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

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



Living Stations of the Cross

The youth of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church held its annual Living Stations of the Cross Wednesday evening at the church. In case you missed it, you can watch at 397news.com, click on Video Archives on the left hand side of the black bar, then 2017-18 and Other Events.

Front Row: Hannah Lewandowski, Grace Wambach, Megan Flihs, Alexis Hanten, Maddie Bjerke, Alexa Herr, Kelsie Frost and Wyatt Locke. Back Row: Luke Thorson, Ashley Flihs, Nicole Marzahn, Anne Marie Smith, Jackson Cogley, Alexis Simon, Isaac Smith, Austin Weiser, Erica Herr, Trey Gengerke, Jessica Bjerke, Korbin Blackmun, Garrett Schroeder, Jordan Bjerke, and Evan Nehls. (Photo by Renee Marzahn)

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Lions Club donates to Trinity Church Roof Fund

The Groton Lions Club recently donated \$1000 toward the re-roofing of Trinity Episcopal Church, a building over 100 years old that is now on the National Register of Historic Places. The Lions Club is challenging all other local citizens, service organizations, and businesses to step up and help preserve this beautiful old building. Pictured in back, left to right, are Bev Frohling, Ryan Quiggle, Nancy Larsen and Alfred Tastad; in front, left to right, are Groton Lions Club President Dave Pigors presenting the check to Groton Community Historical Society Treasurer Marcy Blackmun. (Photo by Dorene Nelson)

Maintenance Supervisor Wanted:

Under the direction of the Facility Administrator, the Maintenance Supervisor oversees the daily operations of the Maintenance. Performs maintenance and repair of physical structures of buildings.

Day Shift C.N.A. Wanted

Sign-on Bonus

☆☆☆ \$1,500 for CNAs ☆☆☆

Contact Brynn Pickrel or Nellie Hatfield at 605-397-2365 or apply in person.

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



1106 N. 2nd Street, Groton



Sun Dial Manor in Bristol is accepting applications for **full time and part time CNA's**. 12 hr. shifts- days and nights (SIGN ON BONUS OFFERED)

DIETARY OPENINGS

Full time cook, 8 hr. shifts (WITH SIGN ON BONUS)

Part time Dietary Tech

For more information, call 605-492-3615

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Skywarn Storm Spotter Class

Brown County Emergency Management and the National Weather Service will be hosting Skywarn Storm Spotter Class.

April 18, 2018 6:00pm-8:00pm

BC Courthouse Community Room

25 Market St. Aberdeen

This class is free and open to the public, no registration is needed.

You'll learn about:

- Basics of thunderstorm development
- Fundamentals of storm structure
- Identifying potential severe weather features
- Information to report
- How to report information
- Basic severe weather safety

For more information please contact Ryan Lueck at the Aberdeen - National Weather Service Office at 605-225-0519 or the NWS Skywarn web page at: <http://www.nws.noaa.gov/skywarn/>



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")**

At Easter...

...The celebration of
holy love

...The day of resurrection
... The day that brings
us new hope

**Have a great and
wonderful Easter!**

GROTON
DQ Dairy Queen

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Helping South Dakotans Navigate the Federal Bureaucracy

In the United States Senate, we spend much of our time working on legislation, attending committee hearings and making sure federal policies are working for families and communities in our state. But we also spend a great deal of time assisting individuals who are having difficulties dealing with federal rules, regulations or policies, and who may need help working with a federal agency. Our office can assist you in working with the federal government and try to help find a solution to the problem you may be dealing with, whether it's with the Internal Revenue Service, the Department of Veterans Affairs or any other government agency.

Every day, I receive emails, letters and phone calls from South Dakotans sharing thoughts on legislation, policy issues or federal regulations that may be causing them problems. I appreciate hearing from you because receiving your feedback is critical for me as I seek to make the best possible decisions for South Dakotans. I travel across the state as frequently as I can, and always enjoy hearing what's going on in your community.

Since the Senate requires us to be in D.C. during the week for votes and committee hearings, one way I am able to get feedback from South Dakotans is by having my staff members visit communities across the state and hold open mobile office hours. Folks in the area can stop by, have a cup of coffee and share thoughts, ask questions or request assistance in dealing with a federal agency.

If you follow along with me on Facebook, you may have seen that we post our mobile office hours ahead of time, so you know where we'll be. We also share the time and location information with newspapers in the communities we're visiting. We understand that your lives are busy and you may not be able to attend mobile office hours. To assist you, our offices in Pierre, Sioux Falls and Rapid City are open every week day from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and the phone numbers can be found on my website, www.rounds.senate.gov.

I know that navigating the federal bureaucracy can be difficult, frustrating and confusing. Our goal is to make sure that federal agencies are treating you with the respect and attention you deserve, and we're here to help you work with them. The staff members working in my South Dakota offices are specially trained to help residents navigate the bureaucratic maze of the federal government.

It is an honor to work for South Dakotans. One of the best parts of the job is hearing from you. We invite you to make contact with us through any one of our offices or through our website. We know it's important that there be a consistent and easily usable way for citizens to have contact with us on a regular basis. Your messages to us in person, by email or over the phone do make a difference.

Wicks Steps Down for Head Coaching Position at Missouri Western

Aberdeen, S.D. – Northern State Associate Head Men’s Basketball Coach, Sundance Wicks, has accepted the head coaching position at Missouri Western State University. Wicks spent the past two seasons with the Wolves, in his second coaching stint at NSU.

“A great and well-earned career move for Coach Wicks, who will be sorely missed on campus, but always a part of Wolves Nation,” explained NSU President, Dr. Tim Downs.

“This is a tremendous opportunity for Sunny and we couldn’t be more excited for him,” noted NSU Director of Athletics, Josh Moon. “Missouri Western is getting someone who has unmatched energy and enthusiasm and has been mentored by some of the best Head Coaches in the business, including Paul Sather. We want to thank him for all of his hard work and dedication to NSU over the years – as a student-athlete and a Coach.”

Wicks was a main component in the Wolves success this past season, as Northern won the NSIC Overall and North Division Championships, the NSIC/Sanford Health Basketball Tournament Championship, and the NCAA Central Region Championship. Northern advanced to the NCAA National Championship game after two Elite Eight victories over East Stroudsburg and Queens (NC).

“Coach Wicks deserved this opportunity to be a head coach and Missouri Western hit a homerun with this hire,” added head coach, Paul Sather. “Two years ago when Sundance joined our staff his goal was to become a head coach at the NCAA D2 level, and we’re proud to have helped him reach that goal. He has been outstanding here at Northern State, and is more than ready for his new challenges ahead. He’ll always be a Wolf!”

Statistically, NSU sat in the top-15 in the country this season in scoring margin, rebounding margin, 3-point field goal percentage, and field goal percentage defense. A total of seven Wolves were named to the NSIC All-Conference teams in the past two seasons including 2016-17 NSIC Newcomer of the Year, Logan Doyle.

An outstanding collegiate player with the Wolves, Wicks ended his four-year collegiate career as the 25th all-time leading scorer in school history with 1,174 points and helped the NSU to back-to-back Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference titles in 2002 and 2003. A 2-time All-NSIC first team selection, Wicks started every game (105) in his career and was also a 2-time all-conference academic honoree. Wicks remains a member of the NSU record books sitting 31st all-time in scoring (1,174) and 10th all-time in rebounding (665). Wicks was also a member of the Northern State track and field team competing in the 400-meter hurdles, where he was a 2-time All-NSIC performer. As a senior, he was honored with the Northern State Clark Swisher Award.

He began his collegiate coaching career as a graduate assistant under the legendary Don Meyer for two seasons (2004-06). During his tenure, he helped the Wolves reach the NCAA Division II Sweet 16 in 2005-06. Wicks is a 2003 and 2006 graduate of Northern State University with a bachelor’s degree in international business and master’s degree in health, physical education, and coaching.



Changing of the Post Masters

The Groton Post Office will be seeing a change in the guard this week as Mel Sombke will be retiring and turning the helm over to Mindy Vander Vorst as the new post master.

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Today in Weather History

March 29, 1982: An early season Tornado briefly touched down at Swett, South Dakota (11 miles west of Martin). The tornado overturned and heavily damaged a mobile home. One person was slightly injured, and another barely escaped injury, as he left the trailer just seconds before the storm struck.

March 29, 1998: A supercell thunderstorm produced 13 tornadoes across southern Minnesota. The strongest tornado was an F4. Two people died during this tornado event.

1848: Niagara Falls eased to a trickle during the late afternoon and then became "silent" for 30 hours. Most people noticed the silence on the morning of the 30th. This is the only time in recorded history that both Falls stopped flowing. An ice jam at the neck of Lake Erie and the Niagara River entrance between Fort Erie, Ontario Canada, and Buffalo, NY, was caused by the wind, waves, and lake currents. People even ventured into the gorge, discovering relics like weapons from War of 1812.

1886: Rainfall amounts of 6-12 inches occurred over northwest Georgia in a 3-day period from March 29 through April 2. This caused record flooding on the Oostanaula and Etowah Rivers that merge to form the Coosa River. Floodwaters, up to 11 feet deep covered portions of Broad Street in Rome with extensive record flooding. The stage height reached 40.3 feet. Flood stage is 25 feet. This record flood and another major flood in 1892 prompted the citizens of Rome to raise the town by 12 feet. This feat was accomplished by bringing in thousands of wagon loads of dirt. An official rainfall amount of 7.36 inches was recorded on this day in Atlanta. The 7.36 inches is the most Atlanta has seen in one day since record-keeping began in 1878.

1942: A slow-moving low-pressure system brought 11.5 inches of snow to the nation's capital on March 29, 1942. It still stands as the highest March snowfall on record in Washington, D.C. on a single calendar day. Also, Baltimore, Maryland recorded an imposing total of 21.9 inches of snow on the same day. On the flip side, eight days later, the temperature in D.C. soared to 92 degrees on April 6, 1942, and it remains the highest temperature on record for April 6. 2007: If thunder is heard, one should go to a lightning safe area. A high school athlete was struck and killed by lightning at a track meet in Carbondale, Illinois. A bolt or 2 had been seen miles away, and a distant rumble of thunder was heard before the deadly strike.

1920 - Clear Spring, MD, received 31 inches of snow in 24 hours to establish a state record. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1921 - The temperature in Washington D.C. dropped from 82 degrees to 26 degrees thus ending an early spring. (David Ludlum)

1935 - A severe duststorm blanketed Amarillo, TX, for 84 hours. During one six hour period the visibility was near zero. (28th-31st) (The Weather Channel)

1945 - Providence, RI, hit 90 degrees to establish a March record for the New England area. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms spawned tornadoes in Mississippi, and produced high winds and heavy rain in Louisiana. Thunderstorm winds gusted to 92 mph at Houma LA, and caused a million dollars damage in Terrebonne Parish. Avondale LA was deluged with 4.52 inches of rain. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Severe thunderstorms in the Lower Mississippi Valley spawned a tornado which injured two persons at Bunkie LA, and produced high winds which down a large tree onto a trailer at Bastrop LA claiming the life of one child and injuring another. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced torrential rains in northeastern Texas and southwestern Arkansas. Longview TX reported 14.16 inches of rain. More than eleven inches of rain at Henderson TX caused a dam to give way, and people left stranded in trees had to be rescued by boat. Total damage in northeastern Texas was estimated at 10 to 16 million dollars. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

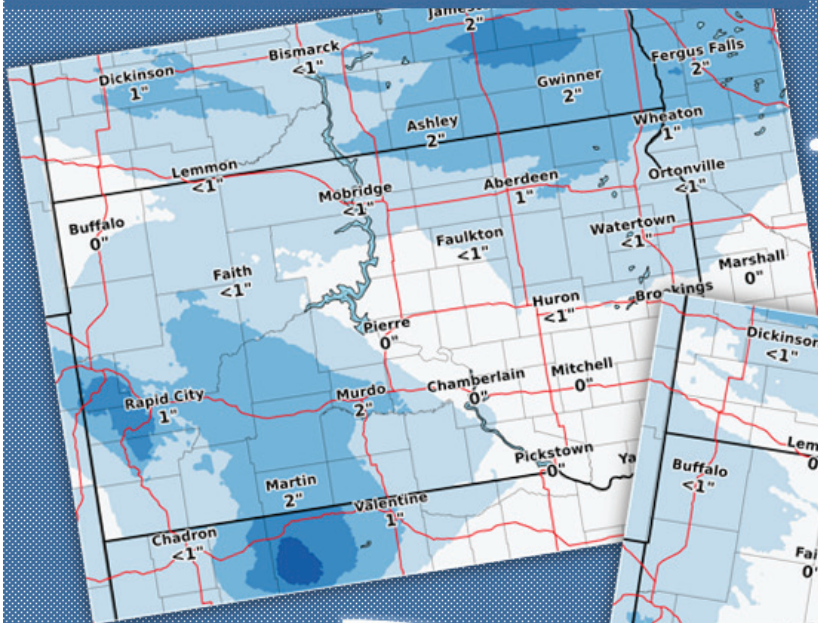
1990 - Thunderstorms developing ahead of a cold front produced severe weather in southeastern Texas and southern Louisiana. Thunderstorms spawned seven tornadoes, including one which injured seven persons at Gray LA. Thunderstorms also produced golf ball size hail and wind gusts to 70 mph at Port O'Conner TX, and produced up to six inches of rain in Beauregard Parish LA. (Storm Data)

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Thu Mar 29	Fri Mar 30	Sat Mar 31	Sun Apr 1	Mon Apr 2	Tue Apr 3	Wed Apr 4
40°F	40°F	23°F	33°F	37°F	33°F	36°F
21°F	13°F	7°F	20°F	18°F	18°F	33°F
NNW 6 MPH	N 13 MPH Precip 50%	NNW 24 MPH	W 9 MPH	SSE 10 MPH Precip 30%	NNE 11 MPH Precip 20%	E 11 MPH Precip 40%

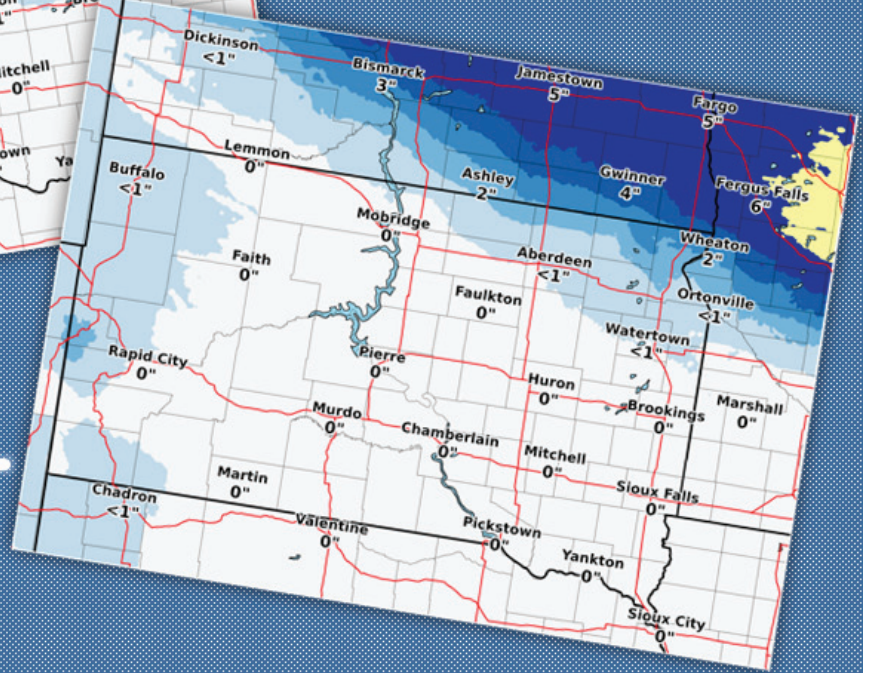
Just Can't Shake Winter!



Snowfall Expected Tonight

Snowfall Expected Fri Night

NWS Aberdeen,
Updated: 3/29/2018 5:05 AM Central



Published on: 03/29/2018 at 5:09AM

A couple of systems will pass through the region over the next couple days. Both are expected to provide for some light snow. Confidence in the Friday night amounts is somewhat low, and the band could shift a little south, or more into South Dakota. Temperatures will be on a roller coaster ride through the weekend.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 39.1 F at 12:00 AM

Low Outside Temp: 27.1 F at 11:29 PM

Wind Chill:

High Gust: 25.0 Mph at 3:02 AM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 78° in 1986

Record Low: -9° in 1969

Average High: 47°F

Average Low: 25°F

Average Precip in March: 1.06

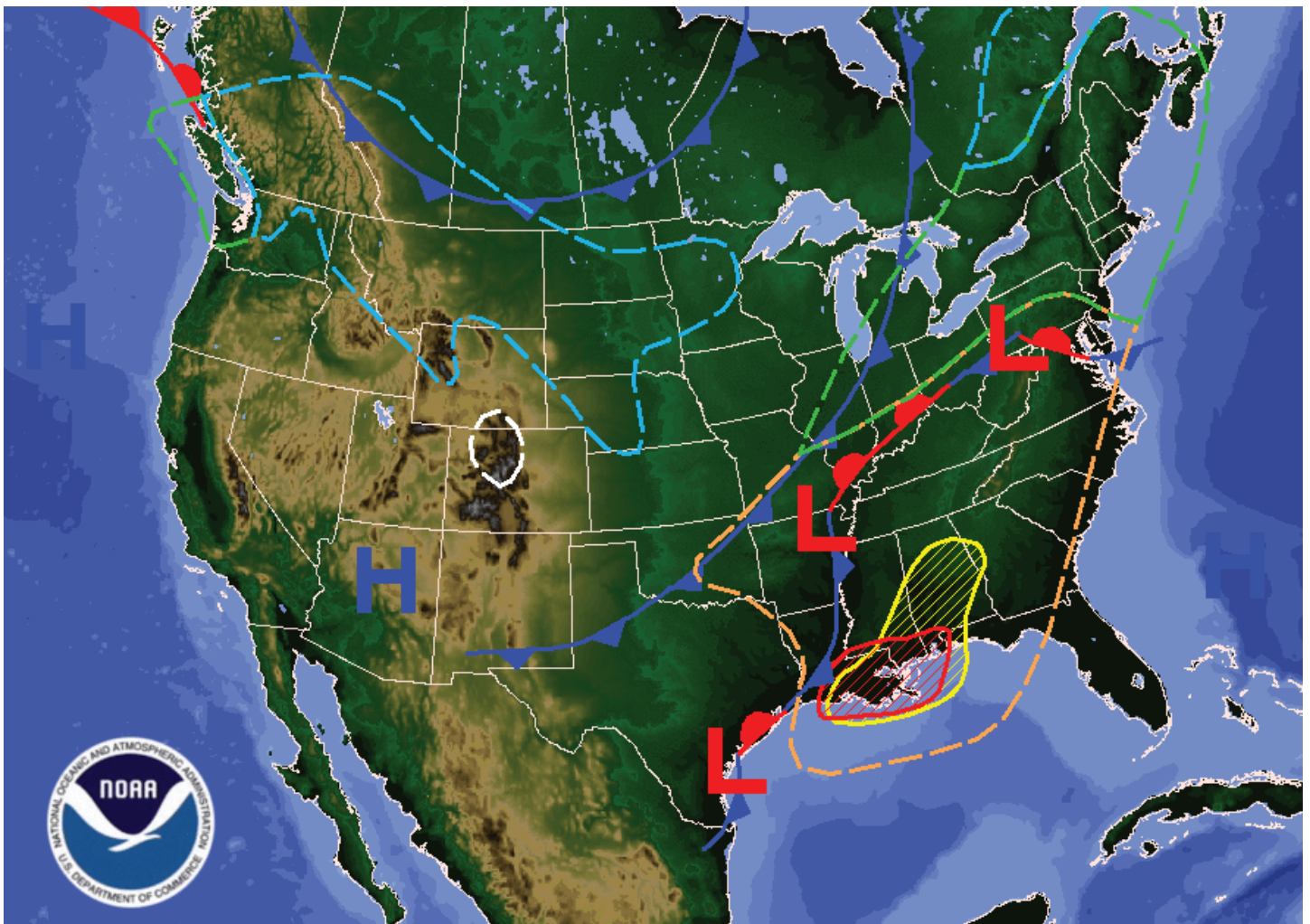
Precip to date in March: 1.66

Average Precip to date: 2.08

Precip Year to Date: 2.07

Sunset Tonight: 7:58 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:17 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Thu, Mar 29, 2018, issued 4:53 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Mcreynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

Rain

Rain and T'Storms

Rain and Snow

Snow

Flash Flooding Possible (hatched)

Severe T'Storms Possible (hatched)

Freezing Rain Possible (hatched)

Heavy Snow Possible (hatched)

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OUR HOMES – GOD’S SANCTUARY

“On the first day of each month I carefully walk through every room in my home to make certain that there is nothing that would embarrass Jesus if He were to visit our family,” said my friend. “If there is anything anywhere that is not appropriate for His eyes, it certainly is wrong for me to gaze upon it. If there are magazines or books or newspapers that have vile or unclean photos or stories I throw them away immediately. And because of the influence of television - even the news or children’s stories or cartoons, we got rid of our television. And many would think we were wise. But when I talk to “them” about Jesus, many of them think I’m weird even without having that ‘stuff’ corrupt my mind and the minds of my children.”

His statements brought back childhood memories of my home in Lorain, Ohio. His attitude was the same as my mother’s. I can hear an echo of her voice today: “We’re not going to allow Satan to live in this house,” she said often. In every room there was an open Bible - readily visible for anyone to see. The walls had pictures of Bible stories and scenes of the way people lived in the days of Jesus. Wherever guests looked, they were reminded of something that had to do with the story of salvation. Of course, we also had family photos. But they were pictures of activities that were related to church events or pictures of us “kids” standing next to missionaries or evangelists.

“Home is where the heart is,” someone once said. And if the “heart” belongs to Jesus He will be very visible.

Prayer: Father, may our homes become Your dwelling place where all who visit see You as the Lord of our lives. In Jesus’ Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 101:2b Oh, when will You come to me?

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)
- 1/27/2019 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm
- 3/24/2018 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 4/13/2018 Elementary School Carnival, 5 p.m.
- 5/5/2018 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)
- 5/27/2018 Historic Trinity Church Pump Organ Concert.
- 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)
- 12/01/2018 Olive Grove Golf Course 2018 Holiday Party

- 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
12-13-14-22-33
(twelve, thirteen, fourteen, twenty-two, thirty-three)
Estimated jackpot: \$36,000

Lotto America
07-24-40-46-51, Star Ball: 5, ASB: 3
(seven, twenty-four, forty, forty-six, fifty-one; Star Ball: five; ASB: three)
Estimated jackpot: \$2.47 million

Mega Millions
Estimated jackpot: \$502 million

Powerball
06-08-26-52-53, Powerball: 21, Power Play: 2
(six, eight, twenty-six, fifty-two, fifty-three; Powerball: twenty-one; Power Play: two)
Estimated jackpot: \$40 million

South Dakota regents hike public university tuition, fees

SPEARFISH, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Board of Regents voted Wednesday to increase tuition and fees at the state's six public universities by an average of 3 percent next school year.

The hikes will raise the average cost of tuition and fees for undergraduate resident students by about \$256 to roughly \$8,870, up from \$8,614. Regents President Bob Sutton said in a statement that the adjustment attempts to keep costs for students as low as possible.

The board cited employee salary increases and inflation in announcing the hikes. Tuition and fee setting is a "balancing act" between delivering services required by students and ensuring affordable access to higher education, Sutton said.

"All of this is done with the uppermost goal in mind: to deliver to our students the highest quality education possible," he said.

The increases are: 1.4 percent at Dakota State University; 1.5 percent at Black Hills State University and the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology; 2.6 percent at Northern State University; 3.3 percent at the University of South Dakota; and 3.8 percent at South Dakota State University.

Trevor Gunlicks, a junior studying political science at South Dakota State University, said he has "mixed emotions" about the increases. Gunlicks said the funds could be put to good use if managed correctly, but said he's slightly disappointed to see the bump.

"As a student, it's not something you want to see. You don't want to see your tuition rates going up," he said. "I do, from my perspective, understand why they're doing it."

The board last year approved an average 2.9 percent increase for the current school year. Tuition rates were held flat for the 2016-17 academic year after Gov. Dennis Daugaard and the Legislature funded a tuition freeze for resident university students.

South Dakota law alters how landlords handle support animals

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — New South Dakota legislation will allow landlords to evict or fine tenants who fake a disability or provide false documentation to keep a pet in their rental unit.

Gov. Dennis Daugaard signed into law this month a bill intended to prevent tenants from lying about medical conditions and claiming they have an emotional support animal. The law takes effect July 1, the Argus Leader reported.

A loophole in current law allows tenants to keep miniature horses, snakes and chickens as support animals, said Amy Miller, president of Charisma Property Management.

"It's a huge problem," Miller said. "Nobody wants to get sued so nobody's pressing it."

The federal Americans with Disabilities Act describes trained animals but not specifically therapy or emotional support animals. The language means that landlords can't deny tenants from living with the animals.

But state law didn't distinguish service or therapy animals either, so landlords often choose to allow them in order to avoid lawsuits.

"It goes unquestioned because (the law is) so ambiguous that unfortunately, I think landlords get taken advantage of," said Paul Gourley, chair of the South Dakota Multi-Housing Association. "There's a loophole in the system that needs to be corrected."

The new law says landlords can request that tenants whose disability or health condition isn't "readily apparent" provide a doctor's note affirming their need for the service or emotional support animal.

University of South Dakota student Taiya Bunde has a support cat named Snuggles that she keeps in her off-campus apartment. Bunde's psychiatrist approved Snuggles as an emotional therapy animal. The 21-year-old said she hopes "that people don't abuse it and ruin for those that need it."

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

Wells Fargo moving 100 Aberdeen jobs to other states

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — The Wells Fargo financial services company is moving 100 jobs from Aberdeen to cities in other states, including Minneapolis.

The American News reports the decision affects auto finance workers and those in student loan collections.

Company spokeswoman Staci Schiller says the move over the coming months is designed "to meet the needs of customers and the marketplace."

She says workers in Aberdeen who want to move with their jobs will be offered relocation assistance. Those who don't want to move will be given severance packages.

Other cities where jobs are being moved are in Arizona, Texas, North Carolina and Utah. The Aberdeen location is expected to close by the end of the year.

Information from: Aberdeen American News, <http://www.aberdeennews.com>

Fourth man charged with murder in 2016 Pine Ridge killing

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A fourth man has been charged with murder in the daytime killing of a man in the parking lot of a Pine Ridge Indian Reservation youth center in 2016.

The Rapid City Journal reports that 24-year-old Estevan Baquera was arrested earlier in March in his home city of Denver for first-degree murder.

He is the fifth person to be accused of conspiring to harm and killing 29-year-old Vincent Brewer III in South Dakota. Tiffanee Garnier has been sentenced to 15 years in prison for helping the attackers evade authorities.

Baquera has also been charged with first-degree premeditated murder, conspiracy to commit assault and brandishing a firearm in furtherance of a crime of violence.

Authorities say Brewer was shot over a dozen times during an attempt to collect an alleged drug debt in October 2016.

Study: Armed security officers are on the rise in US schools

By MARIA DANILOVA and LARRY FENN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Armed security officers are becoming more prevalent at America's schools, according to a federal study released Thursday amid a heated debate over whether teachers and other school officials should carry guns.

Armed officers were present at least once a week in 43 percent of all public schools during the 2015-16 school year, compared with 31 percent of schools a decade before, according to data from a survey conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics.

Last month's mass shooting at a Florida high school put renewed focus on the role of armed school security guards, after a video showed that a sheriff's deputy at the school approached but did not enter the building where the attack was taking place.

The study came out a day after Education Secretary Betsy DeVos kicked off a federal school safety panel. DeVos has said that schools should have the option to arm teachers. She's being criticized by teachers' unions for not including educators, students and experts in the panel, which consists only of her and three other Cabinet secretaries.

The percentage of schools with a security guard, a school resource officer or other sworn law enforcement officer on campus at least once a week has gone up from 42 percent in 2005-06 to 57 percent a decade later. While security at schools of all grade levels increased, the shift is clearer among elementary schools, where the share with security staff has gone from 26 percent to 45 percent in the same time period.

"There has been an increase in security staff in school over the last 10 years and it's more pronounced at the primary school level," said Lauren Musu-Gillette, lead author of the report.

Experts, however, are divided on whether putting such officers on school campuses will make the schools safer or frighten children and lead to more arrests.

"There needs to be at least one in every school in the country," said Mo Canady, executive director of the National Association of School Resource Officers. "Every school could benefit from one."

School resource officers are sworn law enforcement personnel who have been trained to work in schools. Their duties include controlling outside traffic, patrolling the school, maintaining discipline, identifying problems and mentoring at-risk students, teaching law-related classes and serving as liaisons between schools and police. The school security study released Thursday includes school resource officers, other sworn law enforcement and additional security staff.

Ronald Stephens, executive director of the National School Safety Council, agrees, saying that trained officers carrying weapons can help prevent a shooting inside the school and deter a possible shooter from entering.

"It sends the signal that the school is being watched and that the care and supervision of children is an important priority," Stephens said.

Others have questions.

A 2013 congressional report found that the available research "draws conflicting conclusions about whether SRO programs are effective at reducing school violence."

"Also, the research does not address whether SRO programs deter school shootings, one of the key reasons for renewed congressional interest in these programs," the study said.

Critics of putting weapons in schools point to the sheriff's deputy in Parkland who stayed outside the school when 17 people were being killed. The officer, Deputy Scot Peterson, says he thought the shots were being fired from outside the school.

Ron Astor, an education professor at University of Southern California who specializes in school behavior, says that putting weapons in schools will make them akin to prisons, intimidate children and hurt their studies. Instead, he says, research has shown that violence, bullying and the use of drugs and guns is reduced in warm, caring environments focused on providing support to students.

"With a lot of guns, it doesn't create a sense of safety with the children and the teachers. It could trigger post-traumatic stress disorder. It triggers nonattendance," Astor said.

"We don't want to live in neighborhoods where there are thousands of police officers or the military. Who likes to live in those neighborhoods?" he said. "We like to live in neighborhoods where we know each other, where people have good relationships with each other, where they are out on the streets, talking to each other."

The doctor is in: White House physician nominated to lead VA

By HOPE YEN and ZEKE MILLER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump fired Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin and nominated White House doctor Ronny Jackson to replace him following a bruising ethics scandal and a mounting rebellion within the agency.

A Navy rear admiral, Jackson is a surprise choice to succeed Shulkin, a former Obama administration official and the first nonveteran to head the VA. Trump had been considering replacing Shulkin for weeks but had not been known to be considering Jackson for the role.

In a statement, Trump praised Jackson as "highly trained and qualified." It was a decision that signaled Trump chose to go with someone he knows and trusts, rather than choosing a candidate with a longer resume, to run a massive agency facing huge bureaucratic challenges.

Shulkin said he was undone by advocates of privatization within the administration. He wrote in a New York Times opinion piece that they "saw me as an obstacle to privatization who had to be removed." He added: "That is because I am convinced that privatization is a political issue aimed at rewarding select people and companies with profits, even if it undermines care for veterans."

Jackson has served since 2013 as the physician to the president, one of the people in closest proximity to Trump day in and day out.

His profile rose after he conducted a sweeping press conference about the president's medical exam in January in which he impressed Trump with his camera-ready demeanor and deft navigation of reporters' questions as he delivered a rosy depiction of the president's health, according to a person familiar with the president's thinking but not authorized to discuss private conversations.

Jackson eagerly embraced the idea of moving to the VA, according to a White House official who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss personnel matters. Ironically, it was Shulkin who had recommended Jackson for an undersecretary position at the agency in fall. Jackson was vetted during that time on his policy positions and other issues, the official said.

The promotion of Jackson marks the latest Trump hire to be driven at least as much by personal familiarity with the president as by his vision for the role at government's second-largest department, responsible for 9 million military veterans in more than 1,700 government-run health facilities.

Brig. Gen. Dr. Richard Tubb, who trained Jackson, said in a letter read at Jackson's briefing that the doctor had been attached like "Velcro" to Trump since Inauguration Day.

"On any given day," he wrote, "the 'physician's office,' as it is known, is generally the first and last to see the President."

A White House official said Shulkin was informed of his dismissal by chief of staff John Kelly before the president announced the move on Twitter on Wednesday.

A major veterans' organization expressed concern over Shulkin's dismissal and Trump's intention to nominate Jackson, whom they worried lacked experience to run the huge department.

"We are disappointed and already quite concerned about this nominee," said Joe Chenelly, the national executive director of AMVETS. "The administration needs to be ready to prove that he's qualified to run such a massive agency, a \$200 billion bureaucracy."

Rep. Phil Roe, chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, said he believed Shulkin did a "fantastic job" and didn't think he should have been dismissed, but "at the end of the day, Cabinet secretaries serve at the pleasure of the president."

"I respect President Trump's decision, support the president's agenda and remain willing to work with anyone committed to doing the right thing on behalf of our nation's veterans," said Roe, a Republican

from Tennessee.

Shulkin is the second Cabinet secretary to depart over controversies involving expensive travel, following Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price's resignation last September. Trump said in a statement he is "grateful" for Shulkin's service.

Shulkin had agreed to reimburse the government more than \$4,000 after the VA's internal watchdog concluded last month that he had improperly accepted Wimbledon tennis tickets and that his then-chief of staff had doctored emails to justify his wife traveling to Europe with him at taxpayer expense. Shulkin also blamed internal drama at the agency on a half-dozen or so rebellious political appointees, insisting he had White House backing to fire them.

But the continuing VA infighting and a fresh raft of watchdog reports documenting leadership failures and spending waste — as well as fresh allegations that Shulkin had used a member of his security detail to run personal errands — proved too much of a distraction.

It was the latest in a series of departures of top administration officials, including Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and national security adviser H.R. McMaster.

The VA change comes as Trump is trying to expand the Veterans Choice program, fulfilling a campaign promise that major veterans' groups worry could be an unwanted step toward privatizing VA health care. His plan remains in limbo in Congress.

Having pushed through legislation in Trump's first year making it easier to fire bad VA employees and speed disability appeals, Shulkin leaves behind a department in disarray. Several projects remain unfinished, including a multibillion-dollar overhaul of electronic medical records aimed at speeding up wait times for veterans seeking medical care as well as expanded mental health treatment for veterans at higher risk of suicide.

Trump selected Robert Wilkie, undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, to serve as the acting head of the VA.

Associated Press writers Jill Colvin and Jonathan Lemire contributed to this report.

VA pick impressed Trump when he gave glowing health report

By JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Ronny Jackson passed his screen test with President Donald Trump before casting even began.

Jackson, the president's personal physician and surprise choice to lead the massive Department of Veterans Affairs, stood before the White House press corps in January to announce the results of the president's first physical in a performance that showed he was quick-witted, hard to throw off-kilter and unflinchingly complimentary of Trump.

Marveling at the 71-year-old president's good health, Jackson opined, "It's just the way God made him."

Now, the Navy doctor who has been entrusted with the health of the past three presidents is poised for a promotion, tapped to replace David Shulkin at an agency that has been badly bruised by scandal. Trump's unexpected pick is the latest example of the president's reliance on familiar faces. And it shows Jackson has succeeded at arguably the most important measure in the Trump administration: winning the president's trust.

Trump, in a statement, called Jackson "highly trained and qualified" and said that, as a service member himself, Jackson "has seen firsthand the tremendous sacrifice our veterans make and has a deep appreciation for the debt our great country owes them."

Jackson's name was not among the roughly half-dozen candidates the White House was said to be actively reviewing in recent weeks. But Trump has formed a close bond with his doctor in the hours they've spent together at the White House and traveling on Air Force One.

Dr. Richard Tubb, the longest-serving White House physician and the person who trained Jackson, said in a letter read at Jackson's star-turning briefing that members of the White House medical team have

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been “figuratively Velcro-ed” to Trump since the day after his election and that “on January 20, 2017, Dr. Jackson became that Velcro.”

Tubb explained that Jackson’s office is “one of only a very few in the White House Residence proper,” located directly across the hall from the president’s private elevator.

Trump has told aides and outside advisers that he is fond of Jackson personally, according to a person familiar with the president’s thinking but not authorized to discuss private conversations.

The president was also impressed with Jackson’s performance at the podium in January, telling aides that he liked Jackson’s smooth turn before the cameras and ability to field reporters’ questions as he offered a glowing report on the president’s physical and mental well-being.

During the briefing, Jackson spent nearly an hour exhausting reporters’ questions, extoling the president’s “incredible genes” and joking that if only Trump had eaten a healthier diet over the last 20 years, “he might live to be 200 years old.”

And he achieved a more consequential, if less noticed, goal: effectively stamping out questions that had been brewing about the president’s mental fitness.

A White House official said Shulkin himself had recommended Jackson for an undersecretary position at the VA last fall, and Trump ultimately decided he was more comfortable with Jackson than with other top candidates. The official was not authorized to discuss personnel matters and spoke on condition of anonymity.

A native of Levelland, Texas, Jackson graduated from Texas A&M with a degree in marine biology and went on to attend medical school at the University of Texas Medical Branch, graduating in 1995.

From there, he headed to the Navy, where he attended the Navy’s Undersea Medical Officer Program and served in a number of roles, including diving safety officer at the Naval Safety Center in Norfolk, Virginia. In 2005, he joined the 2nd Marines, Combat Logistics Regiment 25, and deployed in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom as the emergency medicine physician in charge of resuscitative medicine for a Surgical Shock Trauma Platoon, according to the White House.

Ned Price, a National Security Council spokesman under President Barack Obama who was served by Jackson, described the doctor as “the guy you always want to be around” because he’s affable and funny. But Price added that it was difficult to believe the nomination was unrelated to the “glowing assessment” of Trump’s health that the doctor had provided.

On Capitol Hill, Jackson’s selection was praised by Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C.

“If there ever was a home run pick, Adm. Jackson fits the bill - combat surgeon, career military officer who loves his country and will provide the highest quality health care and services to our wonderful veterans,” he said.

But a major veterans’ organization worried about whether Jackson had the experience to run the huge department.

“The administration needs to be ready to prove that he’s qualified to run such a massive agency, a \$200 billion bureaucracy,” said Joe Chenelly, the national executive director of AMVETS.

Associated Press writers Jonathan Lemire, Hope Yen, Darlene Superville and Zeke Miller contributed to this report.

Follow Colvin on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/colvinj>

Angry families demand facts on deadly Venezuela jail riot

By JUAN CARLOS HERNANDEZ, Associated Press

VALENCIA, Venezuela (AP) — Distraught families are clamoring for information about detained relatives following a fire that Venezuela’s chief prosecutor says killed 68 people when it swept through the cells of the state police station.

Angry relatives fought with police outside the facility Wednesday after being unable to get any informa-

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tion on casualties from Wednesday's fire, which townspeople said erupted after a disturbance involving detainees. Officers used tear gas to disperse the crowd, and local officials would confirm only that there were fatalities.

Late Wednesday, Attorney General Tarek William Saab said on his official Twitter account that 68 people were dead and nearly all of them were prisoners. He said the dead included two women who were staying overnight at the station, but he didn't provide any further details.

Saab said four prosecutors had been named to determine what happened at the state police headquarters in Valencia, a town in Carabobo state about 100 miles (160 kilometers) west of Caracas.

It was one of the worst jail disasters in Venezuela, where human rights groups complain about poor conditions in prisons and jails. A fire at a prison in the western state of Zulia killed more than 100 inmates in 1994.

With tears streaking cheeks, people waiting outside the station Wednesday said dozens of detainees had been kept in squalid conditions and they feared the worst for their loved ones.

Some people buried their hands in their faces. Others had to be supported by friends and family as they collapsed in despair. Some wept quietly and clutched their hands in prayer.

"I don't know if my son is dead or alive!" cried Aida Parra, who said she last saw her son the previous day, when she took food to him. "They haven't told me anything."

Nearby, National Guard troops wearing flak jackets and carrying rifles slung across their backs walked in and out of the station. Fire trucks and ambulances stood outside. Unused stretchers leaned against a wall.

A Window to Freedom, a nonprofit group that monitors conditions at Venezuela's jails and prisons, said preliminary but unconfirmed information indicated the riot began when an armed detainee shot an officer in the leg. Shortly after that a fire broke out, with flames growing quickly as the blaze spread to mattresses in the cells, it said. Rescuers apparently had to break a hole through a wall to free some of the prisoners inside.

Photos shared by the group showed prisoners being taken out on stretchers, their limbs frozen in awkward positions as skin peeled off.

Carlos Nieto Palma, director of A Window to Freedom, said officials should be held accountable for failing to address the poor conditions in police station jails. The group said overcrowding has become common throughout Venezuela, with detainees being kept long past customary brief holding periods before being let go or sent to larger jails to await trial.

"It's grave and alarming," Nieto Palma said. "What happened today in Carabobo is a sign of that."

Opposition lawmaker Juan Miguel Matheus demanded that the pro-government leader of Carabobo state inform relatives about what happened.

"The desperation of relatives should not be played with," he said.

Clashes between prisoners and guards are not uncommon in Venezuela. Inmates are frequently able to obtain weapons and drugs with the help of corrupt guards and heavily armed groups control cellblock fiefdoms.

Malala says she will continue fight for girls' education

By **MUNIR AHMED** and **SHERIN ZADA**, Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Nobel Peace Prize winner Malala Yousafzai on Thursday said she was excited to be back in Pakistan for the first time since she was shot in 2012 by Taliban militants angered at her championing of education for girls.

Yousafzai said in a brief speech at a ceremony at Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi's office that she will continue to campaign for the education of girls and asked Pakistanis to be united on issues like providing better health care and education.

She said she remembered having to leave Pakistan for treatment after she was attacked. Covering her tear-filled eyes with her hands, Yousafzai said it was hard to wait for more than five years to return home.

"It is now actually happening and I am here," she said.

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Abbasi praised Yousafzai for her sacrifices and role in the promotion of girls' education. He said he was happy to welcome her home, where he said terrorism has been eliminated.

Since her attack and recovery, Yousafzai has led the "Malala Fund," which she said has invested \$6 million in schools and to provide books and uniforms for schoolchildren.

"For the betterment of Pakistan, it is necessary to educate girls and empower women," she said.

Earlier, tight security greeted the now-20-year-old university student upon her arrival at Pakistan's Benazir Bhutto International Airport. Local television showed her with her parents in the lounge at the airport before leaving in a convoy of nearly 15 vehicles, many of them occupied by heavily armed police.

Her return had been shrouded in secrecy and she was not likely to travel to her hometown of Mingora in the Swat valley, where the shooting occurred.

As news broke about Yousafzai's arrival, many of her fellow Pakistanis welcomed her.

Cricketer turned opposition leader Imran Khan's party said Yousafzai's return was a sign of the defeat of extremism in the country.

Mohammad Hassan, one of Yousafzai's cousins in the northwestern town of Mingora, said it was one of the happiest days of his life. He said he was not sure whether Yousafzai will visit her home town, where schoolchildren were jubilant on her return, though they wished Yousafzai had visited Mingora so that they could greet her.

Javeria Khan, a 12-year-old schoolgirl in Yousafzai's hometown, said she was excited about Yousafzai's return.

"I wish I could see her in Swat. I wish she had come here, but we welcome her," she said, as she sat among schoolchildren.

Marvi Memon, a senior leader of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League party, also welcomed Yousafzai, saying it was a pleasant surprise for her to see Yousafzai back home.

"What an incredible surprise I woke up to this morning" to know that Yousafzai is back along with her parents, she said. Memon said it was a proud day for Pakistan that Yousafzai was back in Pakistan.

Yousafzai was just 14 years old but already known for her activism when Taliban gunman boarded the school van in which she was sitting and demanded to know "who is Malala?" before shooting her in the head. Two of her classmates were also injured. In critical condition, Yousafzai was flown to the garrison city of Rawalpindi before being airlifted to Birmingham in Britain.

She has since spoken at the United Nations, mesmerizing the world with her eloquence and her unrelenting commitment to the promotion of girls' education through the Malala Fund, a book, meetings with refugees and other activism.

She was awarded the Nobel in 2014, along with Indian child-rights activist Kailash Satyarthi, and said on the day she collected the prize that "Education is one of the blessings of life, and one of its necessities."

She remained in Britain after undergoing medical treatment there and was accepted to the University of Oxford last year.

At home in Pakistan, however, she has been condemned by some as a Western mouthpiece with some even suggesting on social media that the shooting was staged. Yousafzai has repeatedly responded to the criticism with a grace far outstripping her years, often saying education is neither Western, nor Eastern.

Often when she has spoken in public she has championed her home country and spoken in her native Pashto language, always promising to return to her home.

On March 23 when Pakistan celebrated Pakistan Day, Yousafzai tweeted, "I cherish fond memories of home, of playing cricket on rooftops and singing the national anthem in school. Happy Pakistan Day!"

Local television channels have been showing her return to Pakistan with some replaying the horror of her shooting and the rush to get her treatment.

Pakistani officials say they captured several suspects after the attack on Yousafzai, but the head of the Taliban in Pakistan, Mullah Fazlullah, was still on the run and believed to be hiding in neighboring Afghanistan.

Fazlullah's spokesman, Mohammad Khurasani, earlier this month said Fazlullah's son was among 21 "holy warriors" killed by missiles fired by a U.S. drone at a seminary in Afghanistan.

Associated Press writer Kathy Gannon in Kabul, Afghanistan, contributed to this report. Sherin Zada reported from Mingora, Pakistan.

1 year to Brexit: So much to do, so little time

By JILL LAWLESS and RAF CASERT, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain's exit from the European Union has been likened to putting toothpaste back in the tube. But it's more like trying to separate the fluoride from the paste: complicated and messy.

Thursday marks 365 days until Britain officially leaves the EU. The March 29, 2019, departure will end a 46-year marriage that has entwined the economies, legal systems and peoples of Britain and 27 other European countries.

British Prime Minister Theresa May was on a whistle-stop tour of the United Kingdom's four corners — England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland — to promise a Brexit that unites the country.

"Brexit provides us with opportunities," May said at a weaving firm in southwest Scotland. "It is in our interests to come together and really seize these opportunities for the future."

For all her optimism, there are a thousand complex issues to settle, and little time.

Britain formally announced its intention to leave the EU a year ago, triggering a two-year countdown. University of Manchester political science professor Rob Ford said that timeframe is "ludicrously short."

"That's not sufficient time to disentangle 40 years of political, social and economic entanglement," he said. "Even with the best will in the world — which isn't the spirit in which these negotiations have been conducted — it couldn't happen."

Across the English Channel in Brussels, the chief European Parliament Brexit official, Guy Verhofstadt, listed a few of the many areas where the two sides must strike a deal: fishing, aviation, research and academic exchanges, nuclear cooperation and the handling of radioactive materials. Failure could leave British hospitals unable to offer radiation treatment and British planes stranded on the tarmac.

"In every one of these fields it will be necessary to find a new arrangement," Verhofstadt told The Associated Press. Britain will turn into a third country "and a third country cannot have the same advantages as a member state."

The EU has repeated that warning ever since Britain voted in June 2016 to leave: Brexit is going to hurt. That applies especially to future trade and economic ties, which the two sides have barely begun to negotiate.

In a speech this month, May said she wanted "the broadest and deepest possible partnership" through a free-trade deal unlike any other in the world. EU leaders warn Britain that it cannot "cherry-pick" the benefits of membership without the obligations.

The two sides have given themselves until October to agree on the outlines of a deal, so that the EU and national parliaments can sign off on it before Brexit day. That deadline is rapidly approaching after many months of delay and deferral.

Nine months passed between Britain voting to leave the EU and the triggering of the two-year countdown. More delay followed when May called a snap election to strengthen her hand in Brexit talks — only to lose her majority in Parliament and much of her authority as leader.

Her government now relies on support from Northern Ireland's Democratic Unionist Party, which has further complicated talks on the most intractable of all Brexit issues — maintaining the near-invisible border between the EU's Ireland and the U.K.'s Northern Ireland.

Negotiations between Britain and the EU finally began in earnest last summer. Their main achievement so far is a transition period that will last until the end of 2020. During the transition, Britain will continue to pay into EU coffers and follow the bloc's rules, though it will lose its voice in decision-making.

The transition period has eased, though not erased, fears of a Brexit cliff-edge, in which time runs out and Britain crashes out of the EU with no deal. Both Britain and the EU — and most businesses — want to avoid that economically and politically destabilizing scenario.

Verhofstadt said he is "an optimist by nature" and considers a cliff-edge Brexit unlikely.

"The question is: Can we bridge the red lines of the U.K. with the principles of the European Union? And the answer is yes, it is possible," he said.

Amid the uncertainty, British businesses worry. Since the referendum, inflation in Britain has shot up, and growth, once among the highest in the EU, is now below the bloc's average.

And Britain remains divided. The 52 percent-48 percent referendum result divided Britain into two mutually mistrustful camps, leavers and remainers, battling over the nation's future.

Remainers argue Britain should be able to change its mind if it turns out Brexit will damage the economy and the country.

"Nobody voted in the referendum to be worse off," said pro-EU Labour lawmaker Chris Leslie.

That argument infuriates Brexiteers like John Longworth, co-director of lobby group Leave Means Leave. He says pro-EU campaigners are "a fifth column in the U.K. working in collusion with the European Union to try and wreck the Brexit process."

While Brexit has divided Britain, it has brought out unity in the often fractious EU.

"After Brexit, everybody thought there would be a sort of domino effect," Verhofstadt said. "A Dexit, the Danish going out; Nexit, the Dutch going out; a Frexit even, the French going out. What we have seen is exactly the opposite. Since Brexit, we see that people again have a positive feeling about the EU.

"They are saying, we will not be so stupid as to leave the EU, to destroy the EU. So Brexit has been a serious wake-up call."

Casert reported from Brussels.

Kansas to audit water park where boy decapitated

By JOHN HANNA, Associated Press

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — A Kansas agency plans to conduct a full audit of a water park's inspection records before it reopens this spring, a state official said Wednesday, after criminal charges were filed over the decapitation of a 10-year-old boy on the world's tallest waterslide there in 2016.

The state Department of Labor said it will review reports from daily inspections of rides by park staff at the Schlitterbahn park in Kansas City, Kansas, before it is scheduled to reopen May 25 for its annual season. A state law enacted last year after Caleb Schwab's death requires amusement parks to keep daily reports on their rides and to give them annual inspections.

A grand jury has issued indictments with multiple criminal charges against the park; the construction company that built the giant waterslide; former park operations director Tyler Austin Miles; the ride's co-designer, John Timothy Schooley, and a co-owner of Schlitterbahn Waterparks and Resorts, Jeffrey Wayne Henry.

Henry, Schooley and the construction company face one felony count of second-degree murder and Miles and the park, one count of involuntary manslaughter, over Caleb's death. The raft the boy was riding on the 17-story Verruckt ride went airborne and hit an overhead loop.

State law allows parks to have their own staff do daily inspections and to have private inspectors do the annual inspections, rather than state inspectors. The inspectors doing the annual reviews must be either licensed engineers with two years' experience with amusement rides, have five years' experience in inspecting rides or have been certified by one of three industry groups.

Hersh said the audit will show whether the park has been conducting the required inspections and maintaining proper records on them as it prepares to reopen for the season.

"They will have a notebook full of inspections," she said.

Schlitterbahn spokeswoman Winter Prosapio said in a statement Tuesday that the latest indictment against Henry, Schooley and the construction company "is filled with information that we fully dispute."

The company also posted a statement on its website that all park attractions are "thoroughly inspected daily" by supervisors and managers.

Also, it said, before the park opens for the season, each ride has a thorough internal review and an inspection from "an independent third party." The statement said the park's insurance provider also conducts annual inspections.

Henry, Schooley and the construction company are charged with second-degree murder in connection with Caleb's death, and Miles and the park are charged with involuntary manslaughter over it. All are charged with multiple counts of aggravated battery and aggravated endangering a child in connection with injuries to other riders on the 17-story waterslide.

Miles was arrested last week and released from a Kansas jail on bond. jail in Wyandotte County, Kansas, on \$50,000 bond. Henry was arrested Monday in Cameron County, Texas, and waived extradition to Kansas during a court hearing Wednesday.

As for Schooley, family attorney Kit Yam, of Houston, said he was traveling in Asia. Yam said Schooley is in the process of hiring a Kansas City-area attorney.

"He is out of the country at this point on a business trip," Yam said.

Associated Press writers Heather Hollingsworth in Kansas City, Missouri; Tim Talley in Oklahoma City, and David Warren and Terry Wallace in Dallas also contributed to this report.

Follow John Hanna on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/apjdhanna> .

Rival Korean leaders to meet April 27 in historic summit

By LEE JIN-MAN and KIM TONG-HYUNG, Associated Press

PAJU, South Korea (AP) — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un will meet South Korean President Moon Jae-in at a border village on April 27, the South announced Thursday, for a rare summit that could prove significant in global efforts to resolve the decades-long standoff over the North's nuclear program.

The announcement was made after officials of the two countries met at the border village of Panmunjom. The Koreans plan to hold another preparatory meeting on April 4 to discuss security, protocol and media coverage issues, according to a statement released by the countries.

Leaders of the two Koreas have held talks only twice since the 1950-53 Korean War, in 2000 and 2007, under previous liberal governments in South Korea. The Korean Peninsula was divided in 1945 into a U.S.-dominated south and Soviet-backed north, which became sovereign nations three years later.

Unification Minister Cho Myoung-gyon, one of three South Korean participants in Thursday's talks, told reporters beforehand that setting up discussions between the leaders on the North's nuclear disarmament would be a critical point.

After the meeting, Cho told South Korean reporters there was a "sufficient exchange of opinions" on the agenda for the summit, but didn't provide a clear answer on whether discussions of the nuclear issue will be included.

"Both sides agreed to prepare for (the summit) in a way that would allow sincere and heartfelt discussions (between the leaders). If there's a need, we decided to continue discussions on the summit agenda through follow-up high-level meetings in April," Cho said.

"Both sides will continue working-level discussions (on the agenda) while focusing on the issues surrounding the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula, the stabilization of peace and the development of relations between the South and North."

When asked whether such issues would shape the discussions between Kim and Moon, Cho said "Yes."

The North's three delegates were led by Ri Son Gwon, chairman of a state agency that deals with inter-Korean affairs. The countries earlier this month agreed to hold a leaders' summit on the southern side of the border village. Thursday's meeting was held to determine the date and other issues.

After the meeting, Ri hailed the agreement on the summit, which he said provides "immense expectations and new hope for the entire nation that desires peace on the Korean Peninsula." He called for officials from both countries to do their best to "perfectly secure the historic meeting between the leaders."

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The countries also agreed to hold a separate meeting to discuss communication issues, such as setting up a telephone hotline between Moon and Kim, and maintain working-level discussions, according to the statement.

The South's delegation arrived in Panmunjom after their vehicles crossed the heavily guarded border near the southern city of Paju.

Greeting the South Korean officials at the North Korean-controlled Tongilgak building, Ri said the past 80 days have been filled with "unprecedented historic events" between the rivals, referring to the resumption of dialogue between the Koreans before the Winter Olympics in the South and the agreement to hold a summit.

Cho, in response, said officials should do their best to arrange a successful summit as the "current situation was created by decisions by the highest leaders of the North and South."

The talks follow a surprise meeting this week between Kim and Chinese President Xi Jinping which appeared to be aimed at improving both countries' positions ahead of Kim's planned summits with Moon and U.S. President Donald Trump.

In setting up separate talks with Beijing, Seoul, Washington, and potentially Moscow and Tokyo, North Korea may be moving to disrupt any united front among its negotiating counterparts. By reintroducing China, which is North Korea's only major ally, as a major player, the North also gains leverage against South Korea and the United States, analysts say.

In his talks with Xi, Kim may have discussed economic cooperation or requested a softening of the enforcement of sanctions over the North's nuclear weapons and missiles. North Korea also wants Beijing to resist tougher sanctions if the talks with Washington and Seoul fall apart and the North resumes testing missiles.

Chinese State Councilor Yang Jiechi is spending two days in Seoul briefing South Korean officials on the results of the talks between Kim and Xi. Yang met with presidential national security director Chung Eui-yong on Thursday and is to meet President Moon on Friday. Moon's spokesman, Kim Eui-kyeom, said in a statement that Seoul welcomes the meeting between Kim and Trump and called it an encouraging sign that Kim expressed a firm willingness to engage in dialogue with South Korea and the United States during his visit to Beijing.

"President Xi exchanged opinions with Kim Jong Un over a long period of time," Yang said through a translator in his meeting with Chung. "We believe this meeting will prove helpful in solving the problems surrounding the Korean Peninsula through political discussions and agreements on the peninsula's denuclearization and establishment of peace and security."

Cho said there was no specific discussion of the Kim-Xi meeting during the talks at the border village.

North Korea has yet to officially confirm its interest in a summit between Kim and Trump. In its coverage of the Kim-Xi meeting, the North's state media didn't mention Kim's reported comments about opening a dialogue with the United States that were carried in Chinese state media.

It's unclear whether the leaders' meetings will lead to any meaningful breakthrough.

The North's diplomatic outreach comes after an unusually provocative year in which it conducted its most powerful nuclear test to date and test-launched three intercontinental ballistic missiles designed to target the U.S. mainland. The change in tactics could be an attempt to ease pressure from heavy sanctions and improve its economy.

Washington and Seoul have said Kim previously told South Korean envoys that he was willing to put his nuclear weapons up for negotiation in his talks with Trump. However, the North has yet to officially confirm its interest in a summit between Kim and Trump.

There's deep skepticism among some analysts that the North, after years of dogged weapons development, will commit to real denuclearization and agree to a robust verification regime. North Korea over the past two decades has been repeatedly accused of using disarmament talks as a way to ease outside pressure and win badly needed aid, while continuing to secretly push ahead with weapons development.

The Koreans agreed to a summit when Moon's envoys visited Kim in Pyongyang earlier this month. The meeting followed a sudden period of inter-Korean warmth over February's Winter Olympics in the South,

to which the North sent hundreds of officials, including Kim's sister who met with Moon to convey her brother's desire for a summit.

On a subsequent visit to the United States, Moon's envoys brokered a potential meeting between Kim and Trump, who said he would meet the North Korean leader "by May."

The planned summit between Moon and Kim will be preceded by performances by South Korean pop singers in North Korea this Sunday and Tuesday.

About 70 South Korean officials and technicians flew to Pyongyang on Thursday to set up the performance equipment. The South Korean artists performing in the North include some of the country's most popular pop singers, including Cho Yong-pil, who performed in Pyongyang during a previous era of detente, and girl band Red Velvet.

Kim reported from Seoul.

Sister Jean helps bring basketball to an otherworldly place

By EDDIE PELLIS, AP National Writer

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — On the night before Easter, a night when Sister Jean could reasonably be contemplating more consequential affairs, she will instead be festooned in her maroon and yellow letter jacket, sitting in her wheelchair on the floor of one of America's greatest sports cathedrals, praying for an entirely different sort of miracle.

She'll be trying to will the underdog, 11th-seeded Ramblers from the Jesuit school of Loyola-Chicago another step along the road to a national championship. It's a road even the most pious fan wouldn't have dreamed of a mere three weeks ago.

More than any single player or coach, it is the 98-year-old nun, Sister Jean Dolores-Schmidt, who has left an indelible mark on this year's NCAA Tournament, with her scouting reports and T-shirt-ready advice — "Worship, work and wisdom" — lending an almost otherworldly credence to the idea that, in sports, anything is possible.

And for those seeking a deeper meaning to Loyola's improbable trip to the Final Four, her presence raises questions that would normally be out of bounds in most mainstream sports conversations:

Do Sister Jean's prayers carry more weight than, say, those of the Michigan fans who will be rooting against Loyola on Saturday?

Is it OK to pray for something as pedestrian as, say, your team to win the big game?

Do miracles really happen in sports?

To sum them all up: Does God really care about basketball?

"Because God cares about the whole health of a human being, and because play is an element of the human experience, God cares about play," says Joe Price, an ordained minister who teaches classes on sports and religion at Whittier College. "Now, whether God cares about competitive sport at a professional level is perhaps a different question."

Big-time sports has been long familiar with enthusiastically religious athletes and ultra-successful programs from religious colleges. Tim Tebow, Carson Wentz and Kurt Warner; Notre Dame, BYU and, yes, another Final Four participant this weekend, Villanova. They and others have come to the fore and brought their religion with them, front and center.

And yet, Loyola feels like something different. Instead of a player or coach who stands out as the main catalyst for all this success, it's a nun who is not only bringing added attention to her beloved players but doing it in a way that unravels stereotypes about the elderly to say nothing of the millions of women who have chosen her calling over the centuries.

"She's showing that, yes, nuns are regular people with a special calling," says Rebecca Alpert, a religion professor at Temple whose book, "Religion and Sports," looks at ways those two facets of life intersect. "She's photogenic. She's media savvy. It's a great story. I like hearing it. I'll buy a bobblehead."

It also brings up this awkward dissonance: Villanova is also accompanied by a person of the cloth, the

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Rev. Rob Hagan. And yet, because he represents a school that is better known, top seeded, a champion only two years ago and the furthest thing from a plucky underdog, Father Rob is a supporting player in this drama — no bobblehead as of yet — who is receiving his 15 minutes in large part because Sister Jean has gotten hers on the other side of the bracket.

Which brings up the question: If Father Rob's and Sister Jean's teams square off in an all-Catholic final Monday night, who wins?

Another way to ask it is whether Sister Jean's prayers hold any more weight than those of others, including secular fans who may want Kansas or Michigan to win on Saturday — to say nothing of the poor folks who were pulling for Kansas State or Texas Tech last weekend in the Elite Eight.

"It's a legitimate question," Price says. "It's about discipline and it's about frequency (of praying), and that doesn't necessarily mean (Sister Jean's) prayers are heard better. But they're articulated in ways that are not about self-gratification. Cheering for a bunch of young men to play their best and fulfill their dream is different from, let's say, a stock car racer who prays to the Lord for a caution flag to come out so he can win the race."

The idea of divine intervention in sports goes way back, even decades before Al Michaels famously asked "Do you believe in miracles?" as the seconds ticked down in the 1980 U.S. Olympic hockey team's seminal victory over the Russians — a bunch of amateurs unbelievably beating a bunch of professionals.

And yet, the so-called "Miracle on Ice" hardly stands alone in sports, where the never-ending search for the upset, the unexpected, the unexplainable, is, in fact, "the reason we play the game."

Miracle in the Meadowlands.

Music City Miracle.

The Immaculate Reception.

Hail Mary.

The winner of the first three women's national titles: Immaculata College . That was no miracle.

But if little Loyola-Chicago is cutting down nets come Monday night, well, that might be — even if God is in no way connected to the actual result.

"The word 'miracle' is very important because what it signals is something intruding on your day-to-day reality and reminding you that the world is a much more complicated and beautiful place," Alpert says. "You don't have to make the assumption that there's an all-knowing God intervening and making this happen."

Though no harm if you do.

From all the corruption that's been unmasked in college basketball to the sex-abuse scandals involving Larry Nassar and gymnastics to the Russian doping scandal at the Olympics, sports has become an ugly, ungodly sort of place of late.

Miracle or no, who's to say an 89-year-old superfan and her 11th-seeded team from out of nowhere can't help drag some sports fans from that abyss?

"We can't possibly forget the kinds of questions and issues that are being raised," Alpert says. "But this has ... pulled us away from things that are hurting sports today. If you look at it that way, then we can all be very grateful to Sister Jean."

More AP college basketball: <https://collegebasketball.ap.org> ; https://twitter.com/AP_Top25 and <https://www.podcastone.com/ap-sports-special-events>

City on edge for funeral of man killed by Sacramento police

By DON THOMPSON, Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — California's capital city is on edge for the funeral of a 22-year-old unarmed black man killed by Sacramento police in his grandparents' backyard.

The Rev. Al Sharpton plans to give the eulogy for Stephon Clark at Thursday's funeral at Bayside of South Sacramento church.

He previously called it "an atrocity" that shows the urgent need for intervention against police misconduct

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and a thorough investigation into Clark's death.

Some mourners at Wednesday's wake for Clark predicted increased unrest beyond the unruly but mostly nonviolent protests that have disrupted traffic and two professional basketball games since the March 18 shooting.

The Rev. Ray Morsheth of Sacramento Revival Center said he plans to stay away from the funeral for fear things could turn ugly, while the Rev. Phillip Goudeaux of Calvary Christian Center said it should be a time for peace and forgiveness.

"I am very concerned about the climate and what's going on right now," Goudeaux said of the high emotions since Clark's death.

Two Sacramento police officers who were responding to a report of someone breaking car windows fatally shot Clark in his grandparents' backyard. Police say they thought he was holding a gun, but he was found only with a cellphone.

Some mourners attending Wednesday's wake called for police to face criminal charges or donned black shirts calling for justice.

The family's raw grief was on display when Clark's brother, Stevante Clark, had to be physically restrained while confronting members of the media gathered outside the wake. The outburst came a day after he disrupted a Sacramento City Council meeting and chanted his brother's name at Mayor Darrell Steinberg.

Some of Clark's relatives were more conciliatory.

"We're not mad at all the law enforcement. We're not trying to start a riot," said Shernita Crosby, Stephon Clark's aunt. "What we want the world to know is that we got to stop this because black lives matter."

Cousin Suzette Clark said the family wants Stephon Clark remembered as an outgoing, funny, handsome, loving father of two young sons, as "more than just a hashtag."

"I just hope it can bring people together," she said of the two-hour funeral set to begin at 11 a.m. "Emotions are heightened, but I just hope everyone comes and shows compassion."

Authorities are working to avoid a repeat of the protests that have twice blocked fans from entering the NBA arena downtown for Sacramento Kings games. The police, the Kings and Steinberg's office met Wednesday to discuss security ahead of Thursday night's game. Sgt. Vince Chandler said officers would be ready to respond in protective gear, according to The Sacramento Bee.

On Wednesday, about 50 protesters took over the intersection near the Sacramento district attorney's office as part of a protest organized by the local Black Lives Matter chapter to urge the district attorney to file charges against the officers who shot Clark. In New York City, hundreds of people marched to protest the shooting and at least 11 people were detained as tensions flared.

Meanwhile, Steinberg said disruptions like Stevante Clark's at Tuesday's council meeting won't happen again. "But in that moment, that was a brother grieving for the loss of his brother," he said.

The California attorney general's office on Tuesday joined the investigation, a move Sacramento Police Chief Daniel Hahn said he hopes will bring "faith and transparency" to a case that he said has sparked "extremely high emotions, anger and hurt in our city."

The Rev. Shane Harris of the National Action Network, a civil rights group founded by Sharpton, said this week that Clark's funeral "will be a national day of mourning for this family and for Stephon Clark. But it will also be a national day of justice."

Associated Press writer Sophia Bollag and videographer Haven Daley contributed to this story.

Family killed in cliff plunge: free spirits or troubled?

By PHUONG LE and TOM JAMES, Associated Press

WOODLAND, Wash. (AP) — The two women and their six adopted children traveled to festivals and events, offering free hugs and promoting unity, friends said. They raised animals and grew vegetables and last year moved onto a piece of land in rural southwest Washington, a dream of theirs.

The Hart Tribe, as they were known, also took spontaneous road trips to hike or camp, and friends believe

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they may have been on one of those adventures when their SUV plunged off a scenic California highway.

"We know that an entire family vanished and perished during this tragedy," said Mendocino County Sheriff Tom Allman on Wednesday as he appealed for help retracing where the family had been before the vehicle was found Monday.

Friends described married couple Jennifer and Sarah Hart as loving, inspiring parents who promoted social justice and exposed their "remarkable children" to art, music and nature. But neighbors said they saw signs that caused them to worry about how the homeschooled children were being cared for.

The California Highway Patrol has not determined why the vehicle went off an ocean overlook on a rugged part of coastline. A specialized team of accident investigators was trying to figure that out, Allman said.

"We have no evidence and no reason to believe that this was an intentional act," he said, adding that the scene was confusing because "there were no skid marks, there were no brake marks" at the roadside turnout where the vehicle went over.

Authorities believe six children were in the vehicle with their parents, though three siblings haven't been found.

The 100-foot (31-meter) drop killed both women, both 39, and their children Markis Hart, 19; Jeremiah Hart, 14; and Abigail Hart, 14. Hannah Hart, 16; Devonte Hart, 15; and Sierra Hart, 12, have not been found.

"This is a tragic accident of a magnitude that cannot be measured," said Zippy Lomax, a photographer who knew the Harts.

"They were really radiant, warm, adventurous inspiring people. They were always on some grand adventure, and the kids were living this life that was kind of like this dream," Lomax told The Associated Press. "The family was this very self-supporting unit that was impossible to miss. When they showed up to an event, they made an impression. They shattered a lot of norms and they did not shy away from controversy or adversity."

The Harts, who went to events such as rallies for presidential candidate Bernie Sanders, often showed up in matching T-shirts.

The family gained attention after Devonte Hart was photographed during a 2014 protest in Portland, Oregon, over a grand jury's decision not to indict a police officer in the shooting of a black man in Ferguson, Missouri. The boy, holding a "Free Hugs" sign, stood crying. A Portland officer saw his sign and asked if he could have a hug, and an emotional Hart embraced him in a picture that was widely shared.

The Harts moved to Woodland, Washington, a small city outside Portland, Oregon, in the spring of last year, partly overwhelmed by the media coverage. The multi-racial family also received death threats, Ribner said.

The family had a recent visit from state child protective services, Clark County sheriff's Sgt. Brent Waddell told AP.

Next-door neighbors Bruce and Dana DeKalb said they called child services Friday because they were concerned about Devonte Hart, who they said had been coming over to their house in the past week asking for food.

Dana DeKalb said the boy told her his parents "weren't feeding them" and were "punishing them by withholding food." He came over almost every day for a week, and asked her to leave food in a box by the fence for him, she said.

Washington state child protective services opened an investigation Friday and tried to make contact with the family three times since Friday, but weren't able to reach them, said Norah West, a spokeswoman with the state Department of Social and Health Services. The agency had no prior history with the family, she said.

The DeKalbs also recounted that three months after the family moved into the home on 2 acres with a fenced pasture in May 2017, one of the girls rang their doorbell at 1:30 a.m.

She "was at our door in a blanket saying we needed to protect her," Bruce DeKalb said. "She said that they were abusing her."

In 2011, Sarah Hart pleaded guilty to a domestic assault charge in Minnesota. Her plea led to the dismissal of a charge of malicious punishment of a child, online court records say.

Max Ribner, who has known the family since 2012, said allegations from neighbors don't square with what he knows about the Harts.

"They are beautiful examples of opening arms to strangers, helping youth, supporting racial equality," Ribner, who lives in Portland, told the AP. "They brought so much joy to the world. They represented a legacy of love."

Bill Groener, 67, was a next-door neighbor of the Harts when they lived in West Linn, Oregon, and said the kids stayed indoors most of the time. He said the family didn't eat sugar, raised their own vegetables, had animals and went on camping trips.

"There was enough positive there to kind of counteract the feeling that something maybe wasn't quite right," Groener said.

Le reported from Seattle. AP reporters Paul Elias in San Francisco, Steven Dubois in Portland, Oregon, and Alina Hartounian in Phoenix also contributed.

Venezuela AG says 68 dead after riot, fire at police station

By JUAN CARLOS HERNANDEZ, Associated Press

VALENCIA, Venezuela (AP) — Venezuela's chief prosecutor reported late Wednesday that 68 people died in a fire that swept through the cell area inside a police station, which townspeople said followed a disturbance by detainees being held there.

Attorney General Tarek William Saab said on his official Twitter account that nearly all the dead were prisoners. He said two women who were staying overnight at the station were also killed, but didn't provide any further details.

Saab said four prosecutors had been named to determine what happened at the state police headquarters in Valencia, a town in Carabobo state about 100 miles (160 kilometers) west of Caracas.

It was one of the worst jail disasters in a country where human rights groups complain about bad prison conditions. A fire at a prison in the western state of Zulia killed more than 100 inmates in 1994.

Local authorities in Valencia had confirmed earlier only that there were fatalities, and said they were working to determine an exact number. They said they were not providing any estimates "out of respect for the families."

Angry relatives who gathered outside the station said dozens of detainees had been kept in squalid conditions at the station and expressed fear that their loved ones were dead.

Dozens of men and women demanding to know if their loved ones had survived clashed with police officers in riot gear. Police used tear gas to disperse the crowd.

"I don't know if my son is dead or alive!" cried Aida Parra, who said she last saw her son a day before, when she went to deliver him food. "They haven't told me anything."

A Window to Freedom, a nonprofit group that monitors conditions at Venezuela's jails, said preliminary but unconfirmed information indicated the riot began when an armed detainee shot an officer in the leg. Shortly after that a fire broke out, with flames growing quickly as the blaze spread to mattresses in the cells, it said. Rescuers apparently had to break a hole through a wall to free some of the prisoners inside.

Photos shared by the group showed prisoners being taken out on stretchers, their limbs frozen in awkward positions as skin peeled off.

A Window to Freedom's director, Carlos Nieto Palma, said officials should be held accountable for failing to address deteriorating conditions in police station jails. The group said overcrowding has become common throughout the country as detainees are kept long past customary brief holding periods before being sent to other larger jails before trial or freed.

"It's grave and alarming," Nieto Palma said. "What happened today in Carabobo is a sign of that."

Outside the police station, some relatives buried their hands in their faces as tears streamed down their cheeks. Others had to be held up with the support of friends and family as they collapsed in despair. Still others wept quietly and clutched their hands in prayer.

Nearby, National Guard troops wearing bullet-proof vests and carrying rifles across their backs walked in and out of the station. Fire trucks and ambulances stood outside, and unused stretchers leaned against a wall.

Opposition lawmaker Juan Miguel Matheus demanded that the pro-government leader of Carabobo state inform relatives about what had happened.

"The desperation of relatives should not be played with," he said.

Clashes between prisoners and guards are not uncommon in Venezuela. Inmates are frequently able to obtain weapons and drugs with the help of corrupt guards and heavily armed groups control cellblock fiefdoms.

Trump emerging from seclusion to promote infrastructure plan

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Attempting a policy reset, President Donald Trump will push for upgrades to the nation's aging roads and bridges Thursday in his first public appearance since an adult-film actress claimed on national TV that they had sex months after his wife gave birth to his fifth child.

Trump is visiting Richfield, Ohio, to sell Americans on his plan to use \$200 billion in federal money to spur at least \$1.5 trillion in spending over a decade to repair or replace highways, bridges, ports, airports and other infrastructure.

Trump unveiled the sweeping infrastructure proposal in February and cast it as one that could garner bipartisan support. But the plan relies heavily on state and local governments for the bulk of the spending, raising concerns among members of Congress about the possibility of higher commuter tolls and the sale of assets to raise the money.

There is little expectation that Congress will take up a sweeping infrastructure proposal along the lines of what Trump envisions — or that Republicans in control of the House and Senate will write their own legislation — as lawmakers begin to shift their focus to the challenge of getting re-elected in November.

Instead, Congress plans to package a series of related measures, including beefed-up spending in the big budget bill Trump signed into law last week, as infrastructure investments. That bill, which funds the government through Sept. 30, included more money for transportation projects, rural broadband and other investments.

House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., promoted it in a tweet as "Long-overdue updates to our country's infrastructure."

Trump was last seen in public on Friday, when he used an appearance at the White House to criticize a massive government funding bill he had signed into law. The president, first lady Melania Trump and their 12-year-old son, Barron, spent last weekend at their Palm Beach, Florida, estate. Trump returned to the White House on Sunday shortly before CBS' "60 Minutes" aired its interview with porn actress Stormy Daniels, who says the married Trump had sex with her in his Lake Tahoe hotel room in 2006.

Trump, through his personal attorney and White House aides, has denied the affair. He has not commented on the allegations himself.

The president has kept a relatively low profile since the broadcast, except for a series of tweets about trade and his pending meeting with North Korea's leader. White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders denied Trump was in hiding.

"He's been incredibly active all week long," Sanders said, pointing to actions by Trump on trade and the expulsion of scores of Russian intelligence officials.

Trump has previously suggested the infrastructure proposal was not as important to him as other efforts to cut taxes and increase military spending.

"What was very important to me was the military, what was very important to me was the tax cuts, and what was very important to me was regulation," Trump said as he unveiled the plan in February before state and local leaders gathered at the White House.

In Ohio, Trump was also expected to discuss findings in a new report from the White House Council of

Economic Advisers that the infrastructure proposal would contribute modestly to economic growth over the 10-year period and help put hundreds of thousands of unemployed laborers back to work.

After the speech, Trump was expected to fly to his Florida home.

Associated Press writer Lisa Mascaro contributed to this report.

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

Tensions high as city mourns unarmed man killed by police

By DON THOMPSON, Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Family, friends and strangers, some expressing anger and frustration, gathered in Sacramento on Wednesday for a public wake for 22-year-old Stephon Clark, an unarmed man shot by police in his grandparents' backyard.

Some attendees wore black shirts calling for justice, while one woman held up a clenched fist as she exited the Bayside of South Sacramento church. The wake was largely quiet until Clark's brother, Stevante Clark, shouted at the media to leave before being picked up and carried away.

The outburst came a day after he disrupted a Sacramento City Council meeting and chanted his brother's name at Mayor Darrell Steinberg.

Some said the two police officers who shot Clark should be criminally charged, while other mourners said they could envision their own families in Clark's family's place.

"This feels like the '60s, it doesn't feel like 2018. We've definitely regressed," said Cynthia Brown, a friend of Clark's grandfather who brought her 10- and 15-year-old grandsons to the wake. "To me, (they) could be Stephon Clark."

The Rev. Al Sharpton plans to deliver the eulogy at Clark's funeral on Thursday.

Tensions remain high in California's capital city following the March 18 shooting. Two police officers who were responding to a report of someone breaking car windows fatally shot him in his grandparents' backyard. Police say they believe Clark was the suspect and he ran when a police helicopter responded, then did not obey officers' orders.

Police say they thought Clark was holding a gun when he moved toward them, but he was found only with a cellphone.

Many mourners weren't buying that narrative.

"You always feel threatened — you're a law enforcement officer, it comes with your job title," said Rahim Wasi. "That doesn't give you a right to go running around like Clint Eastwood in a movie."

Some of Clark's relatives were more conciliatory.

"We're not mad at all the law enforcement. We're not trying to start a riot," said Shernita Crosby, Stephon Clark's aunt. "What we want the world to know is that we got to stop this because black lives matter."

Cousin Suzette Clark said the family wants Stephon Clark remembered as "more than just a hashtag."

He was outgoing, funny, loving, a good-looking man who liked to dress sharp and the doting father of two young sons.

"He made some mistakes in his life, but he was genuinely a good person," she said.

Protests have been held almost daily in town and on Wednesday, hundreds of people marched in New York City to protest the shooting. Police there said someone threw a bottle at an officer and at least 11 people were detained as tensions flared.

Sacramento marchers have twice blocked fans from entering the NBA arena downtown for Sacramento Kings games.

The Kings warned Wednesday that there will be a "significant" police presence in and around the Golden 1 Center on Thursday to keep protesters from reaching the plaza and blocking fans for a third time.

Sgt. Vince Chandler said officers would be ready to respond in protective gear, according to The Sacramento Bee.

There also will be additional stadium security and barriers along with ticket checks at the plaza outskirts. On Wednesday, about 50 protesters took over the intersection near the Sacramento district attorney's office as part of a protest organized by the local Black Lives Matter chapter to urge the district attorney to file charges against the officers.

They disrupted midtown rush hour traffic as they marched through the streets. Latavia Ross, pushing her 2-year-old son Jayceon Hurts in a stroller, said she attended the protest because she thinks it's good for the community to come together to end to gun violence.

Meanwhile, Steinberg said disruptions like Stevante Clark's at Tuesday's council meeting won't happen again.

"That sort of demonstration in the council chamber cannot happen again. It won't happen again. But in that moment, that was a brother grieving for the loss of his brother," he said.

For all the angst and raw emotions, some grieving and weary family members are skeptical that any substantive change will result before the next young black man dies from police gunfire and siphons away the national media and banner headlines.

"You know, sadly, I have no confidence in America and the fact that I will probably hear another story sometime this year of an innocent life lost over excessive police force," Curtis Gordon, Clark's uncle and the family's spokesman, told The Associated Press in an interview Tuesday. "It's so common, you're numb to it."

The California attorney general's office on Tuesday joined the investigation, a move Sacramento Police Chief Daniel Hahn said he hopes will bring "faith and transparency" to a case that he said has sparked "extremely high emotions, anger and hurt in our city."

Associated Press writer Sophia Bollag and videographer Haven Daley contributed to this story.

Family famed for protest photo die when SUV goes off cliff

By PAUL ELIAS and TOM JAMES, Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A family that gained attention for an emotional photograph of an African-American boy hugging a white police officer at a 2014 protest was killed when their SUV plunged off a scenic California highway, authorities said Wednesday as they asked for help figuring out what happened.

"We have every indication to believe that all six children were in there," Mendocino County Sheriff Tom Allman said, appealing for tips to retrace where the siblings and two parents had been before the vehicle was found Monday in rocky ocean. "We know that an entire family vanished and perished during this tragedy."

Some friends described married couple Jennifer and Sarah Hart as loving parents who took their adopted kids to Bernie Sanders rallies, while some neighbors said they called child welfare officials in their rural Washington state community over concerns about possible abuse or had noticed red flags.

The California Highway Patrol has not determined why the vehicle went off an ocean overlook on a rugged part of coastline. A specialized team of accident investigators was trying to figure that out, Allman said.

"There were no skid marks, there were no brake marks" at the turnout on the Pacific Coast Highway where the vehicle went over, the sheriff said. Investigators have no reason to believe the crash was intentional, he said.

The 100-foot (31-meter) drop killed the women, both 39, and their children Markis Hart, 19; Jeremiah Hart, 14; and Abigail Hart, 14. Hannah Hart, 16; Devonte Hart, 15; and Sierra Hart, 12, have not been found.

The Harts lived in Woodland, Washington, a small city outside Portland, Oregon, and had a recent visit from Child Protective Services, Clark County sheriff's Sgt. Brent Waddell told The Associated Press.

He said the sheriff's office later entered the house and found no obvious signs of trouble or violence. It appeared the family planned a short trip because they left behind a pet, chickens and most of their belongings.

Next-door neighbors Bruce and Dana DeKalb said they called child services Friday because they were

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concerned that Devonte Hart, who hugged the officer at the protest, was going hungry. They said he had been coming over to their house too often in the past week asking for food.

The DeKalbs also recounted that three months after the family moved into the home on 2 acres with a fenced pasture in May 2017, one of the girls rang their doorbell at 1:30 a.m.

She "was at our door in a blanket saying we needed to protect her," Bruce DeKalb said. "She said that they were abusing her. It haunted my wife since that day."

In 2011, Sarah Hart pleaded guilty to a domestic assault charge in Minnesota. Her plea led to the dismissal of a charge of malicious punishment of a child, online court records say.

Bill Groener, 67, was a next-door neighbor of the family when they lived in West Linn, Oregon, and said the kids were home-schooled.

"They stayed indoors most of the time, even in really nice weather," Groener said.

He said the family didn't eat sugar, raised their own vegetables, had animals and went on camping trips.

"There was enough positive there to kind of counteract the feeling that something maybe wasn't quite right," Groener said.

He said they were neighbors for about two years and that "privacy was a big thing for them."

The family got attention after Devonte Hart was photographed during a 2014 protest in Portland, Oregon, over a grand jury's decision not to indict a police officer in the shooting of a black man in Ferguson, Missouri.

The boy, holding a "Free Hugs" sign, stood crying. A Portland officer saw his sign and asked if he could have a hug, and an emotional Hart embraced him in a picture that was widely shared.

At the time, Jennifer Hart wrote on social media: "My son has a heart of gold, compassion beyond anything I've ever experienced, yet struggles with living fearlessly when it comes to the police. ... He wonders if someday when he no longer wears a 'Free Hugs' sign around his neck, when he's a full-grown black male, if his life will be in danger for simply being."

The family traveled to many festivals throughout the area — including events for presidential candidate Bernie Sanders — and were known for wearing matching T-shirts.

Zippy Lomax, a Portland photographer who knew the Harts, told the Oregonian/Oregonlive.com that the reaction to the 2014 photo overwhelmed them, with negative attention focused on the multiracial family with lesbian parents.

"They kind of closed off for a while, honestly," Lomax told the newspaper. But she added that "Jen and Sarah were the kind of parents this world desperately needs."

This story has been corrected to reflect the accurate spelling of Mendocino County Sheriff Tom Allman's last name.

James reported from Woodland, Washington. AP reporter Steven Dubois in Portland, Oregon, and Phuong Le in Seattle also contributed.

Stormy Daniels seeking Trump's answers under oath

By CATHERINE LUCEY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Cranking up pressure on the president, porn actress Stormy Daniels wants Donald Trump to answer her attorney's questions under oath about a pre-election payment aimed at keeping her quiet about their alleged tryst.

If she's successful, it would be the first deposition of a sitting president since Bill Clinton in 1998 had to answer questions about his conduct with women.

Daniels' attorney, Michael Avenatti, is seeking sworn testimony from Trump and his personal lawyer, Michael Cohen, about a \$130,000 payment made to Daniels days before the 2016 presidential election as part of a nondisclosure agreement she is seeking to invalidate. Avenatti filed the motion in U.S. District Court in California on Wednesday.

Trump has kept a low profile all week, as has first lady Melania Trump, who is spending the week in

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Florida. White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said Trump had denied the allegations and directed further questions to outside counsel. Cohen's attorney, David Schwartz, told CBS that the filing was a "reckless use of the legal system."

Despite the pushback, the persistent focus on Daniels is a troubling distraction for a White House already struggling with an exodus of top staffers, a floundering agenda and the looming threat from the Russia investigation.

Avenatti is just one on a growing list of lawyers looking to question Trump. Attorneys for a former "Apprentice" contestant have said they want to depose the president as part of a defamation suit. And the president's legal team continues to negotiate with special counsel Robert Mueller over the scope and terms of an interview with the president.

A hard-charging attorney maintaining a near-constant presence on television news, Avenatti wants to question Trump and Cohen for "no more than two hours." In the filing, he says the depositions are needed to establish if Trump knew about the payment, which Avenatti refers to as a "hush agreement," and if the future president consented to it.

"We're looking for sworn answers from the president and Mr. Cohen about what they knew, when they knew it and what they did about it," Avenatti told The Associated Press.

While he noted that "in every case you always have to be open to settlement," Avenatti said that "at this point we don't see how this case would possibly be settled."

A former businessman, Trump is no stranger to high-stakes litigation, sitting for depositions in contract and defamation lawsuits over the years. Those interviews show his deep experience in giving statements to lawyers, but also reveal a witness who could be voluble, boastful and, at times, combative.

Georgetown University law professor Naomi Mezey said a deposition presented risks because it is the way to get the president in a vulnerable position. "And President Trump is a particularly vulnerable president," Mezey said.

Daniels, whose legal name is Stephanie Clifford, detailed her alleged 2006 tryst with Trump in a widely watched interview with CBS' "60 Minutes" broadcast Sunday. She said she'd had sex with him once, shortly after Melania Trump gave birth to the president's youngest son.

Daniels also said that a man approached her in a Las Vegas parking lot in 2011 when she was with her infant daughter, and threatened her with physical harm if she went public with her story.

The interview prompted a flurry of new legal action, with a lawyer for Cohen demanding that Daniels publicly apologize to his client for suggesting Cohen was involved in her intimidation. Daniels responded by filing a revised federal lawsuit accusing Cohen of defamation.

Cohen has said he paid the \$130,000 out of his own pocket and that neither the Trump Organization nor the Trump campaign was part of the transaction. Avenatti has argued that the "hush agreement" Daniels signed in October 2016 is invalid because it was not signed by Trump.

A hearing before Judge S. James Otero in the federal court's Central District in Los Angeles is set for April 30.

The motion notes that Clinton was deposed while in office in 1998 during Paula Jones' sexual harassment suit. That came after the Supreme Court ruled that a sitting president was not immune from civil litigation on something that happened before taking office and was unrelated to the office.

In that deposition, Clinton sat at an oval conference table at a law firm and answered questions for six hours on Jones and other women her attorneys hoped would prove a pattern of sexual misconduct.

Jones' case was dismissed by a judge, then appealed. The appeal was still pending when Clinton agreed to pay \$850,000 to Jones to settle the case. He did not admit wrongdoing. Later in 1998, Clinton also gave grand jury testimony about his relationship with White House intern Monica Lewinsky.

Clinton was impeached by the House later that year. One of the approved charges alleged that he committed perjury before the grand jury when asked about Lewinsky. He was acquitted in the impeachment proceedings.

Daniels is not the only woman accusing Trump. Former Playboy model Karen McDougal said in a recent CNN interview she had an affair with Trump that began at a bungalow at the Beverly Hills Hotel in 2006.

McDougal said she ended the relationship in 2007 out of guilt concerning Mrs. Trump.

McDougal has filed suit in Los Angeles seeking to invalidate a confidentiality agreement with American Media Inc., the company that owns the supermarket tabloid National Enquirer. It paid her \$150,000 during the 2016 presidential election and did not publish a story on her relationship with Trump.

California regulators target web ads for illegal pot shops

By MICHAEL R. BLOOD, Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Weedmaps is a go-to website for people looking to find a marijuana shop. With a few clicks on a cellphone, customers can find virtually any type of cannabis product, along with the fastest route to the place selling it and ratings from other consumers to help them decide what to buy.

But legal and illegal operators advertise next to each other, and licensed operators in California say that's put them at a disadvantage in a cutthroat marketplace.

To them, Weedmaps is helping illegal sellers flourish without having any of the obligations licensed operators endure — collecting and paying taxes, insuring their businesses and employees, and abiding by safety rules for their products.

In other words, illegal shops can sell pot at cheaper prices, sometimes 30 percent to 50 percent less.

"That's Weedmaps' business model, to confuse the difference between legal and illegal," said Jerred Kiloh, a licensed dispensary owner in Los Angeles who heads the United Cannabis Business Association, an industry group. "It's an unfair playing field. They are pitting us against each other."

Weedmaps operates in over two dozen states, but the issue is coming to a head in California, which in January became the nation's largest legal marketplace. State regulators last month warned Weedmaps to stop advertising shops operating outside the law.

In a response, Weedmaps executives said they are eager to work with the state but asserted that the online directory doesn't fall under state authority and is shielded by provisions in federal law.

The company sees the core of the problem as a scarcity of legal outlets and hefty taxes that scare off consumers from licensed shops, not its online ads. In Los Angeles, where the pace of city licensing has been sluggish, only about 130 retail shops have authority to operate, while city officials acknowledge hundreds more are making illegal sales.

Weedmaps says its experience dropping unlicensed businesses from its listings in Washington, Oregon, Nevada and Massachusetts had no impact on the size of those unlicensed markets.

"Scrubbing the internet of the reality of unlicensed operators ... does nothing to fix the underlying issues," Weedmaps CEO Doug Francis and President Chris Beals wrote to the state Bureau of Cannabis Control earlier this month.

The company some call a Craigslist for cannabis defines itself as an "interactive computer service" that falls under the federal Communications Decency Act. A key section of that law is designed to protect internet publishers, generally providing immunity to them for content posted by users.

But Kiloh is among those who argue Weedmaps is far more than an advertising platform, noting consumers can use the site to submit orders and summon deliveries from shops legal and otherwise.

"They are acting like Amazon, saying, 'Here is a shopping cart,'" Kiloh said. "They are creating a marketplace, not a platform for advertising, and it's driven by dollars."

The dispute over the online ads goes to basic economics for an emerging market sprung from what was mostly an illegal one: Lawful operators will struggle if they're competing with a robust black market that can undersell them.

Complaints have surfaced elsewhere, including over fees that in some cases can be tens of thousands of dollars a month for prime ad space. The company says some advertisers pay nothing.

"I strongly believe their response to advertise for unlicensed cannabis companies is a black eye to the industry," said Peter Marcus, a spokesman for Boulder-based Terrapin Care Station.

Terrapin has five licensed dispensaries in Colorado and has advertised with Weedmaps for years, Marcus said. He said Terrapin worries Weedmaps' high-profile spat with California regulators will bring unwanted

attention from the U.S Justice Department, which continues to prosecute marijuana offenses under federal law that still sees cannabis as an illegal drug.

The appeal of black-market shops — and the lure of their ads — was illustrated this month after a raid at an illegal dispensary near Los Angeles.

Even after Los Angeles County sheriff's deputies shuttered the Compton 20 Cap Collective, hauling out employees and customers in handcuffs and seizing bags of illicit pot, the shop's page on Weedmaps advertised deals and displayed the dispensary's products, which included dozens of varieties of cannabis buds, extracts and edibles.

Despite the bust, prospective customers were asking about making purchases.

"Are they back open again?" one comment read.

In its warning to Weedmaps, one of hundreds of letters sent to businesses that California regulators believe are operating improperly, the state said the company should take down ads from illicit operators and warned the company it could face criminal penalties.

But it wasn't immediately clear how far that threat would go, since Weedmaps appears to be operating largely as usual. In their letter, the company executives said they would eliminate an internal "identifier" that appeared in business listings that state regulators said could be confused with a valid license number.

The company said in a statement it wants the licensed market to reach a "functional state where the unlicensed market is minimized."

California regulators are discussing appropriate next steps, state cannabis agency spokesman Alex Traverso said in an email.

In the Legislature, Democratic Assemblyman Jim Cooper of Elk Grove drafted a bill that would penalize unlicensed operators that advertise on the internet, \$10,000 for every violation.

"The black market is having a substantial impact on those businesses that are following the rules," said Mike Ziegler, a Cooper aide. "They are being undercut by those who choose to operate illegally."(backslash)

This story has been corrected to reflect that Terrapin Care Station is based in Boulder, Colorado and operates five retail stores instead of three.

Associated Press writers Paul Elias in San Francisco and Michael Balsamo in Los Angeles contributed to this report.

Blood, Elias and Balsamo are members of AP's marijuana beat team. Follow them at <https://twitter.com/MichaelRBloodAP> , <https://twitter.com/paulelias1> , and <https://twitter.com/MikeBalsamo1> . Find complete AP marijuana coverage here: <https://apnews.com/tag/LegalMarijuana>

Trump ousts Shulkin from Veterans Affairs, taps his doctor

By HOPE YEN and ZEKE MILLER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump fired Veterans Affairs Secretary David Shulkin on Wednesday and nominated White House doctor Ronny Jackson to replace him in the wake of a bruising ethics scandal and a mounting rebellion within the agency.

A Navy rear admiral, Jackson is a surprise choice to succeed Shulkin, a former Obama administration official and the first non-veteran ever to head the VA. Trump had been considering replacements for Shulkin for weeks, but had not been known to be considering Jackson for the role.

In a statement, Trump praised Jackson as "highly trained and qualified." It was a decision that signaled Trump chose to go with someone he knows and trusts, rather than the candidate with the longest resume, to run a massive agency facing huge bureaucratic challenges.

Jackson has served since 2013 as the physician to the president, one of the people in closest proximity to Trump day in and day out.

His profile rose after he conducted a sweeping press conference about the president's medical exam in

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January in which he impressed Trump with his camera-ready demeanor and deft navigation of reporters' questions as he delivered a rosy depiction of the president's health, according to a person familiar with the president's thinking but not authorized to discuss private conversations.

Jackson eagerly embraced the idea of moving to the VA, according to a White House official who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss personnel matters. Ironically, it was Shulkin who had recommended Jackson for an undersecretary position at the agency in fall. Jackson was vetted during that time on his policy positions and other issues, the official said.

The promotion of Jackson marks the latest Trump hire to be driven at least as much by personal familiarity with the president as by his vision for the role.

Brigadier General Dr. Richard Tubb, who trained Jackson, said in a letter read at Jackson's briefing that the doctor had been attached like "Velcro" to Trump since Inauguration Day.

"On any given day," he wrote, "the 'physician's office,' as it is known, is generally the first and last to see the President."

A White House official said Shulkin was informed of his dismissal by Chief of Staff John Kelly before the president announced the move on Twitter on Wednesday afternoon.

Trump had considered several others for the post, including conservative "Fox & Friends" contributor Pete Hegseth. The White House was hopeful Jackson will have a smoother confirmation process because he was chosen for his current position during former President Barack Obama's administration.

But a major veterans' organization expressed concern over Shulkin's dismissal and Trump's intention to nominate Jackson, whom they worried lacked experience to run the huge department.

"We are disappointed and already quite concerned about this nominee," said Joe Chenelly, the national executive director of AMVETS. "The administration needs to be ready to prove that he's qualified to run such a massive agency, a \$200 billion bureaucracy."

Rep. Phil Roe, chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, said he believed Shulkin did a "fantastic job" and didn't think he should have been dismissed, but "at the end of the day, cabinet secretaries serve at the pleasure of the president."

"I respect President Trump's decision, support the president's agenda and remain willing to work with anyone committed to doing the right thing on behalf of our nation's veterans," Roe said. "I am in the process of reaching out to Dr. Jackson and I look forward to building a strong relationship with him also."

Shulkin is the second Cabinet secretary to depart over controversies involving expensive travel, following former Health and Human Services Secretary Tom Price's resignation last September. Trump said in a statement he is "grateful" for Shulkin's service.

Shulkin had continued to insist he had the full confidence of the White House amid continuing investigations into his travel and leadership of the department.

He had agreed to reimburse the government more than \$4,000 after the VA's internal watchdog concluded last month that he had improperly accepted Wimbledon tennis tickets and that his then-chief of staff had doctored emails to justify his wife traveling to Europe with him at taxpayer expense. Shulkin also blamed internal drama at the agency on a half-dozen or so rebellious political appointees, insisting he had White House backing to fire them.

But the continuing VA infighting and a fresh raft of watchdog reports documenting leadership failures and spending waste — as well as fresh allegations that Shulkin had used a member of his security detail to run personal errands — proved too much of a distraction.

It was the latest in a series of departures of top administration officials, including Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, who was fired by Trump earlier this month, and national security adviser H.R. McMaster, whose departure was announced last week.

The VA change comes as Trump is trying to expand the Veterans Choice program, fulfilling a campaign promise that major veterans' groups worry could be an unwanted step toward privatizing VA health care. His plan remains in limbo in Congress after lawmakers declined last week to include it in a spending bill.

Having pushed through legislation in Trump's first year making it easier to fire bad VA employees and speed disability appeals, Shulkin leaves behind a department in disarray. Several projects remain unfinished,

including a multibillion-dollar overhaul of electronic medical records aimed at speeding up wait times for veterans seeking medical care as well as expanded mental health treatment for veterans at higher risk of suicide.

Trump selected Robert Wilkie, undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, to serve as the acting head of the VA.

The VA is government's second-largest department, responsible for 9 million military veterans in more than 1,700 government-run health facilities. The selection of Wilkie bypasses VA Deputy Secretary Tom Bowman, who has come under criticism for being too moderate to push Trump's agenda of fixing veterans' care.

During the presidential campaign, Trump repeatedly pledged to fix the VA, which was still reeling after a 2014 scandal at its Phoenix medical center, where veterans waited months for care even as VA employees created secret waiting lists to cover up delays. Criticizing the department as "the most corrupt," Trump said he would bring accountability and expand access to private doctors, promising to triple the number of veterans "seeing the doctor of their choice."

Currently, more than 30 percent of VA appointments are made in the private sector.

Associated Press writers Jill Colvin and Jonathan Lemire contributed to this report.

Trump is hopeful, but some skeptical ahead of US-NK talks

By MATTHEW PENNINGTON, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — An enigmatic North Korean leader takes a secretive train trip to China to affirm fraternal ties and declare a commitment to denuclearization.

It sounds like Kim Jong Un's visit this week, but his father and predecessor Kim Jong Il made similar declarations on a trip to Beijing, months before he died in 2011. Yet North Korea's nuclear weapons development only speeded up.

President Donald Trump expressed optimism Wednesday after the younger Kim's meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping, saying there's "a good chance" that Kim will "do what is right for his people and for humanity." But there are plenty of reasons to be skeptical that the U.S.-North Korean summit slated for May will produce the breakthrough that Washington wants.

After a year of escalating tensions, Trump agreed to talks after South Korean officials relayed that Kim was committed to ridding the Korean Peninsula of nuclear weapons and was willing to halt nuclear and missile tests.

That has tamped down fears of war that elevated as Trump and Kim traded threats and insults and North Korea demonstrated it was close to being able to strike the U.S. with a nuclear-tipped missile.

Kim's meeting with Xi offered some reassurance to Washington that "denuclearization" will be up for negotiation if the first summit between American and North Korean leaders in seven decades of animosity takes place.

But while Trump has elevated expectations of what that sit-down would achieve, North Korea has yet to spell out what it wants in return for abandoning a weapons program that Kim likely views as a guarantee for the survival of his totalitarian regime.

The readout of Kim's remarks to Xi as reported by China's state news agency Xinhua strongly indicates Pyongyang is looking for significant American concessions.

"The issue of denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula can be resolved," Kim was quoted as saying, "if South Korea and the United States respond to our efforts with goodwill, create an atmosphere of peace and stability while taking progressive and synchronous measures for the realization of peace."

To many North Korea watchers, that sounds like old wine in a new bottle.

In May 2011, the elder Kim, who was making what would be his final trip to China, told then-president Hu Jintao that the North was "adhering to the goal of denuclearization."

That came months after North Korea had revealed a uranium enrichment plant that gave it a second

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path for making fuel for atomic bombs.

Abraham Denmark, a former senior U.S. defense official, said the North's latest offer to "denuclearize" still appears contingent on U.S. creating the right conditions. In the past, Pyongyang demanded that U.S. withdraw troops from the peninsula, end its security alliance with South Korea and the nuclear protection it offers its ally.

"It's possible that Kim Jong Un has a different meaning in mind," said Denmark, now director of the Asia program at the Wilson Center think tank. "So far it sounds like the same old tune."

Ending six years of international seclusion, Kim was spirited into Beijing by special train under tight security like his father before him. He met with Xi, seeking to repair relations that have been frayed as China has supported tough U.N. sanctions and slashed trade with its wayward ally in frustration over its refusal to stop its provocative behavior.

State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said Kim's first foreign trip was a "historic step in the right direction" and proof that U.S.-led campaign of "maximum pressure" of economic sanctions was working. Trump said that the pressure would be maintained for now, but offered an optimistic view of how he could achieve peace and denuclearization that eluded past administrations.

"Now there is a good chance that Kim Jong Un will do what is right for his people and for humanity. Look forward to our meeting!"

There's another way of looking at it.

It could be North Korea not the U.S. that is calling the shots. When Kim offered an olive branch to South Korea in the new year, he also warned that the entire U.S. was within range of the North's atomic weapons. With that capability in hand, he may now going on a diplomatic offensive, using it as leverage to win aid and security guarantees rather than with an intent of giving it up.

Trump's own choice as national security adviser John Bolton is famously skeptical of diplomacy with North Korea. Just a month ago, he made the case for a pre-emptive military strike on the North. That raises questions about whether he might advocate for the same should Trump's summit with Kim fail.

Experts at the Center for Strategic and International Studies think tank said in an analysis that by meeting Xi, Kim may be seeking an insurance policy that "even if summit talks fail with the U.S. that North Korea could still fall back on its relationship with China."

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, a close ally of the president, is worried about a less than ideal outcome.

He said Wednesday he's worried that in his talks with Kim, Trump will focus on the intercontinental missiles that can reach the U.S. mainland and not the shorter-range missiles that threaten Japan and may "end up accepting North Korea's possession of nuclear weapons."

Associated Press writer Alan Fram contributed to this report.

Emails: Conservatives slammed Pence in 2015 for changing law

By BRIAN SLODYSKO, Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Then-Indiana Gov. Mike Pence faced a firestorm of criticism three years ago after signing a "religious freedom" law critics decried as anti-gay.

Now emails released this week to The Associated Press illustrate similar backlash from fellow conservatives when the eventual vice president agreed to change the law in the face of widespread boycott threats.

"Indiana is fronted by a coward," reads a March 31 email to Pence's office, which was among more than 1,400 pages of documents obtained under Indiana's public records law. "I just watched your boss throw the ENTIRE Christian population in America under the Left's Gay Extortion Bus."

The correspondence from Pence's official and private email accounts, which the AP first requested when he joined President Donald Trump's campaign, offer a window into one of the most challenging periods of his political career.

It was a time when Pence — who describes himself as "a Christian, a conservative and a Republican,

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in that order — came under intense pressure from moderate Republicans, as well as the state's business community to act in the face of a growing public relations crisis.

It's unclear how many of Pence's emails are being withheld, including those sent from a private AOL.com email address he used to conduct state business. Indiana's open records law gives government officials wide latitude to do so. More than 1,300 pages of records that were previously released largely consist of correspondence from staffers sharing press releases, news articles or laudatory notes from Pence's fans.

Many of the messages between Pence and his top aides are redacted. But emails spanning from March to July 2015 do offer a glimpse of his administration's efforts to battle back against negative headlines from the "religious freedom" law, while closely tracking what conservatives had to say about Pence, who harbored presidential ambitions.

"It has been a challenging week," chief of state Jim Atterholt wrote in an April 2 email response to a Pence supporter who criticized the changes made to the law.

Days earlier, Pence had signed the initial version of the law during a closed door ceremony that included several well-known social conservative activists. Simmering criticisms exploded on social media and in national headlines.

It metastasized after Pence struggled to explain in an interview with ABC's George Stephanopoulos whether the law did — or didn't — allow discrimination against gay people.

Celebrities called him out, left-leaning states threatened to ban officials from traveling to Indiana, while businesses and trade groups ratcheted up threats of pulling out of the state.

Amid the criticism, Pence received emails of encouragement from across the country, urging him to stand his ground.

"I would like to voice my support for Gov. Pence's unpopular stand on Religious Freedom," wrote one woman from Troy, Alabama. "It takes courage to stand for what is right and I pray he does not succumb to the noisy, obnoxious people who are threatening him."

But there was a notable shift in tone as reporters from national news outlets swarmed the Statehouse and Pence, under intense scrutiny, called for a "fix." The changes sought to make clear business owners couldn't invoke the law to discriminate against gay people.

"If Governor Pence has any future presidential aspirations he'd better remember the choices he makes now follow him tomorrow," wrote one person, identified only as "SVO."

Steve Defilippo, of Tampa, Florida, was even blunter. His email read : "ACT LIKE A MAN AND LET THE CHIPS FALL WHERE THEY MAY DESPITE ECONOMICS."

Once Pence signed the law, the vitriol only grew.

"Will Governor Mike 'Spineless' Pence announce his resignation today and end this calamity?" wrote Garry A. Clark.

Randi Riley from Edgewater, Florida, wrote that Pence raised "the white flag of surrender to a ruthless horde of sexual jihadists."

Staff scrambled to change the narrative and shift the conversation to the state's improving economy.

"Why are you sending (news) clips around?" Pence asked in an email to his longtime aide, Matt Lloyd.

Lloyd, who is currently a spokesman at the Department of Health and Human Services, wrote back: "I'm sending them to other media and stakeholders to help drive narrative."

Later, after landing a favorable story, Pence praised it as a "Homerun."

Lloyd quipped back: "We're punching back hard like this every single time."

Still, even after the uproar, Pence's polling numbers sagged and he faced a difficult re-election.

In July of 2016, however, Trump picked him to shore up his evangelical base. Before long, social conservative flocked to Pence rallies around the country, gushing over his calm demeanor and Evangelical beliefs.

Ecuador cuts WikiLeaks founder Assange's internet at embassy

By GONZALO SOLANO, Associated Press

QUITO, Ecuador (AP) — Ecuador's government said Wednesday it has cut off WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange's internet connection at the nation's London embassy after his recent activity on social media decrying the arrest of a Catalan separatist politician.

In a statement, officials said Assange's recent posts "put at risk" the good relations Ecuador maintains with nations throughout Europe and had decided as of Tuesday to suspend his internet access "in order to prevent any potential harm."

Assange has since gone silent on social media.

Ecuador granted Assange asylum in the South American nation's London embassy in 2012, where he has remained cooped up ever since. Ecuador has repeatedly tried to find a solution that would allow Assange to leave without the threat of arrest, but with no success. He remains wanted in Britain for jumping bail and also fears a possible U.S. extradition request based on his leaking of classified State Department documents.

Relations between Assange and his host nation have often grown prickly.

Ecuador suspended his internet access in 2016 after a WikiLeaks dump targeting Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign. And while former President Rafael Correa hailed Assange's work, the South American country's current head of state has called him a hacker and warned him not to meddle in politics.

As part of an agreement allowing him to stay at Ecuador's embassy, Assange is forbidden from sending any messages that would interfere with the country's diplomatic relations other nations.

"He violated that agreement," said Maria Fernanda Espinosa, Ecuador's minister of foreign affairs.

She added that Ecuador's government would be sending a group of diplomats to meet with Assange's legal team in London next week while also continuing a dialogue with British officials on how to resolve "an inherited problem."

Assange frequently tweets more than a dozen times a day, sharing news stories and comments that often focus on global politics and digital security issues. In recent days, Assange had criticized Germany's detention of former Catalan president Carles Puigdemont. He wrote that the European arrest warrant system "allows an abusive government to persecute its opponents across the whole of the EU."

He also chimed in a decision by the United States and more than a dozen European nations to kick out Russian diplomats on Monday following Moscow's alleged poisoning of an ex-spy in Britain.

"The manner of and timing of Russian diplomatic expulsions is poor diplomacy," he wrote.

Following Assange's remarks, a British minister called him a "miserable little worm" and said it was regretful that he remains in Ecuador's embassy.

Ecuador granted the Australian-born Assange citizenship in December as part of an effort to make him a member of its diplomatic team, which would grant him additional rights like special legal immunity. But Britain's Foreign Office rejected the request to grant him diplomatic status in the U.K.

Report: Trump attorney discussed Flynn, Manafort pardons

By The Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — One of President Donald Trump's attorneys floated the possibility of pardoning two of the president's former advisers caught up in the Russia probe in discussions with their lawyers last year, The New York Times reported Wednesday.

The newspaper, citing three anonymous people with knowledge of the discussions, said then-Trump attorney, John Dowd, raised the idea with attorneys for former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort and former national security adviser Michael Flynn.

Dowd, who recently resigned from Trump's legal team, denied having the conversations in an interview with the Times, saying, "There were no discussions. Period." He did not respond to request for comment from The Associated Press.

According to the Times, the discussion with Flynn's attorney, Robert Kelner, took place last summer,

months before Flynn took a plea deal and began cooperating with special counsel Robert Mueller. The conversation with Reginald Brown, who represented Manafort at the time, took place ahead of Manafort's indictment last October on charges of acting as an unregistered foreign agent and conspiring to launder money.

Reached Wednesday, Brown and Kelner declined to comment. The report provoked strong denials from the White House and Trump's attorneys.

In a statement, attorney Ty Cobb, who represents the White House, said there have been no pardons discussed related to the Russia investigation.

"I have only been asked about pardons by the press and have routinely responded on the record that no pardons are under discussion or under consideration at the White House," he said.

Trump personal attorney Jay Sekulow also said, "Never during the course of my representation of the president have I had any discussions of pardons of any individual involved in this inquiry."

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said she wasn't aware of any discussions in which Trump directed Dowd to broach the subject of pardoning people involved in the special counsel's investigation. But Sanders said she hadn't asked the president specifically.

The AP earlier reported that Trump mused to aides last summer about pardons and asked for information about the extent of his constitutional powers according two individuals familiar with the discussions. The people spoke on condition of anonymity because the conversations were confidential.

Associated Press writers Zeke Miller and Chad Day contributed to this report.

Russian ex-spy likely poisoned at front door, UK police say

By DANICA KIRKA and JIM HEINTZ, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The Russian ex-spy and his daughter left critically ill in a nerve agent attack three weeks ago were probably poisoned at the front door of their home in southwestern England, British police said Wednesday.

It was the first time police have said where they thought Sergei Skripal and his daughter Yulia might have been poisoned.

The highest concentration of nerve agent found so far was on the Skripals' front door in Salisbury, and detectives plan to focus their investigation in the surrounding area, London's Metropolitan Police force said in a statement.

"At this point in our investigation, we believe the Skripals first came in contact with the nerve agent from their front door," Deputy Assistant Commissioner Dean Haydon said in the statement.

Police have also searched a variety of sites around Salisbury, including a pub, a restaurant and a cemetery.

Britain has blamed Russia for the attack, triggering the expulsion of about 150 Russian diplomats from the U.K., U.S. and their Western allies. Russia has vowed to respond, but a senior diplomat said Wednesday there is no hurry to retaliate.

Russia vehemently denies Britain's accusation that it was behind the March 4 attack.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Sergei Ryabkov told the RIA Novosti state news agency that Moscow is "thoughtfully and thoroughly" considering its response. Separately, he was quoted by the Interfax news agency as saying the expulsions were directed by London and Washington, adding that other nations succumbed to their pressure. He added that "all options are on the table" regarding Russia's response.

President Vladimir Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, told reporters that Russia's response "will suit the interests of Russia."

President Donald Trump spoke with British Prime Minister Theresa May about the coordinated effort by Western allies to expel Russian intelligence operatives. The White House said the leaders agreed Wednesday that dismantling Russian spy rings is a priority to "curtail Russian clandestine activities and prevent future chemical weapons attacks on either country's soil."

Skripal was imprisoned in Russia after he sold secrets to British intelligence. He was released in a 2010

spy swap and moved to Britain.

Britain says the Skripals were poisoned with a nerve agent developed in Soviet times and that it must have come from Russia. Russian officials complain that Britain hasn't presented evidence to back up the accusation.

The Russian Foreign Ministry said Wednesday that British special services could have been behind the poisoning. British officials have previously rejected such Russian claims as nonsense.

Jim Heintz reported from Moscow.

Judge allows Trump foreign gifts case to proceed

By STEPHEN BRAUN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal judge Wednesday allowed Maryland and the District of Columbia to proceed with their lawsuit accusing President Donald Trump of accepting unconstitutional gifts from foreign interests, but limited the case to the president's involvement with the Trump International Hotel in Washington.

U.S. District Judge Peter J. Messitte's ruling dismissed other sections of the lawsuit that raised concerns about the impact of foreign gifts to the president from Trump Organization properties outside of Washington.

Maryland and D.C. accuse the president of violating the emoluments clause of the Constitution, which bans the president and other federal officials from accepting gifts from foreign governments as well as U.S. states. Specifically, they allege nearby businesses have been subjected to increased competition as a result of the foreign traffic to the Trump Hotel.

"Their allegation is bolstered by explicit statements from certain foreign government officials indicating that they are clearly choosing to stay at the president's hotel because, as one representative of a foreign government has stated, they want him to know 'I love your new hotel,'" Messitte wrote in his 47-page ruling.

But the judge also warned the plaintiffs that their "claims sweep too broadly," saying "it is a considerable stretch, however, to find the requisite injury-in-fact" to Maryland and D.C. from Trump properties outside of Washington.

Despite Messitte's limited ruling, a watchdog group that has joined the two jurisdictions in the lawsuit was quick to hail the judge's decision.

"This is a major step forward for the emoluments litigation," said Norman Eisen, a former chief ethics lawyer for the Obama administration and chairman of Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, also called CREW. Eisen said the decision suggests that states and businesses near Trump enterprises in other parts of the country may also have legal standing to sue.

Maryland Attorney General Brian Frosh said "we won the first round. It's a very clear decision that Donald Trump is not above the law and has to be held accountable to the emoluments clause."

D.C. Attorney General Karl Racine, tweeted: "We have standing to hold Pres. Trump accountable for violating the Constitution."

It was not immediately clear whether the Trump administration would appeal the ruling.

White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders declined to address the issue during an afternoon press briefing, saying "I can't comment on pending litigation."

Kerri Kupec, a Justice Department spokeswoman, said "we believe this case should be dismissed, and we will continue to defend the president in court."

Although the Trump Organization was not a party in the litigation, the company said it was pleased that the judge did not allow the lawsuit to target other Trump properties.

"The court's decision today does significantly narrow the scope of the case," said a company spokeswoman. The court has yet to rule on several additional arguments, which we believe should result in a complete dismissal."

If the judge's ruling holds, it could allow Maryland and DC to press for documents showing how foreign government interests or U.S. states used the Trump hotel and how much money they spent there.

Late last year, a judge in New York threw out a similar lawsuit filed by CREW, ruling that the emoluments clause is an issue that Congress should address first. A third federal lawsuit has been filed against Trump on the issue by nearly 200 Democratic members of Congress.

Judge tosses involuntary manslaughter charges in frat death

By MARK SCOLFORO, Associated Press

A judge threw out involuntary manslaughter and many of the other most serious remaining charges Wednesday against 11 of the former Penn State fraternity members arrested in a pledge's hazing-related death last year, the second major blow to the prosecution's case.

District Judge Allen Sinclair dismissed all five involuntary manslaughter charges, along with all reckless endangerment and hazing counts before him during the three-day hearing that wrapped up late Tuesday, sending to county court for trial only alcohol violations and, against two defendants, single counts of conspiracy to commit hazing.

The case involves the February 2017 death of 19-year-old sophomore engineering student Tim Piazza of Lebanon, New Jersey, who died of severe head and abdominal injuries after falling several times at the house the night of a bid acceptance ceremony and party.

Security video recovered from the house showed him and other pledges being plied with alcohol, and authorities later estimated Piazza had consumed three to four times the state's legal limit of alcohol for drivers.

The district judge had previously tossed many of those same counts on Sept. 1, after an eight-day preliminary hearing. The county district attorney subsequently refiled many of those charges, and more were added. There also were new defendants charged after the FBI was able to recover deleted security camera footage from the basement. A preliminary hearing for those defendants is scheduled to begin May 2.

Defense attorney Leonard Ambrose, representing Joseph Sala, called the refiled charges "a total waste of time." All 39 counts against Sala that were in play during the hearing were dismissed, leaving him with 14 counts of hazing and four alcohol-related charges that Sinclair had upheld in September.

"This is the equivalent of a boxing match where they lost the major issues in the first fight, demanded a second fight and lost," Ambrose said. "That's it — they were knocked out of the ring."

Attorney General Josh Shapiro, whose office took over the case upon the request of a new district attorney in January, said their review of the case was continuing.

"We will move forward with our case and the charges that were held for trial today," said Shapiro, a Democrat. "I am disappointed by the decision of the magisterial district judge and we are assessing our legal options. My office is committed to seeking justice for Timothy Piazza and his family and holding responsible individuals accountable for their actions."

Felony counts of aggravated assault that would have carried the lengthiest potential prison sentences had been tossed at a prior hearing, and prosecutors eventually opted not to pursue them again.

The defense attorney for Gary DiBileo, Michael Engle, said prosecutors made essentially the same argument about involuntary manslaughter that was unsuccessful in September.

"Despite our feelings of gratitude to the court for today's legal ruling, Gary and his family recognize that a young man tragically lost his life and they continue to pray for Mr. Piazza's family during this extremely difficult time," Engle said.

Nick Kubera saw all 11 counts against him get dismissed, leaving him to defend the charges that Sinclair had previously forwarded to court — six counts of reckless endangerment, 14 counts of hazing and alcohol violations.

"Two preliminary hearings of unprecedented length conducted by two prosecutors doesn't change the obvious — that a freshman college student who had been a fraternity member for all of a couple of weeks and who handed six pledges a beer (only five of whom were underage) is guilty of nothing more than handing six pledges a beer," said Kubera's lawyer, Andrew Shubin.

Tom Kline, a civil lawyer for Piazza's parents, said they were disappointed that involuntary manslaughter

charges were thrown out but heartened that the judge upheld the counts of conspiracy to commit hazing. "Jim and Evelyn Piazza are optimistic ... this prosecution will eventually deter this kind of abhorrent conduct," Kline said.

After drinking heavily that night, Tim Piazza had to be helped upstairs to a couch, but soon after he fell down the basement stairs and had to be carried upstairs. He spent much of the ensuing evening and overnight on a couch, exhibiting signs of pain and discomfort.

Members of the fraternity took half-hearted and even counterproductive steps to address his condition, ultimately leaving him alone.

By the next morning, Piazza was back in the basement, where fraternity members found him unconscious. They carried him upstairs but waited 40 minutes to call for help.

Justices struggle with partisan redistricting again

By MARK SHERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Dealing with an issue that could affect elections across the country, Supreme Court justices wrestled Wednesday with how far states may go to craft electoral districts that give the majority party a huge political advantage.

But even as they heard their second case on partisan redistricting in six months, the justices expressed uncertainty about the best way to deal with a problem that several said would get worse without the court's intervention.

The arguments the court heard Wednesday were over an appeal by Republican voters in Maryland who object to a congressional district that Democrats drew to elect a candidate of their own.

The Maryland case is a companion to one from Wisconsin in which Democrats complain about a Republican-drawn map of legislative districts. That case was argued in October and remains undecided.

Justice Stephen Breyer suggested that the court could add in yet a third case involving North Carolina's congressional districts and set another round of arguments to deal with all three states.

Breyer said that "we'd have right in front of us the possibilities as thought through by lawyers and others who have an interest in this subject."

His comment is an indication that the justices haven't figured out the Wisconsin case in the nearly six months since it was argued.

More importantly, it suggests that Justice Anthony Kennedy, whose vote almost certainly controls the outcome, has reservations about using the Wisconsin case for the court's first-ever ruling that districting plans that entrench one party's control of the legislature or congressional delegation can violate the constitutional rights of the other party's voters.

The Maryland lawsuit offers the court a more limited approach to dealing with the issue because it involves just one district that flipped from Republican to Democratic control after the 2011 round of redistricting.

The justices have several issues before them:

- Should courts even be involved in the political task of redistricting?
- Is there a workable way to measure how much politics is too much?
- Do the particular plans being challenged cross that line?

There was broad agreement that the Republican voters who sued presented what Justice Sonia Sotomayor called "pretty damning" evidence that the Democrats who controlled the state government wanted to increase the Democrats' edge in the congressional from 6-2 to 7-1.

Even Chief Justice John Roberts, who has questioned lawsuits over partisan redistricting, said the redrawing of the 6th congressional district seemed to lack "any internal logic," other than to elect a Democrat.

Residents of the wealthy Washington, D.C., suburb of Potomac, Maryland, were lumped in with people who live in the rural northwestern corner of the state, Roberts said. "They both have farms. But the former, hobby farms. And the others are real farms."

But Roberts was among several justices, including liberal justices who seemed inclined to side with the challengers, who raised a procedural problem that could keep the court from deciding the merits of the case.

The Wisconsin case also has a potential problem that could prevent a decision about partisan redistricting. That's where Breyer's suggestion could come in. He said even a decision striking down the Maryland map, which he said seems to be an extreme gerrymander, would not necessarily apply to other cases and would leave unaddressed what he called a serious, national problem.

If the court doesn't confront the big issues now, Breyer said, sophisticated map-makers using increasingly powerful technology will create more effective partisan maps after the 2020 census.

Putting all the challenged plans together would allow for a comprehensive ruling, he said.

Over the past 16 months, courts struck down political districting plans drawn by Republicans in North Carolina, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin. Federal judges threw out a state legislative map in Wisconsin and a congressional plan in North Carolina. In Pennsylvania, the state Supreme Court invalidated the state's congressional districts and replaced them with a court-drawn plan.

The Supreme Court has put the drawing of new maps on hold in North Carolina and Wisconsin, but refused to block the Pennsylvania court's adoption of revised congressional districts for this year's elections.

In campaigns, women highlight gender in pitch to voters

By CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY, Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Women running for governor in Wisconsin and Maryland breastfeed their infants in campaign videos. Another in Georgia tells voters that "the folks who have held the office of governor don't look like me."

The record number of women expected to run for office this year are already breaking barriers, upending traditional campaigning by emphasizing their gender as they introduce themselves to an electorate they hope is eager for change.

"Some say no man can beat Larry Hogan," Maryland Democratic candidate Krish Vignarajah says into the camera as she breastfeeds her daughter. "Well, I'm no man. I'm a mom, I'm a woman, and I want to be your next governor."

Experts are predicting a historic wave of female candidates, driven in part by Democrats frustrated over the election of President Donald Trump and actions by his administration and Republicans in Congress on issues such as health care and immigration. The Women's March, the #MeToo movement and the surprising success of women running for the Virginia Legislature in 2017 have kept the momentum.

Vignarajah, a lawyer and former policy director for Michelle Obama, is one of seven Democrats and the only woman running in the Maryland gubernatorial primary. She said the 2016 presidential election was a "rude awakening of what happens when we become complacent" and that her video was designed to show the everyday life of many moms.

"Historically speaking, women were perhaps more hesitant to highlight their womanhood," said Vignarajah, a Sri Lankan immigrant. "For me, I think it's an asset."

The candidates say their message to voters is that electing more women to office is not merely about representation. It's about a change in priorities so that more emphasis is placed on issues such as education, health care, early childhood development, workplace equality and paid family leave.

"I would like our state to be the best place to raise a family and the best place to grow a business, and I think we can achieve that," said Kelda Roys, a former state lawmaker seeking the Democratic nomination to challenge Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, a two-term Republican.

In her ad, Roys highlights her efforts in the state legislature to ban the chemical known as BPA from baby bottles and cups in the state. In the middle of her speech, her youngest daughter begins crying and Roys discreetly lifts her sweater to begin breastfeeding. Roys says she didn't intend to have that moment as part of the video but realized after she saw an initial outtake that it made sense.

"This is part of who I am, and I think it's an honest portrayal of what my life is like," Roys said. "Men running for office have always enjoyed pretty wide latitude to present themselves as whole people, where for women there has always been pressure to conform to a pretty narrow archetype. And I feel like that's changing."

Whether all this enthusiasm translates into a sea change in the number of women elected to office remains to be seen. Currently, women account for a fifth of all U.S. representatives and senators, and one in four state lawmakers. There are six female governors.

So far, 220 women have filed to run for the U.S. House or Senate this year, with candidate filing deadlines still pending in half the states, according to the Center for American Women and Politics at Rutgers University. The record is 334 female candidates set in 2012. The center's experts say nearly 500 women are expected to run for House and Senate this year.

"For women, the expectations of gender and candidacies have often conflicted," said Kelly Dittmar, an assistant professor of political science at Rutgers. "They spent a lot of time talking about how tough they are, how strong they are and how qualified they are to hold office."

But female candidates have grown more comfortable in recent years branching out, Dittmar said. In New Hampshire's hotly contested U.S. Senate race in 2016, both Republican Kelly Ayotte and Democrat Maggie Hassan highlighted their roles as mothers and featured their children prominently in ads. Ayotte's daughter narrated a campaign ad highlighting her mom's credentials.

Some of this year's ads are intensely personal. Before losing her primary bid for Illinois' 4th Congressional District, Democratic candidate Sol Flores spoke about how she fought off a sexual predator as a child and how she has dedicated her life to helping children at risk.

Katie Hill, one of several Democrats seeking to challenge Rep. Steve Knight in California's 25th Congressional District, has a nearly five-minute video on her website detailing the time when she was 19 years old and considered having an abortion before suffering a miscarriage.

"No one can really understand what it's like to be faced with that kind of a choice, and it's a decision that only a woman in that situation can make," Hill says in the video. "The government most certainly can't make it for her."

In a recent video, Georgia gubernatorial candidate Stacey Evans is shown walking the halls of the state Capitol holding hands with her young daughter as she prepares to file paperwork to qualify for the Democratic primary in May. The daughter of a single mother who grew up poor in rural Georgia, Evans says her top priorities are making sure children of all backgrounds have access to quality early childhood education, a strong public school system and financial support for college.

"I don't have to worry about my daughter being taken care of during the day, but a lot of mothers have that struggle," Evans said. "I want to make sure that all families have access to the resources they need to live a high-quality life and to go out and be successful."

Associated Press writer Courtney Columbus in Baltimore contributed to this report.

Follow Christina Almeida Cassidy on Twitter at http://twitter.com/AP_Christina.

Omarosa dishes on Trump and gets his attention

By **DARLENE SUPERVILLE**, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Omarosa Manigault Newman once predicted that "every critic, every detractor will have to bow down to President Trump." The question now for the former White House aide and "Apprentice" contestant is whether that applies to her, too.

Starring in another reality TV show after resigning from the West Wing, Manigault Newman unleashed one criticism after another of her longtime friend Donald Trump and former White House colleagues, testing the widely held view that few people are ever really exiled from Trump's orbit.

Manigault Newman said she was "haunted" every day by Trump's tweets and "attacked" by colleagues when she tried to intervene. She said he tweets in his underwear in the early morning. She compared leaving the White House to being freed from a plantation, a reference to her one-time status as the only black member of the White House senior staff.

If that wasn't enough, she said the country will not be OK under Trump, and teased that she may tell

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everything in a book.

The ill feelings may well be mutual.

Trump, who called Manigault Newman a "good person" after she left the White House, referred to her as "the worst" in a speech at a press dinner where the president traditionally jabs at friends and foes alike.

The White House dismisses Manigault Newman as someone Trump has now fired four times: thrice from "The Apprentice" and once from the White House last December.

Armstrong Williams, a longtime friend of Manigault Newman, said the fact that Trump name-checked her in the Gridiron dinner speech this month "means she's on his mind." He doesn't think she had fallen out of favor because of her nationally broadcast criticisms.

"Here's the key: The president has not tweeted about anything that Omarosa has done since she left. That's significant," said Williams, a conservative commentator. "He's tweeted about (Steve) Bannon and everybody else, but he has not tweeted or pushed back in any way against Omarosa."

Bannon is the former White House chief strategist whom Trump publicly broke with after a book about Trump's first year in office quoted Bannon criticizing some of Trump's adult children. Trump then accused Bannon of "losing his mind."

Others fired by Trump, including his first campaign manager, Corey Lewandowski, and his first chief of staff, Reince Priebus, remain in contact with the president.

During her stint on CBS' "Celebrity Big Brother," where Manigault Newman and other celebrities lived under constant surveillance in a shared house until voted out, she steered clear of Trump's third rail, his family. But she let loose on the president and Vice President Mike Pence.

In one whispered conversation, she said working for Trump was "like a call to duty," but "I was haunted by the tweets every single day, like 'What is he going to tweet next?'" When she tried to intervene, Manigault Newman said through tears, "all of the people around him attacked me."

When asked if people should be worried, Manigault Newman nodded her head and said, "It is going to not be OK. It's not."

She criticized Pence in a later episode, saying he'd be more extreme than Trump. "So everybody that's wishing for impeachment might want to reconsider their lives. We would be begging for days of Trump back if Pence became president," she said. "He's extreme. I'm Christian. I love Jesus. But he thinks Jesus tells him to say things. I'm like, 'Jesus ain't saying that.'"

The conversations eventually came around to Trump's tweets. Manigault Newman was asked who monitors them.

"He's up in his underwear or something at 4 in the morning. Who's going to monitor that?" she said. "Remember, the bad tweets happen between 4 and 6 in the morning. Ain't nobody up there but Melania" — Trump's wife. Manigault Newman then commented on the large diamond the first lady wears on her left ring finger and said Trump "can do whatever he wants. She ain't saying nothing."

It was unclear whether her criticisms were genuine or whether she was trying to curry favor with her castmates to avoid eviction. (She didn't win.)

Manigault Newman, who declined to comment for this story, passed up a chance to repeat her criticisms during a recent appearance on "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert" after the reality TV show ended.

When asked if everything will be OK under Trump, she told Colbert, "You'll have to wait and see."

She did tell Colbert that she plans to focus on her ministry. Last April, she married John Allen Newman, senior pastor at a Baptist church in Jacksonville, Florida, during a ceremony at Trump's hotel near the White House. The website of Mount Calvary Baptist Church says she was licensed to preach in 2011 and later ordained and served as assistant pastor.

"My calling to the ministry is more important than anything else that I've done and I don't want to neglect it," Manigault Newman told Colbert.

Whether that means she's done bashing Trump remains to be seen.

In her first interview after leaving the White House, she told ABC's "Good Morning America" that "when I can tell my story, it is a profound story that I know the world will want to hear."

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

Astronomers baffled by distant galaxy void of dark matter

By **SETH BORENSTEIN, AP Science Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — It's a double cosmic conundrum: Lots of stuff that was already invisible has gone missing.

Astronomers have found a distant galaxy where there is no dark matter.

Dark matter is called "dark" because it can't be seen. It is the mysterious and invisible skeleton of the universe that scientists figure makes up about 27 percent of the cosmos. Scientists only know dark matter exists because they can observe how it pushes and pulls things they can see, like stars.

It's supposed to be everywhere.

But Yale University astronomer Pieter van Dokkum and colleagues spied a vast, old galaxy with relatively few stars where what you see truly is what you get. The galaxy's stars are speeding around with no apparent influence from dark matter, according to a study published in Wednesday's journal *Nature*.

Instead of shaking the very foundations of physics, scientists say this absence of dark matter may help prove the existence of, wait for it, dark matter.

"Not sure what to make of it, but it is definitely intriguing," wrote Case Western Reserve astronomer Stacy McGaugh, who was not part of the study, in an email. "This is a weird galaxy."

Van Dokkum studies diffuse galaxies, ones that cover enormous areas but have relatively few stars. To look for them he and colleagues built their own makeshift telescope out of 48 telephoto lenses that he first tested by using a toy flashlight to shine a light on a paper clip. The bug-eyed telescope, called Dragonfly, peers into the sky from New Mexico.

Using Dragonfly, van Dokkum and colleagues found a large, sparse galaxy called NGC1052-DF2 in the northern constellation Cetus, also known as the whale. It's as big as the Milky Way but with only one percent of its stars. Then they used larger telescopes on Hawaii and eventually the Hubble Space Telescope to study the galaxy.

Even though the galaxy is mostly empty, they found clusters of densely grouped stars. With measurements from the telescopes, van Dokkum and colleagues calculated how fast those clusters moved. If there were a normal amount of dark matter those clusters would be speeding around at about 67,000 mph (108,000 kilometers per hour). Instead, the clusters were moving at about 18,000 mph (28,000 kilometers



This 2016 photo provided by Pieter van Dokkum shows the "Dragonfly" telescope in New Mexico. Using the assembly, van Dokkum and colleagues found a large, thin galaxy called NGC1052-DF2 in the northern constellation Cetus. It's as big as the Milky Way but with only one percent of its stars. Then they used larger telescopes on Hawaii and eventually the Hubble Space Telescope to study the galaxy.

(Pieter van Dokkum via AP)

per hour). That's about how fast they would move if there were no dark matter at all, van Dokkum said. The team also calculated the total mass of the galaxy and found the stars account for everything, with little or no room left for dark matter.

"I find this unlikely in all possible contexts," said McGaugh, who is a proponent of a "modified gravity" theory that excludes the existence of dark matter altogether. "That doesn't make it wrong, just really weird."

How could this absence of dark matter help prove that it exists? By potentially disproving modified gravity theories that suggest gravity acts in a way that the cosmos makes sense without dark matter. But those alternative theories require stars in this galaxy to zip at least twice as fast as they were seen moving in this study.

Other outside scientists said the initial look at the calculations appear to be correct, though the results are confounding. A galaxy with so few stars should have more dark matter than others, not none.

"These are very strong scientists and so I take the results very seriously," said Marc Kamionkowski, a physicist at Johns Hopkins University.

One outsider suggested that perhaps the "galaxy" van Dokkum studied is so diffuse that it may not really be a galaxy. Another suggested that the dark matter might just be outside of the area that van Dokkum measured.

Van Dokkum dismissed both possibilities. "It's sort of non-negotiable. There's nothing else, just the stars," he said. The only way this can be explained is if dark matter exists in the universe, just not in that galaxy, he said.

There's no good explanation for why and how this galaxy has no dark matter, van Dokkum said. He proposed four different possibilities — all unproven. His favorite: That the galaxy formed in the very early universe in a way astronomers have never seen or understood.

"It's not so often you get a true surprise," van Dokkum said.

Follow Seth Borenstein on Twitter at @borenbears . His work can be found here .

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Trump says Second Amendment won't be repealed

By ALAN FRAM, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump tweeted Wednesday that the Second Amendment "WILL NEVER BE REPEALED" and called on voters to elect more Republicans in this fall's congressional elections because the GOP "must ALWAYS hold the Supreme Court."

Trump's statements came a day after retired Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens wrote in an essay in The New York Times that repealing the amendment would make it easier for Congress to enact gun control legislation.

Last month's shootings that killed 17 people at a high school in Parkland, Florida, have galvanized young people, liberals and Democrats for a renewed push to curb firearms. That has included demonstrations that have drawn hundreds of thousands of marchers in cities across the country.

"THE SECOND AMENDMENT WILL NEVER BE REPEALED!" Trump tweeted early Wednesday. "As much as Democrats would like to see this happen, and despite the words yesterday of former Supreme Court Justice Stevens, NO WAY. We need more Republicans in 2018 and must ALWAYS hold the Supreme Court!"

As with many issues, Trump's stated position on guns has been inconsistent. In a televised meeting after the Parkland massacre with shooting survivors, lawmakers and others, he suggested letting authorities confiscate guns from people considered dangerous even without court permission and expanding required background checks to also cover private gun sales. He's since abandoned those views.

There is no current, major push to repeal the Second Amendment. Any effort to do so would be unlikely to succeed in today's divisive political climate. Under the most common way to amend the Constitution,

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the House and Senate would both need to approve the proposal by two-thirds majorities. It would then need to be ratified by three-fourths of the states.

Political parties do not technically "hold" the Supreme Court like they control Congress.

Justices are nominated by presidents and must be confirmed by the Senate. It is true justices often reflect the political views of presidents who select them, but that is not always the case.

Of the current nine justices, the four considered to comprise the court's conservative wing were appointed by GOP presidents and the four more liberal judges were selected by Democratic presidents. The ninth, often considered the crucial swing vote, is Anthony Kennedy, who was nominated by Republican President Ronald Reagan.

Trump would have an easier time filling the next Supreme Court vacancy if Republicans can expand their current 51-49 Senate majority in November's elections.

The Supreme Court ruled in 2008 that the Second Amendment lets people own guns for self-defense.

New service aims to follow users across multiple devices

By ANICK JESDANUN, AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Some 60 companies including such leading brands as Subway, Sprint and the NFL are joining forces to help each other follow you around online.

Adobe, a company better known for Photoshop and PDF files, says the new Device Co-op initiative it is organizing will help companies offer more personalized experiences and make ads less annoying by filtering out products and services you have already bought or will never buy. Under the initiative, Adobe can tell you're the same person on a home PC, a work laptop, a phone and a tablet by analyzing past sign-ins with member companies.

The initiative comes amid heightened privacy sensitivities after reports that Facebook allowed a political consulting firm, Cambridge Analytica, to harvest data on millions of Facebook users to influence elections. Facebook also has been criticized for collecting call and text logs from phones running Google's Android system.

Adobe's initiative underscores the role data plays in helping companies make money. Many of the initial uses are for better ad targeting.

The company timed Wednesday's announcement to a digital marketing conference it is hosting this week in Las Vegas. Adobe executives said they believed their initiative offers strong privacy safeguards and weren't worried about a backlash in light of the Facebook scandal.

"With this stuff coming out now around Cambridge Analytica and Facebook, the bar has to be so high in terms of privacy," Adobe executive Amit Ahuja said.

Adobe says no personal data is being exchanged among participating companies, which also include Allstate, Lenovo, Intel, Barnes & Noble, Subaru and the Food Network. Adobe says the program links about 300 million consumers across nearly 2 billion devices in the U.S. and Canada.

The program would let Sprint, for instance, know that Bob is already a customer when he visits from a new device. Bob wouldn't get a promotion to switch from another carrier, but might get instead a phone upgrade offer. Or if Mary has declared herself a Giants fan on the NFL's app, she might see ads with Giants banners when visiting NFL.com from a laptop for the first time.

All this might feel creepy, but such cross-device tracking is already commonly done by matching attributes such as devices that from the same internet location, or IP address. Consumers typically have little control over it.

Adobe says it will give consumers a chance to opt out of such tracking. And it's breaking industry practices in a few ways. Adobe says it will honor opt-out requests for all participating companies and for all devices at once. It's more typical for such setups to require people do so one by one. All companies in the initiative are listed on Adobe's website, a break from some companies' practice of referring only to unspecified partners.

"We're doing everything we can not letting brands hide themselves," Ahuja said.

But in taking an opt-out approach, which is common in the industry, Adobe assumes that users consent. And it places the burden on consumers to learn about this initiative and to figure out how they can opt out of it.

China's defunct space lab hurtling toward Earth for re-entry

By CHRISTOPHER BODEEN, Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — China's defunct and reportedly out-of-control Tiangong 1 space station is expected to re-enter Earth's atmosphere sometime this weekend. It poses only a slight risk to people and property on the ground, since most of the bus-size, 8.5-ton vehicle is expected to burn up on re-entry, although space agencies don't know exactly when or where that will happen.

Below are some questions and answers about the station, its re-entry and the past and future of China's ambitious space program.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN AND HOW GREAT IS THE DANGER?

The European Space Agency predicts the station will re-enter the atmosphere between Saturday morning and Sunday afternoon — an estimate it calls "highly variable," likely because the ever-changing shape of the upper atmosphere affects the speed of objects falling into it.

The Chinese space agency's latest estimate puts re-entry between Saturday and Wednesday.

Western space experts say they believe China has lost control of the station. China's chief space laboratory designer Zhu Zongpeng has denied Tiangong was out of control, but hasn't provided specifics on what, if anything, China is doing to guide the craft's re-entry.

Based on Tiangong 1's orbit, it will come to Earth somewhere between latitudes of 43 degrees north and 43 degrees south, or roughly somewhere over most of the United States, China, Africa, southern Europe, Australia and South America. Out of range are Russia, Canada and northern Europe.

Based on its size, only about 10 percent of the spacecraft will likely survive being burned up on re-entry, mainly its heavier components such as its engines. The chances of anyone person on Earth being hit by debris is considered less than one in a trillion.

Ren Guoqiang, China's defense ministry spokesman, told reporters Thursday that Beijing has been briefing the United Nations and the international community about Tiangong 1's re-entry through multiple channels.

HOW COMMON IS MAN-MADE SPACE DEBRIS?

Debris from satellites, space launches and the International Space Station enters the atmosphere every few months, but only one person is known to have been hit by any of it: American woman Lottie Williams, who was struck but not injured by a falling piece of a U.S. Delta II rocket while exercising in an Oklahoma park in 1997.

Most famously, America's 77-ton Skylab crashed through the atmosphere in 1979, spreading pieces of wreckage near the southwestern Australia city of Perth, which fined the U.S. \$400 for littering.

The breakup on re-entry of the Columbia space shuttle in 2003 killed all seven astronauts and sent more than 80,000 pieces of debris raining down on a large swath of the Southern United States. No one on the ground was injured.

In 2011, NASA's Upper Atmosphere Research Satellite was considered to pose a slight risk to the public when it came down to Earth 20 years after its launching. Debris from the 6-ton satellite ended up falling into the Pacific Ocean, causing no damage.

China's own space program raised major concerns after it used a missile to destroy an out-of-service Chinese satellite in 2007, creating a large and potentially dangerous cloud of debris.

WHAT IS TIANGONG 1 AND WHAT WAS IT USED FOR?

Launched in 2011, Tiangong 1 was China's first space station, serving as an experimental platform for bigger projects such as the Tiangong 2 launched in September 2016 and a future permanent Chinese

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space station.

The station, whose name translates as "Heavenly Palace," played host to two crewed missions that included China's first female astronauts and served as a test platform for perfecting docking procedures and other operations. Its last crew departed in 2013 and contact with it was cut in 2016. Since then it has been orbiting gradually closer and closer to Earth on its own while being monitored.

The station had two modules, one for its solar panels and engines, and one for a pair of astronauts to live in and conduct experiments. A third astronaut slept in the Shenzhou spaceships that docked with the station, which also contained facilities for personal hygiene and food preparation.

HOW ADVANCED IS CHINA'S SPACE PROGRAM?

Since China conducted its first crewed mission in 2003 — becoming only the third country after Russia and the U.S. to do so — it has taken on increasingly ambitious projects, including staging a spacewalk and landing its Jade Rabbit rover on the moon.

China now operates the Tiangong 2 precursor space station facility, while the permanent station's 20-ton core module is due to be launched this year. The completed 60-ton station is set to come into full service in 2022 and operate for at least a decade.

China was excluded from the 420-ton International Space Station mainly due to U.S. legislation barring such cooperation and concerns over the Chinese space program's strong military connections. China's space program remains highly secretive and some experts have complained that a lack of information about Tiangong 1's design has made it harder to predict what might happen upon its re-entry.

A mission to land another rover on Mars and bring back samples is set to launch in 2020. China also plans to become the first country to soft-land a probe on the far side of the moon.

Online:

Official website of China Manned Space: <http://en.cmse.gov.cn/col/col1763/index.html>

Asian shares mixed as tech losses weigh in muted trading

By KELVIN CHAN, AP Business Writer

HONG KONG (AP) — Asian stock markets were mixed on Thursday as tech-sector losses on Wall Street weighed on sentiment. Trading in some markets was muted ahead of the Easter long weekend.

KEEPING SCORE: Japan's Nikkei 225 rose 0.4 percent to 21,121.17 after a sharp drop in the yen made shares cheaper for foreign buyers. South Korea's Kospi added 0.2 percent to 2,424.49. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index slipped 0.3 percent to 29,939.72 while the Shanghai Composite in mainland China gained 0.1 percent to 3,123.67. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 lost 0.3 percent to 5,770.70. Shares rose in Thailand and Singapore but fell in Indonesia.

TECH PRESSURE: Amazon, Netflix and other consumer-focused tech companies suffered losses that outweighed gains in other sectors. Investors continue to wrestle with the possible implications of negative headlines swirling around tech sector names. Amazon slid on a report that President Donald Trump was musing about going after the e-tailer with antitrust or competition law while Tesla tumbled after Moody's downgraded the electric car maker's credit rating.

MARKET TAKE: "U.S. tech stocks remained a drag amid the scrutiny over a multitude of issues and it should be of little surprise to see the decline's extent with a lack of positive news to boost sentiment," said Jingyi Pan of IG Markets in Singapore. "For Asian markets, however, this gloom may have worn out a little as we anticipate a potentially lackluster session today."

KOREAS SUMMIT: Tensions over the Korean peninsula eased on signs of progress in the standoff over the North's nuclear program. The two Koreas began high-level talks Thursday to prepare for a summit between North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and South Korean President Moon Jae-in. That follows a meeting earlier this week between Kim and Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing. A summit between Kim and President Donald Trump is also anticipated by the end of May though nothing has been confirmed.

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WALL STREET: The benchmark S&P 500 index dipped 0.3 percent to close at 2,605. The Dow Jones industrial average fell less than 0.1 percent to 23,848.42. The Nasdaq composite slid 0.8 percent to 6,949.23.

ENERGY: Benchmark U.S. crude rose 19 cents to \$64.57 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract lost 87 cents, or 1.3 percent, to settle at \$64.38 per barrel on Wednesday. Brent crude, used to price international oils, rose 14 cents to \$68.90 per barrel in London.

CURRENCIES: The dollar eased after making a big jump against the yen to its highest level in three weeks. It was trading at 106.58 yen from 106.84 yen late Wednesday. The euro rose to \$1.2328 from \$1.2308.

Today in History By The Associated Press.

Today in History

Today is Thursday, March 29, the 88th day of 2018. There are 277 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On March 29, 1943, World War II rationing of meat, fats and cheese began, limiting consumers to store purchases of an average of about two pounds a week for beef, pork, lamb and mutton using a coupon system. (The Associated Press noted, "From the customer viewpoint, the unrationed oasis of food will be the restaurant or other public eating place.")

On this date:

In 1638, Swedish colonists settled in present-day Delaware.

In 1790, the tenth president of the United States, John Tyler, was born in Charles City County, Virginia.

In 1792, Sweden's King Gustav III died, nearly two weeks after he had been shot and mortally wounded by an assassin during a masquerade party.

In 1867, Britain's Parliament passed, and Queen Victoria signed, the British North America Act creating the Dominion of Canada, which came into being the following July.

In 1912, British explorer Robert Falcon Scott, his doomed expedition stranded in an Antarctic blizzard after failing to be the first to reach the South Pole, wrote the last words of his journal: "For Gods sake look after our people."

In 1936, German Chancellor Adolf Hitler claimed overwhelming victory in a plebiscite on his policies.

In 1951, Julius and Ethel Rosenberg were convicted in New York of conspiracy to commit espionage for the Soviet Union. (They were executed in June 1953.) The Rodgers and Hammerstein musical "The King and I" opened on Broadway.

In 1962, Jack Paar hosted NBC's "Tonight" show for the final time. (Johnny Carson debuted as host the following October.)

In 1971, Army Lt. William L. Calley Jr. was convicted of murdering 22 Vietnamese civilians in the 1968 My Lai (mee ly) massacre. (Calley ended up serving three years under house arrest.) A jury in Los Angeles recommended the death penalty for Charles Manson and three female followers for the 1969 Tate-La Bianca murders. (The sentences were later commuted.)

In 1973, the last United States combat troops left South Vietnam, ending America's direct military involvement in the Vietnam War.

In 1984, under cover of early morning darkness, the Baltimore Colts football team left its home city of three decades and moved to Indianapolis.

In 1992, Democratic presidential front-runner Bill Clinton acknowledged experimenting with marijuana "a time or two" while attending Oxford University, adding, "I didn't inhale and I didn't try it again."

Ten years ago: Anti-American Shiite militia leader Muqtada al-Sadr (mook-TAH'-duh ahl SAH'-dur) ordered his followers to defy orders from the Iraqi government to surrender their weapons. Zimbabweans voted in an election seen as the biggest test of Robert Mugabe's 28-year rule. (Opposition leader Morgan Tsvangirai (SVAHNG'-ur-eye) claimed victory, but the Election Commission ordered a runoff; Mugabe claimed victory in that contest, which was widely denounced as a sham.)

Five years ago: President Barack Obama promoted a plan to create construction and other jobs by at-

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tracting private money to help rebuild roads, bridges and other public works projects during a visit to a Miami port that was undergoing \$2 billion in upgrades paid for with government and private dollars.

One year ago: Britain filed for divorce from the European Union as Prime Minister Theresa May sent a six-page letter to EU Council President Donald Tusk. Thirteen people were killed when a small church bus collided with a pickup truck on a two-lane road about 75 miles west of San Antonio. (The driver of the pickup has pleaded not guilty to intoxication manslaughter and aggravated assault with a deadly weapon causing serious bodily injury.) Two former aides to New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie were sentenced to prison for creating a colossal traffic jam at the George Washington Bridge for political revenge, a scandal that sank Christie's White House hopes.

Today's Birthdays: Author Judith Guest is 82. Former British Prime Minister Sir John Major is 75. Comedian Eric Idle is 75. Composer Vangelis is 75. Basketball Hall of Famer Walt Frazier is 73. Singer Bobby Kimball (Toto) is 71. Actor Bud Cort is 70. Actor Brendan Gleeson is 63. Actor Christopher Lawford is 63. Pro and College Football Hall of Famer Earl Campbell is 63. Actress Marina Sirtis is 63. International Gymnastics Hall of Famer Kurt Thomas is 62. Actor Christopher Lambert is 61. Rock singer Perry Farrell (Porno for Pyros; Jane's Addiction) is 59. Comedian-actress Amy Sedaris is 57. Model Elle Macpherson is 55. Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto, D-Nev., is 54. Movie director Michel Hazanavicius (mee-SHEHL' ah-zah-nah-VEE'-see-oos) is 51. Rock singer-musician John Popper (Blues Traveler) is 51. Actress Lucy Lawless is 50. Country singer Regina Leigh (Regina Regina) is 50. Country singer Brady Seals is 49. Former White House Press Secretary Robert Gibbs is 47. CBS News correspondent Lara Logan is 47. Actor Sam Hazeldine is 46. International Tennis Hall of Famer Jennifer Capriati is 42. Actor Chris D'Elia is 38. Rhythm and blues singer PJ Morton is 37. Actress Megan Hilty is 37. Pop singer Kelly Sweet is 30.

Thought for Today: "The fate of love is that it always seems too little or too much." — Amelia Edith Barr, American author and journalist (1831-1919).