changed after Wall Street hits new highs

By JOE McDONALD, AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — Asian stocks were little-changed Tuesday after Wall Street's major indexes rose to new highs as China prepared to open a key political meeting.

KEEPING SCORE: The Shanghai Composite Index was off 0.1 percent at 3,374.66 while Tokyo's Nikkei 225 was unchanged at 21,260.89. Hong Kong's Hang Seng held steady at 28,707.80 and Sydney's S&P-ASX 200 was up 0.8 percent at 5,892.70. Seoul gained 0.2 percent to 2,484.52 and benchmarks in Singapore and New Zealand also gained. Taiwan and Indonesia declined.

WALL STREET: Stocks extended a record-setting run into a sixth week. Financial, technology and energy stocks rose while health care issues declined. The Standard & Poor's 500 index added 0.2 percent to 2,557.64. The Dow Jones industrial average rose 0.4 percent to 22,956.96. The Nasdaq composite gained 0.3 percent to 6,624.

ANALYST'S QUOTE: Dealers are digesting U.S. inflation data "while keeping an eye on geopolitical risk amidst the deluge of Fed chair speculative headlines," said Stephen Innes of OANDA in a report.. "Also, it's worth keeping an eye on the expanding laundry list of geopolitical flashpoints," he said, citing Korea, Iraq, ISIS and U.S.-Turkish tensions. "The Middle East looks like a powder keg waiting to explode."

CHINA PARTY MEETING: The ruling Communist Party opens a twice-a-decade congress on Wednesday to appoint President Xi Jinping to a second five-year term as leader. Investors are watching the party's personnel reshuffle for signs of possible policy directions. After spending his first term firming up his grip on power, analysts expect Xi to shift focus to economic policy, with an emphasis on tighter party control of state companies that dominate industries including banking, energy and telecoms.

FED WATCH: Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen will meet with President Donald Trump on Thursday to discuss the possibility of a second term, a source familiar with the administration's Fed search told The Associated Press. Trump has said Yellen, whose term ends Feb. 3, is one of several candidates. Trump criticized Yellen during his campaign but since taking office has praised her. Trump met with Stanford University economist John Taylor last week. He interviewed former Fed board member Kevin Warsh and current Fed board member Jerome Powell last month. Trump has also said economics adviser Gary Cohn is being considered.

ENERGY: Benchmark U.S. crude fell 9 cents to \$51.78 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract gained 42 cents on Monday to close at \$51.87. Brent crude, used to price international oils, advanced 1 cent to \$57.83 in London. It rose 65 cents the previous session to \$57.82.

CURRENCY: The dollar declined to 112.07 yen from Monday's 112.18 yen. The euro retreated to \$1.1783 from \$1.1798.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Oct. 17, the 290th day of 2017. There are 75 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 17, 1931, mobster Al Capone was convicted in Chicago of income tax evasion. (Sentenced to 11 years in prison, Capone was released in 1939.)

On this date:

In 1610, French King Louis XIII, age nine, was crowned at Reims, five months after the assassination of his father, Henry IV.

In 1777, British forces under Gen. John Burgoyne surrendered to American troops in Saratoga, New York, in a turning point of the Revolutionary War.

In 1807, Britain declared it would continue to reclaim British-born sailors from American ships and ports regardless of whether they held U.S. citizenship.

In 1919, Radio Corp. of America was chartered.

Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, Oct. 17, 2017 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 100 ~ 68 of 68

In 1933, Albert Einstein arrived in the United States as a refugee from Nazi Germany.

In 1941, the U.S. destroyer Kearny was damaged by a German torpedo off the coast of Iceland; 11 people died.

In 1957, the movie "Jailhouse Rock," starring Elvis Presley, had its world premiere in Memphis, Tennessee.

In 1967, Puyi (poo-ye), the last emperor of China, died in Beijing at age 61.

In 1979, Mother Teresa of India was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

In 1987, first lady Nancy Reagan underwent a modified radical mastectomy at Bethesda Naval Hospital in Maryland.

In 1989, an earthquake measuring 7.1 on the Richter scale struck northern California, killing 63 people and causing \$6 billion worth of damage.

In 1992, Japanese exchange student Yoshi Hattori was fatally shot by Rodney Peairs in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, after Hattori and his American host mistakenly knocked on Peairs' door while looking for a Halloween party. (Peairs was acquitted of manslaughter, but was ordered in a civil trial to pay more than \$650,000 to Hattori's family.)

Ten years ago: President George W. Bush, raising Beijing's ire, presented the Dalai Lama with the Congressional Gold Medal and urged Chinese leaders to welcome the monk to Beijing. Comedian Joey Bishop, the last of Sinatra's "Rat Pack," died in Newport Beach, California, at age 89. Singer Teresa Brewer died in New Rochelle, New York, at age 76.

Five years ago: Federal authorities in New York said a Bangladeshi student had been arrested in an FBI sting after he tried to detonate a phony 1,000-pound truck bomb outside the Federal Reserve building in Manhattan. (Quazi Mohammad Rezwanaul Ahsan Nafis was sentenced to 30 years in prison.) The St. Louis Cardinals took a 2-1 lead in the National League Championship Series by beating San Francisco 3-1 in a game delayed 3 1/2 hours by rain at Busch Stadium.

One year ago: A long-awaited offensive to retake the Iraqi city Mosul (MOH'-sul) from the Islamic State group began with a volley of U.S.-led coalition airstrikes and heavy artillery bombardments on a cluster of villages east of the militant-held city. Orbital ATK's unmanned Antares rocket blasted off from Wallops Island in Virginia on a supply mission to the International Space Station; it was the first flight of an Antares since a launch explosion in 2014.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Marsha Hunt is 100. Actress Julie Adams is 91. Country singer Earl Thomas Conley is 76. Singer Jim Seals (Seals & Crofts) is 75. Singer Gary Puckett is 75. Actor Michael McKean is 70. Actress Margot Kidder is 69. Actor George Wendt is 69. Actor-singer Bill Hudson is 68. Astronaut Mae Jemison is 61. Country singer Alan Jackson is 59. Movie critic Richard Roeper is 58. Movie director Rob Marshall is 57. Actor Grant Shaud is 57. Animator Mike Judge is 55. Rock singer-musician Fred LeBlanc (Cowboy Mouth) is 54. Actor-comedian Norm Macdonald is 54. Singer Rene' Dif is 50. Reggae singer Ziggy Marley is 49. Actor Wood Harris is 48. Singer Wyclef Jean (zhahn) is 48. World Golf Hall of Famer Ernie Els is 48. Singer Chris Kirkpatrick ('N Sync) is 46. Rapper Eminem is 45. Actress Sharon Leal is 45. Actor Matthew Macfadyen is 43. Rock musician Sergio Andrade (an-DRAY'-day) is 40. Actress Felicity Jones is 34. Actor Chris Lowell is 33. Actor Dee Jay Daniels is 29.

Thought for Today: "To talk to a child, to fascinate him, is much more difficult than to win an electoral victory. But it is also more rewarding." — Colette, French author (1873-1954).