

“Be a gift to everyone who enters your life, and to everyone whose life you enter.”

-Neale Donald Walsch



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Groton Chiropractic Clinic

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

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GT Robotics has teams in the championship matches of all three tournament so far this year!

G.A.T. Wrenches and G-Force of GT Robotics allied against a Vermillion and Harrisburg alliance for the tournament championship at the 5th Annual Harrisburg Qualifying VEX Robotics Tournament. Unfortunately, their robots were showing the stress of fourteen matches without being able return to their pits for more thorough maintenance, motor cooling and battery charging and were not able score enough to win the matches.

Rankings of the GT Robotics teams at the Harrisburg Tourney at the end of the qualifying rounds were: G.A.T. Wrenches in 3rd place, G-Force in 8th, Galaxy in 16th, Gear Heads in 17th, and Geek Squad in 20th. The tournament had 22 teams competing in the VEX EDR division (middle and high school). The teams came from Mitchell, Rapid City, Sioux Falls, Canton, Vermillion and Groton.

G.A.T. Wrenches was hoping to win back to back championships after being tournament champions at the previous tournament in Mitchell. G.A.T. Wrenches also earned the Excellence Award and Robot Skills (scoring by yourself in one minute). GT Robotics qualifying round rankings at the Mitchell tourney were: G.A.T. Wrenches 1st Place, Galaxy 6th, Geek Squad 10th, Gear Heads 11th and G-Force 12th place.

The entire GT Robotics club was honored with the Sportsmanship Award because of our robotists willigness to help other teams with expertise and parts.

At our tourney in Groton October 21, G-Force allied with a Mitchell team and ended up battling another Mitchell team that was allied with a Harrisburg team for the championship, however, they came up short in two very close matches. Rankings of GT Robotics teams after the qualifying rounds were: Galaxy in 4th, Geek Squad 5th, G.A.T. Wrenches 7th, G-Force 10th and Gear Heads in 13th place of 15.

That is the stats of GT Robotics, but that is only the facts. That is not the good part of robotics. The good stuff is watching Jacob of Geek Squad working hard to figure out why his robot is not working and taking on repairs and scrambling to get them done in the minutes between matches, when he is the only regular member of his team at the tourney, but he has a club-mate, Tanner, who became a Geek for a day to help him.

Or watching Hunter, after he was so discouraged with his team's robot performance, ask to work on his robot immediately after our return from the Mitchell tourney. To see the work ethic, the resilience, the determination of these young robotists is the good stuff. The right stuff!



Galaxy: Travis Townsend, River Pardick, Alex Dutchuk
(Courtesy photo)

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Geek Squad: Andrew Marzahn, Isaac Smith, Dragr Monson, Jacob Lewandowski.
(Courtesy photo)



Gear Heads: Bryson Wambach, Jackson Dinger, Dan Feist, Ethan Clark.
(Courtesy photo)

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G.A.T. Wrenches: Noah Tullis, Tyler Iverson, Adrian Knutson.
(Courtesy photo)



G-Force: Steven Paulson, Tanner McGannon, Lee Iverson, Hunter Monson.
(Courtesy photo)

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

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

Today in Weather History

November 23, 1996: Heavy snow of 6 to 8 inches fell across most of northern South Dakota, adding to already significant snow depth. Roads became snow-packed, which hampered travel, resulting in the postponement of many activities. Some snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Aberdeen, Isabel, Roscoe, and Mellette; 7 inches at Eagle Butte, Timber Lake, Selby, Faulkton, Leola, Frederick, Webster, and Sisseton; and 8 inches at Britton, Ipswich, Eureka, and McLaughlin.

1912: The Rouse Simmons was a three-masted schooner famous for sinking during a violent storm on Lake Michigan on this day. The ship was bound for Chicago with a cargo of Christmas trees when it foundered off the coast of Two Rivers, Wisconsin, killing all on board.

1926 - A hurricane came inland near Daytona Beach, FL. The hurricane caused 2.5 million dollars damage in eastern Florida, including the Jacksonville area. (David Ludlum)

1939 - The temperature at Lewiston, ID, hit 117 degrees to establish an all-time record high for that location. (The Weather Channel)

1943 - On a whim, and flying a single engine AT-6, Lieutenant Ralph O'Hair and Colonel Duckworth were the first to fly into a hurricane. It started regular Air Force flights into hurricanes. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms in Minnesota spawned a tornado which moved in a southwesterly direction for a distance of thirty miles across Rice County and Goodhue County. Trees were uprooted and tossed about like toys, and a horse lifted by the tornado was observed sailing horizontally through the air. Thunderstorms drenched La Crosse, WI, with 5.26 inches of rain, their second highest 24 hour total of record. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Hot weather prevailed in the north central U.S. Williston, ND, reported a record high of 108 degrees. Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the eastern U.S., and in southeastern Texas. Richland County, SC, was soaked with up to 5.5 inches of rain. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced locally heavy rains in the southwestern U.S. Yuma, AZ, experienced their most severe thunderstorm of record. Strong thunderstorm winds, with unofficial gusts as high as 95 mph, reduced visibilities to near zero in blowing dust and sand. Yuma got nearly as much rain in one hour as is normally received in an entire year. The storm total of 2.55 inches of rain was a record 24 hour total for July. Property damage due to flash flooding and high winds was in the millions. (Storm Data)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from Wisconsin and northern Illinois to New England, with 103 reports of large hail and damaging winds through the day. Thunderstorms in Wisconsin produced hail three inches in diameter near Oshkosh, and wind gusts to 65 mph at Germantown. (The National Weather Summary)

and wind gusts to 65 mph at Germantown. (The National Weather Summary)

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Thanksgiving Day



Mostly Sunny

High: 56 °F

Tonight



Partly Cloudy

Low: 39 °F

Friday



Breezy.
Slight Chance
Rain then
Sunny

High: 55 °F

Friday Night



Mostly Clear

Low: 27 °F

Saturday



Sunny

High: 46 °F

Saturday Night



Mostly Clear

Low: 27 °F

Sunday



Mostly Sunny

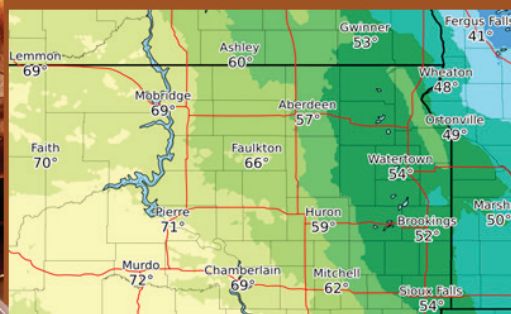
High: 51 °F

Thanksgiving Day Forecast

Warm + Westerly Breeze



High Temperatures



Record Highs For Today

Aberdeen: 57 - 1908
 Watertown: 54 - 1912
 Pierre: 65 - 1984
 Mobridge: 70 - 1914
 Sisseton: 55 - 1984
 Kennebec: 69 - 1988
 Timber Lake: 61 - 2011

National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD



weather.gov/Aberdeen



National Weather Service Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen

Updated: 11/23/2017 5:27 AM Central

Published on: 11/23/2017 at 5:31AM

A westerly breeze will bring mild temperatures into the area today with highs well above average for this time of year. High temperatures will range from the upper 40s, in western Minnesota, to the lower 70s, along and west of the Missouri River.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 36.7

Low Outside Temp: 4.0

High Gust: 30

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 57° in 1905

Record Low: -17° in 1985

Average High: 35°F

Average Low: 15°F

Average Precip in Nov: .59

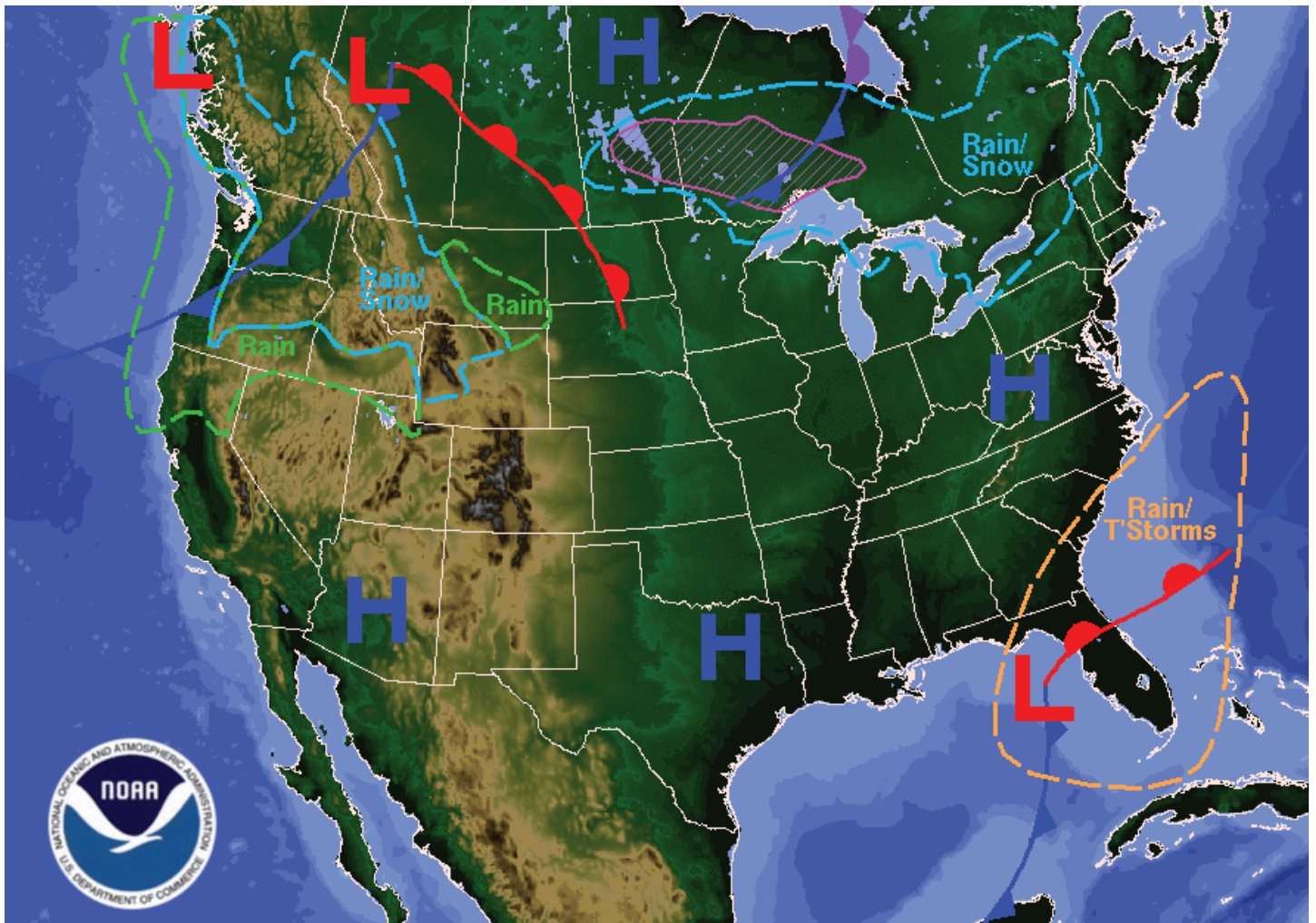
Precip to date in Nov: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 21.06

Precip Year to Date: 13.47

Sunset Tonight: 4:56 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:45 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Thu, Nov 23, 2017, issued 4:34 AM EST

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)

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GIVE THANKS IN ALL THINGS

When four-year-old Sammy awoke after surgery, the nurse explained that it would be necessary for him to be fed intravenously for the next few days.

After assuring him that everything would be fine, she began the process to administer the glucose. Always in the habit of giving thanks before each meal, Sammy asked in a brave and cheerful voice, "Aren't you going to give thanks?"

It is not easy to give thanks in painful situations. Nor is it natural to see God's goodness in all of life's trials and troubles. But the Apostle Paul reminds us to "Be joyful always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

When we give thanks, we acknowledge our confidence in the Lord, knowing that He cares for us. When we give thanks, we express our closeness to God, realizing that He is with us in every situation. When we give thanks, we declare that we are willing to accept the wisdom of God knowing that His will is being done.

Prayer: Dear Lord, may I learn the grace of giving thanks to You in all of life's situations. Help me to realize that You are always with me, watching, protecting, providing and guiding me in every area of life. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Scripture for Today: 1 Thessalonians 5:16-23 Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

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

News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Dakota Cash

03-14-24-27-33

(three, fourteen, twenty-four, twenty-seven, thirty-three)

Estimated jackpot: \$20,000

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$119 million

Powerball

35-37-46-51-61, Powerball: 13, Power Play: 2

(thirty-five, thirty-seven, forty-six, fifty-one, sixty-one; Powerball: thirteen; Power Play: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$134 million

One-fifth of Upper Midwest residents traveling for holiday

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — AAA is projecting that about one-fifth of residents in the region that includes the Upper Midwest will be traveling this Thanksgiving.

The travel organization says the seven-state region that includes North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota will see the greatest share of people traveling over the holiday — 19.5 percent, compared with 15.6 percent nationally.

AAA says more than 90 percent of travelers in the region will travel by vehicle, while about 5 percent will fly. The rest will take trains, buses or cruises.

Thanksgiving travel regionally and nationally is expected to be up 3 percent from last year. AAA cites a strong economy and labor market that are generating rising incomes and higher consumer confidence.

Judge: Lawsuit challenging Keystone pipeline can continue

GREAT FALLS, Mont. (AP) — A federal judge on Wednesday rejected a bid by the Donald Trump administration to dismiss a lawsuit that challenges a presidential permit for the proposed Keystone XL oil pipeline from Canada.

U.S. District Judge Brian Morris in Great Falls, Montana, dismissed U.S. Justice Department arguments that the court had no authority to second-guess the cross-border permit that was issued by the State Department.

Morris also rejected motions by TransCanada Corp., the company behind the project, to dismiss the suit.

Conservation groups and Native American organizations contend in the lawsuit that an environmental review of the project completed in 2014 was inadequate. They've asked Morris to revoke the permit, which was based on the review and issued in March.

The 1,179-mile (1,800-kilometer) pipeline would transport Canadian crude through Montana and South Dakota to Nebraska, where it would connect with lines to carry oil to Gulf Coast refineries.

President Barack Obama's administration rejected the project in 2015, but it was revived in March under Trump. The president insists it will create jobs and lead to greater energy independence.

In seeking to dismiss the suit, government attorneys had argued that Trump had constitutional authority over matters of foreign affairs and national security.

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Morris rejected the notion that any potential court injunction — or even review of the permitting process — would illegally infringe on the president's authority.

Morris cited a decision by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in a case concerning a federal visa exchange program. The circuit court's decision "has made clear that the State Department cannot avoid judicial review simply by invoking its consideration of 'foreign policy' or 'security' factors," Morris wrote.

Both the Justice Department and TransCanada said Wednesday they were reviewing the decision.

"Our environmental laws should never be undercut by the interests of a private foreign company, and the court's decision today solidifies that," Hannah Adams, deputy director of the activist group and co-plaintiff Bold Alliance, said in a statement.

On Monday, Nebraska regulators approved a pipeline route through that state, though the vote is likely to face court challenges. The route is not one preferred by TransCanada, and it could require more time for government agencies to study the changes.

TransCanada has said that it would announce by early December whether to proceed with the pipeline — which would carry an estimated 830,000 barrels of oil a day — and would take into account the Nebraska decision and whether it has lined up enough long-term contracts to ship oil.

Keystone XL would expand the existing Keystone pipeline network that went into service in July 2010. The current pipeline runs through North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Oklahoma and Texas and extends east into Missouri and Illinois.

Daum scores 34, SDSU takes 5th at Cayman Islands Classic

GEORGE TOWN, Cayman Islands (AP) — Mike Daum made 11 of 17 shots and scored 34 points to help South Dakota State beat Buffalo 94-80 on Wednesday for fifth place at the Cayman Islands Classic.

Daum, the nation's leading returning scorer at 25.1 points per game during his sophomore season, moved into sixth on SDSU's scoring list, passing Clint Sargent (2007-11; 1,505) and Steve Brown (1974-78; 1,534). Nate Wolters holds the program record with 2,363 points from 2009-13.

It was Daum's second 30-plus game this season. His career-high came on Feb. 18th last season against Fort Wayne when he scored 51 points on 14-of-29 shooting.

Tevin King added 10 points and six boards for SDSU (5-2). Daum hit 2 of 6 3-pointers and only missed four of his 14 free throws against the Bulls. He also had six rebounds and two blocks.

Nick Perkins paced Buffalo (3-2) with 17 points. Davonta Jordan made four 3-pointers and scored 16 points, and Dontay Caruthers had 13 points and five assists.

South Dakota county official questions conflict of interest

YANKTON, S.D. (AP) — More than half of a southeast South Dakota county's commissioners have asked to be investigated for possible conflicts of interest in the approval of several hog confinements.

Yankton County Commissioner Ray Epp said during a commissioners meeting on Tuesday that he's aware of concerns about his connection to the South Dakota Pork Producers Council. Epp sits on the council's Board of Directors.

Epp said he has asked whether his involvement with the industry group poses a conflict of interest for approving local hog farms, the Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan reported .

Commissioners Todd Woods and Don Kettering made similar requests about three weeks ago, asking Yankton County State's Attorney Rob Klimisch to request the South Dakota Attorney General's Office open an investigation into whether they have any conflicts of interest.

The county is currently facing lawsuits filed by opponents of hog confinements that were approved earlier this fall.

The commission has only five members. Klimisch said the attorney general's office has been contacted about the commissioners' requests and a resolution is expected in the coming weeks.

Klimisch noted that commissioners can declare they have a conflict of interest.

"The state limits it strictly to financial gain," he said. "They would have to look into what you're in, where

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the votes would come from and where the interests lie.”

For Epp’s investigation, Klimisch said they’ll look into his votes, the Pork Producers Council and whether Epp has been compensated.

“That’s what we’re doing with Don and also Todd — seeing where all of their connections are,” he said.

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

USD’s Streveler named offensive player of the year in MVFC

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — University of South Dakota senior quarterback Chris Streveler has been named offensive player of the year in the Missouri Valley Football Conference.

Streveler led the Coyotes to a 7-4 record and the program’s first appearance in the NCAA Football Championship Subdivision playoffs.

Streveler is from Crystal Lake, Illinois. The transfer from the University of Minnesota leads FCS this season in total offense at 385 yards per game, ranks third in total touchdowns with 33 and is the nation’s eighth-leading passer at 322 yards per game. He also broke several USD records.

Streveler also is among 25 finalists for the Walter Payton Award, given each year to the FCS offensive player of the year.

NDSU’s Chris Klieman named coach of the year in MVFC

FARGO, N.D. (AP) — North Dakota State University coach Chris Klieman has been named coach of the year in the Missouri Valley Football Conference.

The league announced Wednesday that Klieman had won the Bruce Craddock Coach of the Year Award for the first time in his career, through a vote of media, coaches and sports information directors.

Klieman guided the Bison to their seventh straight conference championship, reaching his 50th win in the process. He is just the fifth Bison coach to reach that mark. His teams have lost only six games in four seasons.

Klieman also is among 18 finalists for the Eddie Robinson Award, given to the NCAA Football Championship Subdivision coach of the year.

Separately, NDSU linebacker Jabril Cox swept the freshman of the year and newcomer of the year awards.

Sioux Falls police investigate west side shooting

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Sioux Falls police are investigating a shooting outside an apartment building on the west side.

A witness told police a man got out of an SUV Tuesday about 11 p.m. and fired several gunshots in the building’s parking lot. The Argus Leader says officers found a broken window on the second floor of the apartment and a car with some bullet holes.

No one was injured. No one is in custody.

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

Supreme Court uphold fatal Aberdeen stabbing conviction

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Supreme Court has upheld the conviction of a man who fatally stabbed his ex-girlfriend in Aberdeen.

The high court unanimously affirmed both the conviction and the sentence for John Eric Hemminger. Attorney General Marty Jackley says the court upheld law enforcement’s seizure of Hemminger’s cell phone, clothing and DNA. It also agreed it was appropriate for the state to introduce 26 autopsy photos of the victim over the defense’s objection.

Last year a jury found Hemminger guilty of premeditated murder in the January 2015 death of 26-year-

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old Jessica Goebel of Aberdeen. She was stabbed 26 times and died later at a Sioux Falls hospital.

State: Testing finds no oil in ditch near Keystone spill

AMHERST, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota official says TransCanada Corp.'s testing of water from a drainage ditch next to the Keystone pipeline's estimated 210,000-gallon oil spill found no oil.

Brian Walsh, an environmental scientist manager for the state Department of Environment and Natural Resources, said Wednesday the ditch in Marshall County appears to flow into a creek.

But Walsh says officials haven't spent significant resources following the ditch downstream because they know it's not contaminated.

Officials don't believe the leak polluted any surface water bodies or drinking water systems. A TransCanada spokeswoman said Tuesday the cause is unknown.

The company says that more than 16,000 gallons of oil had been removed as of Tuesday.

Pipeline protester's elderly endangerment case dismissed

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Authorities have dismissed one of two criminal cases against a Bismarck woman accused of abusing her elderly mother during protests against the Dakota Access oil pipeline.

Kathleen Bennett, 59, was accused of leaving her 82-year-old mother with dementia tied to a chair in a protest camp in North Dakota while she attended demonstrations in December 2016. The mother was taken to a hospital during a blizzard. Hospital staff said she was frail and malnourished.

Bennett in February pleaded not guilty to endangering a vulnerable adult, a felony charge that carries a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison.

She was to stand trial next week, but the defense and prosecution agreed Tuesday to dismiss the case with \$2,050 in fines forfeited from Bennett's bond, The Bismarck Tribune reported. Authorities said Bennett is in Nevada with limited funds, and there also were difficulties with getting witnesses to the trial.

Bennett also is charged with exploiting her mother by using \$1,200 of her money without consent to rent hotel rooms, buy meals and pay legal fees while her mother was hospitalized. She has pleaded not guilty to a felony charge that carries a maximum punishment of five years in prison, and is scheduled for a three-day trial in January.

Court documents indicate the condition of Bennett's mother has improved, and she is living in Nevada under the guardianship of two sons.

Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorials

By The Associated Press

American News, Aberdeen, Nov. 22

Is it city's job to regulate Lyft?

City leaders are going to consider an ordinance governing ride-sharing services like Lyft, which recently started operating in Aberdeen.

The plan is to put as much as possible into the draft — including regulations that Sioux Falls and Rapid City have implemented or are implementing — and to pare it back from there.

Lyft is considered a "transportation network company" under state law, which sets out a series of regulations for drivers.

The Sioux Falls City Council passed an ordinance requiring transportation network companies to pay an annual license fee of \$1,500, according to the Sioux Falls Argus Leader. That amount covers all drivers.

Lyft drivers are operating in Rapid City as the council works to incorporate Lyft regulations into an ordinance that was first drafted to regulate taxis, according to the Rapid City Journal.

Aberdeen City Manager Lynn Lander previously said the ordinance Rapid City is pondering would require vehicle inspections, background checks on drivers and language on how fees are collected.

It appears, though, that Lyft already has the background check bit covered as they are required by state

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law.

In fact, according to Ron Wager, Aberdeen city attorney, "Transportation network company requirements are stricter than what we have for our taxi cab drivers."

Which begs the question: How much more involved in the regulation of ride-sharing services does the city want to get?

Certainly, council members should complete their due diligence. And taking a look at a draft ordinance that covers a lot of territory is fine, but there's no need for duplication or needlessly restricting free enterprise.

Taxis in Aberdeen have to be inspected every 120 days to make sure their speedometers, brakes, windshield wipers, lights and other features work. The vehicles must also have a spare tire and be clean.

We would argue inspecting private vehicles used for Lyft every four months is unnecessary — especially for a service that encourages customers to provide a rating for the service they get.

More restrictive to taxi services is that the city regulates the fees they can collect. The minimum fee is \$3. The maximum — for up to 77 blocks, anyhow — is \$7.50, though there can be charges for extra stops and passengers. Additionally, taxis can charge an extra dollar per ride between 9:30 p.m. and 5:30 a.m., per city ordinance.

Lyft is not bound by those rate restrictions and, having found a legal workaround, should never be.

There will certainly be instances — perhaps most — in which Lyft rides cost more than those provided by taxis. If patrons want to pay extra for the convenience of using a smartphone app to order a quick ride for a flat fee, that's their choice.

The benefit of paying with a credit card as opposed to needing to have cash on hand is also substantial.

Wager said it might be time for the city council to consider updating its taxi ordinances. That probably makes more sense than imposing too many regulations on Lyft and any other ride-sharing services that come along.

Any advantage enjoyed by transportation network companies is a credit to their ingenuity. That shouldn't be punished.

In trying to be fair to all parties, the city needs to keep the people who need rides at the top of the list. The businesses are secondary.

Local drivers wasted no time in offering their services and vehicles to Lyft. Now they're in business and the city is in an awkward spot of trying to craft well-meaning guidelines retroactively. It might be hard to unring the bell, so communication is going to be key.

Rapid City Journal, Rapid City, Nov. 21 **Fall River County about to go solar**

GOOD: Fall River County is on its way to becoming a pioneer of sorts in South Dakota. The county commission there recently gave what amounts to its final approval for a utility scale solar energy project for the southwest corner of the state. The project, which will be built on a 700-acre area, is being developed by 174 Power Global, a subsidiary of the Korean-based Fortune Global 500 Hanwa Group. Work on the project is expected to begin in April 2018 and be completed in September. The solar farm is expected to generate enough electricity for an estimated 45,000 homes when it is completed. Black Hills Energy will be its primary customer. One of the great benefits of solar energy is that there is no need for trucks, trains or pipelines to transport it to customers. Fall River County and its commissioners have helped shine a light on the future.

BAD: The four members of the West Dakota Water Development District must have been singing in the rain last week after they learned their votes sank two stream gauges in their district. The U.S. Geological Survey, or USGS, told a Journal reporter that the district's decision to not allocate \$14,785 for the stream gauges — something that has been done for 32 years — led to the decision. The USGS contributes \$11,725 annually for the gauges, which are just above Deerfield Lake and in a tributary above Pactola Reservoir. They measure the flow from underground springs that feed the lakes and then disseminate the data via a satellite that provides information to Pennington County Emergency Management, South Dakota Depart-

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ment of Environment and Natural Resources, Rapid City, the Rapid Valley Irrigation District and others. The vote also contradicts the district's mission, which according to its website includes "proper water management" and "evaluation and protection of our water quality." If you don't care about water quality, why run for a position that is charged with overseeing water quality?

UGLY: A grim toll has been adding up on South Dakota's roads lately. According to the Department of Public Safety, 35 people have lost their lives in traffic accidents since Sept. 1. Fifteen fatalities were reported in September, 14 in October and at least six so far in November — and the holiday driving season is just around the corner. "Too many fatalities, too many families grieving," said Office of Highway Safety Director Lee Axdahl. Ten of the fatal crashes occurred when vehicles left the road and rolled; 16 of the victims were not wearing seat belts. Losing a loved one in a traffic accident shatters families. Even if you don't care about your own safety, think about others when you drive and focus on the road.

The Daily Republic, Mitchell, Nov. 20

Hisses and cheers

CHEERS to the climbing cattle prices pleasantly surprising produces this season.

Last week, we reported cattle prices shot up from \$141.28 to \$186.17 per hundredweight, padding the pockets of the same ranchers who were met with low cattle prices in 2016.

Officials cited a variety of factors for the increase, but we're just happy to see a bit of good luck hit South Dakota's agriculture economy after a devastatingly dry year.

The other good news is that many corn and soybean growers are also surprised with better than expected yields as harvest comes to a close.

With the doom and gloom outlook many foresaw in the scorching summer months behind us, we're hoping for a booming year in the ag economy in 2019. And the rising cattle prices are hopefully a sign of more good things to come.

HISSES to the TransCanada pipeline spill that leaked approximately 210,000 gallons of oil in northeast South Dakota last week.

Our area is no stranger to TransCanada, with a massive spill occurring near Freeman last year. We saw first-hand the impact a spill can have on the environment, and we spoke with people along the route that runs in our coverage area who were worried the same thing could happen to them.

And now it has, just in a different part of the state.

We understand if those along the Keystone route are feeling anxious after this latest spill, because like them, we've been told time and time again from TransCanada officials during interviews that people have little to worry about with their pipelines.

With 2018 right around the corner, we can't help but wonder if these massive spills will become annual occurrences.

CHEERS to the fact we finally heard an estimate cost for the restoration of Lake Mitchell, but hisses to the number itself.

At a public meeting last week, a city official tossed out an \$8 million estimate to restore Lake Mitchell, an estimate which was anything but final. But the \$8 million figure was only the city's estimated expense.

Another \$12 million could be needed from grant funds. And while the majority of money coming from outside of the city's coffers, what if the city can't attain those grant funds as expected?

We're encouraged that numbers and costs are beginning to trickle out as the city works to repair its algae-ridden lake, but the \$20 million total price tag is intimidating. The good news is a consultant for the city speculated a repaired lake could have major economic benefits for the city of Mitchell.

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Trooper imprisoned for grand theft denied early release

CHAMBERLAIN, S.D. (AP) — A Davison County judge has denied early release for a former South Dakota Highway Patrol trooper convicted of grand theft.

Several dozen supporters of Brian Biehl were in court Tuesday hoping the judge would allow him to get out of prison by Christmas. Biehl was sentenced to five years in prison last March after pleaded guilty to grand theft by law enforcement for keeping nearly \$70,000 confiscated from drug searches. Biehl was a trooper for about 15 years, working out of Chamberlain.

The Daily Republic says Biehl asked for a three-month reduction of his sentence making him eligible for parole before Christmas.

Judge Chris Giles denied the request and told Biehl he should have been charged with multiple felonies instead of one charge of grand theft.

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

Fire destroys Fort Pierre auto body shop; no one injured

FORT PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Authorities are investigating the cause of a fire that destroyed an auto body shop in Fort Pierre.

The Capital Journal reports that the blaze at Fort Pierre Body Shop broke out about 2 a.m. Tuesday. The building was destroyed. No one was hurt.

Fire Chief Justin Jones says utility workers had to be called in when the building collapsed and broke off a natural gas meter, and the open gas line fueled the fire.

The property was valued at about \$250,000.

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

Man convicted in deadly beating on reservation sentenced

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A man convicted of instigating the deadly beating of another man on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in July 2015 has been sentenced to 17 ½ years in federal prison.

A jury in June found 26-year-old Calmer Cottier guilty of aiding and abetting second-degree murder and conspiracy to commit assault in the killing of 30-year-old Ferris Brings Plenty. The Rapid City Journal reports he was sentenced Tuesday.

Authorities said Brings Plenty was beaten with a machete, a stick, a bat and a cinder block while he was visiting his mother. Prosecutors said the killing stemmed from gang rivalries on the reservation.

Seven people were charged in the case. Five have pleaded guilty and been sentenced, including three for murder.

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

Mount Rushmore float to appear again in Turkey Day parade

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — This year's "Mount Rushmore's American Pride" float in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade will feature legendary rhythm and blues singer Smokey Robinson.

This will be the eighth year the South Dakota Department of Tourism float will appear in the New York City parade. The float features the iconic faces at Mount Rushmore National Memorial in western South Dakota.

Other famous singers have appeared on the float in past years, including Neil Diamond and Don McLean.

Rock 'n' roll singer Joan Jett was to appear on it in 2013. But she was moved to another float after complaints from some South Dakota farmers and ranchers who questioned why the vegetarian and animal-rights ally was representing their beef-loving state.

Myanmar, Bangladesh sign agreement on Rohingya refugees

BANGKOK (AP) — Myanmar and Bangladesh signed an agreement on Thursday covering the return of Rohingya Muslims who fled across their mutual border to escape violence in Myanmar's Rakhine state.

Myanmar announced the agreement but provided no details on how many Rohingya refugees would be allowed to return home. Bangladesh said the repatriations are to begin within two months.

More than 620,000 Rohingya have fled from Myanmar into Bangladesh since Aug. 25, when the army began what it called "clearance operations" following an attack on police posts by a group of Rohingya insurgents. Refugees arriving in Bangladesh said their homes were set on fire by soldiers and Buddhist mobs, and some reported being shot at by security forces.

The office of Myanmar civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi said the agreement "on the return of displaced persons from Rakhine state" was signed by Cabinet officials in Naypyitaw, Myanmar's capital. It said the pact follows a formula set in a 1992 repatriation agreement signed by the two nations after an earlier spasm of violence. Under that agreement, Rohingya were required to present residency documents, which few have, before being allowed to return to Myanmar.

Rohingya at a refugee camp in Bangladesh expressed deep doubts about the new agreement.

"They burned our houses, they took our land and cows - will they give us these things back?" asked Abdul Hamid from Hoyakong.

"I'm not happy at all. First, I need to know if they are going to accept us with the Rohingya identity," said Sayed Alom, also from Hoyakong.

Rohingya Muslims have faced state-supported discrimination in predominantly Buddhist Myanmar for decades. Though members of the ethnic minority first arrived generations ago, Rohingya were stripped of their citizenship in 1982, denying them almost all rights and rendering them stateless. They cannot travel freely, practice their religion, or work as teachers or doctors, and they have little access to medical care, food or education.

The Myanmar government has refused to accept them as a minority group, and the statement issued Thursday by Suu Kyi's office did not use the term "Rohingya."

The human rights group Amnesty International said in a report Tuesday that the discrimination against Rohingya has worsened considerably in the last five years, and amounts to "dehumanizing apartheid."

The United States on Wednesday declared the violence against Rohingya to be "ethnic cleansing," and threatened penalties for Myanmar military officers involved in the crackdown.

Report: Barton said he'd go to Capitol Police over photo

DALLAS (AP) — U.S. Rep. Joe Barton told a woman that he would complain to U.S. Capitol Police if sexually explicit photographs of him and other material from their relationship were to be exposed publicly, according to a published report.

The Washington Post reported the threat Wednesday after Barton, a North Texas Republican, apologized for a nude photo of him that circulated on social media.

The photo of Barton appeared on an anonymous Twitter account. It was not immediately known who posted the photo or when it was taken.

Barton issued a statement saying that while separated from his second wife, prior to their divorce in 2015, he had sexual relationships "with other mature adult women." The 68-year-old Republican said each relationship was consensual and has since ended.

"I am sorry I did not use better judgment during those days. I am sorry that I let my constituents down," said Barton, the longest-serving member of Congress from Texas.

However, a woman whom the Post did not identify told the newspaper of Barton's threat over the sexually explicit photographs, videos and messages he had sent to her. The woman described sexual encounters and contact extending over five years, beginning with her posting of a message on Barton's Facebook page in 2011.

She also shared with the Post a secretly recorded telephone conversation with Barton in 2015 in which

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he warned her against using the material "in a way that would negatively affect my career."

The Post reported the woman, who is not married, spoke on the condition of anonymity to protect her privacy.

A message left by The Associated Press at Barton's district office in Arlington, Texas, was not returned. The voicemail for his office in Washington was full.

In a statement to the Post, Barton said a transcript of the telephone conversation provided by the newspaper may be "evidence" of a "potential crime against me." He also said that Capitol Police had informed him Wednesday that they were opening an inquiry.

Capitol Police did not respond to a request by the AP for comment late Wednesday.

Earlier in the day, Barton's spokeswoman told The Dallas Morning News that the congressman has no plans to step down.

Barton, a member of the conservative House Freedom Caucus, announced his re-election bid this month. His district includes several counties in the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

Barton was a consultant in the oil and gas industry before he joined the U.S. House in 1985.

He is currently the vice chairman of the powerful House Energy and Commerce committee. He was the committee's chairman from 2004 to 2007.

Barton has also been the longtime manager of the GOP congressional baseball team. He was taking part in a team practice in June when a gunman opened fire, injuring another congressman and others.

For Franken, a rising trajectory, and then the accusations

By **ALAN FRAM** and **KYLE POTTER**, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — "Many of you have jobs, many of you have families," Sen. Al Franken told Virginia Democratic leaders gathered on the eve of what seemed an uncomfortably close gubernatorial election. After an expectant pause, he leaned into the microphone and added, "Ignore them."

Franken was jokingly beseeching activists to get out the vote the following day, in what ended up as a surprisingly decisive victory for Democratic candidate Ralph Northam. But the moment, barely two weeks ago, also underscored how high the one-time "Saturday Night Live" comic had risen in his party's firmament.

After spending much of his nearly nine years as senator trying to shed his funnyman image and quietly digging into issues like internet access and consumer protection, he was now a draw at political events and mentioned by some as a 2020 presidential possibility. Months of savaging some of President Donald Trump's appointees had turned the Harvard-educated Franken into a weapon of choice for Democrats eager to attack the administration and energize party voters. He brandished comedy as a bludgeon.

Now, Franken's rising trajectory has been interrupted by allegations he had physical contact with two women without their permission. He faces a Senate ethics investigation for improper conduct and hasn't been seen publicly since the first claims of misbehavior last week. His future is suddenly unclear.

"It's always a great disappointment when leaders you like and admire do bad stuff," said Mike Lux, a liberal Democratic consultant. He said it was premature to say how the allegations would affect Franken's career. But, Lux added, "If more incidents come to light, he's got a real problem."

Los Angeles radio anchor Leeann Tweeden last week said Franken had put his tongue in her mouth during a 2006 USO tour, before he became senator. She also posted a photo of him with his hands above her chest as she slept wearing a flak vest aboard a military plane. Franken, 66, has apologized.

Another woman, Lindsay Menz, said Monday he'd squeezed her buttocks in 2010 while posing for a photo at the Minnesota State Fair. Franken, by then a senator, said he didn't remember the picture but expressed remorse that Menz felt "disrespected."

Franken canceled a sold-out appearance in Atlanta to promote his book, "Al Franken, Giant of the Senate." His aides have said he's "spending time with his family and doing a lot of reflecting."

Franken came to the Senate after a months-long recount gave him a 312-vote victory in his 2008 election. He immediately distanced himself from his decades of professional comedy, which included off-color

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jokes about rape and disparaging women, and avoided national reporters.

Instead, he focused on building a reputation as a studious senator, pushing legislation to crack down on Wall Street rating agencies he considered complicit in the 2007 economic collapse. As a signature issue, he adopted the push to protect "net neutrality," an Obama administration policy barring internet providers from blocking or hindering websites. The Trump administration's Federal Communications Commission said Tuesday it will dismantle the rule.

Franken helped shape parts of former President Barack Obama's health care law and tackled farm and mental health issues. He easily secured a second six-year term in 2014, defeating a Republican businessman.

Franken appeared on his first Sunday network talk show late in his first term amid signs he was bolstering his national profile. But it was Trump's emergence that teased out a new Franken and had him pivot from staid senator to liberal attack dog.

In withering interrogations in the Senate, Franken has clashed with a parade of Trump Cabinet appointees. "He made those guys sweat," former Senate Democratic aide Jim Manley said. "He's got the ability to channel some of the populist rage against the administration."

Franken had a celebrated clash last month with Jeff Sessions over the attorney general's evolving descriptions of his contacts with Russian officials during last year's presidential campaign. Sessions, a Trump campaign official, told Congress in January he'd not communicated with the Russians. He later said he didn't recall such contact. Then last month, he told the Senate Judiciary Committee he'd had no "improper discussions" with them.

"To me, that is moving the goal posts every time," Franken, a committee member, told Sessions.

At a January confirmation hearing, Franken bore into education secretary nominee Betsy DeVos when she seemed unable to answer a policy question. "I'm not that surprised that you didn't know this issue," he said.

He opposed Trump Supreme Court pick Neil Gorsuch and battled with Rick Perry over the energy secretary's skepticism that increased carbon dioxide emissions cause global warming. He told Tom Price, who has since resigned as health secretary, that it was "very hard to believe" that he didn't realize he'd owned tobacco stocks, and that "millions of Americans" feared the Trump administration's push to repeal Obama's health care law.

In a lighter exchange, Perry told Franken he enjoyed meeting him at the senator's office, saying, "I hope you are as much fun on that dais as you were on your couch."

"Please, oh my lord," Franken replied.

Potter reported from St. Paul, Minnesota.

Balloons, Broadway stars and security at Macy's parade

NEW YORK (AP) — New faces and old favorites will fly, float and march in the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade as police go all-out to secure it in a year marked by attacks on outdoor gathering spots.

One of the nation's biggest outdoor holiday events, the parade makes its way through 2 1/2 miles of Manhattan with marching bands, performers from Broadway hits, elaborate floats and signature giant balloons. Olaf from the Disney movie "Frozen" and Chase from the TV cartoon "Paw Patrol" will be among the new balloons Thursday, along with a new version of the Grinch of Dr. Seuss fame.

The parade also will feature heavy security, including officers with assault weapons and portable radiation detectors among the crowds, sharpshooters on rooftops and sand-filled city sanitation trucks poised as imposing barriers to traffic at every cross street.

"Every year the NYPD has done more to keep this event tonight and the parade itself safer," Democratic Mayor Bill de Blasio told crowds gathered to watch the balloons being inflated Wednesday. "Because we understand we are dealing with a very challenging world. And so the amount of resources and personnel we put in has increased each year to make us safer."

Authorities say there is no confirmation of a credible threat to the parade, but it comes after a truck at-

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tack on a bike path near the World Trade Center killed eight people in October. Weeks earlier, a gunman in a 32nd-floor Las Vegas hotel room rained bullets on a crowd at a country music festival, killing 58 and injuring hundreds.

New York City's mayor and police brass have repeatedly stressed that layers of security, along with hundreds of officers, will be in place for the Thanksgiving parade and that visitors shouldn't be deterred. But they're asking spectators to be alert for anything suspicious.

Police officers will escort each of the giant balloons to help monitor wind speeds and ensure the wafting characters don't go off course, but winds weren't expected to climb above 17 mph.

In 2005, a balloon caught an unexpected gust of wind and struck a lamppost in Times Square, injuring two people. Since then, the parade has been accident-free.

The 91st annual parade begins at 9 a.m. and will be broadcast live on NBC. Smokey Robinson, Jimmy Fallon, The Roots, Flo Rida and Wyclef Jean will be among the stars celebrating, along with performances from the casts of Broadway's "Anastasia," "Dear Evan Hansen" and "SpongeBob SquarePants," plus a dozen marching bands.

George Avakian, jazz producer and scholar, dies at 98

By HILLEL ITALIE, AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — George Avakian, a Russian-born jazz scholar and architect of the American music industry who produced essential recordings by Louis Armstrong, Miles Davis and other stars has died at age 98.

Avakian's daughter, Anahid Avakian Gregg, confirmed that her father died Wednesday morning at his home in Manhattan. No further details were immediately available.

Avakian, an executive at Columbia Records and Warner Bros. among other labels, helped popularize such consumer standards as liner notes, the long-playing album and the live album.

Few could claim as many milestones as Avakian, who started out as an Ivy League prodigy rediscovering old jazz recordings and became a monumental industry figure and founder of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences, presenters of the Grammys. Through the artists he promoted and the breakthroughs he championed, Avakian helped shape the music we listen to and the way we listen to it.

"The innovations Avakian brought or helped bring to the recording industry are so fundamental and taken for granted today that most people under the age of 70 would find it hard to imagine there was ever a time when they didn't exist," DownBeat magazine declared in presenting Avakian a lifetime achievement award in 2000.

His contributions date back to the late 1930s, when he was an undergraduate at Yale and a jazz fan frustrated by the limited availability of his favorite music. He wrote to numerous companies and finally convinced Decca to let him compile "Chicago Jazz," widely regarded as the first jazz album and among the first jazz records to include liner notes, written by Avakian.

"Decca said in essence, 'We don't know quite what jazz in those cities is about but you seem to know so why don't you go ahead and produce them,'" Avakian told JazzWax in 2010.

Avakian was soon working on new and old music, documenting and making history, and jazz's stature was changing from popular entertainment to art. He prepared a series of reissues at Columbia that featured recordings by Armstrong, Ellington and Bessie Smith and helped launch the inclusion of alternate takes of individual songs. He produced the classic "Louis Armstrong Plays W.C. Handy" and one of Dave Brubeck's most popular albums, "Dave Digs Disney." He also signed up Davis for Columbia and co-produced "Miles Ahead," the 1957 album that began Davis' collaborations with arranger Gil Evans and established him as among the first jazz superstars of the post-World War II era.

"I saw him as the best trumpet ballad player since Louis Armstrong," Avakian told The Wall Street Journal in 2005.

The music business was rapidly changing in the 1940s and '50s, thanks in part to Avakian. Columbia was the industry leader in issuing classical recordings as albums and Avakian, as head of Columbia's pop

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division, oversaw the landmark 1948 release of 100 long-playing records for pop and jazz. Featuring Frank Sinatra, Dinah Shore and other artists, they were pressed on vinyl that was thinner than the traditional 78 rpm "shellac" records and played at what became the standard speed, 33 1/3 rpm.

In the 1950s, Avakian supervised two historic live recordings: "Benny Goodman Live at Carnegie Hall 1938" and "Ellington at Newport." The Goodman concert, released in 1950, was among jazz's first double albums, first live albums and first to sell a million copies. "Ellington at Newport," featuring a sensational 27-chorus solo by tenor saxophone player Paul Gonsalves on "Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue," captured the 1956 performances that revived the middle-aged Ellington's career.

Avakian's other achievements ranged from producing Bob Newhart's Grammy-winning debut "The Button-Down Mind of Bob Newhart" and Sonny Rollins' comeback album "The Bridge" to managing Keith Jarrett and teaching, at Columbia University, one of the first courses on jazz. In 1958, he was among the founders of the recording academy, which in 2009 presented him a Trustees Award for lifetime achievement. His other honors included an advocacy award from the National Endowment for the Arts, a Commandeur des Arts et Lettres from France and the Soviet Union's highest honor, the Order of Lenin.

Avakian, essentially retired from the music industry since the 1970s, was a breeder of race horses in recent years, notably the champion pacer President Ball. Avakian was married to the violinist Anahid Ajemian, with whom he had three children. She died on June 13, 2016, at age 92.

He was born in 1919 in the Russian city of Armavir, the child of wealthy Armenians who fled from the civil war that followed the 1917 revolution. Once settled with his family in New York, Avakian fell in love with jazz listening to the radio, on low volume, so his parents wouldn't know he was still awake. When he entered Yale, jazz was still a relatively new and popular genre and few sensed it had lasting value.

Avakian was barely out of his teens when he met Armstrong. While at Yale, he helped unearth tracks from Armstrong's foundational Hot Five and Hot Seven sessions from the 1920s. After serving in the infantry during World War II, when Avakian was based in the Philippines, he was hired by Columbia and was soon back in touch with Armstrong.

"Louis remains the artist I most admired and most enjoyed recording, by a distinct though relatively narrow margin," Avakian told JazzTimes in 2000, "narrow because it was also an enormous pleasure working with Duke Ellington, Miles Davis, Mahalia Jackson, Erroll Garner, Sonny Rollins, Dave Brubeck and a host of others who were not just great artists, but among the best friends I have ever had."

Papua New Guinea officials pressure refugees to leave camp

By ROD McGUIRK, Associated Press

CANBERRA, Australia (AP) — Papua New Guinea authorities on Thursday removed dozens of asylum seekers and ratcheted up pressure on more than 300 others to abandon a decommissioned immigration camp, where refugees reported their shelters, beds and other belongings have been destroyed.

Police Commissioner Gari Baki said 50 police and immigration officials entered the Manus Island camp Thursday morning and "peacefully relocated" 50 asylum seekers among the 378 men to alternative accommodation in the nearby town of Lorengau.

Shen Narayanasamy, a human rights campaigner for the activist group GetUp!, said some of those bused from the camp reported being forced to leave.

Baki said in a statement all had "left voluntarily," except for Iranian refugee Behrouz Boochan, a journalist who used social media to report on disturbing conditions on Manus.

Australian Immigration and Border Protection Minister Peter Dutton told Sky News television that Boochan was among "a small number of people ... arrested."

But Baki said Boochan was neither arrested nor charged.

"He was stirring up trouble and telling the other refugees not to move out of the center so police and officers ... simply escorted him out," Baki said. "I am glad that this relocation exercise was done peacefully and without use of force."

Boochan had earlier tweeted from the camp: "They are destroying everything. Shelters, tanks, beds

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and all of our belongings.”

“Right now are shouting at us to leave the prison camp,” he added.

Police Chief Superintendent Dominic Kakas denied reports that authorities destroyed asylum seekers’ property in an effort to persuade them to leave.

Water, power and food supplies ended when the Manus camp officially closed on Oct. 31, based on the Papua New Guinea Supreme Court’s ruling last year that Australia’s policy of housing asylum seekers there was unconstitutional.

But asylum seekers fear for their safety in Lorengau because of threats from local residents.

Amnesty International cited reports of immigration officials entering them camp armed with sticks and knives.

“The risks of serious injury if the authorities use force now is completely foreseeable,” the London-based rights group’s researcher Kate Schuetze said in a statement.

Authorities have previously made conditions tougher in the camp by emptying drinking water tanks and removing shelters. Deadlines to abandon the camp have passed without authorities taking action.

Australia pays Papua New Guinea, its nearest neighbor, and the tiny Pacific nation of Nauru to hold thousands of asylum seekers from Africa, the Middle East and Asia who have attempted to reach Australian shores by boat since mid-2013.

The United States has agreed to resettle up to 1,250 refugees among of them under a deal struck by former President Barack Obama’s administration that President Donald Trump has reluctantly decided to honor. So far, only 54 have been accepted by the United States.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull dismissed asylum seekers’ fears for their safety in Lorengau, accusing them of trying to pressure Australia into resettling them by refusing to move from Manus.

“They think that ... in some way they can pressure the Australian government to let them come to Australia. Well, we will not be pressured. We will not outsource our migration policy to people smugglers,” Turnbull told reporters.

“People on Manus should go to the alternative places of safety with all the facilities they need, they should do so peacefully and they should do so in accordance with the legal directions of Papua New Guinea,” he added.

Baki said “refugees cannot continue to be stubborn and defiant.”

Zimbabwe, facing new leader, wonders ‘Where is Mugabe?’

By FARAI MUTSAKA and CHRISTOPHER TORCHIA, Associated Press

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP) — As Zimbabwe on Thursday prepared to swear in a new leader, Emmerson Mnangagwa, after 37 years, attention turned to the fate of Robert Mugabe and the wife who just days ago was poised to succeed him.

The 93-year-old Mugabe, who resigned on Tuesday as lawmakers began impeaching him, has not been seen outside a few photographs since his stunning speech to the nation on Sunday night in which he defied calls to step down.

Mugabe was said to remain in the capital, Harare, with former first lady Grace but it was not clear under what terms. Some wondered whether the former president had secured guarantees of protection, including immunity from prosecution.

A photo circulating on social media, said to be taken this week, showed Mugabe and his wife sitting on a sofa with a trio of advisers standing behind them. A dejected-looking Grace Mugabe, who earlier this month was likely to replace Mnangagwa after his firing as vice president, looks off camera while Robert Mugabe’s eyes are closed. The photo could not immediately be verified.

Mnangagwa is set to be sworn in Friday after making a triumphant return to the country. He had fled shortly after his firing, claiming threats to his life.

He greeted a cheering crowd Wednesday night outside ruling party headquarters and promised “a new, unfolding democracy.” He also reached out to the world, saying international help is needed to rebuild

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the shattered economy.

Mnangagwa, who fled Zimbabwe upon being fired as vice president on Nov. 6, returned a day after Mugabe resigned. Mugabe's departure followed a week of intense pressure — from the military that staged a government takeover, from members of parliament who started impeachment proceedings and from citizens who protested by the tens of thousands in the streets.

While Mnangagwa spoke about "working together," he also recited slogans from the ruling ZANU-PF party that are unlikely to attract Zimbabweans in the opposition.

Mnangagwa, a former justice and defense minister with close ties to the military, served for decades as Mugabe's enforcer, a role that earned him the nickname "Crocodile." Many opposition supporters believe he was instrumental in the army killings of thousands of people when Mugabe moved against a political rival in the 1980s.

Mnangagwa was in hiding during the political drama that led to Mugabe's resignation. His presence Wednesday, flanked by heavy security, delighted supporters who hope he can guide Zimbabwe out of political and economic turmoil that has exacted a heavy toll on the southern African nation of 16 million.

The 75-year-old said he had received messages of support from other countries. "We need the cooperation of the continent of Africa," he said. "We need the cooperation of our friends outside the continent."

After meeting with South Africa's president, Mnangagwa flew home in a private jet. He said his inauguration on Friday is "when we finish this job to legally install a new president."

Mnangagwa will serve Mugabe's remaining term until elections at some point next year after the ruling party's Central Committee voted to remove Mugabe from his party leadership post. Opposition lawmakers who have alleged vote-rigging in the past say balloting must be free and fair, a call the United States has echoed.

Mugabe's firing of his longtime deputy as the first lady positioned herself to succeed her husband led the military to step in, sending tanks into the streets and putting the president under house arrest. That opened the door for the party and the people to turn against the man who took power after the end of white minority rule in 1980.

Mugabe's resignation has been met with wild celebrations by people thrilled to be rid of a leader whose early promise was overtaken by economic collapse, government dysfunction and human rights violations.

On Thursday, an editorial in the privately run NewsDay newspaper said Mnangagwa has "an unenviable task" and that he should set up a coalition government that represents all Zimbabweans.

"Arguments by some sections of society are that indeed Mnangagwa was part of the failed Zanu PF regime until two weeks ago, and may not have been the right person for the job, given the political and economic errors of the past," the editorial said. "The new president will come under significant pressure to perform miracles to prove his critics wrong and revive the sinking economy."

Raisman embraces role as 'Fierce' advocate for abuse victims

By WILL GRAVES, AP Sports Writer

The people come forward to Aly Raisman almost daily now. Random strangers. Men and women of various ages, races and backgrounds. They see the six-time Olympic medal winning gymnast out in public and approach with a hug to give and a story to tell.

It was jarring at first, if Raisman is being honest. When she pitched her autobiography "Fierce" to publishers last summer shortly after the 2016 Olympics, she intended to focus on her journey from tenacious prodigy to champion. And while all of that is in there, the part of her experience that's resonated the most since the book's release earlier this month is the one she wasn't sure she'd be able to share.

It's Chapter 22, titled "The Survivors." In it, Raisman outlines how she was abused by former national team doctor Larry Nassar, how he "groomed" her by presenting himself as a friendly ear and how she feels he was empowered to continue over the course of years by those in charge at USA Gymnastics.

Raisman spent weeks working on the section, revisiting it again and again, trying to get it just right. Or at least as close to right as she can get.

"I put in a ton of thought whether how I wanted to come forward about this," Raisman told The Associ-

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ated Press. "What I realized at the end of the day is that I want change and I want people to understand what exactly abuse is. It's very complicated. It's very confusing. I didn't know that I was being abused because I was manipulated so horribly."

In the process, Raisman discovered the abuse Nassar committed against other female athletes — including allegations from Olympic teammates McKayla Maroney and Gabby Douglas — is a very small part of a much larger problem that extends far beyond the actions of just one man. It's why she took those painful memories and put them on paper, to share with the world that, as she says over and over again, "It's not OK. It's never OK."

The 23-year-old's new calling makes thinking about a return to competition in time for the 2020 Olympics seem trivial.

"This is the focus," Raisman said.

A focus that has turned her into an unexpected symbol of strength for others who share their experiences.

"Unfortunately sexual abuse is far too common," Raisman said. "I've realized how many people are affected by it and it's disgusting. That's why I want change."

Raisman has become an increasingly outspoken critic of USA Gymnastics, blaming the governing body for a lack of oversight on Nassar's conduct. The 54-year-old spent nearly 20 years as the team doctor for the U.S. women's elite program, often working with athletes one-on-one. Raisman declined to get into specifics about the abuse she was subjected to but her experience falls in line with what many other have claimed against Nassar: that he touched them inappropriately while describing it as proper treatment.

Nassar pleaded guilty to multiple charges of sexual assault in Michigan on Wednesday and will face at least 25 years in prison. He still faces additional criminal charges and has been named in more than 125 civil lawsuits filed by former athletes. Nassar's downfall began following reporting by the Indianapolis Star in 2016 that highlighted chronic mishandling of abuse allegations against coaches and staff at some of USA Gymnastics' more than 3,500 clubs across the country.

Raisman has not taken any legal action yet against Nassar, though she's not ruling it out. Her larger concern is educating young athletes and their parents on the warning signs while also loudly clamoring for change. She has seen a familiar pattern repeat itself over the last 18 months: another gymnast comes out claiming abuse by Nassar, and USA Gymnastics follows with a press release attributed to no specific individual that praises them for their courage.

One of the most decorated Olympic athletes of her generation doesn't just want words. She wants action.

USA Gymnastics has taken several steps in recent months. President and CEO Steve Penny resigned under pressure in March and was replaced by Kerry Perry, who takes over on Dec. 1.

The organization hired Toby Stark, a child welfare advocate, as its director of SafeSport over the summer. Part of Stark's mandate is educating members on rules, educational programs and reporting. The federation also adopted over 70 recommendations by Deborah Daniels, a former federal prosecutor who oversaw an extensive independent review.

It's not enough for Raisman. She points out Penny wasn't fired but instead forced out. Though Nassar's relationship with USA Gymnastics officially ended in 2015 after an athlete came forward about potential abuse, he was still allowed to continue working at Michigan State University while also volunteering at a USA Gymnastics-affiliated club.

"That is just unacceptable to me," Raisman said. "(That gym) is a part of USA Gymnastics. USA Gymnastics is responsible for kids at that gym. Instead of doing their job, they let Larry keep working there."

Raisman would like to see more extensive change in leadership at USA Gymnastics. She never imagined being an agent for change as she dreamed of the Olympics while growing up in Needham, Massachusetts, but she's embracing the role as she comes to grips with her own victimhood.

Chapter 22 wasn't the end, only the beginning.

"I'm still, as you see, processing it," she said. "I'm still at a loss for words. I'm having so many people come up to me, telling me they had similar experience, that they filed a complaint and it was ignored. I will do everything I can to make sure those people are heard."

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Democrats also juggling politics of sexual predation

By JULIET LINDERMAN and CALVIN WOODWARD, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrats have been quick to support the “me too” chorus of women — and some men — who have stepped up to allege sexual misconduct and name names. But now “me too” stains the Democrats, too, putting them in an awkward place as they calibrate how forcefully to respond.

Allegations against Sen. Al Franken of Minnesota and Rep. John Conyers of Michigan are part of the newest chapter in the hot-potato politics of sexual predation for the party, which has its own fraught history on the subject.

The latest revelations have prompted a hard look back at the way Democrats and their allies once circled the wagons around President Bill Clinton, dismissing allegations that extended to serious assault as mere dalliances or the tales of “looney” women.

In her 2016 presidential campaign, Hillary Clinton drew a clear line on behalf of women who allege sexual assault, saying flatly: “You have the right to be believed.” But she equivocated when asked if her husband’s accusers from another decade should be believed, too: “I would say that everybody should be believed at first until they are disbelieved based on evidence.”

The pressure’s on now to act without equivocation.

Franken’s prankish photo of his hands over a napping woman’s breasts on a military plane, combined with her allegations that he kissed her forcibly on another occasion, prompted swift condemnation from throughout the party’s ranks and inspired calls for an ethics investigation that the senator-in-hiding supported, too. Then a second woman came forward, alleging Franken grabbed her buttocks during a photo op at a state fair.

In a story published Wednesday by the Huffington Post, two more women alleged that Franken touched their buttocks during campaign events in 2007 and 2008.

The women spoke on condition of anonymity. Franken said in a statement, “It’s difficult to respond to anonymous accusers, and I don’t remember those campaign events.”

And now, BuzzFeed has published affidavits from former employees of Conyers who said they saw the Democrat inappropriately touching women who worked for him and asking them for sexual favors.

It reported that his office paid more than \$27,000 to a woman who alleged she was fired because she rejected his sexual advances. On Tuesday, Conyers denied he made that settlement — but his office later acknowledged it while still denying that the allegations were true. The House Ethics Committee has initiated an investigation.

Democrats, predictably, have spoken fiercely and with one voice against Roy Moore, the Republican Senate candidate in Alabama who is accused of disrobing a 14-year-old girl in his house when in his 30s.

Some Republicans have demanded Moore quit his candidacy “if” his accusers have told the truth about his approaching teenage girls. Others have concluded the accusations are more credible than his denials. But a few, like Alabama’s GOP governor, have suggested that even if he did prey on a 14-year-old girl decades ago, the need to protect the Senate’s Republican majority is a higher priority. President Donald Trump repeatedly noted on Wednesday that Moore has denied the allegations and insisted that Alabama must not elect the Republican’s “liberal” opponent in a Dec. 12 special election.

In this sexual misconduct frenzy of unmasking figures in entertainment, media, sports and politics (#MeToo on Twitter), all sorts of episodes on the spectrum of misbehavior are being lumped together, from the boorish and juvenile to the allegedly criminal.

Grabbing a woman’s behind at the state fair isn’t in the same league as molesting a child.

Still, the Democrats have a predicament.

“They don’t want to look tolerant on this issue by saying, ‘He wasn’t as bad as so and so,’” said Dan Lublin, a political science professor at American University.

“They need to appear strong,” he said, and not focus on gradations in misbehavior. “They’re going with ‘unacceptable.’ And it is a dilemma, because you don’t know how far that will go.”

Kathleen Dolan, chair of the political science department at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, said

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the party's history with this issue is important to remember.

"Certainly, Democrats, from an ideological perspective, and on gender egalitarianism, should be the party or people we'd expect to be taking the lead on awareness of the decades-old problem of sexual harassment and sexual assault," she said.

"That's complicated in part by the history of the party debate when Bill Clinton was in the thick of his stuff. ... There's evolution, because the Democrats could perhaps with some accuracy say in the '90s we tolerated so much of what we shouldn't have."

Indeed, Democratic Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, whose Senate seat was once held by Hillary Clinton, now says she believes Bill Clinton should have resigned for his improprieties.

Only now is there movement to bring sexual misconduct out of the shadows in Congress, where people in both parties say it has been widespread.

Democratic Rep. Jackie Speier, who sponsored legislation to overhaul the system by which sexual complaints are made and settled on Capitol Hill, described Congress as "a breeding ground for a hostile work environment." Last month she shared her own story of being sexually assaulted by a high-level aide while she was a staffer.

In a stunning public hearing last week, Speier and Republican Rep. Barbara Comstock shared stories of current lawmakers harassing staff members. Comstock said she was told that an aide recently left her job after a congressman exposed himself to her. Support for mandatory training to prevent sexual harassment in Congress has received bipartisan support.

The Conyers allegations, made in a leaked settlement, lay bare the opaque nature of that process.

In order to file a complaint with the Office of Compliance, accusers must first enter into mediation, with a non-disclosure agreement attached, followed by a mandatory 30-day "cooling off" period. After completion, a victim may either file a formal complaint or a federal lawsuit. The process is so arduous that many victims either settle or decide against going through the reporting at all.

"My view of this law is that it is very stacked in favor of members and others accused of sexual harassment, to the detriment to someone who has suffered sexual harassment or other discrimination at the Capitol," said Debra Katz, a Washington employment and whistleblower attorney.

Kathleen Hall Jamieson, director of the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania, sees a common thread in the response to very different allegations, dating back to Anita Hill's accusations against Clarence Thomas on his way to the Supreme Court. No matter the nature of allegations, she said, the reaction to them is driven more by political party than by the merits.

US declares 'ethnic cleansing' against Rohingya in Myanmar

By JOSH LEDERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States declared the ongoing violence against Rohingya Muslims in Myanmar to be "ethnic cleansing" on Wednesday, threatening penalties for military officials engaged in a brutal crackdown that has sent more than 620,000 refugees flooding over the border to Bangladesh.

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson blamed Myanmar's security forces and "local vigilantes" for what he called "intolerable suffering" by the Rohingya. Although the military has accused Rohingya insurgents of triggering the crisis, Tillerson said "no provocation can justify the horrendous atrocities that have ensued."

"After a careful and thorough analysis of available facts, it is clear that the situation in northern Rakhine state constitutes ethnic cleansing against the Rohingya," Tillerson said in a statement.

Although the designation carries no legal obligations for the U.S. to act, Tillerson said those who perpetrated the atrocities "must be held accountable." He added that the U.S. wanted a full investigation and was considering "targeted sanctions" against those responsible — but not broader sanctions against the nation.

Rohingya from Myanmar's Rakhine state have been fleeing to neighboring Bangladesh, seeking refuge from what Myanmar's military has called "clearance operations." The crisis started in August, when Rohingya insurgents attacked Myanmar security forces, leading to a brutal crackdown in which soldiers and Buddhist mobs have killed men, raped women and girls and burned homes and property to force the Rohingya to leave.

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The declaration followed a lengthy review process by President Donald Trump's administration to determine whether the violence met the threshold to be considered ethnic cleansing. The United Nations came to that conclusion in September, but the U.S. had held off, with Tillerson saying he needed more information even as he expressed deep concern about the crisis.

Last week, Tillerson traveled to Myanmar in the highest level visit by a U.S. official since Trump took office. U.S. officials dangled the possibility of an "ethnic cleansing" designation ahead of Tillerson's trip, potentially giving him more leverage as he met with officials in Myanmar. In the capital of Naypitaw, Tillerson met with the country's civilian leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, as well as Myanmar's powerful military chief, Min Aung Hlaing, who is in charge of operations in Rakhine state, home to Myanmar's Rohingya population.

The leader of a group that works to improve conditions for the Rohingya said Thursday he hopes the declaration will strengthen the call for accountability. Arakan Project director Chris Lewa said he thought Tillerson's visit had been relatively appreciated and he hoped it would prove constructive.

"I hope that it will have the impact that (Tillerson) used the correct word I think to describe what really is going on," Lewa said. "And I hope that the military will listen more, but it's always difficult to predict how the military will react and sometimes it's like they are not listening to anything at all."

Senior State Department officials said the determination was intended to ramp up pressure on the military and others in Myanmar to resolve the conflict and repatriate refugees who have fled to Bangladesh. Yet it was also likely to intensify calls for the Trump administration and Congress to move toward new sanctions. Earlier this month, a House committee passed a nonbinding resolution condemning "murderous ethnic cleansing and atrocities" and calling on Trump to impose sanctions on those responsible for abuses.

Yet sweeping sanctions targeting Myanmar's economy or its military as a whole are off the table, officials said, adding that the Trump administration had determined they would not be productive either for ensuring accountability or for promoting broader U.S. goals in Myanmar. Instead, the U.S. is considering sanctions against individuals only, said the officials, who weren't authorized to comment by name and briefed reporters on a conference call on condition of anonymity.

Broad-based U.S. sanctions on Myanmar were eased under former President Barack Obama as the Southeast Asian nation inched toward democracy. U.S. officials have been concerned that slapping back sanctions or pushing Myanmar's leaders too hard on the Rohingya violence could undermine the country's civilian government, led for the last 18 months by Suu Kyi. That could slow or reverse the country's delicate transition away from decades of harsh military rule and risks pushing Myanmar away from the U.S. and closer to China.

The State Department has also examined whether the violence in Rakhine meets the definitions for crimes against humanity or genocide, but have so far made no such determinations. Both designations carry significant legal consequences.

Ethnic cleansing, on the other hand, isn't recognized as an independent crime under international law, according to the United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention. The ethnic cleansing term surfaced in the context of the 1990s conflict in the former Yugoslavia, when a U.N. commission defined it as "rendering an area ethnically homogeneous by using force or intimidation to remove persons of given groups from the area."

Human rights groups accuse the military of a scorched-earth campaign against the Rohingya, who numbered roughly 1 million in Myanmar before the latest exodus. The Buddhist majority in Myanmar believes they migrated illegally from Bangladesh, but many Rohingya families have lived for generations in Myanmar. In 1982, they were stripped of their citizenship.

Already, the United States has curtailed its ties to Myanmar's military over the violence. Earlier this year, the U.S. restored restrictions on granting visas to members of Myanmar's military, and the State Department has deemed units and officers involved in operations in Rakhine state ineligible for U.S. assistance.

___ Associated Press writer Matthew Pennington contributed to this report.

___ This story has been corrected to show that a House committee, not the full House, passed a non-binding resolution this month condemning ethnic cleansing.

Ships, aircraft search Philippine Sea for 3 missing in crash

TOKYO (AP) — U.S. and Japanese ships and aircraft were searching in the Philippine Sea on Thursday for three sailors missing since a U.S. Navy aircraft crashed a day earlier.

Eight people were rescued about 40 minutes after the crash of the C-2 "Greyhound" transport aircraft Wednesday afternoon, the Navy said. They were taken aboard the USS Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier and were in good condition.

The C-2A twin-propeller plane came down about 500 nautical miles (925 kilometers) southeast of Okinawa as it was bringing passengers and cargo from Japan to the USS Ronald Reagan aircraft carrier, the Navy said in a statement. The cause wasn't clear but the crash would be investigated, the Navy said.

The Reagan was participating in a joint exercise with Japan's Maritime Self-Defense Force when the plane crashed.

The aircraft carrier was leading the search and rescue efforts along with Japan's naval forces. The ships and aircraft had searched more than 320 nautical miles as of Thursday morning, the Navy said.

Japan's Defense Ministry said the crash site is about 150 kilometers (90 miles) northwest of Okinotorishima, a Japanese atoll.

The Navy said it had notified next of kin that the three sailors were "whereabouts unknown" but it would delay releasing their identities publicly for three days due to policy.

In Washington, the White House said President Donald Trump had been briefed on the crash. Trump said in a tweet: "We are monitoring the situation. Prayers for all involved."

The Nov. 16-26 joint exercise in waters off Okinawa has been described by the Navy as the "premier training event" between the U.S. and Japanese navies, designed to increase defensive readiness and interoperability in air and sea operations.

The Navy's Japan-based 7th Fleet has had two fatal accidents in Asian waters this year, leaving 17 sailors dead and prompting the removal of eight top Navy officers from their posts, including the 7th Fleet commander.

The USS John S. McCain and an oil tanker collided near Singapore in August, leaving 10 U.S. sailors dead. Seven sailors died in June when the USS Fitzgerald and a container ship collided off Japan.

The Navy has concluded that the collisions were avoidable and resulted from widespread failures by the crews and commanders, who didn't quickly recognize and respond to unfolding emergencies. A Navy report recommended numerous changes to address the problems, ranging from improved training to increasing sleep and stress management for sailors.

Olympic gymnastics ex-doctor pleads guilty to sex charges

By DAVID EGGERT, Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — A former sports doctor accused of molesting at least 125 girls and young women while he worked for USA Gymnastics and Michigan State University pleaded guilty Wednesday to multiple charges of sexual assault and will face at least 25 years in prison.

Larry Nassar, 54, admitted to digitally penetrating seven girls, mostly under the guise of treatment at his Lansing-area home and a campus clinic, between 1998 and 2015.

"For all those involved ... I'm so horribly sorry that this was like a match that turned into a forest fire out of control," he said in a courtroom packed with tearful accusers and others. "I pray the rosary every day for forgiveness. I want them to heal. I want the community to heal."

Nassar, who lost his physician's license in April, admitted his conduct had no legitimate medical purpose and that he did not have the girls' consent. The 125 girls and young women who have filed reports of abuse with campus police will be able to speak at his Jan. 12 sentencing.

The plea deal in Ingham County calls for a minimum prison sentence of 25 years, but the judge could set the minimum sentence as high as 40 years. Nassar is expected to also plead guilty Nov. 29 in neighboring Eaton County — the location of an elite gymnastics club — resolving state prosecutors' charges against him. Separately, he is scheduled to be sentenced next month in federal court for possessing child pornography.

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Olympic gymnasts Aly Raisman, McKayla Maroney and Gabby Douglas are among the women who have publicly said they were among Nassar's victims.

"You used your position of trust ... in the most vile way to abuse children," Judge Rosemarie Aquilina told Nassar after his plea. "I agree that now is a time of healing, but it may take them a lifetime of healing while you spend your lifetime behind bars thinking about what you did in taking away their childhood."

She called the victims "superheroes for all of America, because this is an epidemic."

They had testified that Nassar molested them with his hands, sometimes when a parent was present in the room, while they sought help for gymnastics injuries. Several accusers were angry with his apology.

"The fact that he just thinks, 'Oh, I pleaded guilty and now you guys can start healing' is ridiculous to me. I don't think he truly understands how many people are hurting and how bad people are hurting over this," said Lindsey Lemke, a Michigan State gymnast.

The criminal cases against Nassar followed reports last year in The Indianapolis Star about how USA Gymnastics, which trains Olympians, mishandled complaints about sexual misconduct involving the doctor and coaches. Women and girls said the stories inspired them to step forward with detailed allegations of abuse.

Many of the accusers have sued Michigan State, USA Gymnastics and the U.S. Olympic Committee.

"We are more than a year from my police report. Our abuser has pled guilty, but MSU, USAG and the USOC, you have yet to take responsibility for what happened on your watch," said victim Rachael Denhollander. She said officials kept Nassar in power for decades after ignoring repeated reports of sexual assaults and brushing off the victims as being unable to tell the difference between a medical exam and a sexual violation.

John Manly, an attorney for 105 accusers, said the three institutions "miserably failed children," and he likened what happened with Nassar to the child sex abuse scandal at Penn State University. He criticized an internal review at Michigan State and called for an investigation of university officials by Michigan Attorney General Bill Schuette, whose office is prosecuting Nassar.

Women's gymnastics coach Kathie Klages resigned earlier this year, but others remain on the job.

"We've never been given the documents either in litigation or anywhere else to show who knew what when," said Manly, who added that Michigan State President Lou Anna Simon should resign if she does not release an internal report about the scandal.

He also said USA Gymnastics officials should be investigated — possibly by an FBI task force — citing laws that require people in certain professions to report suspected child abuse to children's protective services.

USA Gymnastics said in a statement that it was "very sorry that any athlete was harmed by Larry Nassar" and that it fired Nassar and reported him to the FBI after first learning of concerns in 2015. Manly said the organization never informed Michigan State, however, which had investigated a complaint in 2014 only to clear Nassar.

Michigan State spokesman Jason Cody said the university "unequivocally denies" accusations that it covered up misconduct by school administrators. He disclosed for the first time that university police and the FBI conducted a joint investigation earlier this year to determine if any school employees besides Nassar committed crimes.

The results were sent to the U.S. attorney for western Michigan, and "we have no reason to believe that any criminal conduct was found," Cody said in a statement.

"Michigan State University continues to be shocked and appalled by Larry Nassar's now-admitted criminal conduct," he said. "Any suggestion that the university covered up this conduct is simply false."

In a statement, U.S. Olympic Committee spokesperson Mark Jones said the organization is "disgusted that these acts occurred, heartbroken for the victims" and "proud of their courage for confronting this tragedy."

Jones also thanked "law enforcement personnel for ensuring (Nassar) is never able to abuse young women again."

Associated Press reporter Mike Householder in Lansing contributed to this report.

Follow David Eggert on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/DavidEggert00> . His work can be found at <https://apnews.com/search/David%20Eggert>

Pro-Roy Moore group fundraises off Trump's near endorsement

By ZEKE MILLER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A political action committee supporting Senate candidate Roy Moore is fundraising off President Donald Trump's near-endorsement of the Alabama Republican, who is facing new allegations of decades-old sexual misconduct in the closing weeks of the campaign.

A Thanksgiving-themed email with the subject line "Giving thanks for YOU and OUR PRESIDENT!" applauds Trump, who on Tuesday discounted the sexual assault allegations against Moore and said voters must not support his "liberal" rival.

"We are thankful that his last words before leaving the White House to celebrate Thanksgiving were the strong words of support for Roy Moore," said the email from the group Solution Fund PAC.

After staying silent for more than a week, Trump all but endorsed Moore as he departed Washington on Tuesday, telling reporters, "We don't need a liberal person in there."

Two women have accused Moore, 70, of sexually assaulting or molesting them decades ago, when he was in his 30s and they were 14 and 16. At least five others have said he pursued romantic relationships when they were teenagers and he was a prosecutor. He has vehemently denied the allegations.

The president also said he would announce next week whether he will campaign for Moore, who faces Democrat Doug Jones in a Dec. 12 special election to fill the seat once held by Attorney General Jeff Sessions, a Republican.

Jones released a campaign ad Wednesday spotlighting Moore's accusers. An announcer recites their names as their photographs appear on screen. "They were girls when Roy Moore immorally pursued them," the announcer says in the opening. The ad ends with: "Will we make their abuser a U.S. senator?"

Moore's campaign announced Wednesday that his communications director, John Rogers, had resigned. The campaign characterized the departure as part of the normal turnover that occurs in political campaigns and denied that Rogers' decision had anything to do with the allegations against Moore.

Trump, who won election despite facing more than a dozen accusations of sexual misconduct himself, dismissed questions from reporters about backing a Republican accused of sexual assault over a Democrat. Trump pointed to Moore's assertions that he did nothing wrong.

"Roy Moore denies it, that's all I can say," Trump said Tuesday.

Trump didn't explicitly say he was endorsing Moore, but he insisted, "We don't need a liberal person in there. ... We don't need somebody who's soft on crime like Jones."

He also noted that the allegations came from behavior alleged to have happened decades ago.

"Forty years is a long time," Trump said, questioning why it took so long for Moore's accusers to come forward.

Other Republican leaders in Washington have called for Moore to leave the race, and the White House has repeatedly said Trump himself felt Moore would "do the right thing and step aside" if the allegations proved true.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and House Speaker Paul Ryan, both Republicans, have called on Moore to leave the race. And the Republican National Committee and the National Republican Senatorial Committee have pulled their support for his campaign.

Officials with both those groups said Wednesday their organizations had not changed their decisions in light of Trump's remarks.

Trump backed incumbent Sen. Luther Strange in a September Alabama Republican primary but moved quickly to embrace Moore after he won. A White House official said Tuesday that Trump's attack on Jones did not amount to a formal endorsement of Moore but rather was a message that sending the Democrat

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to Washington would hamper his agenda.

Republican leaders briefly explored the possibility of seeking a write-in candidate but have determined those efforts would only increase Jones' chances of victory by splitting the GOP vote in the Republican state.

The allegations against Moore come amid a national reckoning over misdeeds by powerful men in media, business and politics.

Just Tuesday, longtime Rep. John Conyers, D-Mich., acknowledged that his office settled a sexual harassment complaint against him involving a former staffer, though he "vehemently" denied allegations in the complaint.

Trump said he was "very happy" that women in general were speaking out about their experiences.

"I think it's a very special time because a lot of things are coming out, and I think that's good for our society and I think it's very, very good for women," he said.

More than a dozen women came forward in the waning days of the 2016 presidential election to say that Trump had sexually assaulted or harassed them over the years. He denied it. A tape was also released of him boasting that he could grab women's private parts with impunity. "When you're a star, they let you do it," Trump said on the 2005 "Access Hollywood" tape.

Trump, who has said all of his accusers lied, declined to answer Tuesday when asked why he does not believe Moore's accusers.

Jones, Moore's senatorial opponent, served as a federal prosecutor in Alabama, where he brought charges against two Ku Klux Klan members over their roles in killing four girls in a 1963 Birmingham church bombing.

Associated Press writers Jill Colvin in West Palm Beach, Florida; Kim Chandler in Montgomery, Alabama; and Corey Williams in Detroit contributed to this report.

Woman raises more than \$60K for homeless man who helped her

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — A New Jersey woman who was helped by a homeless man after she ran out of gas on an interstate in Philadelphia has raised more than \$60,000 for the good Samaritan.

Kate McClure, 27, started the Gofundme.com campaign earlier this month after she said she ran out of gas on Interstate 95 and a homeless man, Johnny Bobbitt Jr., walked a few blocks and bought her some with his last \$20.

McClure said she didn't have any money to repay him at the time but returned to the road several times to give him cash, clothes and food.

After a few visits, she started the fundraiser with the hopes of using the money toward housing and other expenses for the 34-year-old Bobbitt.

"I wish that I could do more for this selfless man, who went out of his way just to help me that day," she wrote on the fundraising page. "Truly believe that all Johnny needs is one little break. Hopefully with your help I can be the one to give it to him."

Donations have poured in, and the fundraiser has shattered its goal of raising \$10,000 for Bobbitt. About 2,000 people had given to the campaign by Wednesday evening.

APNewsBreak: Ferguson leaders wonder if monitor worth cost

By JIM SALTER, Associated Press

FERGUSON, Mo. (AP) — Ferguson, Missouri, has paid nearly a half-million dollars to the monitor team overseeing its police and court reforms, but city leaders question what they've gotten for their money, especially after the departure of the original lead monitor.

Washington attorney Clark Kent Ervin resigned in September after serving a little over a year as lead monitor overseeing the consent agreement between the U.S. Department of Justice and Ferguson, the St. Louis suburb where Michael Brown was fatally shot by a police officer in 2014. Boston attorney Natasha Tidwell, who has been with the Ferguson monitor team since its start, now leads it.

Concerns over the cost of monitoring were detailed in exclusive interviews with The Associated Press.

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The money spent on monitoring is costly in Ferguson, paid for entirely with city funds. The community of 20,000 is much smaller, with far less money, than most cities subject to Justice Department consent agreements. Money is so tight that Ferguson voters twice in 2016 approved tax increases to keep the budget balanced.

Mayor James Knowles III said Ervin failed to follow through on some projects, including opening an office in Ferguson and surveying residents. City Attorney Apollo Carey said his departure slowed a court audit and other reforms.

"It begs the question: What are residents getting out of (monitoring)?" Knowles said. "They're supposed to be getting transparency. They're supposed to be getting regular updates and engagement from the monitor. They haven't gotten any of it."

City Manager De'Carlton Seewood said "there were a lot of concerns on both sides," which led to Ervin stepping down. "The thought was it was best to depart," Seewood said.

Ervin did not respond to phone and email messages seeking comment.

Ferguson fell under Justice Department scrutiny after Brown was killed by Ferguson officer Darren Wilson during an Aug. 9, 2014, confrontation on a neighborhood street. A St. Louis County grand jury and the Justice Department declined to charge Wilson, who resigned in November 2014.

But the shooting of the black, unarmed 18-year-old by the white officer drew attention to allegations about mistreatment of African-Americans by Ferguson's police and court system. A Justice Department investigation led to a civil rights lawsuit that was settled in 2016 with the consent agreement.

The agreement calls for reforms such as hiring more black officers, requiring diversity training for police, and court reforms that include easing financial burdens for minor offenses such as traffic violations. The process is expected to take up to three years with oversight by a team of independent monitors.

Nine teams applied to perform the monitor duties. In July 2016, the Justice Department and Ferguson leaders chose the team led by Ervin, a former inspector general for the State Department and Homeland Security.

The agreement called for paying the eight-member monitor team up to \$350,000 a year, with the total amount to be capped out at \$1.25 million over five years. Ferguson paid \$350,000 for the first 12-month period, and has paid another \$145,000 since July of this year, its records show.

Of the initial \$350,000, \$291,192 was paid to Ervin's law firm, Squire Patton Boggs, according to Ferguson records. It isn't clear if Ervin received all of that money or if some was shared with other monitors or assistants, Seewood said. The agreement called for Ervin to be paid \$685 per hour and work up to 30 hours a month on the monitoring, which would amount to \$246,600 over a full year.

Since July of this year, an additional \$108,000 has been paid out to a data collection firm, along with \$21,000 to Tidwell and \$15,000 split between two other monitor team members, Knowles said.

At a community meeting last December, Ervin pledged to conduct a survey of residents and to open an office in Ferguson. The survey never happened, and no office ever opened.

Knowles said the survey "should have been done in the first year and it wasn't done. You can't have a baseline survey of the community to see how it feels about progress if you don't know what the baseline is."

The proposal to open an office, Seewood said, was aimed at adding transparency to the reform process.

"I offered to give him an office at City Hall," Seewood said of Ervin. "For some reason he was never able to make that commitment that he should be here."

Carey, the city attorney, said during a town hall meeting last week that Ervin's resignation has slowed reform efforts. He cited a court audit performed in August that remains incomplete.

Justice Department attorney Jude Volek said at the meeting that progress is being made despite Ervin's resignation, aided by the fact that Tidwell has been involved in the process since day one.

"You can see her commitment," Volek said.

Tidwell, who is a former police officer and federal prosecutor, declined comment through a spokeswoman.

Seewood also has high hopes for the team's new leadership.

"She's awesome," he said of Tidwell. "I'm very optimistic."

Merkel's weakness at home might not be fatal flaw abroad

By RAF CASERT, Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — If Angela Merkel has shown the European Union one thing over the past dozen years, it is never to underestimate her political skills.

The German chancellor returns to the EU summit scene on Friday after missing the last one because she showed a rare domestic flaw by struggling to form a coalition. Even worse, she will be in Brussels still a mere caretaker chancellor when, for years now, she has been considered the caretaker of the EU as a whole.

Such is her reputation for rigorous reliability that rumors are running wild that Merkel has finally lost her touch.

But observers say don't count on it, stressing that reports of her demise are still out of place.

"We have grown used to seeing her so strong and solid. Now, for once that it is not that obvious, we immediately see unrest in Europe," Ghent University professor of European politics Hendrik Vos said. "It is an exaggeration."

Merkel herself has underscored that she is steadfast in her determination to lead Germany for another term and at first sight there are few options — In Merkel's Germany that translates to "Alternativlos," and in Europe, the choices beyond Merkel are very few too.

By all means, Germany is the EU's powerhouse, the biggest country with the biggest economy smack in the middle of the bloc's 28 member states, which will become 27 after Britain departs.

And since reunification in 1990, Germany has now fully emerged from its post-World War II diplomatic shell. Under Merkel, a more assertive Germany has often come to be seen as a blessing rather than a curse.

"In our European neighborhood there would be incomprehension and great concern, if the political forces in the biggest and economically strongest country in Europe of all places didn't fulfill their responsibility" and quickly sought to end the domestic impasse, German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier said.

And after all, protracted coalition crises are legion in the EU, where most EU governments are made up of several parties.

"The role of Germany will not change because the FDP (Liberals) refused to join the government," said Manfred Guellner, head of German polling institute Forsa.

Even if Merkel's problems left the door to EU leadership ajar, nobody is squeezing a foot in too hard to push her out — there is far too much respect for that. And Germany is far too indispensable.

French President Emmanuel Macron, the man with the momentum since his stunning election victory in May, is widely portrayed as putting Merkel in his shadow.

When Merkel was last at the summit, she was seen with Macron, and British Prime Minister Theresa May in between them, urgently lobbying the U.K. leader for progress on Brexit negotiations.

When Merkel missed last week's summit in Goteborg, Sweden, May and Macron held a private, wind-swept tete-a-tete along the shore, a symbolic illustration of how the mechanics of diplomacy can quickly change.

Perhaps it's only fitting that Macron will be a no-show at the summit Friday. As a Frenchman, Macron knows well enough nothing moves without a strong Germany on board.

Since its inception 60 years ago, France and Germany have moved in lockstep most of the time and none of the major reforms that have led to closer union and more prosperity among the member states have happened when there was a rift between them.

"The president has invested a lot in the relationship with Chancellor Merkel. She is popular in France. She is respected here. And you prefer to work with people you know," Richard Ferrand, who leads Macron's majority in France's lower house, told German weekly Die Zeit.

If Merkel has a moment of political weakness, this might be the right time. She was instrumental in steering the EU out of the financial crisis as a united bloc, even if relations with debt-laden Greece were stretched to breaking point.

The migration crisis which saw hundreds of thousands of people trek to the EU's heartland from Syria and north Africa has also abated. And the continental economies are finally looking up.

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Still, Britain's imminent departure from the bloc is a cathartic moment for the EU and unity remains essential.

At the same time, Macron is driving the debate for more integration among the core nations on banking and finance, and harmonizing taxation. All things that make German commitment essential.

It's where France and Germany, for all their common EU ideals, could come to clash.

After all, Merkel has made a career as the embodiment of "Dear Prudence" while Macron seems to live by the dictum of French revolutionary Georges Danton: "Audacity, even more audacity, always audacity."

Associated Press writers Geir Moulson in Berlin, and Angela Charlton in Paris, contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected to show that the French revolutionary's first name is Georges, not George.

Retailers look to woo shoppers from rivals as Amazon grows

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO, AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Toys and TVs at J.C. Penney, Barbies at Best Buy, kitchen appliances like wine refrigerators at B.J.'s. As the holiday shopping season officially kicks off Thursday, shoppers may find some surprises at their favorite stores.

Even as retailers are counting on a lift from a better economy, they're looking beyond economic data and mapping out ways to pick up sales from other retailers as Amazon expands its reach. That can mean opening earlier than rivals on the holidays or even jumping into new product categories. The fight for market share comes as analysts at Bain say Amazon is expected to take half of the holiday season's sales growth. And Amazon is the top destination for people to begin holiday shopping, according to a September study by market research firm NPD Group.

"The retailers are in survival mode. It's about stealing each other's market share," said Marshal Cohen, chief industry analyst at NPD. "Amazon is the Grinch. They're stealing the growth."

With the jobless rate at a 17-year-low of 4.1 percent and consumer confidence stronger than a year ago, analysts project healthy sales increases for November and December. The National Retail Federation trade group expects sales for that period to at least match last year's rise of 3.6 percent and estimates online spending and other non-store sales will rise 11 percent to 15 percent.

Amazon is expected to be a big beneficiary as it cements loyalty among its Prime members and moves into new services and private-label merchandise. The company has introduced more than 20 such brands in the past two years in clothing, electronics, groceries and more, says Bain.

That leaves stores looking at rivals to see where they can pick up sales. There are extra dollars up for grabs this year, after thousands of store locations have closed and several retailers including Gymboree and Toys R Us filed for bankruptcy protection.

Jordan Ascencio, who has sons aged 1, 7, and 8, plans to bypass Toys R Us on Black Friday after being turned off by what she says are dirty stores and skimpy supplies. The latest problem: Her online order was canceled following a large-scale coupon glitch.

"I am not a fan anymore," said the resident of Sapulpa, Oklahoma. Instead, she plans to buy toys at J.C. Penney and Target.

And with Gymboree shuttering a quarter of its stores, Ascencio is buying more of her children's clothing at Target, which has launched a number of new private label brands.

Target CEO Brian Cornell recently highlighted that up to \$60 billion in consumer spending will be up for the taking in the next few years, and said the chain has been picking up market share in such areas as clothing.

The Thanksgiving weekend, when stores go all-out to attract shoppers, can be an indication of how well they'll do through the season. About 69 percent of Americans, or 164 million people, intend to shop at some point during the five-day period from Thanksgiving to Cyber Monday, according to a survey released by the National Retail Federation. It expects Black Friday to remain the busiest day, with about 115 million

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people planning to shop then.

Stores like Macy's, Target and Kohl's are set to open Thursday evening as they try to woo early shoppers. Walmart starts deals in its stores at 6 p.m. J.C. Penney is opening its doors at 2 p.m., an hour earlier than last year and at least three hours ahead of its department store rivals.

Some retailers are using the weekend to test new product areas before committing to them year-round: Penney says it will have TVs and consumer electronics like game consoles as doorbusters for Thanksgiving and Black Friday only. Penney has also added year-round toy shops and increased its selection of work pants as an apparent move to grab market share from Sears, after last year going back to selling major appliances.

Penney's Senior Vice President James Starke called these moves "market share plays."

Both Walmart and Target have been expanding their exclusive toys offerings. Walmart is throwing parties in its stores including ones where kids can play with new toys. Best Buy created its first toy booklet for the holidays. And in its Black Friday ad, the chain features Barbies among smart TVs and other electronics.

Chris Baldwin, CEO of BJ's Wholesale Club, says it is offering more toys and clothes. In clothing, it's been able to offer key national brands in areas like casual athletic wear amid rampant store closures. And he says clothing sales are up by at least 10 percent as people don't go to the mall as much.

"There's no question that consumer spending has started to tick up and confidence is a little bit better, which is terrific, but we are also seeing some benefit from other retailers," he said.

Follow Anne D'Innocenzio at <http://www.Twitter.com/adinnocenzio>

Asian stocks flat as Fed minutes show support for rate hike

By YOUKYUNG LEE, AP Business Writer

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Asian stock markets were largely flat on Thursday with investors in the U.S. markets going on a Thanksgiving holiday and the Fed minutes largely in line with investor expectations that the Fed will soon raise interest rates for a third time next month. Japan was closed on a holiday.

KEEPING SCORE: China's Shanghai Composite Index fell 0.2 percent to 3,422.65 while South Korea's Kospi dipped 0.1 percent to 2,538.88. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 was flat at 5,986.50. But Hong Kong's Hang Seng index rose 0.5 percent to 30,148.75. Stocks in Singapore and other Southeast Asian countries were slightly higher.

FED: Minutes of the Fed's last meeting that ended Nov. 1 showed that most officials generally believe that it'll soon be time for another increase in the Fed's key interest rate. A few Fed leaders think rates should stay where they are until there is more evidence inflation is rising, showing the concerns that the U.S. inflation is falling short of expectations despite the jobless rate falling to the lowest level in nearly 17 years. But the minutes did not change expectations for a December rate hike, analysts said.

ANALYST'S TAKE: While the minutes did not surprise markets, "the statement does clear the air of one raging debate, and that's 2018 rate hikes unambiguously depend more pressingly on inflation than on growth," said Stephen Innes, head of Asia trading at OANDA.

WALL STREET: U.S. stocks finished mostly lower on Wednesday retreating from their latest record highs. The Standard & Poor's 500 index dipped 1.95 points, or 0.1 percent, to 2,597.08. The Dow Jones industrial average slid 64.65 points, or 0.3 percent, to 23,526.18. The Nasdaq composite rose 4.88 points, or 0.1 percent, to a record 6,867.36. The Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks lost 2.13 points, or 0.1 percent, to 1,516.76. U.S. markets will be closed Thursday for the Thanksgiving holiday. They will reopen Friday but will close at 1 p.m. ET.

OIL: The price of oil retreated after a jump on reports that key oil producers might extend the cuts in production they made at the start of this year. U.S. crude fell 15 cents to \$57.87 per barrel on New York Mercantile Exchange. On Wednesday, the contract rose \$1.19, or 2.1 percent, to \$58.02 a barrel. Brent crude, used to price international oils, lost 23 cents to \$63.09 per barrel in London. It gained 75 cents, or 1.2 percent, to \$63.32 a barrel.

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CURRENCIES: The dollar rose to 111.35 yen from 111.24 yen. The euro rose to \$1.1833 from \$1.1819.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Thursday, Nov. 23, the 327th day of 2017. There are 38 days left in the year. This is Thanksgiving Day.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Nov. 23, 1942, during World War II, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed a measure establishing the U.S. Women's Coast Guard Reserve, or SPARS (an abbreviation of the U.S. Coast Guard motto "Semper Paratus" — "Always Ready").

On this date:

In 1765, Frederick County, Maryland, became the first colonial American entity to repudiate the British Stamp Act.

In 1804, the 14th president of the United States, Franklin Pierce (puhrs), was born in Hillsboro, New Hampshire.

In 1889, the first jukebox made its debut in San Francisco, at the Palais Royale Saloon. (The coin-operated device consisted of four listening tubes attached to an Edison phonograph.)

In 1903, Enrico Caruso made his American debut at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York, appearing in "Rigoletto."

In 1910, American-born physician Hawley Harvey Crippen was hanged at Pentonville Prison in London for murdering his wife, Cora. (Crippen's mistress, Ethel Le Neve, was acquitted in a separate trial of being an accessory.)

In 1936, Life, the photojournalism magazine created by Henry R. Luce (loos), was first published.

In 1945, most U.S. wartime rationing of foods, including meat and butter, was set to expire by day's end.

In 1959, the musical "Fiorello!," starring Tom Bosley as legendary New York Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia, opened on Broadway.

In 1963, President Lyndon B. Johnson proclaimed Nov. 25 a day of national mourning following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

In 1971, the People's Republic of China was seated in the U.N. Security Council.

In 1980, some 2,600 people were killed by a series of earthquakes that devastated southern Italy.

In 1996, a commandeered Ethiopian Airlines Boeing 767 crashed into the water off the Comoros Islands, killing 125 of the 175 people on board, including all three hijackers.

Ten years ago: A Canadian cruise ship, the MS Explorer, struck submerged ice off Antarctica and began taking on water, but all 154 passengers and crew took to lifeboats and were plucked to safety by a passing cruise ship. Robert Vesco, the American fugitive who cooked up moneymaking schemes that allegedly involved everyone from Colombian drug lords to the families of U.S. presidents, reportedly died in Cuba at age 71.

Five years ago: Supporters and opponents of Egyptian President Mohammed Morsi clashed in the streets of Cairo and other major cities in the worst violence since Morsi took office nearly five months earlier. Actor Larry Hagman, best known for playing the scheming oil baron J.R. Ewing on TV's "Dallas," died in Dallas at the age of 81.

One year ago: President-elect Donald Trump selected two Republican women who'd had unflattering things to say about him during the campaign: South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley to serve as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations and charter school advocate Betsy DeVos to lead the Department of Education. Two juveniles set a fire in Great Smoky Mountains National Park; the fire spread into the Gatlinburg, Tennessee, area, merging with others, contributing to 14 deaths and up to \$2 billion of damage. Ralph Branca, the Brooklyn Dodgers pitcher who gave up Bobby Thomson's famed "Shot Heard 'Round the World" in 1951, died in Rye Brook, New York, at age 90. Actor Andrew Sachs, who played Manuel the waiter in the British

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TV comedy "Fawlty Towers," died in London at age 86.

Today's Birthdays: Former Labor Secretary William E. Brock is 87. Actress Elmarie Wendel is 89. Actor Franco Nero is 76. Actress Susan Anspach is 75. Screenwriter Joe Eszterhas is 73. Actor-comedy writer Bruce Vilanch is 70. Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., is 67. Singer Bruce Hornsby is 63. Former Sen. Mary Landrieu, D-La., is 62. Actor Maxwell Caulfield is 58. Actor John Henton is 57. TV personality Robin Roberts ("Good Morning America") is 57. Rock singer-musician Ken Block (Sister Hazel) is 51. Rock musician Charlie Grover is 51. Actress Salli Richardson-Whitfield is 50. Actor Oded Fehr (OH'-dehd fayr) is 47. Rapper-actor Kurupt (Tha Dogg Pound) is 45. Actor Page Kennedy is 41. Actress Kelly Brook is 38. Actor Lucas Grabeel (GRAY'-beel) is 33. TV personality Nicole "Snooki" Polizzi is 30. Actress-singer Miley Cyrus is 25. Actor Austin Majors is 22. Actress Olivia Keville (TV: "Splitting Up Together") is 15.

Thought for Today: "We are incredibly heedless in the formation of our beliefs, but find ourselves filled with an illicit passion for them when anyone proposes to rob us of their companionship." — James Harvey Robinson, American historian (1863-1936).