

# Groton Daily Independent

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**Kristi Peterson Bookkeeping**  
Simple Solutions for YOU  
605/216-4474 ~ peterson4@nvc.net


**High School Track Meet Scheduled for Today in Groton has been Cancelled.**

**The JH Track Meet scheduled for Thursday at Sisseton has been Postponed.**

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

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

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**Blood Drive!**

**Monday, April 16**  
**Noon to 6 p.m.**  
**Groton American Legion**

To make an appointment, call  
Carol Osterman: 397-8498  
or June Ackman: 397-8369

JUST  
1 DONATION  
SAVES  
3 LIVES

## Plans develop for this year's 7th and 8th grade students to take trip to Washington, D.C.

Mary Johnson and Carly Wheeting came before the school board Monday evening to discuss a middle school trip to Washington, D.C. in 2019. Brett Newton from World Classroom, Aberdeen, gave the sales pitch to the school board. The district would assume no liability and would not have to be involved with keeping track of the funds. Johnson said that the first group that could sign up for the trip would be this year's seventh and eighth graders. There are 60 schools from across South Dakota that take part in the educational trip. A charter bus would pick up the students/parents/chaperones from the Groton School and take them to Minneapolis where they would fly out to their destination. After the presentation, the board offered no objection to the trip.

The Groton Area School District has been reaffirmed of its A+ rating by the Standard and Poor Rating system. However, the rating would be reviewed in two years. If the district can maintain a stable general fund balance, the rating could go to an A++; however, if the district was not able to do that, the rating could drop to an A.

Business Manager Mike Weber reviewed the long term debt that the district currently has.

The \$2.7 million Arena project had an original interest rate of 5.07 percent in 2004. It was refinanced in 2009 with an interest rate of 3.52 percent and it was refinanced again in 2016 with an interest rate of 2.06 percent. The final pay-off for the Arena loan is December 2020.

The East Side addition of \$2 million was financed at a rate of 5.85 percent in 2010. With some payback of interest and refinancing, the final interest rate will be 3.80. The final payment will be in December 2020.

The Elementary Project has an interest rate of 3.19 percent and is less than \$1 million. The final payment is December 2036.

Middle/High School Principal Kristen Sombke reported on the peanut butter/jelly project. Ashley Seeklander, Jodi Sternhagen and Jodi Schwan are spearheading this project where people can drop off unopened peanut butter and jelly jars at the high school. They cannot be dropped off at the elementary school due

### 2018 Groton Area Elementary

### Kindergarten Roundup (Screening) for children turning

5 on or before September 1, 2018

When: Friday, April 20

**Parents of children who will be turning 5 on or before September 1, 2018, in the Groton Area School District are asked to contact Heidi Krueger at the Groton Area Elementary School during school hours at 397-2317 to set up a screening time or to confirm their screening time.**

**\*Students currently attending Junior Kindergarten will not be screened at this time.**

**Packets will be sent home shortly with a scheduled time and additional paperwork that will need to be completed.**

**Kindergarten Roundup will take place at the Groton Area Elementary School. Please check in at the office.**



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to the peanut allergy issue. The jars of peanut butter and jelly will be distributed to families in need during the summer. The project is in its third week.

The district's health insurance will see no increase in premiums for next year. The insurance pool is dropping the \$500 and \$750 deductible plans, which only two staff members are using. Two higher premium options will be added - \$2,500 and \$3,500. A vision insurance policy will also be added to the insurance offering with the premium paid fully by the staff member.

Every body is wondering when will be the last day of school. Superintendent Joe Schwan said he has been fielding phone calls from a number of patrons. He said it may be too early to make a final decision with the impending storm scheduled to hit the area Friday. But as of now, the district agreed that the last day of school for the students will be May 25 with the faculty having contact hours on May 29 and May 30. The seniors last day is scheduled for May 11. If the storm forces a cancellation, the board will have to revisit the final dates at the next school board meeting. Schwan said he is opposed to bringing students back for one day after Memorial Day; however, if it goes to two or three days, that could be a different situation.

The food service program received glowing remarks from the recent food inspection. The high school cafeteria received a perfect score of 100. Schwan said he's only seen that score one other time. The elementary score was a 99. The only deduction was a thermometer that the inspector could not find. The staff was busy with lunch and was unable to point the inspector to the thermometer. It has been moved to a more conspicuous place.

The food service fund balance is one item that the district has to keep an eye on. This balance is \$21,498.91, which is about \$36,000 less than last year at this same time.

Current job openings in the district are MS/HS Special Education Teacher, head girls' soccer coach, senior class advisor and athletic director.

There has been no solution to the elementary kitchen floor issues. The district, along with ICS Consulting (formerly Foster Jacobs and Johnson (FJJ)), will begin discussion on the next option and begin to seek alternate contractors to make the repairs after school is out.

Items coming up according to the principal's reports:

Last day to order a yearbook is Friday, April 20. Cost is \$55.

Any student interested in modeling their prom dress in the FCCLA Style Show should contact Lindsey Tietz. The Style Show is set for Thursday, April 26.

Prom is set for Saturday, April 14. The Grand March will begin at 7 p.m. The post-prom party will begin at 11:30 p.m.

The PAC School Carnival is set for Friday, April 13, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in the elementary gym and commons areas.

Smarter Balanced Testing will begin the week of April 16. Fifth grade science testing will began on April 10.

The Kindergarten Roundup is scheduled for April 20. Kindergarten visitation is set for May 7 and 8.

Elementary Track and Field Day is May 18 starting at 12:30 p.m. There will be a grill-out so families are invited to eat with their children that day.

- Paul Kosel

## CONSIGNMENT AUCTION

Sat. April 28, 2018 10:00 am  
Trucks-N-Tractors  
14069 434th Ave.  
Webster, SD 57274

Now taking Consignments  
Tractors, Combines, all types of  
Farm & Haying Equipment, Vehicle,  
Recreational, Sporting,  
& Construction Equipment  
To consign you equipment, call our  
office at 605-448-0048 or

Bill Jensen 605-848-0943  
Don Wolter 605-881-6789  
Larry Lekness 605-880-5933  
Jan Vold 605-228-4250

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Farm & Personal Property Auctions



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## Be a part of the State Arts Conference By Jim Speirs, Executive Director, Arts South Dakota

The excitement is building for the State Arts Conference being held in Sioux Falls May 4-5. The weekend will be packed with fascinating arts and cultural activities for South Dakotans of all ages and I hope you will join us.

SculptureWalk Sioux Falls is installing dozens of new outdoor artworks throughout downtown Sioux Falls on May 5. On May 4, Downtown Sioux Falls is the scene for the monthly Art & Wine Walk, and the weekend features special performances from White Wall Sessions musicians. The first State Arts Conference ever held in Sioux Falls will also spotlight national arts leaders, including National Endowment for the Arts Chairman Jane Chu and Americans for the Arts Vice President of Research and Policy Randy Cohen. In addition, our state's top arts professionals will be presenting at the conference. You'll be inspired by sessions from national consultant and Dell Rapids native Janet Brown, American Indian writer and educator Dr. Craig Howe, fundraising professional Brian Bonde and South Dakota's Artist Laureate Dale Lamphere. Conference participants will have the opportunity to interact with these leaders and many more contributors all weekend!

That's what this year's State Arts Conference is all about—getting together, person to person, to share our enthusiasm for the arts, network with national and state leaders in creative culture and build our arts community. South Dakota is a large and diverse state, and the arts conference gives us a chance to focus on meaningful topics for all of us—and help plan for the future by exploring where we are today.

This is the biggest arts get-together of the year in South Dakota, with helpful and practical presentations, exciting art and performances, with arts leaders who really are the best in their fields. So let's get together, friends and neighbors. Make your plans to be in Sioux Falls May 4 and 5 and share the excitement by lending your voice to the conversation. It's so easy to register for this year's State Arts Conference. The information on speakers, workshops and registration forms are all available on the Arts South Dakota website, [www.ArtsSouthDakota.org](http://www.ArtsSouthDakota.org). Check it out and register today!



## Rip 'n Ravel CFEL Club

A March snow storm postponed the original meeting date of the Rip n' Ravel CFEL Club to the 14th. Nine members toured the K.O. Lee Public Library in Aberdeen. Merry Jo Ball hosted the members after the tour. President Ella Johnson presided. A thank you card was shared from the Groton Rescue Squad for the Christmas gift they received. Jim Lane of Groton has agreed to give the county lesson in October, topic 'Robots.' fourteen Easter baskets were put together for the Dept. of Social Services Child Protection program. Upcoming events: Area III Meeting- Zion Lutheran Church , April 12th- Zion Lutheran Church, Aberdeen. Spring Council and Recognition Tea- April 24th- Br. Co. courthouse community room. April 2 Club meeting to be held at the home of Rose Waage.

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## Robotics compete in final tournament of the season

Two GT Robotics Teams Participated in CREATE U.S. Open Robotics Championship at Council Bluffs, G.A.T. Wrenches, Noah Tullis, Tyler Iverson and Adrian Knutson and Geek Squad, Isaac Smith, Andrew Marzahn and Jacob Lewandowski. The Create US Open is an invitation only robotics tournament with teams coming from all over the US and the world. The high school VEX Robotics competition was divided into two divisions of 91 and 93 team which will join together during the elimination section of the tournament with 32 three team alliances battling for the high school championship. G.A.T. Wrenches were not in the same division as Geek Squad. We had a third team qualify for the Create US Open but Galaxy, Travis Townsend, River Pardick and Alex Dutchuk, was not able to compete because the tournament was full.

Besides the VEX high school level, there was a 89 team VEX middle school tournament and a 60 team Open tournament which play the same game but the robots may be more powerful. Lots of robots!

How did our robotists do? It was not our best tournament. The robots were plagued with problems the first day. But the kids worked on the robots and fixed the problems but not in time to move up in the rankings enough to be selected for the elimination rounds. G.A.T. Wrenches ended the qualifying rounds in 58th place of 91 and Geek Squad in 89th of 93.

This was GT Robotics last tournament of the 2017-18 season. We did have one team qualify for the 2018 VEX Robotics World Championship but we will not be attending. Now we need to prepare for the next season! On April 28, we will find out what next year's game will be. And we start determining our new robots' designs and build, test, redesign, build and test.

Thank you for your support during this past year! Raffle tickets will be on sale until April 16th at 6 P.M. when we will draw for the greenhouse, 55" TV, I-Pad Mini and \$50 Dairy Queen Card. Find a GT Robotics member or call or text Jim Lane at 397-7013.

Rankings of GT Robotics Teams at the end of qualifying rounds for each tournament.

Tournament		Groton	Mitchell	Harris burg	Rapid City	Groton	Chamber lain	State	US Open
Teams in Tourney		15	13	22	22	22	18	30	93
9050A	G-Force	10	12	8	19	7	1	22	NA
9050B	Gear Heads	10	11	17	20	12	16	26	NA
9050C	G.A.T. Wrenches	7	1	3	11	4	7	8	58
9050D	Geek Squad	5	10	20	3	16	NA	28	89
9050E	Galaxy	4	6	16	18	21	3	7	NA

How far did GT Robotics teams get in elimination rounds? (think sports playoffs)

Tournament		Groton	Mitchell	Harris burg	Rapid City	Groton	Chamber lain	State	US Open
9050A	G-Force	Final	Semi	Final	Final	Semi	Semi	Semi	NA
9050B	Gear Heads	<u>Qtr</u>		<u>Qtr</u>	<u>Qtr</u>	<u>Qtr</u>	<u>Qtr</u>	<u>Qtr</u>	NA
9050C	G.A.T. Wrenches	Semi	<b>Champ</b>	Final	Final	Semi	Semi	<u>Qtr</u>	
9050D	Geek Squad		Semi	<u>Qtr</u>	<u>Qtr</u>	Semi	NA		
9050E	Galaxy		Semi			<u>Qtr</u>	<b>Champ</b>	Semi	NA

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## National and South Dakota Gas Price Average Holds Steady

April 9, 2018 - Gas prices have held at their highest price of the year – \$2.66 – for one week. And motorists are seeing fluctuating prices at the pump from state to state with jumps as high as 12-cents in Utah and declines as much as 7-cents in Michigan since last Monday.

“Gas prices are only a penny away from topping the \$2.67 high of 2017,” said Marilyn Buskohl, AAA spokesperson. “The price is likely to increase as spring brings warmer weather and the switchover to summer blend gasoline, but hopefully we will only see mild jumps in coming weeks.”

### South Dakota Average Gas Prices:

Current Avg. \$2.575

Yesterday Avg. \$2.593

Week Ago Avg. \$2.574

Month Ago Avg. \$2.561

Year Ago Avg. \$2.373

Gas prices have edged higher this week following the Energy Information Administration’s (EIA) latest weekly report that showed gasoline inventories dropped by 1.1 million bbl. Additionally, demand for gasoline remains robust at 9.2 million b/d and is more in line with demand levels at the same time in 2017.

### Quick Stats

The largest yearly increases are: California (\$3.52, +54 cents), Hawaii (\$3.52, +47 cents), Idaho (\$2.89, +44 cents), Utah (\$2.81, +42 cents), Arizona (\$2.67, +40 cents), Nevada (\$3.07, +40 cents), Oregon (\$3.10, +35 cents), Maine (\$2.66, +33 cents), Rhode Island (\$2.64, +33 cents) and South Carolina (\$2.43, +32 cents).

The nation’s top ten most expensive markets are: California (\$3.52), Hawaii (\$3.52), Washington (\$3.19), Alaska (\$3.17), Oregon (\$3.10), Nevada (\$3.07), Idaho (\$2.89), Pennsylvania (\$2.87), Washington, DC (\$2.83) and Utah (\$2.81).

### Central and Great Lakes Region

On the week, nine states in the region are paying less to fill up: Michigan (-7 cents), Iowa (-2 cents), Nebraska (-2 cents), Missouri (-2 cents), Indiana (-2 cents), Minnesota (-1 cent), Wisconsin (-1 cent), Kansas (-1 cent), and Illinois (-1 cent). Not all states are seeing cheaper prices; Ohioans are paying 6 cents more to fill up since last Monday.

Gas price averages are volatile across the Great Lakes and Central states with a 31-cent disparity between the highest prices in Illinois (\$2.70) to the cheapest in Missouri (\$2.39).

Gasoline inventories dropped for a fourth week, lowering total inventories to 57.8 million bbl. This total is in-line with levels from a year ago.

### Oil market dynamics

At the close of Friday’s formal trading session on the NYMEX, WTI decreased \$1.48 to settle at \$62.06. Oil prices slid backward amid fears of a trade war between the U.S. and China, as both countries issued trade threats to increase tariffs on key goods produced in each country. If the threats continue this week, the price of WTI will likely take a further hit alongside the equities market in the U.S.

This news follows EIA reporting that crude exports hit a record high of 15.2 million bbl for the week ending on March 30. The last record high occurred in October 2017. Another record high for domestic crude production of 10.5 million b/d last week contributed to the U.S. shipping more oil to other countries.

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## Freeland's 50th Anniversary

John and Shari Freeland of Houghton celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on March 22, 2018. They will be honored with an open house celebration on Saturday, April 21, 2018 from 4-8 pm at the American Legion in Claremont. The honorees request no gifts.

## Help Wanted

Full-time and Part-time cook positions available at The Front Porch in Langford. Day and evening hours available. Apply in person or call 605-493-6570, ask for Suzie. (0411.0418)

## Bridal Shower

A bridal shower for Holly Carlson, bride-to-be of Tyler Candor, will be held Saturday, April 14, 2018, from 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m., at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Groton.



## Wheatcrest Hills

HEALTHCARE  
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by Welcov Healthcare

## Sign-on Bonus

**\$2,500**  
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## Groton Home for Sale



**\$299,900**

**304 N State Street, Groton**

Enjoy this summers sunsets overlooking your large fenced backyard. This beautiful home sits on just under 1 Acre of land. 5 bedrooms, office, Media room, large rec room, surround sound, built-ins & plenty of storage. Not to mention 3 stall garage + new shed. All kitchen appliances to stay + washer & dryer.

[www.flexmls.com/share/1NpDJ/304NSTATEStGrotonSD57445](http://www.flexmls.com/share/1NpDJ/304NSTATEStGrotonSD57445)

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614 South Main Street, Aberdeen ~ 605-725-3130

**Brittany Smart: 605/290-1487**

## FARM RETIREMENT AUCTION

### Saturday, April 14, 2018 10:00 AM

**LOCATION:**

**11701 403rd Ave. SE, Houghton, SD 57449**

**From Groton, SD:** 14 miles north on SD Hwy. 37, 3 west on 119th St., 2 north on 403rd Ave.

**From Britton, SD:** 17 miles west on SD-10, 9 South on SD Hwy 37, 3 West on 119th St., 2 North on 403rd Ave.

**From Houghton, SD:** 5 miles South on 401st Ave., 2 miles east on 117th St.

**From Columbia SD:** 2.5 miles north on Hwy. 16, 5 east on 120th St., 1 north on 401st Ave, 2 east on 119th St., 2 miles north on 403rd Ave.

#### AUCTIONEER'S NOTE:

Terry and Marcia have retired from farming and will be offering this well maintained line of farm equipment at auction. Farm equipment was used in 2017 and is field ready. Very few small items, please be on time.

#### OWNERS

**Terry & Marcia Haaland**

**For information call 605-885-7188**

**Live Auction with internet bidding through Bidcaller, a part of Auctiontime.**

**Register for internet bidding at Auctiontime.com or Ag4Bid.com**

#### TRACTORS

1980 JD 4440, 8,745 hrs, quad range, 3 hyd., 3 pt., 540 & 1000 PTO, Firestone 480/80R38 tires@80% Versatile 875, 4 hyd., 20.8x38 dual, main tires@65%



Case IH 9150 4wd, 300 hp., 5000 hrs., 3 hyd. PS 12 fwd, PS 12 r.v., Cummins eng., new tires – CONSIGNED: Will@605-290-2324

#### TILLAGE EQUIPMENT

Summers 30" Super Coulter, Summers 3 bar harrow, weight package, smooth blade front, 13 wave blades back



JD E0400 rotary hoe 20' w/transport IHC 496 30' disk, Summers 4 bar harrow, hyd. wings, tandems all around, 22" blade, 9" spacing IHC 496 24' disk, hyd. wings, 9" spacing, tandems IHC 24' disk, Summers 3 bar harrow, tandems, 9" spacing JD 1350-1450, 6-16" trip beam plow, w/ Melroe 8' packer IHC #45 Field Cult. 21', 3 pt., gauge wheels

#### PLANTING EQUIPMENT

JD 7000 12R30" front fold 1.5 & 3 bushel poly boxes, trash whippers, markers, JD 200 monitor, 2 pt. JD 7000 8R36" poly boxes, herbicide boxes, markers, monitor



3 JD 8' 9350 drills, w/fert., grass seeder 3 JD 8' LL166 drill w/fert., grass seeder

SN#005798

#### COMBINE, HEADS & TRAILERS

1999 JD 9610, rebuilt engine at 1,900 hrs, 2,335 sep. hrs., 3,539 eng. hrs., buddy seat, Maurer hopper ext., 20.8 x 42 straddle duals, new

unloading auger tube & auger, twin chaff spreader, 16.9x26 rear tires, SN#09610X681947 JD 930 platform flex, good poly, F & A, #H00930F677831



2-JD 634 GRN corn heads Elmers manufacturing 30' header trailer, 2 wheel 2-homemade 20' 4 wheel trailers

#### GRAIN CART

Kilbros 490 grain cart, roll tarp, 100 small PTO, lights, 23.1x26 tires

#### TRUCKS

2004 International Eagle 9400i, Cummins ISX, 10 sp. 759,164 mi., air ride suspension & cab, new bags, new batteries, 205"WB, 3 stage eng brake, 275/80R22.5 matching drivers & steering tires@90%, air slide 5th wheel, 27541, VIN#5CNAPR4C 027541



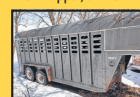
1973 GMC, gas 427, 13 sp., tandem 66" x 19' box, alum., air brakes,

air shift, twin screw, roll tarp, air brakes, air shift, 10:00 R20 tires diff. lock

1977 Chevy gas, 5 sp, 2 sp., 366 v8, 60"x15' metal box, single axle w/cheater, roll tarp 1965 Ford F600 14' box & stock rack, hoist, 4 sp, 2 sp., 6 cyl., 61,618 actual miles, parade ready SN# F60BR708576

#### TRAILERS

1991 Cornhusker grain trailer, alum, ag hopper, Shur-Co electric trap openers, RRS electric roll tarp, brakes @90%, 275/80R24.5 tires, 1 new hopper, SNT19204227M0007434



1986 Kiefer built 5th wheel 7x16 goose-neck stock trailer,

#1DVSM1628GK0101509

1967 43" x 9" Homemade Stock Trailer, 2 wheel for 1 animal, lights #248084 Dakon 200 bushel gravity box w/HD running gear

#### CATTLE EQUIPMENT

20-Various sizes metal gates Calf pullers Wood posts New & used steel posts Stockade panels

#### SHOP

Reznor 85,000 BTU propane hanging heater 2-225 Amp Arc Welders Drill press 1-manual tire machine

#### HAVING EQUIPMENT

Vicon 6 Wheel Rake NH 568 10' side delivery rake NH 55 10' side delivery rake Hitch to pull 2 side delivery rakes New Vicon rake wheel 3-IHC 100 sickle mowers: 1-9' pull type, 1-9' 3 pt., 1-7' pull type

#### AUGERS

Farm King 8" x 51 PTO auger 3-6" take out augers w/hyd. & electric motors

#### FARM EQUIPMENT

Flare box w/hoist 2-track wackers Farmhand loader w/bucket & grapple 7' 3 pt. snowblower, hyd. spout, 1000 PTO, like new 2-Farmhand pushoffs Farmhand manure & snow buckets F-11 Farmhand Loader

#### DOZER & SCRAPER

Custom built 8' dozer, rear axle models 12' hyd. scraper, like new

#### MISCELLANEOUS

RR tires 18.4x38 Axle duals Electric drill fill for truck 18.4 x 38 band duals 3 pt. heavy duty hyd. drive, 12" post hole auger Category 1 & 2 quick tachs Straw chopper for Gleaner L2 More items may be listed by sale time!

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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

## 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.

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



1106 N. 2nd Street, Groton



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**Save \$2-\$4 /tank**

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**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")**

## HOUGHTON/HECLA AREA LAND FOR SALE

Houghton/Hecla area real estate located 4 miles South and 2 miles East of Hecla, owned by the Estate of Florence Evelyn Peterson, will be sold at auction, cash sale only, the following described real estate:

- Southwest Quarter of Section 18, Township 127 North, Range 60 West of the 5<sup>th</sup> P.M., Brown County, South Dakota. Approximately 162.46 acres of land (19.63 cropland, 142.83 pasture)

*Seller makes no representation as to the actual number of acres contained in this description.*

Bid opening and auction will take place at 2 o'clock p.m. on Tuesday, April 10, 2018, in the Hecla Community Room located at 202 Main Street, Hecla, South Dakota.

**Terms of Sale:** Sealed bids can be mailed to the office of Gellhaus & Gellhaus, P.C., ATTN: Lonald L. Gellhaus, PO Box 73, Aberdeen, SD 57402-0073 or brought to the auction. Please contact Teresa at 605-225-6522 to request a bid packet. Each sealed bid must include a Bid Sheet.

Earnest money of 10% upon acceptance of bid made payable to "Gellhaus & Gellhaus, P.C. Trust Account". Title insurance and closing fees shall be split equally between Buyer and Seller. Balance due upon closing and delivery of good title. 2017 real estate taxes due in 2018 will be paid by the Seller. 2018 real estate taxes due in 2019 will be the responsibility of the Buyer.

Seller reserves the right to reject any and all bids.

Lonald L. Gellhaus, of Gellhaus & Gellhaus, P.C., represents the Seller. For additional information, please contact Lonald L. Gellhaus at 605-225-6522.

## Groton Area schools ranked fourth in the state

The Mount Rushmore State is no slouch when it comes to public school education, placing in the top 20 in both college readiness and NAEP math scores in U.S. News & World Report's ranking of the fifty states in Pre-K-12 education. South Dakota's finest school districts compare favorably with the best in the nation.

The state's top school district is comprised of one school, Chester Area School in Chester, SD with elementary, middle, and high school branches. According to Niche.com, a remarkable 95% of the elementary school students are proficient in mathematics.

Number two in the ranking is Parker School District, another one school district located in Parker, SD. The district is the only school district in South Dakota to receive the Distinguished School District award for seven straight years, and Parker Elementary earned the National Blue Ribbon Award in 2012.

Warner School District, a small but excellent school district serving the town that lends it its name comes in at #3.

At #4 is Groton Area School District, comprising one elementary school and one combined middle school/high school in Groton, SD. Groton's two schools regularly deliver a high level of academic excellence, with Groton Area Elementary taking home the National Blue Ribbon School Award in 2012.

Closing out the top five is Harrisburg School District, larger than the preceding districts on the list with six elementary schools, two middle schools and one high school serving Lincoln County, SD.

The following contributed to the ranking: student performance (math and reading test scores), dropout rates, school funding, and area poverty rates. Data was collected from a total of 9,577 school districts.

The report was formally released on April 10, 2018.

Backgroundchecks.org is a public safety focused organization committed to increasing public safety, community involvement, and education.

[Click here](#) for the rankings for the all of the schools in the state.



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## Today in Weather History

April 10, 1965: Severe Thunderstorms in the afternoon and early evening resulted in severe hail reports throughout much of Clark County. Hail up to 2.00 inches in diameter was recorded 30 miles northeast of Huron around 2:40 PM. About 6:30 PM, hail 0.75 inches in diameter fell near Garden City on a flock of wild geese in flight, killing 25 of them.

April 10, 1969: The Elm River in Westport was the highest of all time at 22.11 feet, which is 8.11 feet above flood stage.

April 10, 2005: Thunderstorm winds caused widespread damage in Menno, in Hutchinson County. Numerous trees including several large trees were uprooted. Numerous homes were damaged, some directly by the wind and others by trees and other debris. Garages were especially hard hit, including at least one garage which was destroyed. A grain elevator was damaged, with a catwalk and conveyor being blown over. A historical post office addition to a log building was destroyed, doors and part of the roof of a flour mill were blown down, and doors were blown off several other buildings. Many homes and other buildings had windows broken and siding damaged. A few small storage buildings were destroyed, and others were damaged or blown over. Several farms were heavily damaged, with machine sheds, at least, one hog barn, and several other small structures destroyed. Several vehicles were damaged, including one pickup which was pushed partly onto the porch of a house. Power lines and poles were blown down, resulting in a power outage in Menno.

April 10, 2013: A large slow-moving upper-level low-pressure area moving across the region brought several rounds of heavy snow to much of central and northeast South Dakota. Snowfall amounts from 6 to as much as 22 inches occurred over the several day periods. Travel became difficult if not impossible with some roads closed for a time. Interstate-90 closed on the evening of the 9th. Many schools were also closed across the region. Additionally, a 66-year-old suffered a heart attack and passed away while shoveling the snow in front of his house in Aberdeen.

1894 - A heavy late season snow blanketed parts of the northeastern U.S. Heavier snowfall totals included 31.5 inches at Salem Corners PA, 30 inches at LeRoy NY, 26 inches at York PA, 14 inches at Waterbury CT, and 9 inches at Providence RI. (The Weather Channel)

1935 - Severe dust storms across Iowa and Kansas closed schools and highways. Dodge City KS experienced its worst dust storm of record, with dense dust reported from the morning of the 9th until after sunset on the 11th. The sky was almost as dark as night at times during the daylight hours. The thick dust suspended traffic on highways and railroads, and also suspended most business in town. (The Weather Channel)

1979 - A massive tornado smashed into Wichita Falls, TX, killing 43 persons and causing 300 million dollars damage. Another tornado struck Vernon TX killing eleven persons. (David Ludlum) (Storm Data)

1987 - Blustery northwest winds prevailed across the Northern Plains Region. Winds in Wyoming gusted to 65 mph. Temperatures in North Dakota were only in the 20s and 30s, following afternoon highs in the 70s the previous day. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Unseasonably warm weather prevailed in the western U.S. Eleven cities reported new record high temperatures for the date, including Bakersfield CA with a reading of 95 degrees, their warmest for so early in the season. Pocatello ID warmed from a record low of 19 above to an afternoon high of 63 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

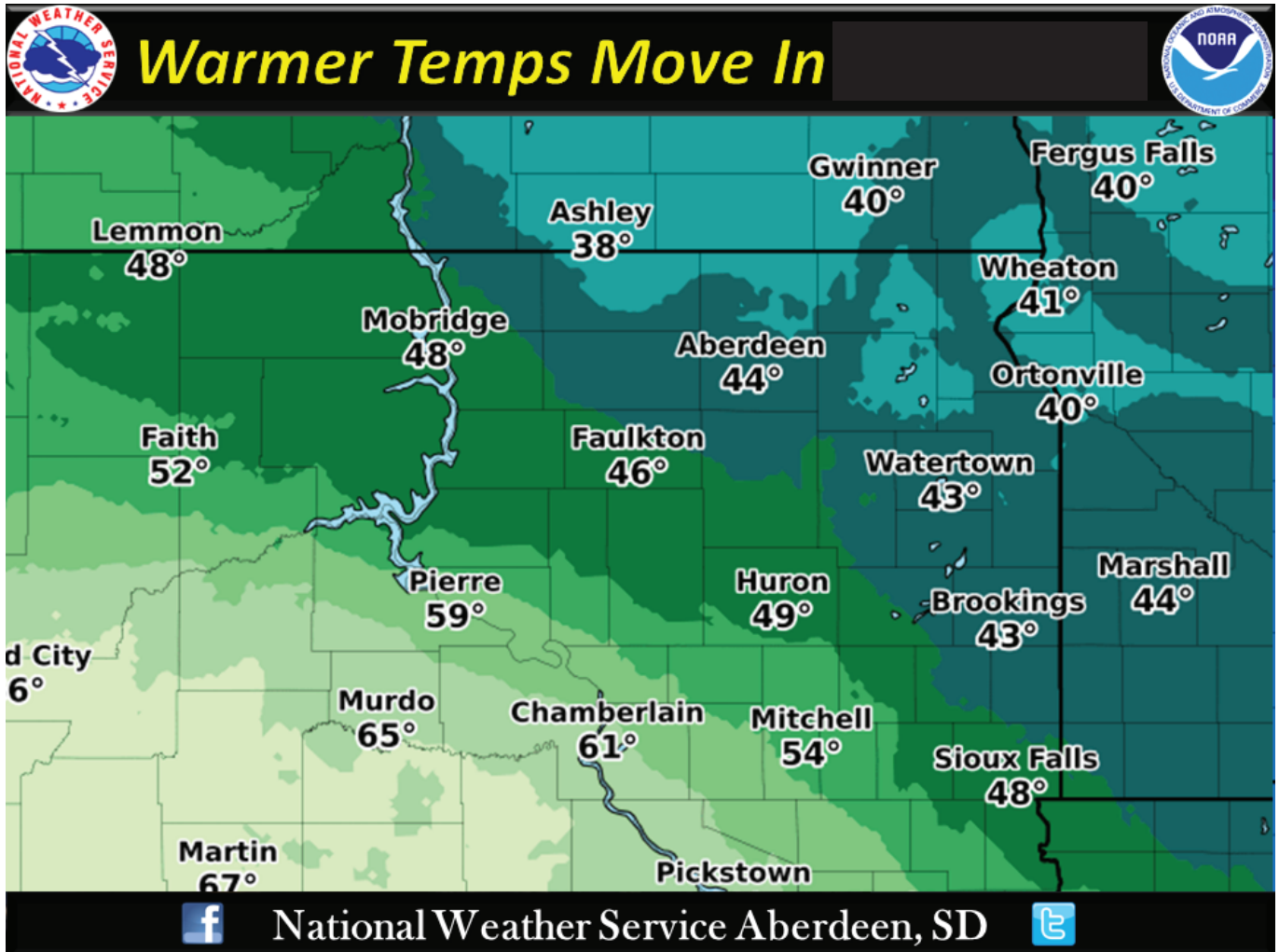
1989 - Strong northerly winds, gusting to 53 mph at Albuquerque, NM, ushered cold arctic air into the south central U.S. The temperature at Albuquerque plunged from 82 degrees to 29 degrees overnight. Thirty-three cities in the central U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date, including Goodland KS with a reading of 4 degrees above zero. (The National Weather Summary)

1990 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from the Central Gulf Coast Region to western sections of the Carolinas during the afternoon and evening. Evening thunderstorms over western South Carolina produced wind gusts to 98 mph which injured four persons at Holly Springs, and wind gusts to 100 mph which injured one person and caused half a million dollars damage north of Dacusville. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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Tue Apr 10	Wed Apr 11	Thu Apr 12	Fri Apr 13	Sat Apr 14	Sun Apr 15	Mon Apr 16
42°F	44°F	45°F	38°F	33°F	37°F	39°F
29°F	30°F	34°F	23°F	17°F	18°F	24°F
S 9 MPH	ENE 11 MPH Precip 50%	WNW 13 MPH Precip 10%	NE 27 MPH Precip 70%	N 25 MPH Precip 70%	N 11 MPH	SSW 15 MPH



Published on: 04/09/2018 at 4:47PM

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## Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 33.6 F at 3:53 PM

Low Outside Temp: 23.1 F at 5:12 AM

Wind Chill:

High Gust: 10.0 Mph at 6:22 PM

Precip:

## Today's Info

Record High: 88° in 1977

Record Low: 16° in 1997

Average High: 54°F

Average Low: 30°F

Average Precip in April: 0.47

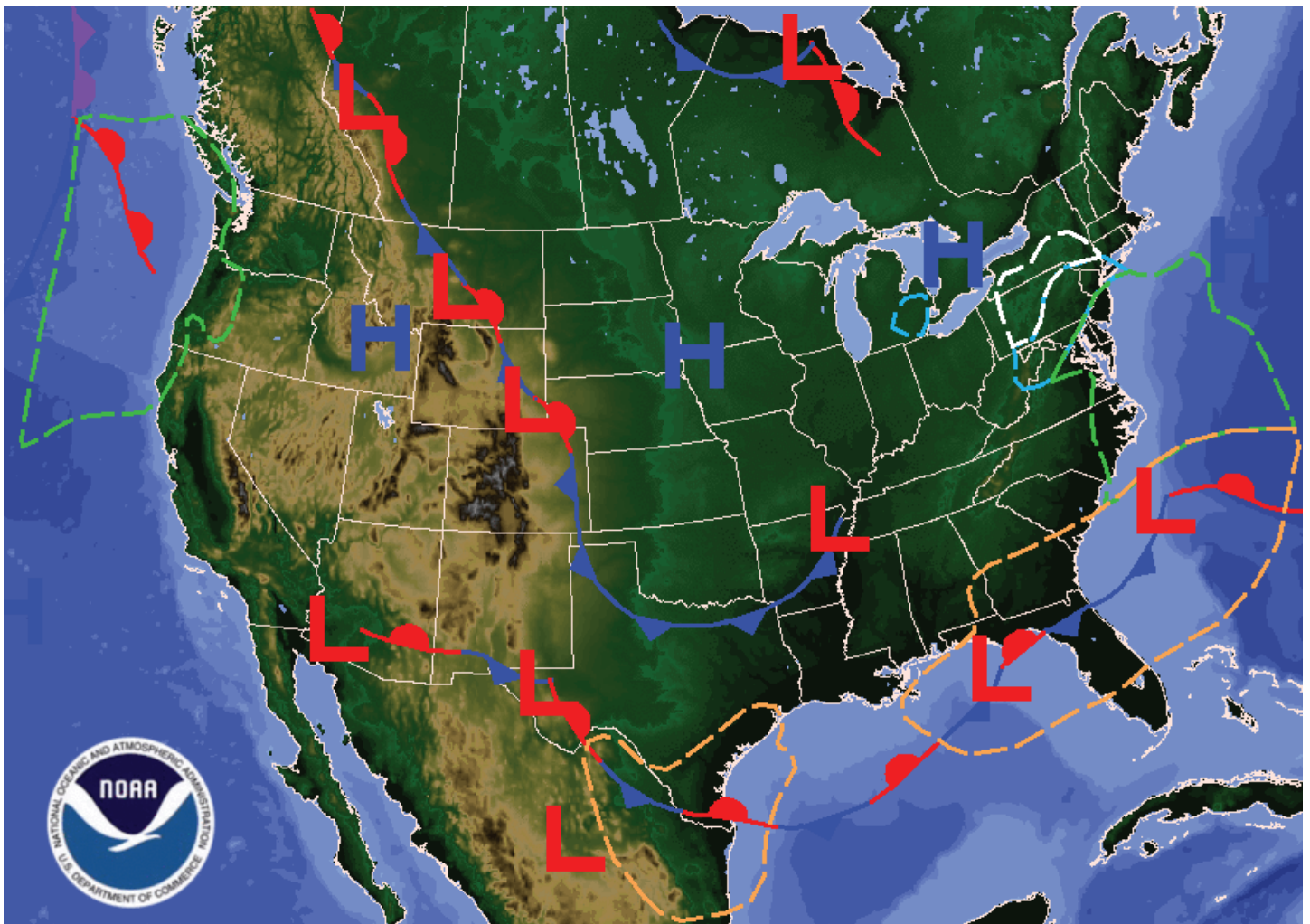
Precip to date in April: 0.61

Average Precip to date: 2.65

Precip Year to Date: 2.68

Sunset Tonight: 8:13 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:55



### Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Mon, Apr 09, 2018, issued 4:38 PM EDT  
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center  
Prepared by Tate 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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## HEALING

A few years ago I was sitting in the office of a dear friend and orthopedic surgeon. Because of his God-given skills, he was able to correct the misdiagnosis of another physician that enabled me to walk once again.

As we sat and talked, he asked me how things had been going with my health. After explaining my ordeal with cancer and several other illnesses, he looked at me and said very seriously, "You have no reason to be alive!"

But he was wrong.

There was every reason for me to be alive. It was God who brought the healing to my body even though several physicians who worked with Him along the way. David was certainly aware of God's role in the healing process when he wrote, "and heals all your diseases." If God is the one who heals all of our diseases, why does He do this? Who is the beneficiary of His healing? Us or Him?

There is no doubt in my mind that God heals us that we might bring honor and glory to Him by serving Him faithfully. If He restores our health, we must realize that it is a gift of His grace and we show our gratefulness to Him by giving Him the glory and working with Him in this, His world.

We can only demonstrate our gratitude to Him, after we thank Him, by what we do for Him. Gratitude is not gratitude unless we become involved in building His Kingdom. Working with Him and through Him is not an option. It is a requirement if He has "healed our diseases."

Prayer: Lord, we are not our own, but Yours. When You heal us, let us show how thankful we are by serving You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 103:2b And forget not all His benefits:

## 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

### **Son accused of killing mother extradited to California**

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A California man arrested three months ago after a chase in South Dakota with his mother's body in the SUV has been extradited to his home state.

Thirty-year-old Tosten Walsh Lommen faces a murder charge in California in the death of his mother, 58-year-old Michelle Walsh.

Authorities allege Lommen killed his mother sometime around Dec. 30. Investigators believe both were living in Walsh's home in Palm Springs.

South Dakota troopers discovered Walsh's body in the back of the SUV Lommen was driving after he was arrested after a New Year's chase on Interstate 90.

The Rapid City Journal reports Lommen was extradited over the weekend. The extradition took three months because he refused to return to California, requiring a governor's warrant to force the transfer.

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

### **Salmonella in chicken salad kills 1, sickens 265 in 8 states**

By **DAVID PITT, Associated Press**

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Chicken salad made by an Iowa food processing company and distributed by Fareway Stores in the Midwest sickened 265 people in eight states and caused one death in Iowa from salmonella contamination, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said.

The outbreak which sickened people from Jan. 8 through March 20, appears to have ended, the CDC said in an update posted on Friday. Ill people ranged in age from less than 1 year to 89 years. Sixty-seven percent were female.

The contaminated food left some people with serious illnesses, said Seattle food safety attorney Bill Marler. He and Iowa attorney Steve Wandro represent 48 people filing lawsuits against Triple T Specialty Meats of Ackley, Iowa, which made the chicken salad and Fareway Stores, a Boone, Iowa-based grocery chain that distributed the food under its store brand name.

Out of the 265 illnesses, 94 people were hospitalized, a high number for such an outbreak Marler said.

"There's a woman in Nebraska who was in ICU for a week and a gentleman in Iowa who has lost his large intestine. He's now facing another surgery in a month or two to try to reconnect that. So there are obviously some pretty significantly sick people," Marler said.

Wandro said several of those sickened are in their 70s or 80s with weakened immune systems who have had to go to skilled care facilities for several weeks to recover.

Triple T Specialty Meats spokesman Dave Dutton said the company isn't commenting.

"We're still receiving information and we want to make sure we have all that information before we make any public comments," said Dutton, lawyer from Waterloo, Iowa.

Asked if the company has determined the source of the salmonella contamination he said, "that's the job of testing companies and we haven't seen all the reports as yet."

Salmonella infection usually occurs when a person eats food contaminated with the feces of animals or humans carrying the bacteria.

"On behalf of everyone at Fareway, our sympathy goes out to the affected families, and we are working diligently to resolve this matter," Fareway CEO Reynolds Cramer said in a statement.

The company is working with state and federal agencies on the investigation and hasn't carried Triple T Specialty Meats' chicken salad since it was pulled from the shelves and will not carry this product moving forward, he said.

Lawsuits already on file in federal court in Des Moines allege product liability violations for distributing



defective food and negligence for failure to ensure the food distributed was safe to eat. They seek money to compensate the victims for "general, special, incidental and consequential damages incurred" and attorney fees.

The illnesses hit Iowa hardest with 240 sickened and one dead, the CDC said. Illinois reported 10 cases, Nebraska had five, Minnesota had four and South Dakota had three illnesses. Indiana, Mississippi and Wisconsin each reported one case linked to the chicken salad.

Iowa Department of Public Health spokeswoman Polly Carver-Kimm said a woman in eastern Iowa died from the same strain of salmonella identified in the chicken salad outbreak but she stopped short of attributing it to the chicken salad since the woman wasn't interviewed about what she ate before she died.

CDC spokeswoman Brittany Behm confirmed Monday the Iowa woman died of the outbreak strain which meets the agency's criteria for inclusion in the outbreak statistics.

On Feb. 9, Fareway stopped selling chicken salad in all of its stores after the Iowa Department of Inspections and Appeals contacted the company about illnesses. Iowa public health officials issued a consumer advisory on Feb. 13 warning that chicken salad sold at Fareway may be contaminated with Salmonella. Eight days later Triple T Specialty Meats recalled more than 20,000 pounds of chicken salad after samples from two Fareway grocery stores in Iowa tested positive for the same strain of Salmonella that was sickening people.

Follow David Pitt on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/davepitt>

## Mitchell pushes license ordinance to help liquor retailers

MITCHELL, S.D. (AP) — Mitchell is moving to alter its liquor licensing rules after South Dakota lawmakers made changes that would create uncertainty for nearly 20 of the city's businesses.

State regulators notified cities of changes to state liquor license laws late last month. Lawmakers discontinued three classes of off sale liquor and malt beverage licenses and expanded one class of on-off sale licenses.

An example of an on sale institution is a bar, while an off sale institution is a store that sells alcohol but doesn't serve it.

The move could damage profitability for several Mitchell retailers who would be restricted from selling alcoholic beverages, the Daily Republic reported .

The City Council is working to approve an ordinance to maintain the status quo for 18 affected businesses. The ordinance would allow the retailers to obtain replacement licenses before the law takes effect July 1.

The council is holding a special meeting Monday evening to finalize measures.

The hardship for some retailers would be significant if the city's effort stalls, said Bev Robinson, owner of Rob's Short Stop.

"It would probably close most any convenience store," she said. "It's a big chunk of any business."

Robinson and her husband have held an off sale license for their neighborhood store since 1982. The new state changes eliminate that license.

Anyone with an eliminated license will be expected to apply for the expanded class of on-off sale licenses. But the number of those licenses is being capped in Mitchell, according to City Attorney Justin Johnson.

Robinson has no interest in on sale business, but her store relies on package beer sales.

The city's proposed ordinance would eliminate the cap so all Mitchell businesses can apply for the on-off sale license.

Petitions to refer the city's changes to a public vote could delay the effort, Johnson said.

"Why do we limit competition like this?" Robinson said. "Free enterprise should be free enterprise."

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

## Forget April showers, Midwest covered under blanket of snow

By DON BABWIN, Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — People in the Midwest woke up Monday to a scene that looked a lot more like January than April.

A weather system that marched across the Midwest left a blanket of snow on the ground before it gave way to slate-gray skies, a good chance of rain for much of the region and temperatures that weren't expected to crack the 40-degree mark all day.

According to the National Weather Service, Aberdeen, South Dakota, got 8 inches (20 centimeters) of snow, the southwest portion of Minnesota and parts of Iowa received 6 inches (15 centimeters), while the Chicago area saw up to 3 inches (8 centimeters). The system appeared to be running out of steam as it moved east, with weather service offices in New York and Boston calling for a rain and snow mix overnight. If it does snow, it's not expected to add up to even an inch.

The Illinois State Police said it was enough snow to cause an uptick in fender benders on roadways. It also was enough to prompt the Chicago Cubs to go ahead and postpone Monday's Opening Day at Wrigley Field until Tuesday. Across town, the White Sox were moving ahead with their game against the Tampa Bay Devil Rays.

Experts say as much as people in Midwest like to hope it is safe to put the snow boots away by now, it does snow in April. Charles Mott, a National Weather Service meteorologist, noted Chicago has received more than 9 inches (23 centimeters) of snow in April before — once in 1975 and once in 1982.

The good news is that temperatures will start rising in the Midwest on Wednesday, and some parts of Illinois and Missouri could get into the upper 70s on Thursday, said weather service meteorologist Ed Shimon.

The bad news is that another cold front could start coming through starting Friday. By Saturday, the temperatures could drop into the 50s or 40s, possible lower overnight.

"We may see a snow and rain mix," Mott said.

## Accused city commissioner in Newell sentenced, will resign

NEWELL, S.D. (AP) — A city commissioner in Newell accused of stalking has pleaded no contest to a criminal charge and agreed to resign in a plea deal with prosecutors.

The Black Hills Pioneer reports that Commissioner Allen Youngberg pleaded no contest to stalking, and a charge of sexual contact without consent was dismissed.

He was given a suspended 45-day jail sentence and ordered to pay more than \$800 in costs and fees. He also must have no contact for a year with the woman who accused him and led to charges last November.

Youngberg was elected to the commission in May 2014 and re-elected last year. Butte County State's Attorney Cassie Wendt filed a civil complaint March 30 seeking Youngberg's removal from the commission.

Information from: Black Hills Pioneer, <http://www.bhpioneer.com>

## Authorities ID man killed when wheelchair struck by semi

MILLER, S.D. (AP) — Authorities have identified a man who died when the motorized wheelchair in which he was riding was struck by a semitrailer in Miller.

The Highway Patrol says 80-year-old Donald Simpson was in an intersection crosswalk when he was struck by the semi, which was making a turn off state Highway 45 and onto U.S. Highway 14.

It happened shortly after 1 p.m. Thursday. Simpson later died at a hospital.

The patrol says charges are pending against the 55-year-old Wolsey man who was driving the semi.

## Ex-spy's daughter released from British hospital

By GREGORY KATZ, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Yulia Skripal, who was targeted along with her father in a nerve agent attack in England, has been discharged from the hospital, a British health official said Tuesday.

"This is not the end of her treatment but marks a significant milestone," said Dr. Christine Blanshard, medical director of Salisbury District Hospital.

She said she would not provide details about Skripal's condition for reasons of patient privacy.

The 33-year-old daughter of ex-spy Sergei Skripal, 66, has been taken to a secure location.

Blanshard said Sergei Skripal, the apparent target of the attack, is recovering more slowly than his daughter but continues to improve.

"Both patients have responded exceptionally well to the treatment we've been providing. But, equally, both patients are at different stages in their recovery," she said.

The doctor said no date has been set for the elder Skripal's release from the hospital.

The two were poisoned March 4 in an attack that has led to a prolonged confrontation between Russia and Britain that has revived Cold War tensions. Both were in critical condition for several weeks after the poisoning.

The British government, which accuses Russia of carrying out the attack, is likely to keep details about Yulia Skripal's location secret, given the sensitivity of the case.

If she is well enough, she is likely to be extensively questioned by British security officials and police about her recollection of events leading up to her poisoning.

The Russian Embassy congratulated Yulia Skripal on her release in a tweet but said pointedly that Russia needs "urgent proof" that "what is being done to her is done on her own free will."

Russia says it has no role in the attack and has demanded consular access to Yulia Skripal, who has Russian nationality.

It is not clear where the Skripals will live if they recover enough to resume normal activities. British officials may feel Sergei Skripal would not be safe to live in the open any longer.

Bob Ayers, a security analyst who used to work with the CIA, said it is possible Sergei and Yulia Skripal would be given new identities in Britain or the United States under a program like those used to protect witnesses in high-profile criminal trials.

They could also choose to live in the open under the assumption that Russia would not attack a second time, he said.

"They may not want to go into hiding," Ayers said. "Now that the assassination attempt has been uncovered, the odds are pretty good the Russians won't take another run at them. They'll be under surveillance, the cops will put cameras up, they'll keep good track of the Skripals."

He said he would not expect Yulia Skripal to return to Russia despite her Russian nationality.

British officials say the lethal nerve agent Novichok was placed on the door handle of Sergei Skripal's house in Salisbury, an English cathedral city 100 miles (160 kilometers) west of London.

The nerve agent also sickened Nick Bailey, a police detective who came to their aid. He was the first of the three to recover enough to be released from the hospital.

Yulia Skripal had arrived in England from Moscow to spend Easter with her father the day before the attack.

Sergei Skripal is a former Russian military intelligence officer who was convicted in Russia of spying for Britain.

He was imprisoned in Russia and eventually settled in England after a "spy swap."

He was living under his own name in Salisbury, apparently believing he would be safe because there was no known history of Russia attacking former spies who had been swapped.

The British government maintains the Skripals were poisoned by a military-grade nerve agent that could only have been made in Russia. Russia has denied the allegation.

The incident has led to a mass expulsion of Russian diplomats from countries aligned with Britain. Russia in turn retaliated by expelling diplomats from countries that sided with Britain.

## Free-range parenting law eyed around US after Utah gets buzz

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST, Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — After Utah passed the country's first law legalizing so-called free-range parenting, groups in states from New York to Texas are pushing for similar steps to bolster the idea that supporters say is an antidote for anxiety-plagued parents and overscheduled kids.

Free-range parenting is the concept that giving kids the freedom to do things alone — like explore a playground or ride a bike to school — makes them healthier, happier and more resilient.

It surfaced nearly a decade ago, when Lenore Skenazy touched off a firestorm with a column about letting her then-9-year-old son ride the New York City subway alone. Since then, she's become a vocal advocate for free-range parenting.

Critics say letting kids strike out on their own can expose them to serious dangers, from criminals to cars. Parents have been investigated by child-welfare authorities in several high-profile cases, including a Maryland couple who allowed their 10- and 6-year-old children to walk home alone from a park in 2015.

But lawmakers and policy groups in several states say the protective pendulum has swung too far, and it's time to send a message that parents who raise their children in a healthy environment can grant them more freedom.

Utah's new law specifies that it isn't neglectful to let well-cared-for children travel to school, explore a playground or stay in the car alone if they're mature enough to handle it.

Free-range parenting differs from the concept of latchkey kids, or those who take care of themselves after school, in that it generally emphasizes getting kids outside in the neighborhood as a way to develop independence, Boston-based clinical psychologist Bobbi Wegner said.

Fears about letting kids make their own way date at least in part to cases like Etan Patz, who was among the first missing children pictured on milk cartons after disappearing while he walked to his New York City bus stop alone in 1979.

Meanwhile, as education has become more essential in the workforce, parents are increasingly eager to give their kids a leg up with lessons in everything from coding to cello.

"We sign our kids up for all these activities — tutoring, different things — to create this perfect resume from a very young age, but it's really at a detriment to the kid's mental health," Wegner said.

While giving kids independence with parent oversight helps, it's hard for adults to escape pressure to hover, she said.

"Parents need permission to do this," Wegner said. A self-avowed free-range parent, she said a police officer once knocked on her door and threatened to call child services after seeing her then-3-and-a-half-year-old son standing at the end of the driveway talking to neighborhood kids. She'd like to see Massachusetts follow Utah's lead.

In New York, Democratic state Assemblyman Phil Steck said he's gearing up to introduce a similar proposal.

"When I was a child, you let your dogs and your children out after breakfast and ... they had to be home for dinner," he said. "I felt I gained a lot more from just playing on the street than my children did from being in organized sports activities."

It's an idea that cuts across the ideological spectrum. Brandon Logan with the conservative Texas Public Policy Foundation is working with lawmakers for a bill next year.

"We expect adults to be independent, and we expect parents to raise their children to be independent, and you can't do that whenever children are being micromanaged," Logan said.

A conservative group is also pushing for a bill in Idaho, and an Arkansas lawmaker whose effort failed plans to bring it back again.

They're all taking a close look at Utah's law, which sailed through the Legislature and was signed by the governor of the majority-Mormon state known for big families and wide-open spaces. It doesn't specify how old kids should be to do things alone, which lawmakers say will allow authorities to weigh each case separately.

Discretion like that is important, said Stephen Hinshaw, a University of California, Berkeley psychology



professor. Not every child is ready to ride their bike alongside busy roads, and participating in things like music lessons can teach them important skills.

"Parents have to be smart about what is helping foster self-reliance and what is putting kids in a dangerous spot," he said.

Amy Coulter, a stay-at-home Utah mom of four girls and a boy, said she doesn't call herself a free-range parent. But she does avoid intervening with teachers on her older kids' grades and encourages her kids use their own money to buy things at the grocery store.

"I want them to know that they're capable," she said of her children, who range in age from 5 to 14.

In her Lehi neighborhood, kids often roam the block "snack-hopping" at different homes.

Recent Utah transplant Krista Whipple said she's liked the concept of free-range parenting for years, but it was tough to practice it in her old Los Angeles neighborhood when most kids stayed behind fences.

"I didn't want to raise my kids all cooped up, but it always made me think twice," said Whipple, a program manager at a St. George youth homeless shelter who has two boys and a girl who are 6, 4 and 3.

"Kids are not in constant danger, and it's OK to let them outside, and it's OK ... to let them get lost," she said. "They'll find their way home."

## Syrian troops on alert amid fear of US strike after attack

By **BASSEM MROUE, Associated Press**

BEIRUT (AP) — Syrian government forces and their allies were on alert and taking precautionary measures Tuesday at military bases and posts in government-held areas across the country amid fears of a U.S. strike in the aftermath of an apparent chemical weapons attack in Syria, war monitors said.

The measures came as a senior Iranian official visiting Damascus warned that Israel's airstrike on a Syrian air base Monday that killed several Iranians "will not remain unanswered."

Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency put the number of Iranians killed in the attack at seven. It said the victims have been transferred to the Iranian capital, Tehran, and that funerals will be held in the victims' cities of origin across the country.

Russia and the Syrian military blamed Monday's pre-dawn strike, which reportedly killed 14 people, on Israel. There has been no comment from Israel on the strike on the T4 air base in Syria's central Homs province.

The suspected poison gas attack in a Syrian rebel-held town of Douma, just east of Damascus, and Monday's airstrike by U.S. ally Israel have escalated tensions in the already volatile Mideast and raised the threat of possibly imminent American retaliation.

Ali Akbar Velayati, an aide to Iran's supreme leader, issued his stark warning upon arrival in the Syrian capital on Tuesday. He was quoted by the country's state-run news agency IRNA.

Iran is one of President Bashar Assad's strongest backers and has sent thousands of Iran-backed gunmen to back his forces.

President Donald Trump has threatening a military strike against Syria, vowing to respond "forcefully" to Saturday's apparent chemical weapons attack on civilians in Douma, warning that Russia — or any other nation found to share responsibility — will "pay a price."

Syrian opposition activists said 40 people died in Saturday night's chemical attack in Douma, the last remaining rebel bastion just outside of Damascus. The opposition blamed Assad's forces for the attack, accusations the government and its Russian backers strongly deny.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said Tuesday he is outraged by Syria's apparent chemical weapons use against civilians. If confirmed, the use of such weapons would be a violation of international law, Guterres said in a statement.

Guterres also said he reaffirms his support of an investigation into the alleged attack by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said that as of Monday night, troops have been on a 72-hour alert and are fortifying their positions. The Observatory's chief Rami Abdurrahman said the

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alert includes all army positions and bases from the southern province of Sweida all the way to Aleppo province in the north, the Mediterranean coast in the west to Deir el-Zour province in the east, along the Iraqi border.

The Sound and Picture Organization, an activist collective in eastern Syria, said that Iranian fighters and members of Lebanon's Hezbollah group have evacuated their positions in the Boukamal area, near Iraq's border.

A Lebanese politician with close links to the Syrian government confirmed that precautionary measures were being taken throughout Syria. The politician, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak about secret military movements, said the atmosphere and American statements hint to a possible strike "but there are no indications on the ground so far."

The politician said the Syrian government was expecting a limited strike, similar to the one on Shayrat air base last year, referring to last year's U.S. attack on the central air base of Shayrat in the central province of Homs following a chemical weapons attack on northern Syria that Washington blamed on the government.

In Moscow, a senior Russian lawmaker said his country is willing to help arrange a visit this week for experts from the international chemical weapons watchdog, the Organization for the Protection of Chemical Weapons or OPCW, to the site of a suspected poison gas attack in Syria.

Yevgeny Serberennikov, from the defense committee at the Federation Council, told the RIA Novosti news agency on Tuesday that Russia is anxious for the OPCW to "finally start carrying out the functions it was created for."

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Associated Press writer Nataliya Vasilyeva contributed to this report from Moscow.

## China's president offers US possible trade concessions

By **JOE McDONALD** and **GILLIAN WONG**, Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — President Xi Jinping set the stage Tuesday for a possible effort to resolve a worsening clash with Washington over technology and trade by promising to cut auto import taxes, improve intellectual property protection and boost imports.

Xi's pledges at a business conference came as China filed a World Trade Organization challenge over one aspect of its sprawling conflict with President Donald Trump — last month's U.S. tariff hike on steel and aluminum.

Strains over U.S. complaints that China is flooding global markets with unfairly low-priced goods and pressuring foreign companies to hand over technology have spiraled into the biggest trade conflict since World War II.

Speaking to Chinese and foreign businesspeople, Xi didn't mention Trump or their dispute. He pledged progress on areas that are U.S. priorities including opening China's banking industry but gave no direct response to Trump's demands such as ending requirements for foreign companies to work through joint ventures that require them to give technology to potential Chinese competitors.

Private sector analysts saw Xi's speech as an overture to help resolve the standoff that has fueled fears the global economy may suffer a setback if other governments raise their own import barriers.

Trump has threatened to raise tariffs on Chinese goods worth \$50 billion. Beijing fired back with its own \$50 billion list of U.S. goods for possible retaliation.

In his speech, Xi tried to position China as a defender of free trade, despite its status as the most-closed major economy, in response to Trump's "America first" calls for import restrictions and trade deals that are more favorable to the United States. The speech was free of the nationalist bluster that increasingly marks Chinese official statements and repeatedly called for international cooperation.

"China's door of opening up will not be closed and will only open wider," said Xi at the Boao Forum for Asia.

Xi, the country's most dominant leader since at least the 1980s, said Beijing will "significantly lower" tariffs on auto imports this year and ease restrictions on foreign ownership in the auto industry "as soon

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as possible.”

He also promised to encourage “normal technological exchange” and to “protect the lawful ownership rights of foreign enterprises.”

“President Xi’s speech could create a very good platform to launch U.S.-China dialogue at the WTO to find a deal on intellectual property rights,” said economist Rajiv Biswas of IHS Markit in a report. “This would be a victory for the world trading system and an important step away from the abyss of rising global protectionism.”

The dispute is likely to end “with a concession from China,” said Larry Hu of Macquarie Group in a report.

Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, also speaking in Boao, welcomed Xi’s promises.

“We look forward to seeing these strategies elaborated, implemented and bearing fruit,” Lee said, according to a transcript issued by his office.

Meanwhile, Chinese diplomats filed a request at WTO headquarters in Geneva for consultations with Washington over Trump’s tariff hike on steel and aluminum.

If that fails, Beijing can ask for a ruling from a WTO panel of experts. China also has issued a \$3 billion list of U.S. goods including pork and apples for possible retaliation.

Chinese officials deny foreign companies are compelled to hand over technology, but business groups say joint venture and licensing rules make that unavoidable.

Last month, the United States filed a WTO complaint accusing Beijing of violating its trade pledges by imposing unfair contract terms and allowing companies to use foreign-owned technology after licensing periods expire.

Foreign companies complain Beijing is squeezing them out of promising parts of the state-dominated economy to promote the ruling Communist Party’s plans to create Chinese global competitors in fields including robotics, electric cars and pharmaceuticals.

Xi gave no details on how those conditions might change, leaving it unclear whether that might mollify Washington.

Easing rules that limit the foreign stake in an auto joint venture to 50 percent might help to address Trump’s complaints about technology as well as giving them more flexibility in their biggest global market.

Jake Parker, the vice president for China of the U.S.-China Business Council, an industry group, welcomed Xi’s announcement but expressed hope for additional steps such as ending requirements for joint ventures and technology licensing.

“Ultimately, U.S. industry will be looking for implementation of long-stalled economic reforms, but actions to date have greatly undermined the optimism of the U.S. business community,” said Parker in an email.

Xi repeated earlier official pledges to open China’s finance industries to foreign investors but gave no additional details.

The biggest beneficiaries of a cut in China’s 25 percent tariff on most auto imports will be the handful of automakers such as electric car brand Tesla that have no factory in China. Other automakers such as General Motors and Volkswagen that assemble vehicles in China with local state-owned partners could offer additional models.

More broadly, Xi repeated official promises to expand imports and to narrow China’s trade surplus, which reached \$423 billion last year — about two-thirds of that with the United States.

“China does not seek a trade surplus,” said Xi in comments that were broadcast on national television. “We have a genuine desire to increase imports and achieve a greater balance of international payments.”

The bulk of Xi’s 40-minute speech was devoted to China’s vision for economic development and its global role following a ruling party congress in October that installed him for a second five-year term as leader.

Xi tried to defuse concern about Beijing’s growing military might and territorial disputes with its neighbors, saying his government wants to pursue peaceful, cooperative development.

“We will not bully our neighbors,” the president said. “Cold war thinking and zero-sum games are increasingly obsolete.”

## Trump mulls "very tough" military response to Syria attack

By **ROBERT BURNS, ZEKE MILLER and MATTHEW LEE, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is threatening an imminent military strike against Syria, vowing to respond "forcefully" to Saturday's apparent chemical weapons attack on civilians and warning that Russia or any other nation found to share responsibility will "pay a price."

As he began a Monday evening meeting with military leaders at the White House, Trump promised to "make a decision tonight or very shortly thereafter." He said: "We have a lot of options militarily, and we'll be letting you know pretty soon. Probably after the fact."

The White House sharply rejected any suggestion that Trump's own words about pulling U.S. troops out of Syria had opened the door for the attack, which killed more than 40 people, including children.

Trump, asked at midday whether Russian President Vladimir Putin bore any responsibility for the weekend attack, responded: "He may, yeah, he may. And if he does it's going to be very tough, very tough." He added: "Everybody's gonna pay a price. He will. Everybody will."

Then, during the meeting with top military leaders, he said the weekend assault "will be met and it will be met forcefully." Those at the meeting included Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Joseph Dunford.

Amid the tough talk at the White House, the U.S. military appeared to be in position to carry out any attack order. A Navy destroyer, the USS Donald Cook, was underway in the eastern Mediterranean after completing a port call in Cyprus. The guided missile destroyer is armed with Tomahawk cruise missiles, the weapon of choice in a U.S. attack one year ago on an airfield in Syria following an alleged sarin gas attack on civilians.

The Russian military, which has a presence in Syria as a key Assad ally, said its officers had visited the weekend site in a suburb of Damascus, the Syrian capital, and found no evidence to back up reports of poison gas being used. Russia's U.N. ambassador, Vassily Nebenzia, accused Washington of deliberately stoking international tensions by threatening Russia in a tone "beyond the threshold of what is acceptable, even during the Cold War."

Trump said there was little question that Syria was responsible for the apparent weekend attack, although the government of President Bashar Assad denied it. "To me there's not much of a doubt, but the generals will figure it out," Trump said.

Emphatic in his condemnation of the apparent gas attack, Trump noted graphic pictures of the dead and sickened, calling the assault "heinous," "atrocious," "horrible" and "barbaric."

Fielding questions at the White House, Trump press secretary Sarah Sanders said it would be "outrageous" to say that Trump's recent announcement that he intends to remove all U.S. forces from Syria in the coming months had emboldened Assad. "I think that it is outrageous to say that the president of the United States green-lit something as atrocious as the actions that have taken place over the last several days," she said.

Mattis, in separate remarks at the Pentagon, also suggested Moscow bore some blame. He criticized Russia for what he suggested was its failure to ensure the elimination of Syria's chemical weapons arsenal under terms of a 2013 agreement.

Trump said no action was "off the table" and also conferred with Vice President Mike Pence and his new national security adviser, John Bolton. Monday was the first day on the job for Bolton, who has previously advocated military action against Syria.

Trump said, "If it's Russia, if it's Syria, if it's Iran, if it's all of them together, we'll figure it out."

The United States, meanwhile, urged the U.N. Security Council to adopt a resolution that would condemn the continuing use of chemical weapons in Syria "in the strongest terms" and establish a new body to determine responsibility for chemical attacks. The draft resolution, obtained by The Associated Press, was circulated ahead of an emergency Security Council meeting.

An American official said the U.S. was discussing with allies whether they would participate in a retaliatory strike. If Trump decides to proceed quickly, the most likely partner would be France rather than Britain,



because of concerns about obtaining permission from Parliament, said the official, who wasn't authorized to discuss the planning publicly and requested anonymity.

Acting Secretary of State John Sullivan spoke by phone Monday with British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson. Sullivan and Johnson agreed that based on reports in the media and from the ground, "this attack bore hallmarks of previous chemical weapons attacks by the Assad regime," the British foreign office said.

The White House deliberations came as Russia and the Syrian military blamed Israel for a pre-dawn missile attack on a major air base in central Syria, saying Israeli fighter jets launched missiles from Lebanon's air space. A group that monitors Syria's civil war said the airstrikes killed 14 people, including Iranians active in Syria.

Syria's state news agency SANA initially said that attack on the T4 air base was likely "an American aggression," but Pentagon spokesman Christopher Sherwood quickly denied the United States was behind the strike and the agency then dropped the accusation, blaming Israel instead.

As U.S. officials consider whether and how to respond, they are looking at what type of chemical agent might have been used. When Trump ordered airstrikes last year after a chemical weapons attack, it was a response to the use of sarin gas, which is banned by the Chemical Weapons Convention that Syria has signed. An attack with chlorine, which can be used as a weapon but is not outright banned by the treaty, could raise precedent issues, as there have been numerous recent allegations of chlorine attacks in Syria that have drawn no response from the Trump administration.

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Associated Press writers Ken Thomas, Catherine Lucey, Josh Lederman, Edith M. Lederer and Jonathan Lemire contributed to this report.

## **FEMA faulted for failed contracts to deliver hurricane aide**

**By MICHAEL BIESECKER, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Federal Emergency Management Agency awarded contracts for hurricane supplies without adequately researching whether winning bidders could deliver what they promised, according to a new investigation by Democrats on a Senate oversight committee.

The investigation followed disclosures by The Associated Press in November that a newly created Florida company with an unproven record had won more than \$30 million in FEMA contracts to provide 500,000 tarps and 60,000 rolls of plastic sheeting for repairs after Hurricane Maria damaged tens of thousands of homes in Puerto Rico. That vendor, Bronze Star LLC of St. Cloud, Florida, never delivered those urgently needed supplies.

The report from Democrats on the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs described failures by the Trump administration that prevented timely delivery of tarps and sheeting to hurricane victims after the summer's storms. It focused on the Bronze Star contract and another awarded to Global Computers and Networks LLC of Fort Washington, Pennsylvania.

Bronze Star was formed less than two months before bidding on FEMA's tarp and sheeting contracts. Global Computers registered as a federal government contractor in September, about one month before it won its FEMA contract.

FEMA, an agency under the Homeland Security Department, had awarded Global Computers a \$33.9 million contract to provide 500,000 tarps but canceled the deal about five weeks later because of the company's failure to provide any tarps. FEMA also terminated Bronze Star's contracts without paying any money after about four weeks.

The report said FEMA officials were required to determine that a bidding company was capable of fulfilling a contract, and FEMA was permitted under federal rules to rank a proposal from a company with demonstrated successful past performance higher than one with no experience offering a lower price.

"Once again we've seen massive contracts awarded to individuals and companies that would seem to have no capacity to deliver," Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., said in a statement. She called the contracts "a failure to safeguard tax dollars and a failure to deliver desperately needed goods and services."

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The Homeland Security Department's inspector general is still investigating the contracts.

The head of Global Computers, Dominique Pereira, told the AP late Monday that the company has been cooperating with federal investigators but declined further comment. Phone calls to Bronze Star's offices in Florida went unanswered throughout the day Monday.

One of Bronze Star's owners, Kayon Jones, told the AP previously that manufacturers he contacted before bidding on the contracts assured him they could provide the tarps but later said they could not meet the government's requirements. Jones said supplying the materials was problematic because most of the raw materials came out of Houston, which was hit hard by Hurricane Harvey. He said he sought a waiver from FEMA to allow him to order tarps from a Chinese manufacturer and for more time, but FEMA denied the request.

Jones, who served in the Navy from 1997 to 2000, said he picked the Bronze Star name because he has another company with the word star in it. Neither he nor his brother, who is the firm's co-owner and also is a veteran, earned the Bronze Star military commendation.

Follow Associated Press investigative reporter Michael Biesecker at <http://twitter.com/mbieseck>

## China files trade complaint against US over steel tariffs

GENEVA (AP) — China has filed a World Trade Organization complaint challenging U.S. President Donald Trump's tariff hike on imported steel and aluminum, the trade body said Tuesday.

The tariff spat is one element of a wide-ranging trade dispute between Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping's government. Trump also has threatened to increase duties on \$50 billion of Chinese goods in a separate conflict over technology policy.

China has requested 60 days of consultations with the United States on the steel and aluminum dispute, according to the WTO. If that fails, the next step could be for Beijing to request a ruling from a panel of trade experts.

Beijing says Trump's decision to impose additional duties of 25 percent on steel and 10 percent aluminum violate international trade rules.

Steel and aluminum are among Chinese industries in which supply exceeds demand. China's trading partners complain its mills are exporting their surplus at improperly low prices, threatening jobs in the United States and Europe.

The United States buys little Chinese steel and aluminum following earlier tariff hikes meant to offset what Washington says are improper subsidies to producers. But economists said Beijing responded in order to show it would defend itself.

China's government issued a \$3 billion list of U.S. goods including pork, apples and steel pipes on March 23 that it said might be targeted for retaliation if Trump fails to negotiate a settlement to the dispute over steel and aluminum charges.

## "I am sorry": Zuckerberg faces congressional inquisition

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and BARBARA ORTUTAY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — After privately assuring senators that his company will do better, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg is undergoing a two-day congressional inquisition that will be very public — and possibly pivotal for the massive social networking company he created.

Zuckerberg visited with senators in closed-door meetings Monday, previewing the public apology he plans to give Congress on Tuesday after revelations that Cambridge Analytica, a data-mining firm affiliated with Donald Trump's presidential campaign, gathered personal information from 87 million users to try to influence elections.

He's apologized many times already, to users and the public, but it is the first time in his career that he has gone before Congress. Zuckerberg will testify before a joint hearing of the Senate Judiciary and

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Commerce Committees on Tuesday and before a House panel on Wednesday.

In the hearings, Zuckerberg will not only try to restore public trust in his company but also stave off federal regulation that some lawmakers have floated. In prepared testimony released Monday by the House Energy and Commerce Committee, which he is expected to deliver Wednesday, Zuckerberg apologizes for fake news, hate speech, a lack of data privacy and Russian social media interference in the 2016 elections.

"We didn't take a broad enough view of our responsibility, and that was a big mistake," he says in the remarks. "It was my mistake, and I'm sorry. I started Facebook, I run it, and I'm responsible for what happens here."

After resisting previous calls to testify, Zuckerberg agreed to come to Capitol Hill this month after reports surfaced — and the company confirmed — that Cambridge Analytica had gathered Facebook users' data. In the remarks, Zuckerberg said his company has a responsibility to make sure what happened with Cambridge Analytica doesn't happen again.

Zuckerberg is also expected to be asked about Russia's use of U.S. social media during the 2016 elections — a subject of several congressional investigations and special counsel Robert Mueller's probe into Russian interference.

In the statement, Zuckerberg addresses Russian election interference and acknowledges, as he has in the past, that the company was too slow to respond and that it's "working hard to get better." The company has said that as many as 146 million people may have received information from a Russian agency that's accused of orchestrating much of the cyber meddling in the election.

"We will continue working with the government to understand the full extent of Russian interference, and we will do our part not only to ensure the integrity of free and fair elections around the world, but also to give everyone a voice and to be a force for good in democracy everywhere," Zuckerberg continues.

In the testimony, Zuckerberg acknowledges that the questioning will likely be hostile.

"We face a number of important issues around privacy, safety, and democracy, and you will rightfully have some hard questions for me to answer," Zuckerberg says.

The prepared remarks do not reveal new information about how data was shared or what Facebook will do. In addition to saying he is sorry, Zuckerberg outlines the steps the company has taken to restrict outsiders' access to people's personal information. He also says the company is investigating every app that had access to a large amount of information before the company moved to prevent such access in 2014 — something that came too late in the Cambridge Analytica case.

Zuckerberg met Monday with Florida Sen. Bill Nelson, the top Democrat on the Senate Commerce panel. Nelson said afterward that Zuckerberg was "forthright and honest to the degree he could" be in the private, one-on-one meeting.

Nelson said he believes Zuckerberg is taking the congressional hearings seriously "because he knows there is going to be a hard look at regulation."

Democrats like Nelson have argued that federal laws might be necessary to ensure user privacy. Republicans so far have shown little appetite for such regulation, but that could change if there are future privacy scandals or Democrats gain control of Congress in this November's elections.

"I think he understands that regulation could be right around the corner," Nelson said.

Zuckerberg was also scheduled to meet with Senate Judiciary Chairman Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, and Senate Commerce Committee Chairman John Thune, R-S.D., ahead of Tuesday's hearing.

Separately, Zuckerberg said in a Facebook post Monday that the company is establishing an independent election research commission that will look into the effects of social media on elections and democracy. He said the commission will work with foundations across the U.S. to set up a committee of academic experts who will come up with research topics and select independent researchers to study them.

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Ortutay reported from New York.

## Is Facebook really changing? Or just trimming its data haul?

By **MATT O'BRIEN** and **RYAN NAKASHIMA**, AP Technology Writers

Lost amid a flurry of Facebook announcements about privacy settings and data access is a much more fundamental question: Is Facebook really changing its relationship with users, or just tinkering around the edges of a deeper problem — its insatiable appetite for the data it uses to sell ads?

CEO Mark Zuckerberg, who is scheduled to testify to Congress on Tuesday and Wednesday, long defined the company's mission as making the world more open and connected. He's now tweaking that high-minded goal to emphasize positive community-building, not just connectivity. But it's not at all clear how much Facebook can shift without undermining what makes it one of the world's most profitable companies.

"Why is connectivity a good thing? Once you begin to challenge that, you begin to question the business model, which is about mining our data," said Richard John, a Columbia University professor of business history. Facebook is "extraordinarily reliant on the goodwill of users" who allow it to harvest what they share about themselves, he said — much more so than other tech companies.

Wall Street analysts are already counting on Facebook to survive a user revolt. Based on recent polling, GBH Insights analyst Daniel Ives expects roughly 15 percent of users to disengage somewhat from the social network following revelations that the political data-mining firm Cambridge Analytica improperly obtained personal information from 87 million users to try to influence elections. In a worst-case scenario, decreased engagement and what Ives terms a "negligible" number of deleted accounts could cost the company up to \$2 billion in annual advertising, Ives said.

Facebook could likely survive a \$2 billion cut in its bottom line. Its shares have rebounded after hitting their lowest price in nine months in late March. Since then, the stock has climbed about 4 percent to \$158.61 at midday Monday.

Less clear is how Facebook will handle the threat of increased regulation if Zuckerberg does not adequately resolve lawmakers' concerns this week.

"Could Facebook still exist even though you have greater privacy protections? That's the billion-dollar question," said University of Tennessee law professor Maurice Stucke, who has argued against allowing a handful of tech companies to monopolize everyone's personal data.

In the days leading up to Zuckerberg's testimony, Facebook has implemented a series of changes. It took yet another stab at explaining what happens to user data on its service and rejiggered its confusing privacy controls for the seventh time in a decade.

The company also planned to alert users affected by the Cambridge Analytica breach on Monday, although those efforts were delayed, and announced an independent commission that will have access to Facebook data to study the effects of social media on elections and democracy. Last week, it announced new transparency and verification rules for advertisers and page administrators.

Facebook is also restricting the access that outside parties have to data from Facebook users and groups, and it removed an option to search for users by entering a phone number or an email address that it said "malicious actors" had abused to scrape information from nearly all Facebook users.

Researchers generally consider such steps positive, if insufficient. Stucke, for instance, said a much stronger move would be for Facebook to fold U.S. users into the more stringent data protections the European Union will impose on internet companies starting May 25.

Zuckerberg has been unclear about whether Facebook would extend the European protections to the U.S. and elsewhere. He said recently the company will make its "controls and settings the same everywhere, not just in Europe," although it wasn't clear exactly what he meant, nor how that would affect data collection and privacy.

Privacy advocates are calling for Facebook to embrace the European rules globally. In an open letter sent Monday to Zuckerberg and lawmakers on both sides of the Atlantic, a group called the Trans Atlantic Consumer Dialogue said the law will offer "protections that all users should be entitled to no matter where they are located."

Researchers such as Stucke worry that Facebook might be able to wait out the pressure. "There's a big



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commotion," he said. "You hire a lot of lobbyists. You pressure the agencies not to do anything and just ride it out until the next scandal."

But Jeffrey Chester, executive director for the Center for Digital Democracy, said it would be a mistake to view Facebook's current turmoil as a "one-time event." Thanks to the European rules, he said, "there's a noose that's tightening around the necks of the Googles and the Facebooks" that will eventually force changes in their business models."

Some who favor stricter regulations want Facebook users to be treated like the advertising products that they are and to be paid for what they contribute to the social network. A few scholars say Facebook has so much influence over media and society that the U.S. government should consider taming its dominance by forcing it to spin off Instagram, WhatsApp or other businesses.

"We're in totally unprecedented waters," said Lina Khan, a Yale law professor and director of legal policy with the Open Markets Institute. "I wouldn't be too conservative about what's realistic."

Others who find the European model too onerous say most U.S. consumers don't care if Facebook analyzes them and their friends in a way that keeps what they share anonymous.

Such data collection "doesn't create a lot of harm and can create some significant benefits," said Joe Kennedy, a fellow at the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, which is backed by the technology industry.

He cited targeted ads as a boon to consumers and said the data behind them can boost artificial intelligence systems, which use vast quantities of data to "learn" human-like behavior.

## National Guard members start arriving at US-Mexico border

By NOMAAN MERCHANT and BOB CHRISTIE, Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — Some National Guard members have started arriving at the U.S.-Mexico border with more expected as federal government officials continue to discuss what they'll do about illegal immigration.

The Republican governors of Texas, Arizona and New Mexico on Monday committed 1,600 Guard members to the border, giving President Donald Trump many of the troops he requested to fight what he's called a crisis of migrant crossings and crime.

The only holdout border state was California, led by Democratic Gov. Jerry Brown, who has not announced whether troops from his state's National Guard will participate and has repeatedly fought with Trump over immigration policy.

Under the federal law Trump invoked in his proclamation calling for National Guard troops, governors who send troops retain command and control over their state's Guard members and the U.S. government picks up the cost.

Brown's spokesman, Evan Westrup, said California officials still are reviewing Trump's troop request.

Trump said last week he wants to send 2,000 to 4,000 National Guard members to the border, issuing a proclamation citing "the lawlessness that continues at our southern border."

Trump administration officials have said that rising numbers of people being caught at the southern border, while in line with seasonal trends in recent years, require an immediate response.

Apprehensions are still well below their historical trends during the terms of former presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama, both of whom also deployed the Guard to the border.

In Mexico City, a caravan of Central American migrants that had been heading north stopped in the Mexican capital. The caravan had sparked furious criticism from Trump, followed days later by his National Guard border protection deployment plan. Organizers said they never intended to go to the U.S. border.

Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey told a group of soldiers preparing to deploy from a Phoenix military base that their "mission is about providing manpower and resources" to support agencies on the border and denied that there was a political motive.

"I don't think this is a partisan issue or an identity issue," he said. "You show me somebody who is for drug cartels or human trafficking or this ammunition that's coming over a wide-open and unprotected border here."

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Texas Gov. Greg Abbott told San Antonio radio station KTSA that he would add about 300 troops a week until the total number reaches at least 1,000 troops.

Some Guard members will be armed if they are placed in potential danger, Abbott said, adding he wanted to downplay speculation that "our National Guard is showing up with military bayonets trying to take on anybody that's coming across the border, because that is not their role."

There is no end date for the deployment, Abbott said: "We may be in this for the long haul."

New Mexico Gov. Susana Martinez's office said that more than 80 troops would deploy later this week. They will be the first of an expected 250 Guard members from New Mexico to serve on the border.

South Carolina Gov. Henry McMaster, a Republican, offered to send members of his state's Guard as well. South Carolina sent troops to the border during Operation Jump Start, the border deployment ordered by Bush in 2006.

Trump has said he wants to use the military at the border until progress is made on his proposed border wall, which has mostly stalled in Congress. Defense Secretary James Mattis last Friday approved paying for up to 4,000 National Guard personnel from the Pentagon budget through the end of September.

Mexico's foreign relations secretary said his government is evaluating its cooperation with the United States.

Luis Videgaray said in a Monday interview with local media that he will give results of the analysis to President Enrique Pena Nieto in coming weeks.

The country's Senate passed a resolution last week saying Mexico should suspend cooperation with the U.S. on illegal immigration and drug trafficking in retaliation for Trump's move.

But Videgaray said "no decision has been taken to reduce or suspend any mechanism or cooperation."

Joel Villarreal, the mayor of Rio Grande City in Texas, said he did not agree with what he characterized as "the militarization of the border."

"It's not good for business, to be frank with you," Villarreal said.

Christie reported from Phoenix. Associated Press writers Jeffrey Collins in Columbia, South Carolina; Susan Montoya in Albuquerque, New Mexico; and Kathleen Ronayne in Sacramento, California, contributed to this report.

## Venus, Serena Williams join Billie Jean King equal pay push

By HOWARD FENDRICH, AP Sports Writer

A day before playing in the 2005 final at the All England Club, Venus Williams addressed a meeting of the Grand Slam Board, urging Wimbledon and the French Open to offer equal pay to male and female players.

"I said: 'All of our hearts beat the same. When your eyes are closed, you really can't tell, next to you, who's a man and who's a woman.' And (I asked them) to think about their daughters and their wives and sisters. How would they like them to be treated?" Williams recalled. "Sometimes, we lose track of, and don't even realize, our own bias and our own prejudice. And we have to confront ourselves."

The following afternoon, she won one of her seven major singles championships. About 1½ years later, Wimbledon announced it would, indeed, offer the same prize money to men and women in all rounds of the tournament, and the French Open soon followed suit, eliminating the pay gap at the four majors.

Now, Williams and her sister, Serena, are adding their names and voices to the push for equal pay across all types of jobs that the Billie Jean King Leadership Initiative (BJKLI) is championing.

The two current tennis stars are joining the advisory board of the group founded by the former player, and Tuesday's announcement was timed to coincide with Equal Pay Day, which approximates how far into a new year a woman must work to earn what a man made by the previous Dec. 31.

"Venus, in particular, helped us get equal prize money in the majors. She was amazing. She really got Wimbledon to make the big step," King said in a telephone interview. "Venus has always had the courage to step up. And Serena's the same way. They step up. I mean, Serena is not afraid to say whatever is on her mind."

Added King: "They've been through a lot themselves, so they totally understand what's going on. The two of them have transcended sports. The BJKLI is not about sports. It's about every industry. To try to get equal pay for equal work, and that means across the board, from CEOs down to entry level."

Her group was formed in 2014, and other advisory board members include 2003 U.S. Open champion Andy Roddick, former NBA player Jason Collins, singer Elton John and CNN's Christiane Amanpour.

It was a pretty easy sell for King to add the Williams siblings, owners of a combined 30 Grand Slam singles titles, along with another 14 they've won together in doubles.

"We always put our hands up for Billie. We love her. She has a tremendous history, not just in women's tennis, but in leading rights for people, in general, no matter who they were," Venus Williams said. "Billie could be at the point in her life now where she could say, 'Hey, I'm going to sit back and enjoy my life.' But she's still working hard for others. And that's a prime example for every single person. Your work on this earth never ends, as long as there is inequality."

King, for her part, looks at the Williams sisters as among those who can carry on the work she started decades ago.

"I am in my 70s, so I am looking to younger people to take up the mill as I phase out over time," King said. "I've got energy right now, so we're teeing everything up so we're in great shape for the legacy of the BJKLI, because I want it to have a life after I'm out of here."

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Follow Howard Fendrich on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/HowardFendrich>

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More AP tennis coverage: <https://apnews.com/tag/apf-Tennis>

## **New way of defining Alzheimer's aims to find disease sooner**

**By MARILYNN MARCHIONE, AP Chief Medical Writer**

Government and other scientists are proposing a new way to define Alzheimer's disease — basing it on biological signs, such as brain changes, rather than memory loss and other symptoms of dementia that are used today.

The move is aimed at improving research, by using more objective criteria like brain scans to pick patients for studies and enroll them sooner in the course of their illness, when treatments may have more chance to help.

But it's too soon to use these scans and other tests in routine care, because they haven't been validated for that yet, experts stress. For now, doctors will still rely on the tools they've long used to evaluate thinking skills to diagnose most cases.

Regardless of what tests are used to make the diagnosis, the new definition will have a startling effect: Many more people will be considered to have Alzheimer's, because the biological signs can show up 15 to 20 years before symptoms do.

"The numbers will increase dramatically," said Dr. Clifford R. Jack Jr., a Mayo Clinic brain imaging specialist. "There are a lot more cognitively normal people who have the pathology in the brain who will now be counted as having Alzheimer's disease."

He led a panel of experts, working with the Alzheimer's Association and the National Institute on Aging, that updated guidelines on the disease, published Tuesday in *Alzheimer's & Dementia: The Journal of the Alzheimer's Association*.

### **ABOUT ALZHEIMER'S**

About 50 million people worldwide have dementia, and Alzheimer's is the most common form. In the U.S., about 5.7 million have Alzheimer's under its current definition, which is based on memory problems and other symptoms. About one-third of people over 70 who show no thinking problems actually have brain signs that suggest Alzheimer's, Jack said.

There is no cure — current medicines such as Aricept and Namenda just temporarily ease symptoms. Dozens of hoped-for treatments have failed, and doctors think one reason may be that the studies enrolled

patients after too much brain damage had already occurred.

"By the time that you have the diagnosis of the disease, it's very late," said Dr. Eliezer Masliah, neuroscience chief at the Institute on Aging.

"What we've realized is that you have to go earlier and earlier and earlier," just as doctors found with treating cancer, he said.

Another problem: as many as 30 percent of people enrolled in Alzheimer's studies based on symptoms didn't actually have the disease — they had other forms of dementia or even other medical conditions. That doesn't give an accurate picture of whether a potential treatment might help, and the new definition aims to improve patient selection by using brain scans and other tests.

#### BETTER TESTS

Many other diseases, such as diabetes, already are defined by measuring a biomarker, an objective indicator such as blood sugar. That wasn't possible for Alzheimer's disease until a few years ago, when brain scans and spinal fluid tests were developed to do this.

They measure certain forms of two proteins — amyloid and tau — that form plaques and tangles in the brain — and signs of nerve injury, degeneration and brain shrinkage.

The guidelines spell out use of these biomarkers over a spectrum of mental decline, starting with early brain changes, through mild impairment and Alzheimer's dementia.

#### WHAT TO DO?

People may be worried and want these tests for themselves or a family member now, but Jack advises: "Don't bother. There's no proven treatment yet."

You might find a doctor willing to order them, but spinal fluid tests are somewhat invasive, and brain scans can cost up to \$6,000. Insurance usually does not pay because they're considered experimental outside of research. A large study is underway now to see whether Medicare should cover them and when.

Anyone with symptoms or family history of dementia, or even healthy people concerned about the risk can consider enrolling in one of the many studies underway.

"We need more people in this pre-symptomatic stage" to see if treatments can help stave off decline, Masliah said.

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Marilynn Marchione can be followed on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/MMarchioneAP>

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

## Colombia jails ex-rebel on US drug warrant in blow to peace

By JOSHUA GOODMAN, Associated Press

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP) — Colombia's peace process has been rocked by the surprise arrest of a former top leader of the disbanded FARC rebel army on charges of trying to smuggle several tons of cocaine into the U.S.

The arrest on Monday of Seuxis Hernandez, a blind former peace negotiator best known by his alias Jesus Santrich, played into fears among many Colombians that the former guerrillas haven't cut ties to the country's flourishing criminal underworld.

It also triggered an exchange of angry recriminations between conservative critics of the peace process and supporters of the disbanded Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia.

More than 100 former rebels and FARC sympathizers gathered late Monday outside the heavily guarded prosecutors' bunker where the 51-year-old Santrich was being held to demand his release. Waving white flags emblazoned with the red rose symbol of the former rebels' political movement, some shouted "freedom" and denounced what they called an act of judicial sabotage by the government and its U.S. backers.

Riot police flanked by a water cannon watched quietly, while inside Santrich was believed to have initiated a hunger strike to demand his release, according to his lawyer.



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President Juan Manuel Santos defended the arrest on a U.S. warrant as necessary to maintain the credibility of the peace accord, which Colombians overwhelmingly consider too generous to rebels responsible for atrocities committed during five decades of bloody, armed conflict.

"My hand won't tremble to authorize the extradition," Santos said in a nationally televised address in which he tried to reassure demobilized fighters that they have nothing to fear as long as they uphold their commitments under the 2016 peace accord. "This is what the Colombian people demand. In this aspect, there can't be any room for tolerance or weakness."

Santrich, who joined the guerrilla movement in his 20s and gradually rose into its central command structure, was one of the first rebel leaders to bet on peace. He went to Norway in 2012 to begin negotiations with Colombia's government and then participated in talks that continued the next four years in Cuba, where he earned a reputation as being a hard-line ideologue.

He was picked up Monday at a Bogota residence on charges filed in a New York federal court alleging he conspired with three others to smuggle several tons of cocaine into the U.S. with a wholesale value of \$15 million, or \$320 million when broken up and sold on American streets.

According to an Interpol notice, Santrich met with cocaine buyers at his residence on Nov. 2, 2017 — a day after one of his co-conspirators delivered a 5-kilogram sample of the narcotic to them at a hotel lobby in Bogota. During the meeting and subsequent negotiations, he and his co-conspirators allegedly discussed plans for a 10-ton drug shipment to the U.S., boasting they had access to cocaine laboratories and U.S.-registered planes to produce and transport the drugs inside Colombia, the world's largest producer of the illegal narcotic.

Even before details of the arrest were known, FARC leaders condemned it as a set-up that would undermine almost 7,000 demobilized rebel fighters' trust in the peace process.

"This is the worst moment that the peace process has gone through," said the former rebel leader known as Ivan Marquez, who served as chief negotiator during the peace talks.

The arrest comes less than a week before President Donald Trump is set to visit Bogota for conversations with Santos in which U.S. claims that Colombia's longstanding support for the drug war flagged during peace talks is expected to feature prominently.

U.S. authorities have doubted the sincerity of the FARC leadership's commitment to abandoning the drug trade as it enters politics, and last year named 21 suspected drug traffickers wanted for extradition who somehow managed to end up on a list of former fighters and their sympathizers entitled to benefits under the peace treaty.

Under terms of the accord, rebels who lay down their weapons and confess their war crimes to special peace tribunals are to be spared jail time and extradition. But they aren't protected for crimes committed after the December 2016 signing.

"The senior leadership never cut ties to the cocaine production that earned them billions of dollars as an insurgence," said Douglas Farrah, a senior visiting fellow at the National Defense University who has testified to the U.S. Congress on the FARC's criminal ties.

"Like addicts they just can't quit the business," he added.

The FARC long funded their insurgency by leveling a "war tax" on cocaine moving through territory the rebels dominated. Fifty members of its leadership structure — though not Santrich — were indicted in 2006 in the U.S. on charges of running the world's largest drug cartel.

But the rebels always denied direct involvement in the business itself and rebel peace negotiators in 2013 denounced drug trafficking as a "scourge" that has "contaminated" the international financial system and generated a global health crisis.

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Associated Press writers Manuel Rueda, Cesar Garcia and Christine Armario contributed to this report.

## Trump blasts Mueller probe as 'attack on our country'

By ZEKE MILLER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The special counsel's Russia investigation is not only a political witch hunt but "an attack on our country," President Donald Trump complained Monday, exhibiting mounting concern about the yearlong probe after federal authorities raided the offices of his personal attorney. "We'll see," he said, when asked if he might fire special counsel Robert Mueller.

Trump let loose after federal agents pierced the protective bubble around him, seizing records from the offices of longtime Trump attorney Michael Cohen, on topics including a \$130,000 payment made to a porn actress who says she had sex with Trump more than a decade ago.

Cohen has been an ardent defender in Trump's business, personal and political affairs for more than a decade — Cohen claims to have used a personal home equity loan to pay the adult film actress, known as Stormy Daniels — and the probe's expansion into the president's inner circle left Trump fuming.

He unleashed his sharpest invective to date against the sweeping investigation, calling the Monday search "a disgrace."

"It's an attack on our country in a true sense," he said, flanked by the nation's top military brass, who watched the scene stone-faced. "It's an attack on what we all stand for."

The president didn't bat away the idea of firing Mueller, saying people have advised him to take that action: "Why don't I just fire Mueller? Well, I think it's a disgrace what's going on — we'll see what happens."

He said the raid in New York marked a "whole new level of unfairness" by Mueller and his team.

Trump called the probe a "witch hunt," as he has many times in the past, complaining that it distracts from serious issues such as consideration of a military response to the apparent use of a chemical weapon on Syrian civilians over the weekend. That was the intended subject of his Monday evening meeting with the defense secretary, the joint chiefs of staff and U.S. combat commanders.

Instead, with reporters in the room and cameras rolling, Trump opened the meeting with an unprompted four-minute critique of Mueller's investigation. "I just heard that they broke into the office of one of my personal attorneys, a good man," Trump began, referring to agents who had obtained search warrants from a federal judge.

The raid on Cohen's office was conducted by the U.S. Attorney's office in Manhattan and was based at least partly on a referral from Mueller, according to Cohen's lawyer, Stephen Ryan.

Trump blasted the Mueller team as "the most conflicted group of people I've ever seen," labeling most of them Democrats and saying the few Republicans had worked for President Barack Obama.

"They're not looking at the other side," he complained, referencing the long investigation into former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server. "They're not looking at the Hillary Clinton horrible things that she did and all of the crimes that she committed."

Mueller, a lifelong Republican, and his team of attorneys have been investigating Russian interference in the 2016 election and associated misdeeds in the president's orbit since May 2017.

Mueller reports to Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who appointed the special counsel last year after the recusal of Attorney General Jeff Sessions and Trump's firing of former FBI Director James Comey.

Trump lit into Sessions, repeating in public his private criticism of the attorney general for making a "terrible mistake" in recusing himself from the Russia probe. Trump said Sessions "should have certainly let us know" he would step aside in the probe and we would have "put a different attorney general in."

The president watched the cable news coverage of the raid Monday afternoon and grew increasingly angrier, summoning lawyers Ty Cobb and Jay Sekulow to get their opinion of what was happening.

He vented to allies that Mueller's investigators were "going too far" and conducting "their witch hunt" to undermine his presidency, according to two people familiar with the president's views but not allowed to discuss them publicly.

The harsh tone of Trump's comments immediately drew warnings from lawmakers on Capitol Hill, who have sought to preserve Mueller's independence.

South Carolina Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham said he didn't know the purpose of Mueller's raid on Cohen, but added, "I just want to let Mr. Mueller do his job without any political interference."

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer of New York released a statement warning Trump against firing Mueller. "The investigation is critical to the health of our democracy and must be allowed to continue," he said.

Under Justice Department regulations, Trump cannot directly fire Mueller, but could order Rosenstein or his successor to remove the special counsel. The regulations only allow Mueller's removal for "misconduct, dereliction of duty, incapacity, conflict of interest or for other good cause" including violation of Justice Department policies.

Associated Press writers Jonathan Lemire and Catherine Lucey and AP Video Journalist Padmananda Rama contributed to this report.

Follow Miller on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/ZekeJMiller>

## **Trump's company asked Panama president to help in hotel spat** **By JUAN ZAMORANO and STEPHEN BRAUN, Associated Press**

PANAMA CITY (AP) — U.S. President Donald Trump's company appealed directly to Panama's president to intervene in its fight over control of a luxury hotel, even invoking a treaty between the two countries, in what ethics experts say was a blatant mingling of Trump's business and government interests.

That appeal in a letter last month from lawyers for the Trump Organization to Panamanian President Juan Carlos Varela was apparently unsuccessful — an emergency arbitrator made days later declined to reinstate the Trump management team to the waterfront hotel in Panama City. But it provides hard proof of exactly the kind of conflict experts feared when Trump refused to divest from a sprawling empire that includes hotels, golf courses, licensing deals and other interests in more than 20 countries.

"This could be the clearest example we've seen of a conflict of interest stemming from the president's role as head of state in connection with other countries and his business interests," said Danielle Brian, executive director of The Project on Government Oversight, a Washington ethics and good government organization.

In the March 22 letter to Varela, a copy of which was obtained by The Associated Press, lawyers for the Trump Organization "URGENTLY" request the Panamanian leader's influence to help reverse the company's acrimonious eviction as managers of the 70-story luxury high-rise once known as the Trump Ocean Club International Hotel & Tower.

While never mentioning Trump or his role as president, the letter says lawyers representing the Trump Organization were aware of "the separation of powers" in Panama but essentially asks the country's president to intervene in the judicial process anyway. It goes on to say that the eviction violates an investment treaty signed by the two countries and suggests that the Panamanian government, not the hotel's new management team, could be blamed for any wrongdoing.

"We appreciate your influence in order to avoid that these damages are attributed not to the other party, but to the Panamanian government," said the letter, which was copied to Panamanian Cabinet officials, as well as the presidents of the Supreme Court and National Assembly.

Late Monday, the Trump Organization made available a translated statement from its Panamanian lawyers, Britton & Iglesias, insisting that the letter to Varela was not an attempt to pressure him "or any other official of the government of Panama." The law firm said its appeal to Panama's government was "very common" and that it had not even informed Trump Organization officials of the move beforehand.

Five days after the law firm urged Varela's intervention, however, a court arbitrator ruled against reinstating the previous management, even though he agreed that Trump's company should not have been evicted while arbitration was ongoing.

A source in Varela's office who was not authorized to comment publicly confirmed receipt of the letter but his office did not respond to calls for comment.

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Panama's foreign secretary, Isabel de Saint Malo, who also received a copy of the letter, said Monday: "I don't believe the executive branch has a position to take while the issue is in the judicial process."

The White House referred all questions to the Trump Organization, which did not respond until late Monday night.

Even if Trump was not directly involved in the dispute, his company's citation of the treaty and its appeal to Varela "implicitly traded on President Trump's name and power," said University of Minnesota political governance expert Lawrence Jacobs.

Despite frequent ethics complaints from critics and three current lawsuits accusing him of accepting gifts from foreign and state governments, Trump has clung to constitutional precedence holding that presidents are mostly immune from conflict-of-interest laws.

While most previous presidents have divested some financial assets and placed others in "blind trusts" they could not control during their tenures, Trump kept total control of the Trump Organization but ceded day-to-day management to two of his sons, Donald Jr. and Eric.

Brian said she and other ethicists worry that "this sets a low bar of standards for future presidents."

The bitter standoff in Panama began in October when the owners of the hotel — which was run by Trump under a management agreement — sought to fire his company, citing damage to Trump's brand and mismanagement by hotel officials. But the Trump Organization disputed its termination as illegitimate and refused to hand over the property.

It came to a head in early March, when Panamanian judicial officials sided with majority owner Orestes Fintiklis and a justice of the peace backed by police officers ordered the Trump management team to vacate the property. Workers immediately scrubbed Trump's signage from the hotel and renamed it The Bahia Grand Panama.

The emergency arbitration decision late last month said the case should have remained in arbitration and never gone to Panamanian courts. Both sides continue fighting over who violated the hotel management contract.

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Braun reported from Washington.

## Trump threatens Syria strike, suggests Russia shares blame

By **ROBERT BURNS, ZEKE MILLER and MATTHEW LEE, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Monday threatened an imminent military strike against Syria, vowing to respond "forcefully" to Saturday's apparent chemical weapons attack on civilians and warning that Russia or any other nation found to share responsibility will "pay a price."

As he began an evening meeting with military leaders at the White House, Trump promised to "make a decision tonight or very shortly thereafter." He said: "We have a lot of options militarily, and we'll be letting you know pretty soon. Probably after the fact."

The White House sharply rejected any suggestion that Trump's own words about pulling U.S. troops out of Syria had opened the door for the attack, which killed more than 40 people, including children.

Trump, asked at midday whether Russian President Vladimir Putin bore any responsibility for the weekend attack, responded: "He may, yeah, he may. And if he does it's going to be very tough, very tough." He added: "Everybody's gonna pay a price. He will. Everybody will."

Then, during the meeting with top military leaders, he said the weekend assault "will be met and it will be met forcefully." Those at the meeting included Defense Secretary Jim Mattis and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Joseph Dunford.

Amid the tough talk at the White House, the U.S. military appeared to be in position to carry out any attack order. A Navy destroyer, the USS Donald Cook, was underway in the eastern Mediterranean after completing a port call in Cyprus. The guided missile destroyer is armed with Tomahawk cruise missiles, the weapon of choice in a U.S. attack one year ago on an airfield in Syria following an alleged sarin gas attack on civilians.



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The Russian military, which has a presence in Syria as a key Assad ally, said its officers had visited the weekend site in a suburb of Damascus, the Syrian capital, and found no evidence to back up reports of poison gas being used. Russia's U.N. ambassador, Vassily Nebenzia, accused Washington of deliberately stoking international tensions by threatening Russia in a tone "beyond the threshold of what is acceptable, even during the Cold War."

Trump said there was little question that Syria was responsible for the apparent weekend attack, although the government of President Bashar Assad denied it. "To me there's not much of a doubt, but the generals will figure it out," Trump said.

Emphatic in his condemnation of the apparent gas attack, Trump noted graphic pictures of the dead and sickened, calling the assault "heinous," "atrocious," "horrible" and "barbaric."

Fielding questions at the White House, Trump press secretary Sarah Sanders said it would be "outrageous" to say that Trump's recent announcement that he intends to remove all U.S. forces from Syria in the coming months had emboldened Assad. "I think that it is outrageous to say that the president of the United States green-lit something as atrocious as the actions that have taken place over the last several days," she said.

Mattis, in separate remarks at the Pentagon, also suggested Moscow bore some blame. He criticized Russia for what he suggested was its failure to ensure the elimination of Syria's chemical weapons arsenal under terms of a 2013 agreement.

Trump said no action was "off the table" and also conferred with Vice President Mike Pence and his new national security adviser, John Bolton. Monday was the first day on the job for Bolton, who has previously advocated military action against Syria.

Trump said, "If it's Russia, if it's Syria, if it's Iran, if it's all of them together, we'll figure it out."

The United States, meanwhile, urged the U.N. Security Council to adopt a resolution that would condemn the continuing use of chemical weapons in Syria "in the strongest terms" and establish a new body to determine responsibility for chemical attacks. The draft resolution, obtained by The Associated Press, was circulated ahead of an emergency Security Council meeting.

An American official said the U.S. was discussing with allies whether they would participate in a retaliatory strike. If Trump decides to proceed quickly, the most likely partner would be France rather than Britain, because of concerns about obtaining permission from Parliament, said the official, who wasn't authorized to discuss the planning publicly and requested anonymity.

Acting Secretary of State John Sullivan spoke by phone Monday with British Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson. Sullivan and Johnson agreed that based on reports in the media and from the ground, "this attack bore hallmarks of previous chemical weapons attacks by the Assad regime," the British foreign office said.

The White House deliberations came as Russia and the Syrian military blamed Israel for a pre-dawn missile attack on a major air base in central Syria, saying Israeli fighter jets launched missiles from Lebanon's air space. A group that monitors Syria's civil war said the airstrikes killed 14 people, including Iranians active in Syria.

Syria's state news agency SANA initially said that attack on the T4 air base was likely "an American aggression," but Pentagon spokesman Christopher Sherwood quickly denied the United States was behind the strike and the agency then dropped the accusation, blaming Israel instead.

As U.S. officials consider whether and how to respond, they are looking at what type of chemical agent might have been used. When Trump ordered airstrikes last year after a chemical weapons attack, it was a response to the use of sarin gas, which is banned by the Chemical Weapons Convention that Syria has signed. An attack with chlorine, which can be used as a weapon but is not outright banned by the treaty, could raise precedent issues, as there have been numerous recent allegations of chlorine attacks in Syria that have drawn no response from the Trump administration.

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AP writers Ken Thomas, Catherine Lucey, Josh Lederman, Edith M. Lederer and Jonathan Lemire contributed.

## Ingraham returns to work, complains about censorship

By DAVID BAUDER, AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Fox News Channel's Laura Ingraham returned to work with defiance Monday, denouncing a "Stalinist" effort by liberals to stifle the free speech of conservatives and promising to make fighting it her new cause.

She made no mention of the advertisers who had abandoned her own program after she tweeted that a survivor of the Parkland, Florida school shooting had "whined" about not getting in to some colleges he had applied for.

That high school senior, David Hogg, responded by suggesting that people offended by Ingraham's remark contact her advertisers. Some 19 companies responded by saying they wouldn't air commercials on Ingraham's show.

Ingraham was on vacation for a week after apologizing via social media for her tweet. She hasn't discussed that episode with her viewers specifically, but it didn't take much reading between the lines to realize it was on her mind Monday. Ingraham even played a video clip of Bill Maher saying some liberals have defended free speech; Maher last week came out against a boycott of Ingraham's program.

She said that "left wing retaliatory hit squads" respond to speech that makes them uncomfortable by trying to evict opponents from the public square instead of debating their ideas.

"The free speech clause to our Constitution doesn't just apply to speech our elites deem acceptable," she said.

Hogg has been among the most vocal of the Parkland students arguing in favor of stricter laws on gun safety; Ingraham has resisted stricter gun laws.

Ingraham's show was light on advertisements Monday. But some sponsors stuck with her, with ads running for a visiting nurse service, a floor covering company, a debt relief company, a weight reduction drink, a knife sharpener and a pillow manufacturer.

Ingraham said she would feature stories in coming weeks about conservatives who she says are fighting attempts to silence them.

"We will never relent and we will never give in," she said. "Never."

## Trump furious after FBI seizes documents from his lawyer

By ERIC TUCKER and CHAD DAY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Federal agents on Monday raided the office of President Donald Trump's personal attorney Michael Cohen, seizing records on topics including a \$130,000 payment made to porn actress Stormy Daniels.

A furious Trump, who in the last month has escalated his attacks on Robert Mueller's Russia investigation, said from the White House that it was a "disgrace" that the FBI "broke into" his lawyer's office. He called Mueller's investigation "an attack on our country," prompting new speculation that he might seek the removal of the Justice Department's special counsel.

The raid was overseen by the U.S. Attorney's office in Manhattan and was based in part on a referral from Mueller, said Cohen's lawyer, Stephen Ryan.

"The decision by the U.S. Attorney's Office in New York to conduct their investigation using search warrants is completely inappropriate and unnecessary," Ryan said in a statement. "It resulted in the unnecessary seizure of protected attorney client communications between a lawyer and his clients."

The raid creates a new legal headache for Trump as he and his attorneys weigh whether to agree to an interview with Mueller's team, which in addition to investigating potential ties between Russia and the Trump campaign is also examining whether the president's actions constitute obstruction of justice. And the law enforcement action will almost certainly amplify the public scrutiny on the payment to Daniels, who says she had sex with Trump in 2006. The payment was made just days before the 2016 presidential election. Trump told reporters last week that he did not know about it.

Search warrants are a fairly standard, though aggressive, law enforcement tool and are often sought in

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cases where authorities are concerned someone may hide or withhold evidence. To obtain one, agents must convince a judge they have probable cause of criminal activity and they believe they'll find evidence of wrongdoing in a search. A warrant requires high-level approval within the Justice Department, and agency guidelines impose additional hurdles when the search target is an attorney.

Authorities working with Mueller chose a similar tactic last summer when they raided the home of former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort, who was subsequently indicted.

In this case, Mueller opted to refer the matter to federal prosecutors in Manhattan. Besides Cohen's office, agents also searched a hotel room where he's been staying while his home is under renovation.

Under Justice Department regulations, Mueller must consult with Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein when his investigators uncover new evidence that may fall outside his original mandate. Rosenstein then will determine whether to allow Mueller to proceed or to assign the matter to another U.S. attorney or another part of the Justice Department.

A spokesman for Mueller's office did not immediately return a call seeking comment. White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders and the U.S. attorney's office also had no comment. The New York Times first reported Monday's raid.

Ryan did not elaborate on the documents taken from Cohen's office but said he has cooperated with investigators, including meeting last fall with lawmakers looking into Russian interference in the 2016 election.

Cohen has more recently attracted attention for his acknowledgment that he paid Daniels \$130,000 out of his own pocket shortly before the 2016 presidential election. Cohen has said neither the Trump Organization nor the Trump campaign was a party to the transaction with Daniels and he was not reimbursed for the payment.

Several former officials at the Federal Election Commission have said the payment appears to be a violation of campaign finance laws, and multiple Washington-based groups have filed complaints with the FEC, urging it to investigate.

There have been few signs that Mueller was interested in investigating the payment, though. One Mueller witness, former Trump aide Sam Nunberg, recently connected the special counsel with the payment, saying in an interview on MSNBC last month that prosecutors had asked him about payments to women.

Trump answered questions about Daniels for the first time last week, saying he had no knowledge of the payment made by Cohen and he didn't know where Cohen had gotten the money. The White House has consistently said Trump denies the affair.

Daniels has said she had sex with the president in 2006. She has been suing to invalidate the nondisclosure agreement she signed before the election and has offered to return the \$130,000 she was paid in order to "set the record straight."

Daniels argues the agreement is legally invalid because it was signed by only Daniels and Cohen, and was not signed by Trump.

Last month, Daniels' attorney, Michael Avenatti, sent letters to the Trump Organization demanding the business preserve all of its records relating to the \$130,000 transaction.

The letter demanded they preserve all emails by Cohen that mention Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford, as well as any emails and text messages related to the alleged relationship. He sent similar demand letters to two banks, City National and First Republic, asking they preserve documents connected to the transaction.

Avenatti also enclosed an email showing Cohen had used his Trump Organization email address in correspondence with a representative from First Republic. In the email, the representative said funds had been deposited in Cohen's account.

Federal agents searched Cohen's office at 30 Rockefeller Plaza in New York, where he had been working as part of a "strategic partnership" with the law firm Squire Patton Boggs.

On Monday, the firm said in a statement that its relationship with Cohen had "reached its conclusion, mutually and in accordance with the terms of the agreement."

"We have been in contact with Federal authorities regarding their execution of a warrant relating to Mr. Cohen," the firm said. "These activities do not relate to the firm and we are in full cooperation."

## **Porn star's lawyer promises sketch of man who threatened her**

**By CATHERINE LUCEY and MIKE BALSAMO, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The attorney for a porn actress who says she had sex with President Donald Trump said late Monday that he may delay releasing a composite sketch of the person he says threatened Stormy Daniels to stay quiet.

Michael Avenatti said early Monday that he would release the sketch Tuesday, along with details of a reward for help identifying the person. He said late in the day that the timeline might change, after news broke about federal raid of the offices of Trump's personal attorney, Michael Cohen. But Avenatti said he still expected to release the information this week.

Federal agents raided Cohen's offices Monday, seizing records on topics including a \$130,000 payment made to Daniels. The actress says she had sex with Trump once in 2006 and was paid by Cohen days before the 2016 presidential election as part of a nondisclosure agreement she is seeking to invalidate.

Avenatti said Monday that a "sizeable monetary reward" will be offered to anyone providing information identifying the person that Daniels says threatened her in a Las Vegas parking lot in 2011. He said the sketch will help provide "additional details about what happened here."

A hard-charging attorney who has relentlessly kept the case in the headlines, Avenatti said "common sense dictates" that this person could only have been someone associated with Trump or the Trump Organization. He said the money would likely come from a crowd-sourced legal fund.

Daniels, whose legal name is Stephanie Clifford, said in a recent interview with CBS' "60 Minutes" that she was threatened to keep quiet by an unidentified man in a Las Vegas parking lot in 2011 when she was with her infant daughter. Avenatti tweeted a photo Sunday that he said showed Daniels sitting with a forensic sketch artist to develop a sketch.

The "60 Minutes" interview prompted a lawyer for Trump attorney Michael Cohen to demand 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.

Avenatti is also pushing to have Trump and Cohen answer questions under oath. He refiled a motion in federal court in Los Angeles Sunday, seeking a jury trial and to depose Trump and Cohen. If 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.

Trump answered questions about Daniels for the first time last week, saying he had no knowledge of the payment made by Cohen and adding that he didn't know where Cohen had gotten the money. The White House has consistently said Trump denies the affair and Cohen has held that he made the payment out of his own pocket, without involvement from the Trump Organization or the Trump campaign.

Cohen did not immediately respond to a request seeking comment Sunday.

Avenatti filed a similar motion over a week ago, which a judge deemed premature. He refiled after Trump asked a federal judge to order private arbitration in the case. Trump and Cohen filed papers last week asking a judge to rule that the case must be heard by an arbitrator instead of a jury. Avenatti opposes private arbitration.

In the filing, Avenatti says he wants to question Trump and Cohen for "no more than two hours." He says the depositions are needed to establish if Trump knew about the settlement agreement and if he "truly did not know about the \$130,000 payment." He also asks if Trump was involved in any effort to "silence" Daniels.

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Balsamo contributed from Los Angeles.

## **Apple co-founder closing Facebook account in privacy crisis**

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak is shutting down his Facebook account as the social media giant struggles to cope with the worst privacy crisis in its history.

In an email to USA Today, Wozniak said Facebook makes a lot of advertising money from personal



details provided by users. He said the "profits are all based on the user's info, but the users get none of the profits back."

Wozniak said he'd rather pay for Facebook.

"Apple makes money off of good products, not off of you," he said.

In an interview late Monday in Philadelphia with The Associated Press, Wozniak said he had been thinking for a while of deleting his account and made the move after several of his trusted friends deleted their Facebook accounts last week.

It's "a big hypocrisy not respecting my privacy when (Facebook CEO Mark) Zuckerberg buys all the houses around his and all the lots around his in Hawaii for his own privacy," Wozniak said. "He knows the value of it, but he's not looking after mine."

A British data mining firm affiliated with Donald Trump's Republican presidential campaign gathered personal information from 87 million Facebook users to try to influence elections. Facebook, based in Menlo Park, California, has announced technical changes intended to address privacy issues.

Zuckerberg has apologized, and Facebook's No. 2 executive, Sheryl Sandberg, has said she's sorry the company let so many people down.

Zuckerberg will testify on Capitol Hill on Tuesday and Wednesday about the company's ongoing data privacy scandal and how it failed to guard against other abuses of its service.

Wozniak said he doesn't believe in the current system that Facebook can fix its privacy issues, saying he doesn't think Facebook is going to change its policies "for decades."

Wozniak said Apple Inc., based in Cupertino, California, has systems and policies that in many cases allow people to choose whether to share certain data. He said he doesn't foresee Apple not allowing the Facebook app to be bought or downloaded on its phones but said he does not make those decisions for the company.

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Associated Press writer Claudia Lauer contributed to this report from Philadelphia.

## Tensions ratchet up as Israel blamed for Syria missile strike

By ZEINA KARAM and BASSEM MROUE, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — A suspected poison gas attack in a Syrian rebel-held town and airstrikes on a Syrian air base that Damascus and Moscow blamed on U.S. ally Israel escalated tensions in the already volatile Mideast on Monday and raised the threat of possibly imminent American retaliation.

The timing of the airstrikes in central Homs province, hours after President Donald Trump said there would be "a big price to pay" for the chemical weapons attack, raised questions about whether Israel was acting alone or as a proxy for the United States. The strike on the air base reportedly killed 14 people, including four Iranians.

The U.N. special envoy for Syria, Staffan de Mistura, in his most dire warning since taking the job four years ago, warned the U.N. Security Council that recent grave events have drawn national, regional and international actors "into dangerous situations of potential or actual confrontation."

Israel did not comment on Monday's missile strike. The Jewish State typically does not comment on its airstrikes in Syria, which have been numerous in Syria's civil war.

The fast-paced developments threatened to further hike tensions between the U.S. and Russia, which has in the past warned against any U.S. military action against President Bashar Assad's government. Iran, a key ally of Assad, condemned the airstrikes, which it said killed four Iranians, including a colonel and a member of the Revolutionary Guard's aerospace force.

Opposition activists said 40 people died in Saturday night's chemical attack in the town of Douma, the last remaining rebel bastion in the eastern suburbs of Damascus, blaming Assad's forces. The attack killed entire families in their homes and underground shelters, opposition activists and local rescuers said.

The Syrian government strongly denied it carried out a chemical weapons attack and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons said it has opened an investigation. In a statement, it said a

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fact-finding mission was gathering information from all available sources to establish whether chemical weapons were used.

Russia's U.N. ambassador, Vassily Nebenzia, urged inspectors from the watchdog agency to fly to Syria's capital Tuesday and visit the site in a nearby rebel-held town. He denied any attack occurred, telling the Security Council that experts from Russia's military radiological, biological and chemical unit went to the site and found no chemical substances on the ground, no dead, and no poisoned people in hospitals.

Trump on Monday condemned the "heinous attack" in Syria and said later at a Cabinet meeting that he would "forcefully" respond. "Nothing is off the table," Trump warned.

He said that after conferring with his military advisers, he would soon decide on how to respond, and against whom. "If it's Russia, if it's Syria, if it's Iran, if it's all of them together, we'll figure it out," Trump said. Referring to Russian President Vladimir Putin, he added: "Everybody's going to pay a price — he will, everybody will."

Nebenzia called a U.S. military option "very, very dangerous," not only for Syria itself but for the world.

British Prime Minister Theresa May said Assad's government and its backers, including Russia, "must be held to account" if it is found to have been responsible for the suspected poison gas attack. "Yes, this is about the actions, the brutal actions by Assad and his regime. But it also is about the backers of the regime, and of course Russia is one of those backers. ... And they need to look very carefully at the position they have taken," she said.

The European Union also laid the blame squarely on Assad's government.

The Security Council held an emergency meeting to discuss the chemical attack and the council president said experts were working on a resolution on the continuing use of chemical weapons in Syria, but sharp differences remain between Russia and the U.S. and its allies.

The airstrike was the second this year on the Syrian air base, known as T4, where Iranian fighters are believed to be stationed. Israel hit the base in February, after it said an Iranian drone that violated Israeli airspace took off from it.

Russia's Defense Ministry said two Israeli aircraft targeted the base Monday, firing eight missiles. It said Syria shot down five of them while the other three landed in the western part of the base. Syrian state TV quoted an unnamed military official as saying that Israeli F-15 warplanes fired several missiles at T4. It gave no further details.

Israel's Foreign Ministry had no comment when asked about reports of the airstrikes.

Amos Yadlin, a former Israeli fighter pilot and ex-head of Israeli military intelligence, stopped short of saying Israel was responsible for the airstrike. But he suggested that the chemical attack had crossed a red line and prompted Israel to take action to send a message to Syria and arch-enemy Iran.

"The Iranians are determined to base themselves in Syria," he told the Army Radio station. "Israel is determined not to let them do that. And there is a strategic collision that perhaps tonight may have come together because of the chemical issue."

Since 2012, Israel has struck inside Syria more than 100 times, mostly targeting suspected weapons convoys destined for the Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, which has been fighting alongside Syrian government forces.

The base, which was used as a launching pad for attacks against Islamic State militants who were at one point stationed nearby, is near the Shayrat air base, which was targeted by U.S. missiles last year in response to a chemical weapons attack.

Syria's state news agency SANA initially said the attack on the T4 air base was likely "an American aggression," but the Pentagon denied involvement, and the agency then dropped the accusation, blaming Israel instead. SANA said the missile attack resulted in a number of casualties, but provided no specific figures.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which monitors the war through a network of activists on the ground, said 14 died, including Iranians and three Syrian officers.

Putin's spokesman, Dmitry Peskov, told reporters on Monday that Israel had not notified Russia of the airstrike, even though there may have been Russian military advisers at the base, which he described as

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"a cause for concern for us."

The U.S. launched several dozen Tomahawk cruise missiles at a Syrian air base after a chemical attack in the northern town of Khan Sheikhoun killed dozens of people almost exactly a year ago.

The Syrian government has denied the chemical weapons allegations, calling them fabrications. The Russian military said its officers visited the hospital in Douma and talked to the staff, and said they did not confirm reports of the assault.

First responders entering apartments in Douma late Saturday said they found bodies collapsed on floors, some foaming at the mouth. The opposition's Syrian Civil Defense rescue organization said the victims appeared to have suffocated.

The organization, also known as the White Helmets, and the Syrian American Medical Society, a medical relief organization, did not identify the substance used but said survivors treated at clinics smelled strongly of chlorine.

Those reports could not be independently verified because of a government blockade around the town. A Douma-based Syrian opposition activist, Haitham Bakkar, said most of those killed in the attack had been buried.

Russia's Nebenzia said experts from Russia's military radiological, biological, chemical unit went to Douma after the purported attack and found no chemical substances on the ground, no dead bodies, and no poisoned people in the hospitals. Nebenzia said the bed where a missile purportedly fell wasn't damaged.

"The staged nature of this action is something of which we have no doubt," he said.

Nebenzia urged investigators from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to fly to Damascus on Tuesday to visit the site, saying Russia and Syria would ensure they get to Douma.

Hours after the attack, the Army of Islam rebel group agreed to surrender the town and evacuate its fighters to rebel-held northern Syria, Syrian state media reported. The group also agreed to release its prisoners, a key government demand.

More than 100 buses entered Douma Sunday night to take the fighters and their families to Jarablus, which is under the shared control of Turkish troops and allied Syrian forces, Syrian state-affiliated al-Ikhbariya TV said.

Syrian state TV said two buses left early Monday and 11 more buses were getting ready to move.

Syrian state media said dozens of civilians who had been held for years by the rebels were set free.

The evacuations follow a pattern of departures around the capital and other major Syrian cities as the government reasserts its control after seven years of war.

In his tweets Sunday, Trump called Assad an "animal" and delivered a rare personal criticism of Putin for supporting him. Trump has declared his intent to withdraw U.S. troops from Syria in the coming months, despite resistance from many of his advisers.

More than 500 people, mostly women and children, were brought to medical centers complaining of difficulties breathing, foaming at the mouth and burning sensations in the eyes. Some had bluish skin, a sign of oxygen deprivation, according to a White Helmets statement. The symptoms are consistent with chemical exposure.

Douma is part of the eastern Ghouta suburbs, where a 2013 chemical attack killed hundreds of people and was widely blamed on the government. The U.S. threatened military action but later backed down.

Syria denies ever using chemical weapons during the war and says it eliminated its chemical arsenal under a 2013 agreement brokered by the U.S. and Russia.

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Associated Press writers Nataliya Vasilyeva in Moscow, Tia Goldenberg and Josef Federman in Jerusalem, Jonathan Lemire in Washington, Albert Aji in Damascus, Syria, and Edith M. Lederer at the United Nations contributed to this report.

## Facebook users still waiting on privacy scandal notices

By BARBARA ORTUTAY, AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Facebook said it would begin notifying users Monday if their data has been swept up in the Cambridge Analytica scandal, although it appears to be taking its time.

The 87 million users who might have had their data shared with Cambridge Analytica were supposed to get a detailed message on their news feeds starting on Monday. Facebook says more than 70 million of the affected users are in the U.S., though there are over a million each in the Philippines, Indonesia and the U.K.

As of 8:30 p.m. Eastern time, however, there were no signs that any users have yet received that notification or a more general one Facebook said it would direct to everyone on its service. Associated Press reporters around the world have been surveying users, none of whom have reported seeing anything from Facebook. There appear to be no social media reports of notifications, and Facebook had no immediate comment on the matter.

Reeling from its worst privacy crisis in history — allegations that this Trump-affiliated data mining firm may have used ill-gotten user data to try to influence elections — Facebook is in full damage-control mode. CEO Mark Zuckerberg acknowledged that he made a “huge mistake” in failing to take a broad enough view of what Facebook’s responsibility is in the world. He’s set to testify before Congress on Tuesday and Wednesday.

In prepared remarks released by a House committee, Zuckerberg said the company has notified all users affected in the scandal. Since the remarks are for Wednesday morning, this means everyone who was affected should see a message by then.

Cambridge Analytica whistleblower Christopher Wylie previously estimated that more than 50 million people were compromised by a personality quiz that collected data from users and their friends. In an interview aired Sunday on NBC’s “Meet the Press,” Wylie said the true number could be even larger than 87 million.

That Facebook app, called “This is Your Digital Life,” was a personality quiz created in 2014 by an academic researcher named Aleksander Kogan, who paid about 270,000 people to take it. The app vacuumed up not just the data of the people who took it, but also — thanks to Facebook’s loose restrictions — data from their friends, too, including details that they hadn’t intended to share publicly.

Facebook later limited the data apps can access, but it was too late in this case.

Zuckerberg said Facebook came up with the 87 million figure by calculating the maximum number of friends that users could have had while Kogan’s app was collecting data. The company doesn’t have logs going back that far, he said, so it can’t know exactly how many people may have been affected.

Cambridge Analytica said in a statement last Wednesday that it had data for only 30 million Facebook users.

Facebook has also suspended two more apps in recent days because they might have misused people’s data, adding to a growing list of firms being investigated by the social media company.

Facebook said CubeYou, a firm associated with the University of Cambridge Psychometrics Centre, will be suspended after CNBC notified Facebook that CubeYou was collecting information about users through quizzes.

According to CNBC, CubeYou labeled its quizzes “for non-profit academic research” then shared user information with marketers. CNBC says CubeYou denies misusing data.

On Saturday, Facebook said it suspended AggregateIQ, a Canadian political consulting firm, amid media reports it had ties to Cambridge Analytica.



## Bolton takes the helm on national security at time of tumult

By JOSH LEDERMAN and CATHERINE LUCEY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. military is bracing for a possible strike in Syria. Preparations for a high-risk North Korea summit are barreling forward. The White House staff is on edge, unsure who will be fired next, and when. And the national security team is holding its breath to see whether their new leader will be a shock to the system.

Enter John Bolton, the pugnacious former U.N. ambassador who took over Monday as President Donald Trump's national security adviser — the third person to hold the job in barely 14 months. Trump's selection of Bolton last month set off a guessing game in Washington as to just how much of an imprint his take-no-prisoners approach to foreign policy will have on Trump's team, already beleaguered and exhausted after a tumultuous first year.

If Bolton had any first-day jitters, he had little time to indulge them. A daunting to-do list has awaited him, punctuated over the weekend by a suspected chemical weapons attack by Syria's government that led Trump to start exploring potential military retaliation.

Although Bolton didn't formally start until Monday, he was spotted entering the White House over the weekend, carrying an umbrella as he strolled down the driveway toward the West Wing on a rainy Saturday.

And on Monday, he appeared at his first Cabinet meeting, where Trump talked up his forthcoming meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, chided China for taking advantage of the United States and condemned the "atrocious" chemical attack in Syria. Bolton didn't speak, but was seated prominently behind Trump as reporters were briefly allowed into the meeting.

"I think he's going to be a fantastic representative of our team," Trump said later in the day. He pointed out the fact that Bolton was starting in the midst of an urgent situation with Syria, adding: "Interesting day."

Apprehension outside the White House about Bolton's influence has been matched by hand-wringing in the West Wing about whose fortunes will rise and fall in the Bolton era.

In Trump's reality-show-infused White House, it's become a truism that when a powerful aide departs — like the chief of staff, national security adviser or a Cabinet secretary — others who were considered aligned with that aide are often the next to go. There have been many such shake-ups, even in just the past few weeks. And Bolton, in his former jobs at the U.N. and at the State Department, developed a reputation as someone who doesn't suffer fools quietly.

Although it's unclear whether Bolton will "clean house," two U.S. officials and two outside advisers to the administration said that the White House has been considering a significant staff shake-up in the part of the NSC that handles the Middle East. That comes as Trump prepares for a key decision next month on whether to withdraw from the Iran nuclear deal, the 2015 accord that Bolton has long derided.

Before starting the job, Bolton provided the White House with names of staffers he wanted to bring in, but the list consisted mainly of people associated with his political action committee, The John Bolton Super PAC, one individual with knowledge of the list said. All of the individuals weren't authorized to discuss internal White House deliberations and requested anonymity.

It was unclear whether any of Bolton's favored candidates were being hired. In recent months, Trump's administration has increasingly struggled to find qualified candidates who are eligible for high-level security clearance, are willing to join the White House and haven't been disqualified for other reasons, such as past public criticism of Trump.

Even before Bolton started, rumors were circulating about potential exits on the national security team. The night before Bolton started, Michael Anton, the National Security Council's spokesman and a public face for the administration, resigned. Although the White House said Trump thanked Anton for his service, two people familiar with the situation said he resigned after learning he would be fired, and his departure marked another moment of upheaval in an administration marked by months of in-fighting and high-level departures.

In the weeks since being named to the post, Bolton has quietly sought to calm concerns that he would push a more militaristic, hawkish approach on the president, considering his previously expressed support

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for pre-emptive military action against North Korea and regime change in Iran.

Although he stayed out of the public eye, showing deference to outgoing national security adviser H.R. McMaster, Bolton privately told some foreign embassies and influential foreign policy experts that he planned to approach the job more like a traffic cop, guiding a decision-making process in which the president can hear competing views, individuals familiar with those conversations said.

Yet inevitably, Bolton's past statements in public jobs and as a Fox News commentator follow him into the job. At the White House press briefing Monday, spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders was asked about a comment Bolton made in 2013 on "Fox and Friends" — he said he would have opposed a congressional vote to use military force in Syria.

"The point of view that matters most here at the White House, as you well know, is the president's," Sanders replied.

Frank Gaffney, a longtime Bolton associate and former Reagan administration official who runs the far-right think tank Center for Security Policy, said Bolton views his role as "to help the president get his program implemented." Bolton has been "preparing his whole life to be in this job," Gaffney said.

Yet in his 2007 book "Surrender is Not an Option," Bolton reflected on his decision to take a job at the U.S. Agency for International Development after President Ronald Reagan was inaugurated rather than work at the White House, out of concern his own voice would not be heard.

"Being on the White House staff was fun," Bolton wrote. "But I wanted 'line' responsibility — to manage something and to change it, not simply to be 'staff,' even at the White House."

Bolton's start comes after the tortured exit for McMaster, Trump's second national security adviser, a three-star general who never developed a strong personal bond with the president. While the White House said McMaster's exit had been under discussion for some time and stressed it was not due to any one incident, it came after months of speculation about his future in the administration.

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Associated Press writers Jill Colvin and Zeke Miller contributed to this report.

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Reach Josh Lederman on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/joshledermanAP> and Catherine Lucey at [http://twitter.com/catherine\\_lucey](http://twitter.com/catherine_lucey)

## Body parts from threatened wildlife widely sold on Facebook

By MICHAEL BIESECKER and MICHAEL LIEDTKE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Facebook is displaying advertisements for well-known American corporations on group pages operated by overseas wildlife traffickers illegally selling the body parts of threatened animals, including elephant ivory, rhino horn and tiger teeth.

In a secret complaint filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission, wildlife preservation advocates allege that Facebook's failure to stop illicit traders using its service for illegal activity violates the social network's responsibilities as a publicly traded company.

Facebook didn't respond to requests for comment. Its CEO, Mark Zuckerberg, was expected to testify on Capitol Hill on Tuesday about other issues.

The complaint, a copy of which was provided to The Associated Press, was initially filed in August on behalf of an undercover informant represented by the National Whistleblower Center, a non-profit legal advocacy group. The identity of the informant, who recorded video of face-to-face meetings with wildlife traffickers set up over Facebook, has been kept confidential out of safety concerns.

The SEC declined to comment Monday on whether the whistleblower complaint triggered an investigation of the company.

"Facebook is not an innocent bystander to these crimes," said Stephen Kohn, executive director of the National Whistleblower Center. "Facebook sold advertisements on the very pages the illegal ivory was being marketed."

Facebook is one of 20 technology companies that last month joined the Global Coalition to End Wildlife

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Trafficking Online, which was organized by Google and the World Wildlife Fund. Weeks after the March 7 announcement, an AP reporter was able to see scores of internationally banned wildlife products for sale in public and private Facebook groups, most based in Southeast Asia.

Among the items available were belts made from what appeared to be the fur of Bengal tigers, a critically endangered species with only about 2,500 still living in the wild. Also advertised were horns from black rhinos, a species heavily targeted by poachers with little more than 5,000 still roaming Africa.

Negotiations over price and delivery are often initiated by Facebook Messenger. Instagram and WhatsApp, two social media platforms also owned by Facebook, are also sometimes used by traffickers.

The allegations tying Facebook to the illegal trafficking of wildlife are surfacing while the company is already scrambling to recover from a privacy scandal that has wiped out \$79 billion in shareholder wealth during the past three weeks.

The crisis stems from revelations that Cambridge Analytica, a data-mining firm connected to President Donald Trump's successful 2016 campaign, had exploited weaknesses in Facebook's privacy controls to collect personal information about 87 million people without their consent.

Zuckerberg will try to reverse the backlash against the company when he opens two days of testimony in Congress. His appearance will give lawmakers the opportunity to grill him about the Cambridge Analytica episode, as well as evidence that Russian agents manipulated Facebook's network to spread false information that may have swayed the 2016 election.

The SEC complaint may trigger other lines of inquiry about how much of Facebook's annual revenue of \$41 billion has been generated by ads running on pages featuring illegal activity, such as the sale of elephant ivory and tiger teeth.

Facebook hasn't disclosed that some of its revenue may be tied to illegal trafficking in wildlife in regulatory filings that are supposed to outline various risks and other threats that could crimp its profits or stock price.

Trafficking investigators say they have seen no drop off in the illegal products offered for sale on Facebook after prior public pledges by the company to crack down. They are calling on federal security regulators to force Facebook to immediately freeze accounts being used by illegal traffickers and cooperate with international law enforcement to identify the individuals involved for prosecution.

"The amount of ivory being traded on Facebook is horrifying," said Gretchen Peters, executive director of the Center on Illicit Networks and Transnational Organized Crime, which has analyzed online groups where wildlife goods are being marketed. "I have looked at thousands of posts containing ivory, and I am convinced that Facebook is literally facilitating the extinction of the elephant species."

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Liedtke reported from San Francisco.

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Follow AP environmental reporter Michael Biesecker at <http://twitter.com/mbieseck>

## **Analysis: Tax cuts, spending to raise deficit to \$1T by 2020**

**By ANDREW TAYLOR, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The combined effect of President Donald Trump's tax cuts and last month's budget-busting spending bill is sending the federal deficit toward the \$1 trillion mark next year, according to a new analysis by the Congressional Budget Office.

The CBO report says the nation's \$21 trillion debt would spike to more than \$33 trillion in 10 years, with debt held by investors spiking to levels that would come close to equaling the size of the economy, reaching levels that many economists fear could spark a debt crisis.

Republicans once laced into President Barack Obama for trillion-dollar-plus deficits but mostly fell quiet on Monday's news.

CBO says economic growth from the tax cuts will add 0.7 percent on average to the nation's economic output over the coming decade. Those effects will only partially offset the deficit cost of the tax cuts. The administration had promised the cuts would pay for themselves.

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Instead, Monday's report estimates that the GOP tax bill, which is Republican-controlled Washington's signature accomplishment under Trump, will add \$1.8 trillion to the deficit over the coming decade, even after its positive effects on the economy are factored in.

The economic growth promises to drop the nationwide unemployment rate below 4 percent starting this year, CBO predicts, though interest rates would rise more rapidly than the agency had earlier predicted, countering some of the positive economic impact of the tax cuts.

The report paints an unrelentingly bleak picture of the federal deficit, predicting it will hit \$804 billion this year, rise to just under \$1 trillion for the upcoming budget year and permanently breach the \$1 trillion mark in 2020 unless Congress stems the burst of red ink.

The government would borrow about 19 cents of every dollar it spends this year. Deficits would grow to \$1.5 trillion by 2028 — and could exceed \$2 trillion if the tax cuts are fully extended and if Washington doesn't cut spending.

"Such high and rising debt would have serious negative consequences for the budget and the nation," said CBO Director Keith Hall. "In particular, the likelihood of a fiscal crisis in the United States would increase."

Republicans controlling Washington have largely lost interest in taking on the deficit, an issue that has fallen in prominence in recent years. Trump has ruled out cuts to Social Security and Medicare, and Capitol Hill Republicans have failed to take steps against the deficit since Trump took office.

But if warnings of a future fiscal crisis turn out to be true, lawmakers might be forced to take painful steps, Hall warned, that would be more draconian than if they tackled the deficit now.

With conservatives complaining about the \$1.3 trillion catchall spending bill — which blew through previous budget limits by \$300 billion over this year and next — House GOP leaders have scheduled a vote this week on a proposed amendment to the Constitution to require a balanced federal budget. The vote is sure to fall well short of the two-thirds required to pass and is being rushed to a vote without hearings or committee debate.

"The CBO's latest report exposes the scam behind the rosy rhetoric from Republicans that their tax bill would pay for itself," said top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer of New York. "The American people deserve a Congress that is focused squarely on helping the middle class, not patronizing Kabuki theatre — like sham 'balanced budget' votes — from Republicans who blew up the deficit to benefit wealthy special interests."

The White House is also likely to propose rolling back some of the spending increases in the government-wide funding bill, targeting domestic programs backed by Democrats, but the idea isn't gaining much traction on Capitol Hill.

"It's going nowhere," said Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C. "We made a deal."

Republicans are unlikely to pass even a nonbinding budget blueprint, instead opting to take a pause in the heat of election season.

"Without question, we have challenging work ahead," said House Budget Committee Chairman Steve Womack, R-Ark., who promised he will be "working with my colleagues in the days ahead to craft a responsible budget plan."

Many economists believe that if deficits continue to rise and the national debt grows, government borrowing will "crowd out" private lending and force up interest rates. And if interest rates go up, the government will have to pay much more to finance the more than \$14 trillion in Treasury debt held by investors.

Last year's deficit registered \$665 billion, which was well below the record \$1.4 trillion posted during Obama's first year in office, when the Great Recession led to plunging revenues and a spike in spending. The deficit settled below \$500 billion for part of Obama's second term but has steadily risen since then.

The new report predicts the economy will grow by 3.3 percent this year but that gross domestic product growth will drop to 1.8 percent by 2020. It warns that interest rates on government borrowing will spike, with the benchmark 10-year Treasury note, currently yielding 2.8 percent, will average a 3.0 percent interest rate this year and 3.7 percent next year.

"We expect interest rates to accelerate faster," said CBO's Hall.



## Prosecutor says Cosby paid accuser nearly \$3.4M

By MICHAEL R. SISAK, Associated Press

NORRISTOWN, Pa. (AP) — Bill Cosby paid nearly \$3.4 million to the woman he is charged with sexually assaulting, a prosecutor revealed to jurors Monday, answering one of the biggest questions surrounding the case as the comedian's retrial got underway.

District Attorney Kevin Steele highlighted the 2006 civil settlement during his opening statement, in an apparent attempt to suggest Cosby wouldn't have paid out so much money if the accusations against him were false. Cosby's lawyers have signaled they intend to use the settlement to argue that Andrea Constand falsely accused the former TV star in hopes of landing a big payoff.

The amount had been confidential — and was kept out of the first trial — but a judge ruled that both sides could discuss it at this one.

"This case is about trust," Steele told the jury. "This case is about betrayal and that betrayal leading to the sexual assault of a woman named Andrea Constand."

Cosby, 80, is charged with drugging and molesting Constand, a former employee of Temple University's basketball program, at his suburban Philadelphia home in 2004. Constand says he gave her pills that made her woozy, then penetrated her with his fingers as she lay incapacitated, unable to tell him to stop.

"She's unconscious. She's out of it," Steele said. "She will describe how her body felt during this circumstance. She's jolted during this. She feels herself being violated. ... And she'll tell you she remembers waking up on this sofa with her clothes disheveled at 4 o'clock in the morning. This is hours after this starts."

A lawyer not associated with the trial said Monday the settlement amount could figure prominently in the prosecution's case.

"The question that I'm sure we're going to hear a lot about is, why would an innocent man pay \$3.38 million for something he didn't do?" said Dennis McAndrews, who prosecuted chemical heir John E. duPont for murder in 1997.

The defense will deliver its opening statement on Tuesday in a trial expected to last a month.

Cosby's first trial last spring ended with the jury hopelessly deadlocked. The comedian faces three counts of aggravated indecent assault, each punishable by up to 10 years in prison.

Ahead of opening statements, a topless protester who appeared on several episodes of "The Cosby Show" as a child jumped a barricade and got within a few feet of Cosby as the comedian entered the courthouse.

The woman, whose body was scrawled with the names of more than 50 Cosby accusers as well as the words "Women's Lives Matter," ran in front of Cosby and toward a bank of TV cameras but was intercepted by sheriff's deputies and led away in handcuffs. Cosby seemed startled by the commotion as a half-dozen protesters chanted at him.

The protester, Nicolle Rochelle, 39, of Little Falls, New Jersey, was charged with disorderly conduct and released.

"The main goal was to make Cosby uncomfortable because that is exactly what he has been doing for decades to women," she said afterward.

Rochelle, an actress, said she didn't have any bad experiences with Cosby when she was on the show, nor did she intend to physically hurt him. She is a member of the European feminist group Femen, which is known for staging topless protests around the world.

Cosby spokesman Andrew Wyatt praised deputies for their quick action but urged court officials to increase security. Officials added a second row of barricades, and Cosby left court without incident Monday afternoon.

"It's a different world. Things have changed," Wyatt told The Associated Press, referring to recent mass shootings and other cases. "You never know who's going to want to make a name for themselves."

Opening statements were delayed for several hours while the judge sorted through allegations raised late Friday that a juror told a woman during jury selection that he thought Cosby was guilty. Cosby's lawyers wanted the juror removed from the case.

After questioning all 12 jurors and six alternates behind closed doors, Judge Steven O'Neill ruled the

juror could stay, saying all the panelists told him they stuck to their pledge to remain fair and impartial. Prosecutors have lined up a parade of five additional accusers to make the case that the man revered as "America's Dad" lived a double life as one of Hollywood's biggest predators. Only one additional accuser took the stand at the first trial.

Cosby lawyer Tom Mesereau, who won an acquittal in Michael Jackson's 2005 child molestation case, has said the jury will instead learn "just how greedy" Constand was.

The retrial is taking place in a potentially more hostile environment for Cosby. The #MeToo movement caught fire four months after the first trial, raising awareness of sexual misconduct as it toppled Harvey Weinstein, Sen. Al Franken, Matt Lauer and other powerful men.

Constand first approached authorities with her accusations against Cosby in 2005. The district attorney at that time ended his investigation after four weeks, announcing the comedian wouldn't be charged because the evidence showed both parties "could be held in less than a flattering light."

The current DA's immediate predecessor, Risa Vetri Ferman, took another look at the case in 2015 after the AP fought to unseal parts of Cosby's deposition testimony — including lurid passages about him giving drugs to women he wanted to have sex with. Cosby was charged shortly before the statute of limitations was set to expire.

Referring to the unsealed deposition, Steele told jurors on Monday: "That, ladies and gentlemen, led to our office reopening the investigation."

The Associated Press does not typically identify people who say they are victims of sexual assault unless they grant permission, which Constand and Dickinson have done.

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Associated Press writer Angela Charlton in Paris contributed to this story.

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For more coverage visit [apnews.com/tag/CosbyonTrial](https://apnews.com/tag/CosbyonTrial)

## Canada town gets new shock with dead player misidentified

By JEREMY HAINSWORTH and ROB GILLIES, Associated Press

HUMBOLDT, Saskatchewan (AP) — Families and friends already stunned by the deaths of 15 players and team personnel for Humboldt's youth hockey club got a new shock Monday when authorities announced that one of the dead had been misidentified.

The Ministry of Justice for Saskatchewan province said the mistake occurred partly because all the Broncos players had dyed their hair blond for the team's appearance in the playoffs and because all the young men had similar builds.

The ministry said the body of Parker Tobin had been mistakenly identified as that of Xavier Labelle. It said Labelle was actually one of the 14 injured when the team bus was hit by a semitrailer truck Friday night.

Drew Wilby, spokesman for the ministry, Wilby and the Office of the Chief Coroner apologized.

"To find who they had thought was their loved one wasn't their loved one I can't even fathom," Wilby said. "I don't know enough could ever be said. All I could do is offer our sincerest apologies."

He said families had been involved in identifying the remains of the crash victims at a makeshift morgue and the error wasn't discovered until Sunday night.

"The new information came to light last night that raised questions with the health care professionals. In turn they were able to identify Xavier Labelle as Xavier Labelle, who of course we had previously said was Parker Tobin," Wilby said. "A lot of these boys looked alike."

Over the weekend, Tobin's family had tweeted that their son was alive.

"This is one of the hardest posts I have ever had to make. Parker is stable at the moment and being airlifted to Saskatoon hospital," Rhonda Clarke Tobin wrote.

Meanwhile, Xavier Labelle's family had confirmed his death, with his brother Isaac writing in an Instagram

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post that he was heartbroken.

"All I can say is miracles do exist. My deepest condolences to the Tobin family," Isaac Labelle posted on Facebook on Monday.

Matthew Labelle, a second cousin of Xavier, said that "it's obviously been quite the roller coaster for our family."

Humboldt Mayor Rob Muench called it "an unfortunate mistake."

Broncos club president Kevin Garinger said he was contacted by police early Monday about it and said the error makes a difficult situation more challenging.

"At this point, I just want to reach out and support the families," Garinger said. "It's not about understanding anything."

Among the dead were Broncos head coach Darcy Haugan, team captain Logan Schatz and radio announcer Tyler Bieber. The Saskatchewan Health Authority said 12 of the survivors were still in the hospital, with four in critical condition. Four others were in serious condition and four patients were stable.

Player Nick Shumlanski, who was released from hospital, issued a statement thanking people for their support.

"Although reality hasn't really set in yet, it is truly devastating to have lost so many close friends, brothers and amazing coaches. Times are tough right now but the support you all have shown is so amazing," he wrote.

He also said that he was lucky to be in the condition he was.

"The doctor told me it was truly a miracle that I was able to get up and walk away from the accident with very minor injuries and a couple of scars on my body," he said.

Most of the players were from elsewhere in western Canada, and they lived with families in Humboldt, a town of about 6,000 people. Families who provide homes for players are a large part of junior hockey in Canada.

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Associated Press writer Jeremy Hainsworth reported this story in Humboldt and AP writer Rob Gillies reported from Toronto.

## **GOP Republicans return to work with Trump wish list in mind**

**By LISA MASCARO, AP Congressional Correspondent**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Republican majority in Congress was on a glide path to the midterms, having passed tax cuts into law and backed off budget battles with a year-end funding package. But President Trump was not impressed.

Trump has been picking apart some GOP accomplishments, including the big budget bill, and complaining that others, namely his border wall, remained undone.

Congress returned Monday scrambling over a to-do list that will satisfy a president Republicans desperately need to be promoting their achievements, not undermining them, as they prepare to hit the campaign trail.

"A lot of members would prefer to spend the rest of the year focusing on getting re-elected, but there's pressure from the White House ... to deliver more policy wins before facing voters," said Alex Conant, a GOP strategist.

On Monday, the Senate swore in its newest member, Republican Cindy Hyde-Smith of Mississippi. Hyde-Smith was tapped by the Mississippi governor as the first woman in Congress to represent the state, filling the seat after longtime GOP Sen. Thad Cochran resigned.

Later, Democrat Conor Lamb will take his seat Thursday in the House after a long-shot special election win in western Pennsylvania.

Lawmakers also learned Monday they have limited room to maneuver after the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office said annual deficits will skyrocket close to \$1 trillion in coming years after passage of the tax and spending bills.

But Trump's penchant for belittling lawmakers and badgering them to work doesn't help instill voter

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confidence in Republicans already facing an enthusiasm gap with Democrats fired up to go to the polls, strategists say. They need Trump on their side, not piling on.

"Every day that Trump attacks Congress, he hurts Republicans' chance of keeping the majority," Conant said.

The problems between Trump and Congress, festering for months, spilled into the open when the president toyed with vetoing the \$1.3 trillion funding bill he thought spent too much money on Democratic priorities and not enough on his, including the border wall.

While Congress was away, Trump started talking about rescinding some of that money, working with House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., on a do-over package that would force lawmakers into another round of budget votes this spring or summer. Republicans are eyeing less than \$30 billion in cuts, though the White House may seek more.

"We are looking at an enhanced rescission package," said Lawrence Kudlow, the White House's Chief Economic Adviser, on Fox News Sunday. "I think the Republican Party on the Hill has finally figured out, it's really not a bad idea to trim some spending because, after all, spending can lead to deficits and spending interferes with the economy."

At the same time, Trump's revolving door of Cabinet secretaries has created a legislative logjam of its own. It has forced the Senate to launch lengthy confirmation hearings, starting with this week for Mike Pompeo as the new secretary of state. After that, there are Trump's picks for CIA director and Veterans Affairs secretary.

The nomination battles are sure to dredge up tough debates — over the Russia probe, the CIA's use of waterboarding and other harsh interrogation techniques now outlawed, and the spiraling costs and care at the VA. They're hardly the top conversations lawmakers would choose as their focus in the months before an election.

A senior administration official told reporters on a conference call last week that border security could be among the biggest issues for Congress this spring and summer.

That's likely news to Republicans running for re-election, particularly in swing districts or with sizable minority populations, who have shown little interest in the kind of beefed-up border security the administration has proposed to turn back unaccompanied minors and clamp down on asylum seekers.

To complicate the agenda further, Trump wants Congress to try again on an immigration overhaul, an issue Republicans were happy to shelve earlier this year after he rejected their compromise with Democrats. They offered \$25 billion for the border wall in exchange for deportation protections for the young immigrants known as "Dreamers."

Trump's to-do list is not the springtime agenda Republicans in Congress were hoping for. Instead, they had expected to spend the next few months tackling more modest measures. Among them: legislation to address the opioid epidemic and symbolic House bills on making tax cuts permanent or achieving a balanced budget that, though unlikely to become law, could motivate Republicans to go to the polls in November. Senators were considering more judicial nominees, including some on track Monday for confirmation this week.

Republicans were planning to ride to re-election this fall on the success of their tax cuts package, a once-in-a-generation accomplishment that has long been among the GOP's top priorities.

But at a campaign stop last week, even Trump seemed to have tired of the tax cuts. He literally tossed his prepared remarks aside as "boring" and instead focused on a caravan of Central American migrants making its way through Mexico and on his plan for National Guard troops at the border. Trump even revived his attack on immigrants as "rapists" from his presidential campaign.

"Remember my opening remarks at Trump Tower when I opened? Everybody said, 'Oh, he was so tough,' and I used the word rape," he said during the tax reform roundtable in West Virginia.

"So we have to change our laws," he said. "We have to have strong borders. We're going to have the wall."

The tough talk may push voters to the polls for Republicans in the more conservative districts who are already likely to have a good chance at re-election. But more than anything, strategists said, it helps secure Trump's supporters for Trump.



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"Would any Republican other than Steve King rather have the president talking about jobs, the tax cuts, or have the president talk about migrants being raped?" said GOP strategist Doug Heye, referring to the Iowa congressman who is among the most hard line on immigration.

But, he added, "We know that Donald Trump didn't come here for glide path or status quo. He came to shake things up."

Associated Press writers Jill Colvin and Andrew Taylor contributed to this report.

Follow Mascaro on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/LisaMascaro>

## Amid trade fight, Trump says he'll 'make it up' to farmers

By CATHERINE LUCEY and JONATHAN LEMIRE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump acknowledged Monday that farmers could be adversely affected by the escalating tariff dispute with China, but promised to make it up to them, saying they "will be better off than they ever were."

Speaking at a Cabinet meeting, Trump addressed the Chinese threat to slap tariffs on soybeans and other agriculture staples grown in rural America, a move that could hit Midwestern farmers, many of whom are strong supporters of the president.

"If during the course of the negotiation they want to hit the farmers because they think that hits me. I wouldn't say that's nice, but I tell you our farmers are great patriots," Trump said. "They understand that they're doing this for the country. We'll make it up to them. In the end they're going to be much stronger than they are right now."

China is threatening the tariffs in response to Trump moving to enact protectionist measures as punishment for Chinese theft of U.S. intellectual property. The U.S. bought more than \$500 billion in goods from China last year and now is planning or considering penalties on some \$150 billion of those imports. The U.S. sold about \$130 billion in goods to China in 2017 and faces a potentially devastating hit if China responds in kind.

White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said Trump was working with his team "to determine how best to respond to China's attack on American farmers" and had asked the Agriculture Department to provide him with a plan to protect U.S. farmers.

As the economic saber-rattling shakes global markets, Trump said Monday he had a good relationship with China and with President Xi Jinping, but repeated his claim that China has been "taking advantage of the United States for many years." He added that he doesn't blame China, but American leaders for creating a "lopsided" set of trade rules.

Earlier in the day, Trump tweeted about the "STUPID TRADE" with China, saying that when a Chinese-made vehicle is sent to the U.S., the tariff is only 2.5 percent, while American cars exported to China are slapped with a 25 percent tariff.

China charges total duties of 25 percent on most imported cars — a 10 percent customs tariff plus a 15 percent auto tax. Since December 2016, Beijing also has charged an additional 10 percent on "super-luxury" vehicles priced above 1.3 million yuan (\$200,000).

The president made fixing the trade imbalance with China a centerpiece of his presidential campaign, where he frequently used incendiary language to describe how Beijing would "rape" the U.S. economically. But even as Trump cozied up to Xi and pressed China for help with derailing North Korea's nuclear ambitions, he has ratcheted up the economic pressure and threatened tariffs, a move opposed by many fellow Republicans.

China has pledged to "counterattack with great strength" if Trump decides to follow through on his latest threat to impose tariffs on an additional \$100 billion in Chinese goods — after an earlier announcement that targeted \$50 billion. Beijing also declared that the current rhetoric made negotiations impossible, even as the White House suggested that the tariff talk was a way to spur China to the bargaining table.

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The new White House economic adviser, Larry Kudlow, said Sunday that a "coalition of the willing" — including Canada, much of Europe and Australia — was being formed to pressure China and that the U.S. would demand that the World Trade Organization, an arbiter of trade disputes, be stricter on Beijing. And he said that although the U.S. hoped to avoid taking action, Trump "was not bluffing."

"This is a problem caused by China, not a problem caused by President Trump," Kudlow said on "Fox News Sunday."

But he also downplayed the tariff threat as "part of the process," suggesting on CNN that the impact would be "benign" and said he was hopeful that China would enter negotiations. Kudlow, who started his job a week ago after his predecessor, Gary Cohn, quit over the tariff plan, brushed aside the possibility of economic repercussions.

"I don't think there's any trade war in sight," Kudlow told Fox.

Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin said on CBS' "Face the Nation" that he didn't expect the tariffs to have a "meaningful impact on the economy" even as he left the door open for disruption. He allowed that there "could be" a trade war but said he didn't anticipate one.

Trump's latest proposal intensified what was already shaping up to be the biggest trade battle in more than a half century.

Trump told advisers last week that he was unhappy with China's decision to tax \$50 billion in American products, including soybeans and small aircraft, in response to a U.S. move to impose tariffs on \$50 billion in Chinese goods. Rather than waiting weeks for the U.S. tariffs to be implemented, Trump backed a plan by Robert Lighthizer, his trade representative, to seek the enhanced tariffs.

Further escalation could be in the offing. The U.S. Treasury Department is working on plans to restrict Chinese technology investments in the U.S. And there is talk that the U.S. could also put limits on visas for Chinese who want to visit or study in this country.

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Associated Press writers Hope Yen and Thomas Strong contributed to this report.

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Follow Lemire on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/@JonLemire>

## At the EEOC, harassment cases can languish for years

By JULIET LINDERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The federal agency handling workplace harassment complaints has become a crowded waystation in an overwhelmed bureaucracy, with wait times often stretching years. And as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission takes on renewed significance in light of the growing #MeToo movement, lawyers worry the increased caseload will lead to even longer delays.

A federal worker filing a complaint with the EEOC last year waited, on average, 543 days for resolution. But cases can drag on much longer, often forcing employees to choose between enduring discrimination or abandoning their careers.

Employment lawyers say the cash-strapped agency is doing its best. But they also say the uptick of sexual harassment cases being brought to the EEOC could mean longer wait times.

"We are totally inundated," said Cathy Harris, a Washington-area employment attorney whose practice focuses mostly on federal employees. "I don't think there's more discrimination; I think people are just encouraged to do something about it now."

While the omnibus spending bill Congress passed last month gives the EEOC a \$15 million budget boost, the commission is still without permanent leadership. President Donald Trump's choice to lead the five-person commission, corporate attorney Janet Dhillon, has inspired fierce criticism from civil rights groups. Neither Dhillon, who is married to a White House attorney, nor Daniel Gade, nominated for a seat on the commission, have come up for Senate confirmation votes.

The #MeToo movement, which began last fall, has empowered victims of sexual misconduct to come forward with complaints.

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The EEOC operates on two parallel tracks: one for private sector workers, and one for federal employees. Both are struggling.

In 2017, the average wait time to resolve a private sector complaint was about 295 days.

The agency receives so many complaints that its 549 investigators must prioritize cases deemed likely to be strong.

Last year the agency closed 99,000 cases. In 70 percent of those cases, investigators determined there wasn't evidence immediately available to make a finding that discrimination occurred. But many were dismissed without a full or even cursory investigation; last year, just 2.9 percent of all resolved cases were found to have reasonable cause.

"We're devoting our resources to charges where there seems to be more likelihood to find discrimination that we can attempt to resolve, and spend fewer resources on charges where it appears less likely to find discrimination," said EEOC Project Manager Nicholas Inzeo, who oversees the agency's 53 field offices.

Some lawyers say dismissing complaints without full investigations can discourage workers from pursuing their claim in court.

"It's easy to say there's no reasonable cause if you don't do an investigation," said Richard T. Seymour, an employment lawyer.

Attorney Jacob Small said many workers don't want to go through the lengthy, emotionally draining and very public process of filing a lawsuit.

"So many people realize it's just easier for them to move on or to take a very small settlement that doesn't compensate them for the harm they've actually suffered," he said.

The agency's handling of federal employee complaints often takes even longer.

Federal employees must first file a complaint with their agency's equal employment office, which conducts an investigation. The employee may then file a lawsuit or request a hearing with an EEOC administrative judge.

The average time to resolve a federal complaint with the EEOC is about a year and a half, though complaints filed in busy offices can take much longer. In 2016, just 73 judges were tasked with handling roughly 20,000 cases. By the end of the year, 13,500 were left in the queue.

"I have some cases that have sat on judges' desks for five years with no hearing date in sight," said Rosemary Dettling, the founder of the Federal Employee Legal Services Center.

Dettling said some clients endure years of harassment and retaliation. Others look for other jobs.

"Our clients' suffering is real," she said. "Some leave the jobs they love, just to escape."

In 1993, Ann M. Garcia was an ambitious 34-year-old agent at the Drug Enforcement Agency with dreams of going overseas. But headquarters had told her that she shouldn't stray far from home because her husband might get bored and leave her.

She filed a discrimination complaint with the EEOC alleging her employer illegally denied female agents promotions and foreign assignments because of their gender. An agency judge ruled in her favor — in 2011.

She was 52 and had retired, along with more than 70 other female agents who'd joined her complaint. While the action was pending Garcia did receive a foreign assignment, but many of the others didn't, she said.

"All the emotional distress — the anger, the anxiety," Garcia said. "They say time heals everything. But what happens if something just never ends?"

Protracted cases can also prevent harassment victims from moving on and cause memories to become less reliable.

"Try to litigate a case where you're taking depositions two or three years after the fact," said attorney Les Alderman. "Those fuzzy memories turn into generalities. The delays really, really hurt victims."

Inzeo said the agency is in the process of hiring at least six more administrative judges to ease the burden. Currently, judges each can handle up to 200 cases a year.

Inzeo disputed that cases typically drag on for years, but said he recognizes the frustration many feel over long wait times.

"We are working on projects that will reduce the amount of time, reduce the complexity of it and make it more efficient, for the parties and for us, and reduce inventory, and help us get through the cases more quickly," he said.

Despite its problems, Harris, the Washington employment lawyer, stressed that the EEOC is an invaluable resource.

"They can literally change people's lives and remedy harm," she said. "It's an agency with an incredible power to heal wounds. It's a wonderful system. It's just underfunded, and completely broken."

## Teachers acquire a new skill: how to stop the bleeding

By SCOTT McFETRIDGE, Associated Press

PLEASANT HILL, Iowa (AP) — As she learned the basics of applying direct pressure, packing a wound with gauze and tying a tourniquet, sixth-grade math and social studies teacher Kari Stafford shook her head at the thought that this may now be an essential skill for her profession.

Stafford didn't like it, but with school shootings now a regular occurrence, she and her colleagues have reluctantly accepted that the attacks won't stop and that teachers must know how to keep the victims from bleeding to death.

"Learning to help and not just stand there is important," said Stafford, who joined about a dozen other educators at a medical training session at Southeast Polk High School, a sprawling 9-year-old campus surrounded by farmland in Pleasant Hill, just east of Des Moines.

Over the past five years, about 125,000 teachers, counselors and administrators across the country have been trained in stemming blood loss as school officials have become resigned to the grim trend. The effort is rapidly expanding, and more schools are now stocking classrooms with supplies that would be familiar to any military medic: lightweight tourniquets, gauze coated with blood-clotting drugs and compression bandages.

Although schools are adding security and even arming teachers to deter attacks, new emphasis is being given to saving the wounded while counting down the minutes until help arrives.

The teacher triage idea was initially pushed by Dr. Lenworth Jacobs of Hartford, Connecticut, who operated on victims of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting in 2012, in which 26 children and adults were killed.

He feared that Sandy Hook wouldn't be the last school shooting, and his assumption has been borne out again and again, with the Feb. 14 killing of 17 people at a Florida high school only the latest major incident.

"I've been a trauma surgeon for over 40 years and have seen a lot of gunshot wounds," he said, but an elementary school massacre is "entirely different. These are 6-year-olds with wounds from very high-powered weaponry, and it changes you."

Jacobs and other like-minded surgeons formed a group that expanded to include law enforcement and other first responders who developed strategies for helping victims survive.

In many school shootings, more victims could be saved if someone had at least slowed their bleeding.

"It takes a long time, longer than it takes to bleed to death, to clear the classroom, secure it and make sure there's not another shooter," he said. "The person who is going to save you is the person right beside you."

The initiative, dubbed Stop the Bleed, has spread quickly and training is now available in all 50 states.

Georgia has been a leader, spending more than \$1 million to expand a test program and ship medical supplies to schools. Since last spring, the Georgia Trauma Commission, a state agency that works to improve emergency care, has coordinated the training of more than 18,000 educators.

Many teachers who might once have recoiled at becoming a battlefield medic have come around as school security measures have repeatedly failed to prevent shootings. In many cases, the shooters are students themselves who have ready access to the building. And lockdowns can add to the risk of death.

"If students are shot in a lockdown they can just bleed out. They'll die," said Dena Abston, executive director of the commission.



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In Bend, Oregon, paramedic Nolan McGinnis leapt at the chance to train school personnel on how to treat victims. He was among the first paramedics to arrive at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg, Oregon, after a 2015 shooting that left 10 people dead.

"Especially with these school shootings, you never know if the shooter is going to give himself up or take his own life before we get there, or if it will be 15 minutes and we're still waiting to go onto the scene," McGinnis said.

The Bend trainers are also teaching high school students the techniques, and a group of students is raising money for bleeding control kits.

"A single person can't stop a shooting but one person can save multiple lives, and to have something like that on my conscience is a great feeling," said Sierra Sheeks, a Bend Senior High sophomore.

At the Iowa training, about a dozen teachers, aides and others gathered in an English classroom before the school day began for Southeast Polk's nearly 2,000 students. Although no shootings have occurred at the school, the now-normal drumbeat of reports about threats, rumors and lockdowns in every region keeps the danger in mind.

Trauma care specialist Brian Feist and surgeon Richard Sidwell used a foam limb to demonstrate proper techniques, then gave teachers a chance to practice packing wounds and cinching tourniquets.

Feist explained that direct pressure was more effective on especially young children and tourniquets best for multiple wounds. The ultratight straps on a tourniquet could be very painful, he warned.

"Your patient is going to be freaking out because it's really, really hurting," he said.

Teacher Denise Gulling noted that kids now accept that shootings could happen. They regularly have drills on when to lock doors and hide in their classroom. Now, "this gives me one more option for helping," she said.

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Follow Scott McFetridge on Twitter at: <https://twitter.com/smcfetridge>

## US and China both omit key products from tariff threats

By DEE-ANN DURBIN, AP Business Writer

DETROIT (AP) — Americans spent nearly \$96 billion last year on cellphones and computers imported from China, far more than on any other items. But you won't find them on the list of Chinese-made products the Trump administration is threatening with tariffs.

And China spends about \$1 billion a year importing animal hides from the U.S. to make shoes, car interiors and furniture upholstery. But China didn't include those on its own list of threatened tariffs.

In their escalating conflict over trade, what the U.S. and China are leaving off their tariff lists tells as much as what's on them. The U.S. would put tariffs on flat-screen televisions, for example, but not on clothes. China threatens tariffs on U.S. whiskey but not beer. The omissions indicate how far both countries might be willing to go, or what they could use as future bargaining chips.

The threats intensified last week, when the Trump administration released its list of imports from China worth \$50 billion on which it would impose 25-percent tariffs as punishment for China's alleged theft of U.S. intellectual property. China retaliated with its own threatened tariffs on \$50 billion worth of U.S. products.

The tariffs are far from a done deal. The U.S. proposal is subject to a public comment period, and both countries' lists could still shrink or grow. On Thursday, for example, Trump directed the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative to consider \$100 billion in additional tariffs.

So far, neither country is targeting products they would have a hard time getting elsewhere. China has U.S. soybeans on its list because it can easily buy them from other countries like Brazil. But Brazilian animal hides aren't as prized as U.S. ones, since U.S. winters made animal hides thicker and more resistant to bugs, says Stephen Sothmann of the U.S. Hide, Skin and Leather Association.

The U.S. is the top supplier of animal hides and skins to China's \$220 billion leather industry. China exported 680 million pairs of leather shoes last year, according to the Chinese Leather Industry Association.

The U.S. list excludes laptop computers because they'd also be hard to get from somewhere else. China

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currently supplies at least 70 percent of laptops, said William Reinsch, a senior adviser with the Center for Strategic and International Studies, a think tank.

Both countries also have their own business interests in mind.

Most Apple Inc. iPhones are assembled in China, but they have parts from all over the world, like batteries from Korea or screens from Japan. China contributes the labor to put it all together, but that's only around 1 percent of the cost of a \$500 iPhone, Reinsch said.

"It seems that the U.S. trade representative was very much aware of the global value chains in keeping some of these items off the list," said Dean Pinkert, a trade lawyer and former commissioner of the U.S. International Trade Commission.

China put smaller planes on its list but excluded the 747 and other big planes made in the U.S. by Boeing Co. China's own planes are still years behind foreign competitors, and it would be difficult for Chinese airlines to quickly find replacement jets. Still, China could use bigger planes as a bargaining chip in future negotiations.

In some cases, things were left out because they're small change. China is targeting U.S. whiskey and wine, for example, but not beer. That's because relatively little beer is exported out of the U.S., said Bart Watson, chief economist for the Brewers Association, a lobbying group for craft brewers. The U.S. doesn't target its minuscule imports of animal hides from China, but it is threatening to put tariffs on machinery used to tan leather or make shoes.

U.S. and Chinese also have some different reasons for what they included and excluded from their lists.

China had an eye on U.S. politics, Reinsch said. Soybeans come from Midwest states like Iowa, which voted for President Donald Trump in 2016 but might not again if he threatens farmers' livelihoods.

"The Chinese are predictable. They will do it in a way that will maximize the political pain here and minimize the cost to them," Reinsch said.

Trump on Monday said he's going to "make it up" to farmers who would be impacted by China's proposed retaliatory tariffs on U.S. exports.

"It's not nice when they hit the farmers specifically because they think that hits me," he said.

The U.S. said its tariffs were designed to cause as little disruption as possible to U.S. consumers. That's why cellphones aren't on the list, as well as clothing, shoes, toys, games and furniture, even though they're top imports from China.

But Mary Lovely, an economics professor at Syracuse University and a fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, said it's impossible to protect American consumers and put maximum pressure on China at the same time. Most high-value goods exported from China have foreign content, so U.S. and foreign companies will wind up footing the bill.

She thinks the U.S. should consider non-tariff measures, like forbidding U.S. companies from working with Chinese companies that have stolen tech secrets.

"China is not going to stay the world's factory and workshop, so how can we exert pressure to get them to play fairly," she said.

## **Study: Stop-smoking drugs Chantix, Zyban pose no heart risks**

**By LINDSEY TANNER, AP Medical Writer**

CHICAGO (AP) — Two popular stop-smoking drugs are as safe for the heart as nicotine patches and dummy pills, according to research requested by U.S. and European regulators.

The results come from an extension of a big study of Chantix and Zyban that earlier found no increased risks for severe psychiatric problems including suicidal behavior. Those findings were reported in 2016.

"It's enormously reassuring," said Dr. Nancy Rigotti, director of the Massachusetts General Hospital Tobacco Research and Treatment Center. She was not involved in the research.

"We now know it's a lot safer to use these drugs to help people quit smoking than to continue smoking, Rigotti said.

The original study involved 8,000 smokers randomly assigned to daily use of Pfizer's Chantix, GlaxoS-

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mithKline's Zyban, nicotine patches or dummy pills for 12 weeks. The extended study tracked about 2,400 participants for a year.

During and after treatment, there were five heart-related deaths and 22 nonfatal heart attacks and strokes, pretty evenly distributed among the four groups. The few other heart problems also occurred at similar rates in each group.

The study was published Monday in JAMA Internal Medicine. It included adult smokers from the United States, Canada, Mexico and several European countries. In the original study, by the last three weeks of treatment, 34 percent of Chantix users had quit smoking, 23 percent of nicotine patch users, almost 23 percent of Zyban users and 13 percent of those on dummy pills.

Chantix blocks the effects of nicotine on the brain; Zyban is the brand name for a drug used for depression but it is thought to also affect brain regions linked with addictive behavior. Patches deliver small amounts of nicotine to help reduce smokers' cravings. All are generally used short term.

The patches and prescription pills can potentially raise blood pressure and Chantix's current packaging information includes warnings about a possible small increased risk for heart attacks and strokes in smokers with heart disease.

"The FDA is reviewing the findings of this study and substantial supporting documentation from the clinical trial, along with additional published medical literature, as we continue to evaluate this issue," said Michael Felberbaum, a spokesman for the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

The companies paid for and conducted the post-approval studies at the request of the FDA and European Medicines Agency.

The researchers noted that the study didn't include smokers with severe heart disease, although many had high blood pressure or other risks for heart problems. Dr. Neal Benowitz, the lead author and a professor of medicine at the University of California, San Francisco, said other recent studies have suggested the drugs are safe for smokers with severe heart disease.

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Follow AP Medical Writer Lindsey Tanner on Twitter at @LindseyTanner. Her work can be found here .

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## Child advocates ask FTC to investigate YouTube

By MATT O'BRIEN, AP Technology Writer

The fine print of YouTube's terms of service has a warning that goes unheeded by millions of children who visit YouTube to watch cartoons, nursery rhymes, science experiments or videos of toys being unboxed.

"If you are under 13 years of age, then please do not use the service," the terms say. "There are lots of other great web sites for you."

In a complaint filed Monday, child advocates and consumer groups are asking the Federal Trade Commission to investigate and impose potentially billions of dollars of penalties on Google for allegedly violating children's online privacy and allowing ads to target them.

"Google profits handsomely from selling advertising to kid-directed programs that it packages," said Jeff Chester, director of the Center for Digital Democracy, one of the groups that drafted the complaint. "They created a successful model monetizing kids' data."

Television networks also run ads during cartoons and other programs aimed at kids.

The difference? YouTube does so with a lot of data collection. Its business model relies on tracking IP addresses, search history, device identifiers, location and other personal data about its users so that it can gauge their interests and tailor advertising to them. But a 1998 federal law prohibits internet companies from knowingly collecting personal data from kids under 13 without their parents' consent.

The coalition accuses YouTube of violating that law and deliberately profiting off luring children into what Chester calls an "ad-filled digital playground" where commercials for toys, theme parks or sneakers can

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surface alongside kid-oriented videos.

YouTube said in an emailed statement that it "will read the complaint thoroughly and evaluate if there are things we can do to improve. Because YouTube is not for children, we've invested significantly in the creation of the YouTube Kids app to offer an alternative specifically designed for children."

That toddler-oriented YouTube Kids app, launched in 2015, offers more parental controls but is not as widely used — and features a selection of the same videos and channels that kids can also find on the regular YouTube service.

Although it's not known if the FTC will take action, the complaint comes at a time of increased public scrutiny over the tech industry's mining of personal data and after the FTC opened an investigation last month into Facebook's privacy practices.

For that reason, the FTC "may be more reinvigorated and ready to take these issues seriously," said Josh Golin, director of the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood, which drafted the complaint along with the Center for Digital Democracy and a Georgetown University law clinic. Several other groups have signed on, including Common Sense Media, which runs a popular website for families, and the advocacy division of Consumer Reports.

"I think the day of reckoning has arrived," said U.S. Sen. Edward Markey, a Massachusetts Democrat who co-authored the 1998 law and says he wants the FTC to look into the YouTube complaint. "Americans want to know the answers as to whether or not the privacy of their children is being compromised in the online world."

FTC spokeswoman Juliana Gruenwald Henderson said the agency looks forward to reviewing the letter. She said the FTC already has brought more than two dozen cases for violations of the 1998 law. It has settled child privacy cases with Yelp, mobile advertising network inMobi and electronic toy-maker VTech.

None of those services are as popular for kids as YouTube, which has toddler-themed channels with names like ChuChuTV nursery rhymes, which as of last week counted more than 16 million subscribers and 13.4 billion views. It also has many channels that cater to preteens.

Kandi Parsons, a former FTC attorney who now advises companies on child-privacy compliance, said that because YouTube is a general-audience service, it could be hard to determine if parents are curating content for their kids to watch or letting them use it on their own. Parsons said the FTC so far hasn't gone after kid-directed channels within broader media websites, though that doesn't mean it won't.

Consumer advocates say Google knows what it is doing. They point to its "Google Preferred" program that allows advertisers on YouTube to pay extra to get their ads on the most popular videos. The program includes a "Parenting & Family Lineup" that has featured channels such as ChuChu TV, Fox's BabyTV and Seven Super Girls, whose topics include "fluffy unicorn slime."

YouTube does block children who identify themselves as under 13 from posting video, by prohibiting them from creating an account to begin with, but an account isn't needed merely to watch.

"It's laughable if Google execs claim that they think the parent is in charge of the online viewing behaviors of tens of millions of children," Chester said. "Children are watching this content by themselves. Google is trying to look the other way."

## Asian stocks mostly rise as investors weigh trade war fears

By YURI KAGEYAMA, AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Asian markets mostly rose but stayed within a narrow range in subdued trading Tuesday as global investors continued to weigh their fears about a possible trade war between the U.S. and China.

KEEPING SCORE: Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 gained 0.2 percent to 21,730.41 in morning trading. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 edged up 0.6 percent to 5,843.00. South Korea's Kospi inched down 0.2 percent to 2,439.13. Hong Kong's Hang Seng added 0.8 percent to 30,467.23, while the Shanghai Composite rose 0.3 percent to 3,148.86.

TRADE WORRIES: Indexes are fluctuating in recent sessions as they try to guess the outcome of the U.S.-China trade dispute. While President Donald Trump continued to bash America's trade deals on Twitter, he said the U.S. and China could settle their dispute. But things looked worse at the end of last week,



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when Trump threatened to impose tariffs on an additional \$100 billion in Chinese goods. China has pledged to "counterattack with great strength" if Trump decides to follow through on that threat. The two nations had already proposed \$50 billion in tariffs on imports, but none of that has taken effect yet.

WALL STREET: The S&P 500 index gained 8.69 points, or 0.3 percent, to 2,613.16. The S&P 500 fell 1.4 percent last week, with large losses Monday and Friday and strong gains in between. The Dow Jones industrial average rose 46.34 points, or 0.2 percent, to 23,979.10. The Nasdaq composite jumped 35.23 points, or 0.5 percent, to 6,950.34. The Russell 2000 index of smaller company stocks added 1.17 points, or 0.1 percent, to 1,514.46.

THE QUOTE: "Market nerves over trade tensions have seemingly calmed down, given that Trump has sounded optimistic on the prospects of a trade deal with China, notwithstanding Chinese protestations," said Chang Wei Liang, analyst at Mizuho Bank.

ENERGY: Benchmark U.S. crude rose 45 cents to \$63.87 a barrel. It jumped \$1.36, or 2.2 percent, to \$63.42 a barrel overnight in New York. Brent crude, used to price international oils, added 37 cents to \$69.02 a barrel.

CURRENCIES: The dollar was little changed, inching down to 107.08 yen from 107.12 late Monday. The euro rose to \$1.2314 from \$1.2275.

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

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## Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, April 10, the 100th day of 2018. There are 265 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On April 10, 1968, "In the Heat of the Night" won best picture of 1967 at the 40th Academy Awards; one of its stars, Rod Steiger, was named best actor while Katharine Hepburn was honored as best actress for "Guess Who's Coming to Dinner."

On this date:

In 1790, President George Washington signed the first United States Patent Act.

In 1866, the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals was incorporated.

In 1912, the British liner RMS Titanic set sail from Southampton, England, on its ill-fated maiden voyage.

In 1925, the F. Scott Fitzgerald novel "The Great Gatsby" was first published by Scribner's of New York.

In 1932, German President Paul Von Hindenburg was re-elected in a runoff, with Adolf Hitler coming in second.

In 1947, Brooklyn Dodgers President Branch Rickey purchased the contract of Jackie Robinson from the Montreal Royals.

In 1953, the 3-D horror movie "House of Wax," produced by Warner Bros. and starring Vincent Price, premiered in New York.

In 1971, a table tennis team from the United States arrived in China at the invitation of the communist government for a goodwill visit that came to be known as "ping-pong diplomacy."

In 1978, Arkady Shevchenko, a high-ranking Soviet citizen employed by the United Nations, sought political asylum in the United States.

In 1981, imprisoned IRA hunger striker Bobby Sands was declared the winner of a by-election to the British Parliament.

In 1998, the Northern Ireland peace talks concluded as negotiators reached a landmark settlement to end 30 years of bitter rivalries and bloody attacks.

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In 2010, Polish President Lech Kaczynski (lehk kah-CHIN'-skee), 60, was killed in a plane crash in western Russia that also claimed the lives of his wife and top Polish political, military and church officials.

Ten years ago: The U.S. Board on Geographic Names officially renamed Squaw Peak in Phoenix Piestewa (py-ES'-tuh-wah) Peak, in honor of Army Spc. Lori Piestewa, who was killed in Iraq in 2003 and posthumously promoted from the rank of Private First Class.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama proposed a \$3.8 trillion budget that would raise taxes on smokers and wealthy Americans and trim Social Security benefits for millions. The financially beleaguered U.S. Postal Service backpedaled on its plan to end Saturday mail delivery. Robert Edwards, 87, a Nobel Prize winner from Britain whose pioneering in vitro fertilization research led to the first test tube baby, died near Cambridge, England.

One year ago: Justice Neil Gorsuch took his place as the newest addition on the bench of the Supreme Court, restoring a narrow conservative majority. Alabama Gov. Robert Bentley (R) resigned rather than face impeachment and pleaded guilty to two misdemeanor campaign violations that arose during an investigation of his alleged affair with a top aide. The New York Daily News and ProPublica won the Pulitzer Prize for public service for uncovering how police abused eviction rules to oust hundreds of people, mostly poor minorities, from their homes; Colson Whitehead's novel "The Underground Railroad" won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Max von Sydow is 89. Actress Liz Sheridan is 89. Football Hall of Famer John Madden is 82. Reggae artist Bunny Wailer is 71. Actor Steven Seagal is 66. Folk-pop singer Terre Roche (The Roches) is 65. Actor Peter MacNicol is 64. Actress Olivia Brown is 61. Rock musician Steven Gustafson (10,000 Maniacs) is 61. Singer-producer Kenneth "Babyface" Edmonds is 60. Rock singer-musician Brian Setzer is 59. Rock singer Katrina Leskanich (les-KAH'-nich) is 58. Actor Jeb Adams is 57. Olympic gold medal speedskater Cathy Turner is 56. Rock musician Tim "Herb" Alexander is 53. Actor-comedian Orlando Jones is 50. Rock musician Mike Mushok (Staind) is 49. Singer Kenny Lattimore is 48. Rapper Q-Tip (AKA Kamaal) is 48. Missouri Gov. Eric Greitens is 44. Actor David Harbour is 43. Blues singer Shemekia Copeland is 39. Actress Laura Bell Bundy is 37. Actor Harry Hadden-Paton is 37. Actress Chyler Leigh is 36. Pop musician Andrew Dost (fun.) is 35. Actor Ryan Merriman is 35. Singer Mandy Moore is 34. Actor Barkhad Abdi (BAHRK'-hahd AHB'-dee) is 33. Actress Shay Mitchell is 31. Actor Haley Joel Osment is 30. Actress Molly Bernard (TV: "Younger") is 30. Country singer Maren Morris is 28. Actor Alex Pettyfer is 28. Actress-singer AJ (AKA Amanda) Michalka (mish-AL'-kah) is 27. Actress Daisy Ridley is 26. Singer-actress Sofia Carson is 25. Actress Audrey Whitby is 22. Actress Ruby Jerins is 20.

Thought for Today: "What is more unwise than to mistake uncertainty for certainty, falsehood for truth?" — Cicero, Roman orator, statesman and philosopher (106-43 B.C.)