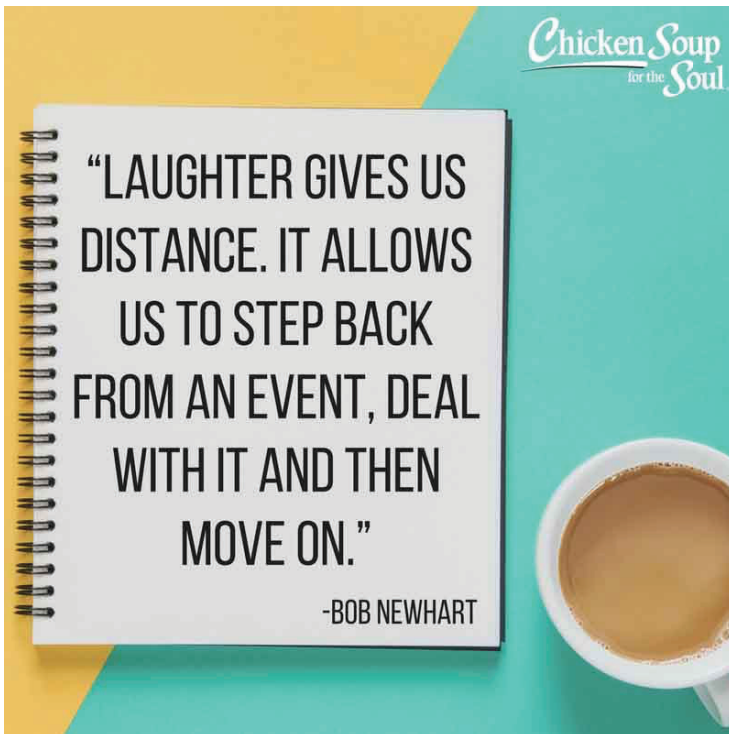


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Monday, April 23, 2018

- 4 p.m.: Junior High Track Meet at Aberdeen Central Track Meet
7 p.m.: School Board Meeting

Tuesday, April 24

- 11:30 a.m.: Track Meet in Groton
Aberdeen Central, Aberdeen Christian, Aberdeen Roncalli, Britton-Hecla, Edmunds Central, Florence/Henry, Frederick Area, Groton Area, Langford Area, Leola, Milbank Area, Northwestern Area, Redfield/Doland, Sisseton, Tiospa Zina, Warner and Waubay-Summit
(Pole vault, shot put, discus) will be held at Aberdeen Central on Monday, April 23 at 4 p.m.

Wednesday, April 25

- VEX World Robotics Competition at Louisville, KY

Thursday, April 26

- VEX World Robotics Competition at Louisville, KY
7 p.m.: FCCLA Style Show
10 a.m.: Girls Golf at Milbank Area

Friday, April 27

- VEX World Robotics Competition at Louisville, KY
FFA Banquet
3 p.m.: Track Meet at Sisseton

Saturday, April 28

- VEX World Robotics Competition at Louisville, KY

Harry Implement
"Family Owned & Operated Since 1935!"



(605) 395-6421

Ferney

Closed: Recycling Trailer in Groton
The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave. It is hoped that the trailer will be returned by the end of this week.

Bridal Shower

A bridal shower for Holly Carlson, bride-to-be of Tyler Candor, will be held Saturday, April 28, 2018, from 9:30 a.m. to 11 a.m., at Emmanuel Lutheran Church, Groton.

Cathy McNickle will be on the June 5th Republican Primary ballot for Brown County Auditor

Aberdeen – Brown County Auditor candidate Cathy McNickle is pleased to announce her candidacy for Brown County Auditor.

Cathy McNickle is born and raised in the county seat of Aberdeen where she resides with her husband, Murdock McNickle, who is originally from rural Groton. Cathy is an experienced auditor, accountant and public administrator.

"I am running for Brown County Auditor because I want to serve the citizens, taxpayers, and voters of Brown County. I am passionate about public administration and look forward to serving you." - Cathy McNickle

Cathy served at the Brown County Auditor's office for four years before being promoted to an auditor for the State of South Dakota. In addition to her career in public service Cathy has a bachelor's degree from the University of South Dakota.

As an accountant, Cathy will work hard to ensure the financial stability of Brown County. Cathy will keep the budget balanced and serve as budget advisor to county departments.

"I will be a watchdog for the taxpayers of our county by maintaining fiscal responsibility" – Cathy McNickle

As a public administrator Cathy will ensure fair policy administration as well as open public records. Cathy will facilitate fair and impartial elections in Brown County. Cathy is an experienced leader, fiscally conservative, and qualified to serve.



ABERDEEN AREA COMMUNITY CHOIR

The spring concert of the Aberdeen Area Community Choir, was held on Sunday afternoon, at the Congregational Church in Aberdeen. Bev Sombke and Lee Schinkel are members of this choir, and sang Sunday afternoon. Lee also had a vocal/piano solo for the concert.

N S U annual concert choir was performed at Johnson Fine Arts Center, on Saturday evening. Alexander Kern is a member of the college choir. Lee Schinkel was a guest singer with the choir that night.

Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jordan Wright

The NFL draft is nearly here! For most football fans, the NFL draft is like Christmas morning. Personally, I have been looking forward to this day since the Vikings lost the NFC Championship game in January. A really good draft can take a team from mediocrity to championship caliber, but on the flip side a bad draft can add years to a team's rebuild. The draft is very difficult to predict, and most teams are lucky to get one or two starters each year. Luckily, the Vikings General Manager Rick Spielman has been very good at drafting. He certainly has his share of "misses" like Christian Ponder, Scott Crichton and Josh Robinson, but he has even more "hits" like Harrison Smith, Xavier Rhodes, Anthony Barr, Eric Kendricks, Danielle Hunter, Dalvin Cook etc..

For a little bit of fun, I wanted to share some mock drafts that showcase what options the Vikings have. If you would like to do your own mock drafts, head over to www.fanspeak.com. I elected to use three different draft big boards for these three mock drafts, and I didn't include any trades. Even though the draft is seven rounds long, I am only including the first three rounds of the mocks because those are the rounds which are the most important. So, without further ado, let's get into some mock drafts!

The first mock draft I completed saw an offensive lineman fall down the draft a little, and I didn't hesitate to select guard Will Hernandez from Texas-El Paso. He is a player who will be able to come in right away and start at guard for the Vikings. In the second round I drafted Isaiah Oliver, a cornerback from Colorado. I don't expect he will still be around when the Vikings pick in the second round, but if he is the team should run to the podium and take him. He is a very good prospect who will provide depth and could challenge for a starting spot after a year or two under his belt. For the third and last pick I double dipped at offensive line, selecting Scott Quessenberry, a center from UCLA. I'm not sure if he is a starting-caliber player, but he can play center and both guard spots and will provide some excellent depth along the interior of the offensive line.

For the second mock draft I drafted Billy Price in the first round. He is a guard/ center from Ohio State. Price was considered one of the best offensive linemen in the draft before injuring his pectoral muscle at the combine. The injury should be minor and not cause him to miss too much time. He might start slowly, but should develop into a great guard in the NFL. In the second round I drafted Arden Key, a defensive end from LSU. Personally I think that might be a little too high for Key, but I'm sure Mike Zimmer is drooling over his athletic potential. To round out the draft I grabbed another defensive lineman in DaShawn Hand, defensive tackle from Alabama. Hand represents phenomenal talent in the third round and will provide some excellent depth along the defensive line and should develop into a solid starter if Sheldon Richardson were to leave next offseason.

For the third mock draft, I went a different direction. In the first round, cornerback Jaire Alexander from Louisville was sitting there at number 30 and I couldn't let him fall any further. He would challenge for playing time right away as a rookie and could overtake Trae Waynes as the starter in his second or third year. In the second round I really wanted to grab an offensive lineman but there weren't any good options available so I took the best player available in defensive end Sam Hubbard from Ohio State. Hubbard doesn't have the athleticism of a player like Danielle Hunter, but he should develop into a solid starter in a year or two. For the Vikings' third round pick, I selected Martinus Rankin, an offensive lineman from Mississippi State. Rankin played his college career at left tackle, but I think he could be better if he slides inside to guard. Either way, he provides the ability to play any position along the offensive line and could work his way into a starter within a few years.

What did you think of the mock drafts? Let me know by reaching out to me on Twitter (@JordanWright-NFL). Skol!

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The World Needs Strong U.S. Leadership Now More Than Ever

Earlier this month, the United States, in conjunction with our allies Great Britain and France, conducted missile strikes against three Syrian chemical facilities in response to the Syrian government's chemical weapons attack. It sent a strong message that the United States and two of its great European allies will not tolerate barbaric and inhumane chemical attacks on noncombatants.

When Syrian leader Bashar al-Assad's regime attacked its own citizens—including young children—with chemical weapons, it killed more than 60 civilians and injured hundreds more. Such use of chemical weapons is a violation of international law and a war crime that must not be tolerated by the civilized world.

In his address to the nation, President Trump explained that the "despicable attack" required a military response to establish a strong deterrent against the production, spread and use of chemical weapons, a vital national security interest of the United States. He also reaffirmed that the United States is prepared to sustain this response until the Syrian regime stops its use of prohibited chemical weapons. I support this strategy. The world needs strong leadership during this volatile time in our nation's history, and I believe President Trump's decision is an example of such leadership.

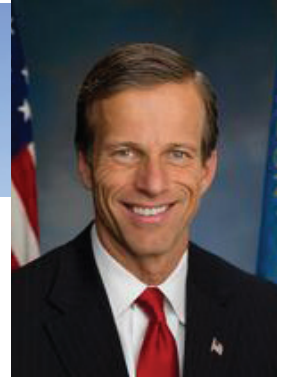
The recent airstrikes in Syria have revived discussion about the proper role for Congress in approving military action. The Constitution makes clear that it is Congress' role is to declare war while the president is commander in chief of the armed forces. Additionally, the War Powers Resolution, adopted in 1973, grants the president authority, under certain constraints, to initiate military action. In this context, both the missile strikes against Syrian chemical weapons facilities and our ongoing military operations to defeat the Islamic State raise important issues.

We currently have approximately 2,000 troops on the ground in Syria working to defeat the Islamic State. Their mission is covered under the 2001 Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF), issued by Congress following the 9/11 terrorist attacks. As a result, we and our allies have had great success against the Islamic State in Syria, and the territory that they control continues to shrink.

A bipartisan group of Senators who serve on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee recently introduced legislation to replace the 2001 AUMF with an updated one that would authorize the use of force against al-Qaida, the Taliban and ISIS in a way that better suits new conditions that have arisen since 2001. The intent is to reassert the role of Congress in deciding questions of war and peace, while continuing to allow the president to act swiftly when necessary, such as in the case of the recent missile strikes.

Updating the AUMF is a healthy discussion to have, and while we must certainly give the administration flexibility to act when necessary, there is certainly a role for Congress to play. I'm pleased the legislation is being carefully considered by the Senate Foreign Relations Committee chaired by Senator Bob Corker who has said committee members will be free to offer amendments during their debate of the measure. I welcome an open, robust debate on this important topic as our nation continues to provide global leadership against our enemies.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



Consumers to Robocallers: Enough Is Enough

I think we can all agree that there's at least one thing more annoying than having snow on the ground in mid-April: receiving an abusive or illegal robocall. And it doesn't matter if it's April or September, there's never a good time to receive one. In fact, unsolicited robocalls are among the top consumer complaints to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) and the Federal Communications Commission (FCC), two federal agencies under which my committee, the Commerce Committee, has jurisdiction.

Advancements in technology have made it easier for scammers to both take advantage of unsuspecting victims and elude the law enforcement professionals who are trying to crack down on this illegal behavior. Scammers and spoofers are often able to make calls from anywhere in the world, while creating the illusion they are coming from somewhere in your community. Last year, for example, the Watertown Police Department alerted residents to a spoofing scam in which the originating phone number was attributed to the police department itself.

We've all likely received one of these calls before. Your phone rings, a phone number with a familiar area code pops up, and you answer the call. It might be an automated message or a scammer himself. Maybe you're told you've "won" an all-expense-paid European vacation for you and your family – a contest you didn't know you'd even entered. Maybe a fake IRS agent or utility company claims you're delinquent, and you owe them money. One of the worst is the "grandparent scam" where callers trick elderly Americans into believing a family member is in trouble and needs quick financial help. The tactics might vary, but these are all blatant attempts to trick innocent, unsuspecting Americans.

While scammers and spoofers frequently use robocalls to target their victims, not all robocalls have a malicious intent. You've probably received an automated call reminding you of an upcoming doctor or dentist appointment. Many pharmacies use robocalls to alert patients when a prescription is ready to be picked up, and important safety recalls are often transmitted via robocalls, too. These legitimate calls aren't our concern, though.

There are few issues these days that garner significant bipartisan support in Congress, but protecting consumers from the bad actors who prey upon robocall victims happens to be one of those rare cases. I recently convened a Commerce Committee hearing during which we heard from folks whose job it is to combat illegal robocalls. We also heard from industry representatives who discussed ways consumers could stop receiving these calls in the first place.

One of the more headline-grabbing witnesses at our hearing ironically refused to pick up our calls – at least until we issued a subpoena for him to appear. Adrian Abramovich is currently facing \$120 million in FCC penalties for allegedly making nearly 100 million robocalls throughout the country. He didn't answer all of our questions and downplayed his culpability, but he did offer a few interesting insights into his practices.

If you think you've been the victim of a phone scam or have received a suspicious call, you should contact your local police department, and if you're interested in being placed on the federal "do not call list," visit www.donotcall.gov. It's important to note, though, even if a phone number is on the list, consumers should always remain vigilant – remember, scammers don't follow the law. You can also file complaints with the FTC and FCC and find more information about the steps they're taking to protect consumers by visiting their respective websites. My office can help, too. Always feel free to give us a call.

This is Severe Weather Awareness Week

PIERRE, S.D. – State officials say it is time to start preparing for the inevitable severe weather that will happen this summer.

Next week, April 23-27, has been designated as Severe Weather Awareness Week in South Dakota. Officials say this is a good time to start thinking about what to do when severe thunderstorms or tornadoes impact the state.

“With our late winter this year, it has been easy not to think about summer and severe weather,” says Tina Titze, director of the South Dakota Office of Emergency Management. “But summer will eventually arrive and so will severe weather. Everybody needs to be ready.”

State and local officials use the week to urge people to start making preparations now. Several counties throughout the week are holding severe weather preparedness meetings for their weather spotters and the public.

“We really encourage families to start having those discussions now about what to do if severe weather hits,” Titze says. “It is never too early to start making those plans.”

A statewide tornado drill will be held Wednesday, April 25. The test watch is scheduled for 10 a.m. CDT (9 a.m. MDT) with the warning issued at 10:15 a.m. CDT (9:15 a.m. MDT).

In most communities on Wednesday, severe weather sirens will be sounded. People are reminded that it is only a test unless otherwise announced.

For more information on how to be ready for severe weather, click onto the Office of Emergency Management’s Severe Weather Preparedness Guide at <https://dps.sd.gov/application/files/9115/2339/2511/2018-severe-weather-guide.pdf>.

The Office of Emergency Management is part of the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.

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Today in Weather History

April 23, 2002: High winds of 35 to 50 mph gusting to over 70 mph occurred across much of central and northeast South Dakota. The high winds caused some spotty damage to property and trees. With the dry conditions, dust was stirred up by the winds and caused reduced visibilities at many locations. The highest wind gust was 72 mph at Onida.

1885 - The city of Denver, CO, was in the midst of a storm which produced 23 inches of snow in 24 hours, and at Idaho Springs CO produced 32 inches of snow. (David Ludlum)

1910 - The temperature at the Civic Center in Los Angeles, CA, hit 100 degrees to establish an April record for the city. (The Weather Channel)

1948: A three block long section was devastated at the edge of Ionia, Iowa in Chickasaw County by an estimated F4 tornado. Six homes and a church were leveled, and nine other homes were severely damaged. Two deaths occurred in the collapse of the Huffman Implement Store. Overall, the tornado killed five people, injured 25, and caused \$250,000 in damages. An F2 tornado touched down initially 5 miles northeast of Rochester. Barns, silos, windmills, and machinery were destroyed on four farms as this tornado tracked north.

1961: Severe weather struck the south suburbs of Chicago, IL. Joliet, IL reported an inch of hail with some hailstones the size of golf balls. Heavy rain from these storms also resulted in some flooding. A tornado struck the town of Peotone resulting in damage to nearly every building with damage also reported in Lorenzo and Wilton Center, IL. Estimated damage was \$9 million with about 30,000 structures affected.

1983 - A mini-blizzard produced sixteen inches of snow at Laramie, WY, including a foot of snow in just eight hours during the night. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms in the Atlantic Coast Region produced golf ball size hail and wind gusts to 67 mph at Anderson SC. The high winds destroyed two planes at the airport, and the large hail damaged fifty other planes, and severely damaged twenty-three greenhouses. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - An intense winter-like storm brought thunderstorms to southern California, and produced snow in some of the higher elevations. Nine girls at Tustin CA were injured when lightning struck the tree under which their softball team had taken shelter from the rain. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)








1989: Salina Kansas was the hot spot in the nation with a high of 105 degrees. The high of 105 degrees established an April record for the state of Kansas.

1990 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in West Texas and western Oklahoma. Thunderstorms produced tennis ball size hail at Lake McKenzie TX and at Garden City TX, and produced wind gusts to 90 mph at Gage OK. Thunderstorms drenched southeast Minnesota with heavy rain, with 6.6 inches reported northwest of Browndale. High temperatures were mostly in the 80s across the central U.S. The morning low of 67 degrees at Fargo ND and afternoon high of 91 degrees were both records for the date. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1999: On Friday, April 23, 1999, a horrific hailstorm moved southeast from Pennsylvania across Garrett County, Maryland and into the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia. It had weakened some as it crossed Garrett County and the Alleghany Front, but as it passed east of Keyser, West Virginia, hail began to increase in size once again. By the time it reached Capon Bridge in eastern Hampshire County, West Virginia, the size of the hail had grown from golf balls to baseballs. As it moved into Frederick County, VA, the hail storm continued to grow dropping golf ball size hail in a swath now reaching from the north of Winchester, south to Stephen City (about 10 miles). Hailstones grew to the size of Grapefruit (4 inches in diameter) east of Winchester. The storm continued east through Clarke County, southern Loudoun, and northern Fauquier doing considerable damage to Middleburg, then across Fairfax County hitting Centreville, Chantilly, Fairfax, Burke, Springfield, and Lorton with golf ball size to baseball size hail. It crossed the Potomac River and weakened slightly. It moved across northern Charles, clipped southern Prince Georges and then into Calvert County with 1 inch to 1.5-inch diameter hail and onto the Chesapeake Bay continuing southeast to the ocean. The damage left behind was incredible. In Northern Virginia alone, it amounted to over \$50 million in losses to public and private properties. Some communities saw a third of the homes with siding and roof damage. Some required total replacement. Windows were broken, cars dented, and windshields smashed. Piles of shredded plant debris were left on the ground in the storm path. In about 6 hours of time, this one thunderstorm, moving at about 50 mph, did \$75 million in damage. There have been other severe hail storms to hit this area before, but none to cause this much damage to property.

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Mon Apr 23	Tue Apr 24	Wed Apr 25	Thu Apr 26	Fri Apr 27	Sat Apr 28	Sun Apr 29
						
70°F	56°F	64°F	57°F	62°F	67°F	68°F
43°F	32°F	41°F	33°F	37°F	42°F	62°F
S 8 MPH	NNE 17 MPH Precip 70%	SSW 14 MPH	NNW 21 MPH	WNW 9 MPH	SSE 11 MPH	ESE 15 MPH



Above Normal Temperatures



Mostly Sunny

Skies will be mostly sunny today as temperatures rise into the upper 60s to the lower 70s across the region.

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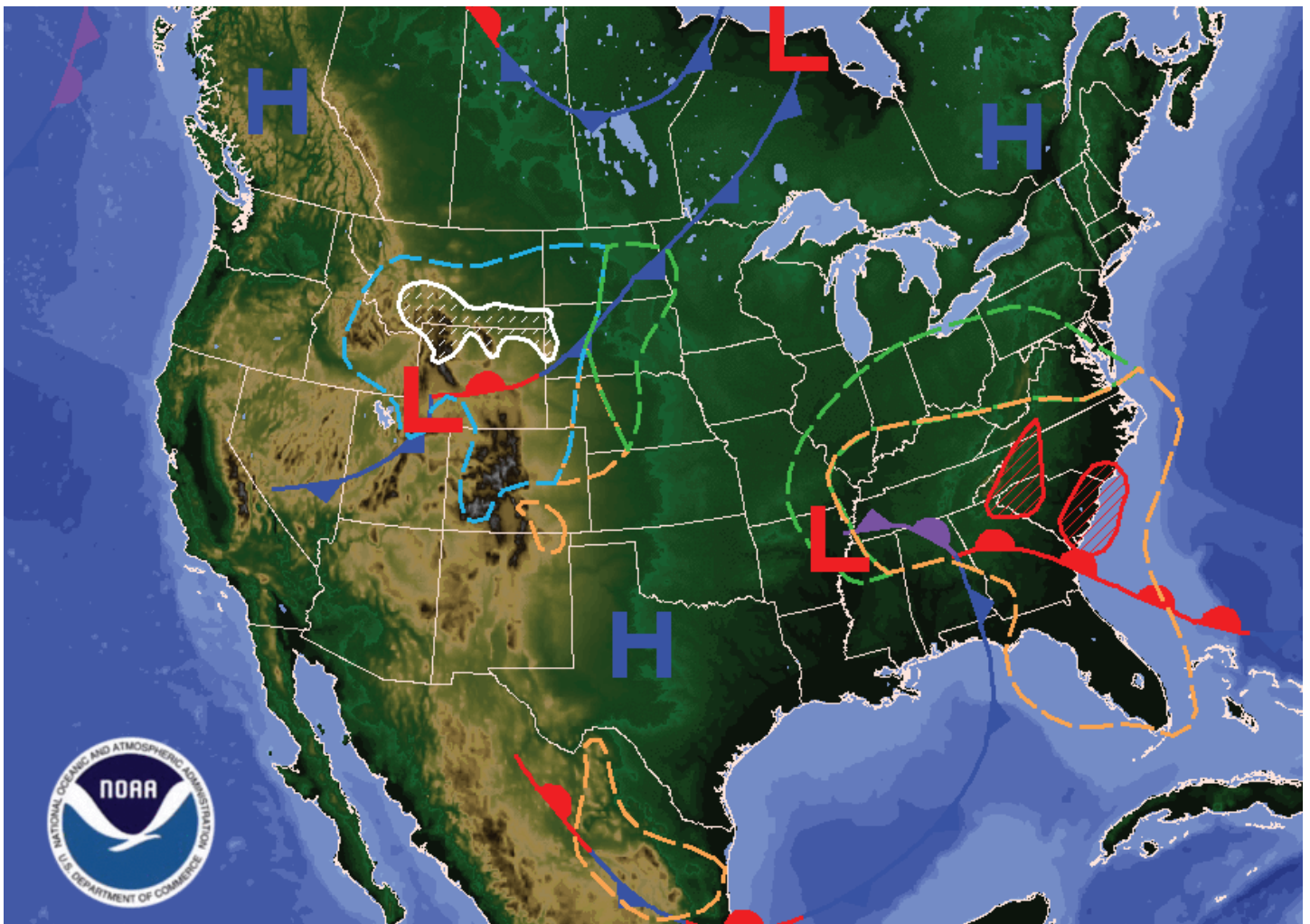
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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 63.6 F at 4:49 PM
Low Outside Temp: 32.2 F at 5:33 AM
Wind Chill:
High Gust: 25.0 Mph at 1:37 PM
Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 90° in 1909
Record Low: 14° in 1956
Average High: 61°F
Average Low: 35°F
Average Precip in April: 1.25
Precip to date in April: 0.61
Average Precip to date: 3.43
Precip Year to Date: 2.68
Sunset Tonight: 8:30 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:32 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Mon, Apr 23, 2018, issued 4:49 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McCreynolds 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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ESTABLISHED FOREVER!

If God said "it" we can believe it. And if He did "it" we know it is right. And when He created this planet we have His assurance that it will never be moved from its orbit. It is safe, stable and secure until His "plan for the ages" is complete. The Psalmist was convinced of this when He wrote in Psalm 104:5, "He set the earth on its foundations; it can never be moved."

There is nothing as important as the foundation of a building if it is to withstand the blasts of tornadoes and tremors of earthquakes. Foundations are essential and are designed and built to withstand the violent acts of "nature." Many building codes have been revised after buildings have been destroyed and people killed. However, no guarantee is given that they are beyond some damage. Not God's creation, however. He guarantees His work!

God gave us a guarantee that the foundation of this earth is secure. Isaiah wrote of another foundation: "This is what the Sovereign Lord says: I will lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation; the one who trusts (in this Foundation) will never be dismayed."

This Foundation is the Messiah, the one in whom we have our salvation and on whom we build our lives for eternity. Even as the foundation of this earth has God's guarantee that it cannot be "moved," so does our salvation in Him have His guarantee that this same power is ours for this life and the one to come.

Prayer: What a blessed assurance is ours, Lord, to know that nothing is as secure as Your Eternal Word. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 104:5 He set the earth on its foundations; it can never be moved.

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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

Weary, but not without hope

By SAMUEL BLACKSTONE, Rapid City Journal

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — In cities and towns across the nation, homelessness is on the rise. In Rapid City, government officials and nonprofits are trying to mitigate this trend with the county's soon-to-open Restoration Center and Rapid City Collective Impact's proposed One Heart Center. But to truly understand homelessness, one must first understand its cause. Over the past few weeks, one reporter traversed Rapid City to speak directly with the town's homeless about the life events that put them on the streets.

The Rapid City Journal reports that Sandra Gayton, 51, used to have an apartment. She used to have closets of clothes, cupboards of food and hot showers, too. But as she sits on a bench across from Tally's Silver Spoon in downtown Rapid City on the second day of spring, the bright afternoon sun warming her back, she says she has little other than her boyfriend, Thomas LeBeaux, 62, and hope.

"Living on the streets is rough," she said. "It's sad. There's not much food. There's no shower. It's cold."

Gayton's mother died when she was just a child, living on Standing Rock Indian Reservation. Raised by a foster family in Rapid City — her last name a vestige of that time — she graduated from Horace Mann Elementary, North Middle School and Central High before moving to Aberdeen for work.

Gayton was a cleaner at a hospital there until she was 35, then moved to Yankton to work at the Human Services Center for five years. She returned to Rapid City in 2011 and worked part time at Ellsworth Air Force Base as a dishwasher and cleaner for six years. Then, they let her go. She searched for a new job but found nothing.

"You've got to be a qualified cleaner or a professional to have these jobs in town," Gayton said of Rapid City. With little money saved, she eventually ended up homeless.

"I've been walking around the streets with nothing," she said of the past couple years, adding that she doesn't receive Supplemental Security Income, or social security. Gayton has stayed with friends, at the Cornerstone Rescue Mission's Women and Children's Home and at the Crisis Care Center for short stints.

"Living on the streets is rough," Sandra Gayton said. "It's sad. There's not much food. There's no shower. It's cold."

"I can't find any relatives or family to take me in or family that needs me," she said. "When someone comes around and needs me for something like babysitting or cooking or cleaning then I think I will have money to be off the streets."

But her true home of late has been a makeshift shelter in Baken Park crafted by and shared with LeBeaux. Each night, Gayton and LeBeaux bundle beneath about a dozen quilts to stay warm. They married more than three decades ago on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, where LeBeaux was born, but the state wouldn't recognize the marriage license. So for now they simply "cohabitate," LeBeaux says. Besides, if they got married, LeBeaux's Supplemental Security Income benefits, which he splits with Gayton, would be cut.

"I don't cheat on her, and she doesn't cheat on me," LeBeaux said of their arrangement.

They like it outside, and with spring's sporadic arrival underway, their living situation will only improve, keeping both away from the shelters, they said. Their worn faces failed to dampen a pair of toothless grins as LeBeaux talked about watching the birds each morning and listening to the train's bellow each night from their shelter.

"She likes railroads. Trains," he said. "We wave at them when they go by."

Joe One Feather's mother had diabetes. His father, cancer. Now, as he sits on a shaded bench a mile north of their final resting place, he says he has both.

"Cancer kicked in on me in 2013," One Feather, 58, said in mid-March. "The medication I take slows it down. It doesn't take it away or cure it, but it slows it down."

Still, One Feather says there are moments in the day when he begins to fade.

"I get kind of weak sometimes," he said. "But I just got to keep going forward. I can't let that stop me."

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Before those problems, One Feather had a house, wife, family and a steady job. Originally from Standing Rock Indian Reservation, One Feather said he moved to Rapid City in 1985 and began working at the Federal Beef Processors plant, now the site of Founder's Park. When the plant burned down in 2002, he found work as a carpenter with a local construction company.

"I can build a house if I want to," he said. "But I'm getting old now."

When he lost that job, he struggled to find something else. Then, One Feather started drinking.

"Sometimes I would turn into an alcoholic," he said. "A bad one."

Eventually, his wife left him and returned to her family in Pine Ridge.

"Finally, I just gave up on it," he said of searching for work and paying for his apartment on East North Street. One Feather has been homeless since September 2016.

"It's hard out here sometimes, but once you get used to it, it's OK," he said of life on the streets.

On the bitter cold nights, he goes to the city/county detox center. He also stays at the mission occasionally, or at his brother's apartment in Star Village. But recently, he's been sleeping near the Journey Museum in an alcove shielded from the wind. Four sleeping bags and four blankets get him through the night.

One Feather hopes his situation may soon change. He's waiting to hear from the government about his appeal for Supplemental Security Income. He's been rejected two times but heard from others that luck often strikes on the third appeal. Each appeal takes about six months, he says.

If approved, he may go back to Standing Rock, where his four children — all of them in their 30s — live with their families. But for now, One Feather is simply waiting to hear about his appeal while doing his best to stay sober.

"They invite me to go back, but it's me," he said of returning to the reservation and his family. "I like it around here. My parents are buried here."

Katherine Backus, 23, has a knack for remembering dates. She can recall the exact day she left her mother's home and moved in with her adoptive parents, Oct. 29, 2002, or the day she legally became a member of their family, Oct. 3, 2003.

She can recite the date of her first night at the Cornerstone Mission, Dec. 14, 2016, the day she left it for Hot Springs, Dec. 21, 2016, and the day she moved into an apartment in there, Jan. 3, 2017.

But it's the more difficult times like first being diagnosed with autism, or the abusive episodes with her ex-boyfriend, or the time she lost her temper and hit him in public, leading to a domestic violence charge, when she leaves out exact dates.

Originally from Sioux City, Iowa, Backus has spent most of the past two and a half years in Hot Springs, she said. Up until last October, most of her time was spent with her ex-boyfriend. Then, they broke up.

"That's when I finally had enough of him taking my money and using it for drugs," she said Wednesday from the mission's back lot. "He was very mentally, physically and verbally abusive to me, constantly putting me down, playing mind games with me, doing things where my body hurt the entire day."

"I pretty much had to leave," Katherine Backus said. "I was tired of feeling worthless."

Two years ago, he put her in a "backbreaker" wrestling move known as the "Walls of Jericho." As her chest lay on the ground, he squatted over her, pulling her lower back and legs backward and toward her head.

"I've had back pain ever since," Backus said.

Things eventually came to a head when, during an argument in her boyfriend's family home, he barricaded her in the bathroom.

"He would not let me out." After that, "I pretty much had to leave," she said. "I was tired of feeling worthless."

Backus arrived at the mission on June 2, 2017, for the second time following that incident, before eventually returning to Hot Springs. There, she found an apartment. A fiancé, too.

"My fiancé absolutely thinks the world of me, and I think the world of him," she said, adding that her temper has cooled and she's begun taking her medication for autism, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and depression more regularly since they met.

But on April 1, Backus returned to the Mission after losing her apartment. It's the first time since they got engaged last November that they've been apart, and she hopes to return to him and Hot Springs by

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June or July, with monthly visits in between.

In the meantime, Backus plans to find work in retail or food service and save money so when she returns, they can get an apartment together. Her fiancé is currently unemployed and lives with his father, she said.

"As long as I can do the job, it doesn't wear me out and it doesn't make me ache and hurt my pains too bad," she said, "I can do it."

In 2011, Vini Dillon, 52, walked into the hospital for a simple outpatient surgery on his gallbladder. Two weeks and a septic infection later, he stepped out into the dry plains air exhausted.

Nonetheless, he was at his job at Western Buffalo Co. the next day, a job he'd had for a decade. Almost immediately, he noticed something was different. They started "cracking the whip" on him, he said from the seat of his walker in the backyard of the Mission in early January. Feeling disrespected, he waited for his next paycheck then quit.

"I haven't been back," he said. Unemployed, Dillon returned to his hometown on Rosebud Indian Reservation, enrolled in college and completed the first semester. Then, he got methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*, or MRSA, a bacterium that causes infections in different parts of the body.

"I'm going to live," said Vini Dillon. "I'm going to have a life. To get out on my own is a big deal, you know?"

Since then, Dillon's life has been a series of health complications, he said. He's been diagnosed with osteonecrosis — or as Dillon calls it, "brittle bone disease" — and has had knee, hip and shoulder replacements as a result. His appendix ruptured a while back and just recently, he had abscesses removed under his armpit and molar. Restricted to a wheelchair for much of the past seven years, he now has diabetes.

"I've heard miracle man several times from different doctors," he said.

When he was working, Dillon, unmarried and without children, helped provide for his sister and her children. Now, he's become such a burden that his family can't help him.

"Coming to a place like this and having to humble myself and ask for help has been a big deal for me," he said. "It's been very surreal losing your body."

Yet, he remains upbeat.

Last year, he was in a wheelchair, something doctors told him would always be the case. Now, he leans on his walker just slightly as he ambles across the mission's back lot. Last year, his right arm could barely move. Now, he shakes it and grins.

"I've been through the wringer, but you know, I'm still here," he said. "No matter what, I'm smiling at life."

Lately, he's been searching for housing and hopes to be on his own again soon. He's been saving most of his monthly disability check and the mission said they'd help him with the security deposit and first month's rent. A wide smile stretches across his face as he talks about being independent again.

"Our bodies are wonderful, miraculous things," he said. "People take it for granted. I'm just so happy that my body's back. I never felt this kind of thing about it. I'm going to live. I'm going to have a life. To get out on my own is a big deal, you know?"

Update: On Friday, Dillon moved out of the mission and into a one-bedroom apartment in north Rapid City.

Tiffany Big Fire, 41, sat on a cold, hard metal folding chair last week, dragging from a bummed cigarette intermittently as she waited for dinner at the Mission. She stared out toward the gray sky blankly. Tonight would be the first night she ever spent at a homeless shelter, she said. It was also her birthday.

"I've kind of lived all over, but I never did go to a mission," she said quietly. She wasn't nervous or apprehensive. "I'm sad."

Just a few months ago she was living in Winnebago, Nebraska, with her husband and near her 21-year-old daughter. She had lived in Winnebago for the past seven years, she said, working as a waitress at a casino.

But just recently, her marriage fell apart. Her husband stayed in their house while she headed west to her brothers' home in Porcupine, South Dakota. Just a two-bedroom house, Big Fire said it was overcrowded even before she arrived, with her brother, his wife and their children crammed in one room and two other brothers, one with a girlfriend, occupying the other room and living area. So after a brief respite, she continued west to Rapid City.

"There's more opportunities here than there is down there," Big Fire said, comparing Rapid City to Por-

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cupine.

She arrived in town a week ago and was crashing at friend's apartment while looking for work. But when it started causing problems between her friend and the landlord, she decided to leave.

"I don't want her to lose her home," Big Fire said.

She's applied for positions at a few area casinos and restaurants by Rushmore Mall as well as some temporary housekeeping jobs but has yet to hear back. Once Big Fire finds something, she hopes to save money, get her own place and start anew.

"I just came here looking for work," she said.

Fifteen years ago, John Red Paint, 28, ran away from a broken home.

"My dad was an old Marine. He used to beat up my mom," Red Paint said recently from a curved, concrete bench on Main Street. "He used to beat on us, too."

Eventually, the abuse not only drove him from Pine Ridge; it drove him and his seven brothers to alcohol. Of all the boys, he's the only one still alive, Red Paint said.

His father is dead too, killed by his mother two or three years ago, he said. The exact timing is hazy, and Red Paint doesn't seem interested in digging to find the answer. His mother is in prison now and his five sisters are still on the reservation, he adds. He doesn't go back there anymore.

"Why should I go back there?" he said. "People die down there, and people don't even care."

Now, he calls the streets of Rapid City home.

"I don't mind it because this place is not like the rez, you know? The rez is hazardous for your health, man. At least up here I've got friends and family."

Red Paint stays with uncles and aunts from time to time but avoids the mission. "Too much bodies there," he said.

He knows most of the homeless community in town and doesn't lament his life. But lately, he's been considering heading south.

"I was thinking about going to Virginia. I guess it's nice down that way," Red Paint said, adding that his sister-in-law said she could give him a place to stay. It's a small town, though he's forgotten the name. The name doesn't matter as much as the idea anyways, he said.

"Get that ticket and get out of this town."

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

Viral antenna video pays off for Sioux Falls Tower

By JEREMY J FUGLEBERG, Argus Leader

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Call it the shot seen 'round the world.

In 2014, a local drone pilot flew a drone up a 1,500-foot TV tower, following a Sioux Falls Tower climber as he made his way to the top, then took a selfie.

The Argus Leader reports that the stunningly clear drone footage, at that time a relatively new phenomenon, got posted on YouTube and won notice. First a couple hundred views. Then a British news site picked up the video, and a viral star was born.

"From there on it just went crazy," said Todd Thorin, director of safety at Sioux Falls Tower. The viral video sensation recently passed 10 million views.

Thorin, owner of the drone through his company, Prairie Aerial, directed the flight as his son flew the drone up the tower, following climber Kevin Schmidt as he changed out a light bulb.

Thorin has also had a bird's-eye view of what has happened since the video was posted online.

The tower video just keeps paying off for Sioux Falls Tower and Prairie Aerial. The video has brought in money and free publicity, and improved an image for tower climbers, who are usually only featured in videos online when things go wrong, Thorin said.

"It really brought us a lot of attention, it really brought us a lot of attention to the industry as a whole," Thorin said. "Before then, any media coverage of tower guys made us look like idiots, yahoos and knuck-

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leheads. We weren't too happy about that. This kind of changed that. All of a sudden people were interested in what we do."

Thorin was interested in drones long before they became mainstream. He always thought a video of a guy climbing up and working on a TV antenna would be spectacular, he said.

The antenna video proved him right. The video earned 1 million views in about 5 days, and additional media coverage including CNN, the discovery channel and shows around the world, including German and Japan.

"One of the inquiries that came over YouTube was people that manage viral videos," Thorin said. "They promote, manage and do the deals for you and what not."

Thorin signed up with the company, which has helped track down un-approved posts of the video and pursue money for the post, earning Thorin \$500 from the British news site that had scooped up the video and posted it itself.

The interest just hasn't stopped.

"Just lately, a couple of months ago, a network television program from Germany called 'WTF' came calling and wanted to send a crew over to recreate it," Thorin said.

The video was also an official selection of the 2016 New York City Drone Film Festival, and connected Thorin to local video production professionals and got him additional work, including Climber Connection safety campaign by the National Association of Tower Erectors.

But not all the interest was welcome. At the time, the lack of specific drone use guidelines meant the antenna flight was against federal rules. The Federal Aviation Administration called Thorin to complain.

"They called me up and said I can't do that. I did have a talk with them," he said. "In the end I asked them, 'Did you like the video?'"

Yes, the FAA caller did.

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

South Dakota student wins geography bee for third time

EMERY, S.D. (AP) — A seventh-grader in southeast South Dakota has just won the state geography bee for the third consecutive time.

Owen Fink won his third South Dakota geography bee earlier this month, the Daily Republic reported .

"I feel like everybody is pretty tired of this kid winning three years in a row, but I'm also excited because I get to go to D.C. again," he said.

The Bridgewater-Emery Middle School student began loving geography at 3 years old when his mother gave him a puzzle of the United States and a globe.

"He read at an early age, so he learned the states and capitals," said Valerie Marsh, Owen's mother. "So I knew early on he had a knack for retaining facts and geography."

Owen has competed in and won his school competition each of the last four years. Elementary Principal Kim Aman says she's excited about exposure Owen gives the district.

"This is quite a feat to make it to state four years in a row," Aman said. "It brings some recognition to Bridgewater-Emery. We plan to continue the bee because they learn about the world around them."

Owen said he found the competitions have made him realize the importance of being a global citizen.

"You can operate all over the world," he said. "If there's a problem, your knowledge of geography can help protect the earth, its environment and its people."

Owen will travel to Washington at the end of May for the national competition against more than 50 other students. He aims to make the finals, where the top 10 competitors are televised while competing for the national title.

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

Yankton updates rules for peddlers, solicitors

YANKTON, S.D. (AP) — A city in southeast South Dakota is changing its rules for peddlers for the first time since 1949.

The Yankton City Commission voted recently to impose higher fees and a time limit on peddlers operating in the city. The vote came after commissioners approached City Manager Amy Nelson about the ordinance, the Yankton Press & Dakotan reported .

"Commissioner (Tony) Maibaum and Commissioner (Nathan) Johnson noticed that those fees had been established back in 1949 and they hadn't been changed," Nelson said. "They did go up, substantially, this evening. That's probably a good thing and more in concert with what other communities are doing."

Before the ordinance change, the city's peddler's fees were \$5 per year for each foot peddler or solicitor, and \$10 per year for people operating with a motor vehicle.

"If you look at rates for cities around the state ... we are not even in the ballpark," Johnson said.

Commissioners voted unanimously to adopt a fee structure similar to the city of Vermillion, which charges \$25 per day, \$75 per week and \$200 per month per person.

Peddlers will also see new hours during which they can operate.

"To me, it's a privilege for peddlers to go around selling their wares," Johnson said. "A lot of people don't necessarily appreciate it."

The new hours will be from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

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

Britain's Duchess of Cambridge in labor with 3rd child

By SYLVIA HUI and JILL LAWLESS, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The "Great Kate Wait" entered its final stages Monday, as the Duchess of Cambridge was admitted to a London hospital in labor with a third child for her and Prince William.

The 36-year-old duchess and her husband traveled by car from their Kensington Palace home to the private Lindo Wing of St. Mary's Hospital in central London, royal officials said. The palace said Kate was in "the early stages of labor" with a child who will be fifth in line to the throne.

William and Kate married in 2011 and have two other children: Prince George, 4, and Princess Charlotte, who turns 3 next week. Both were born at the same hospital, as were William and his younger brother Prince Harry.

The baby, whose gender hasn't been announced, will be Queen Elizabeth II's sixth great-grandchild and fifth in line to the throne, after grandfather Prince Charles, father Prince William and the two older siblings.

The new arrival will bump Prince Harry to sixth place in the line of succession.

The 36-year-old duchess, formerly Kate Middleton, carried out her last official engagement on March 22 before going on maternity leave.

As in her previous pregnancies, Kate suffered from hyperemesis gravidarum, a severe form of morning sickness. Officials announced both her previous pregnancies before the traditional 12-week mark because she was too unwell to attend public engagements.

The birth is being overseen by consultant obstetrician Guy Thorpe-Beeston and consultant gynecologist Alan Farthing — who were also called in for the births of George and Charlotte — as well as the hospital's midwives.

In a mix of royal tradition and modernity, the birth will be announced with a notice placed on an easel in the forecourt of Buckingham Palace — and on royal social media accounts.

Like the baby's older siblings, the child's full title will be Her (or His) Royal Highness, Princess (or Prince), followed by several given names.

Many are betting on a traditional royal name for the baby, with bookmakers saying Mary, Alice, Arthur and James are the most popular guesses. Monday is St. George's Day, England's national day, but the name is already taken by the baby's big brother.

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Television crews, journalists and royal fans have set up camp outside the hospital for the "royal baby watch" since early April in anticipation of the arrival.

John Loughrey, a veteran royal-watcher who has been camped outside the hospital for two weeks, said the baby would be "very good for our country and of course Her Majesty the queen."

"I'm so pleased it's St. George's Day," he said. "St. George himself would be very pleased if the baby's born today."

Waffle House suspect still being sought; residents on alert

By SHEILA BURKE, Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — As an intensive manhunt continued Monday for a half-naked man suspected in the slayings of four people at a Waffle House restaurant, authorities shared reports of previous efforts to contain the gun-loving man with paranoid delusions.

More than 80 Nashville police officers continued to search for Travis Reinking early Monday, authorities said. Agents with the FBI, the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives and troopers with the Tennessee Highway Patrol joined the manhunt.

He was also added to the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation's Top 10 Most Wanted list.

Reinking was nearly naked, wearing only a green jacket and brandishing an assault-style rifle when he opened fire in the parking lot and then stormed the restaurant, police say. Four people were killed and four others were injured before a quick-thinking customer wrestled the gun away, preventing more bloodshed.

Metropolitan Nashville Police Chief Steve Anderson said at a news conference that Reinking, 29, was last seen Sunday around a wooded area near an apartment complex where he lived, wearing only pants and no shirt or shoes.

Anderson said it's not clear why Reinking opened fire on restaurant patrons with an assault weapon, though he may have "mental issues."

He may still be armed, Anderson said, because he was known to have owned a handgun authorities have not recovered.

"He's on foot," Anderson said. "Unless he's been picked up by a car, he would be fairly close. We don't want to alarm people, but certainly, everybody should take precautions. It could be he's in an unoccupied house. We want everybody to be concerned. Neighbors should check on each other."

Nashville public schools will go into "lock-out" mode if Reinking isn't found in time for class Monday, officials said. That means students will be free to move about the building, but no guests or visitors will be allowed to enter.

As the search continued, authorities in Illinois shared past reports suggesting multiple red flags about a disturbed young man with paranoid delusions who liked firearms.

In May 2016, Reinking told deputies from Tazewell County, Illinois, that music superstar Taylor Swift was stalking him and hacking his phone, and that his family was also involved, according to a report released Sunday.

Another sheriff's report said Reinking barged into a community pool in Tremont, Illinois, last June, and jumped into the water wearing a pink woman's coat over his underwear. Investigators believed he had an AR-15 rifle in his car trunk, but it was never displayed. No charges were filed.

Last July, Reinking was arrested by the U.S. Secret Service after he crossed into a restricted area near the White House and refused to leave, saying he wanted to meet President Donald Trump. Reinking was not armed at the time, but at the FBI's request, state police in Illinois revoked his state firearms card and seized four guns from him, authorities said.

The AR-15 used in the shootings was among the firearms seized.

Then, in August, Reinking told police he wanted to file a report about 20 to 30 people tapping into his computer and phone and people "barking like dogs" outside his residence, according to a report.

Reinking agreed to go to a local hospital for an evaluation after repeatedly resisting the request, the report said.

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"There's certainly evidence that there's some sort of mental health issues involved," Tazwell County Sheriff Robert Huston said. But he said deputies returned the guns to Reinking's father on the promise that he would "keep the weapons secure and out of the possession of Travis."

Nashville Police spokesman Don Aaron said that Reinking's father "has now acknowledged giving them back" to his son.

After the shooting, police recovered three of the four guns originally taken from Reinking, officials said. They believe he still has at least one handgun.

Phone calls to a number listed for the father, Jeffrey Reinking, went unanswered.

It is not clear why Reinking moved recently from Morton, Illinois, to Nashville and if it had anything to do with being near Swift. Police say he was employed in construction for a while, and there would have been enough work in the booming city for him.

Police say Reinking drove into the Waffle House parking lot in his gold Chevy Silverado pickup early Sunday and sat there for about four minutes before opening fire outside the restaurant.

The victims fatally shot in the parking have been identified as Taurean Sanderlin, 29, of Goodlettsville, and Joe Perez, 20, of Nashville.

Sanderlin was an employee at the restaurant.

Perez's mother posted a picture of her son on Facebook and asked for prayers, saying it was the hardest day of her life. "Me, my husband and sons are broken right now with this loss," Trisha Perez said in the post. "Our lives are shattered."

Reinking then went inside the restaurant and opened fire, police said.

One of the fatally wounded inside was DeEbony Groves, a 21-year student at Nashville's Belmont University. She was remembered as an exceptional student who made the Dean's list, and a tenacious basketball player.

"She was a brilliant young lady, very, very intelligent and a very hard worker," Gallatin High School basketball coach Kim Kendrick told The Tennessean.

Akilah Dasilva was also killed inside the restaurant. The 23-year-old from Antioch was a rap artist and music video producer who had such skills behind the camera that he was a favorite among many of Music City's independent musicians and recording labels, The Tennessean reported.

"Music is my life and I will never stop until I achieve my dreams," Dasilva said on his Twitter account.

Dasilva's mother told CBS News that her son was a student at Middle Tennessee State University and aspired to be a music engineer.

He was at the restaurant with his girlfriend, 21-year-old Tia Waggoner, the paper reported. Waggoner was wounded and is being treated at Vanderbilt University Medical Center. Dasilva's family said she underwent surgery and doctors were trying to save her leg.

Police say Sharita Henderson, 24, of Antioch, was wounded and is being treated at VUMC.

Also wounded was James Shaw Jr., a 29-year-old restaurant patron who burned his hand grabbing the hot muzzle of the assault weapon as he wrestled the gun away. A Nashville native who works as a wireless technician for AT&T, Shaw said he was no hero — despite being hailed as one by Nashville Mayor David Briley.

Shaw said he pounced on the suspect out of self-preservation, after making up his mind that "he was going to have to work to kill me."

Associated Press writers John Raby in Charleston, West Virginia; Ed White in Detroit; and Justin Pritchard in Los Angeles contributed to this report.

Man who snatched AR-15 from gunman: 'It was life or death'

By SHEILA BURKE, Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — The man who snatched an AR-15 rifle from a gunman at a busy Tennessee restaurant says his was a "selfish" act of self-preservation and he doesn't consider himself a hero. Never mind that he is being credited with saving several other lives.

"When I grabbed the barrel of the weapon it was hot, but I didn't care. It was life or death," said James Shaw Jr., a 29-year-old Nashville resident who found himself wrestling with the suspect after four people had already been fatally shot at a Waffle House bustling with wee hour patrons early Sunday in Nashville.

Shaw joined law enforcement officials and Nashville's mayor at a news conference Sunday, some 12 hours after the shooting, his right hand bandaged. There he was singled out by Waffle House CEO Walter Ehmer, who was present and thanked Shaw for his bravery.

"You don't get to meet too many heroes in life," Ehmer said before addressing Shaw, who dabbed at tears in his eyes. "We are forever in your debt."

Shaw said that after going to a nightclub he had decided to stop with a friend early Sunday at a Waffle House. But the first one he visited was too crowded with overnight patrons, so he ended up going to another in Nashville.

As he entered the Waffle House, he was just two minutes ahead of the gunman, seating himself at a counter.

Suddenly he heard a loud noise, thinking at first that freshly washed plates had crashed from a stack in the restaurant. Then, he said, he saw restaurant workers running and turned and saw a body near the front door as the gunman burst in.

It was then that he realized he was hearing gunshots.

"I looked back and I saw a person lying on the ground right at the entrance of the door, then I jumped and slid ... I went behind a push door — a swivel door," Shaw said. "He shot through that door; I'm pretty sure he grazed my arm. At that time I made up my mind ... that he was going to have to work to kill me. When the gun jammed or whatever happened, I hit him with the swivel door."

Shaw said it was then that they began wrestling, ignoring his own pain as he grabbed the hot barrel of the AR-15 weapon. On Sunday afternoon, his right hand was bandaged from the encounter.

"He was kind of cussing while we were wrestling around. When I finally got the gun he was cussing like I was in the wrong," he said. "It wasn't any kind of talking between us; I just knew I just had to get that away from him."

Of the gun, he added: "I grabbed it from him and threw it over the countertop and I just took him with me out the entrance."

Shaw said after getting the man out of the Waffle House, he then ran one way and saw the suspect, naked save for a jacket, going another way.

Shaw said he had an apparent bullet graze on one elbow and fell and hit his knee as he escaped, landing in the hospital for a time early Sunday.

"I didn't really fight that man to save everyone else. That may not be a popular thing," said Shaw, a Nashville native who went to college in Tennessee and now works as a wireless technician. "I took the gun so I could get myself out" of the situation.

He said he was glad others were saved.

When Shaw's father went to visit him in the hospital early Sunday before he was released, he had one piece of advice for his son: "Don't do that again."

"I take no pride in him charging a loaded gun," James Shaw Sr. said. "I do take pride in him helping save the lives of other people."

Associated Press writer Bill Cormier contributed to this report in Atlanta.

S.Korea halts propaganda broadcasts before summit with North

By HYUNG-JIN KIM, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korea halted anti-North Korea propaganda broadcasts across their tense border on Monday as officials from the two Koreas met again to work out details of their leaders' upcoming talks, expected to focus on the North's nuclear program.

Seoul had been blasting propaganda messages and K-pop songs from border loudspeakers since the North's fourth nuclear test in early 2016. The North quickly matched the South's action with its own border broadcasts and launches of balloons carrying anti-South Korea leaflets across the border.

South Korea turned off its broadcasts on Monday to ease military tensions and establish an environment for peaceful talks, Seoul's Defense Ministry said in a statement. It said Seoul hopes the decision will lead to both sides stopping slander and propaganda activities.

Yonhap news agency, citing an unidentified government source, said that North Korea was believed to have turned off many of its propaganda broadcasts later Monday. Yonhap earlier reported that some North Korean broadcasts were sporadically heard in the South on Monday morning. South Korean defense officials said they couldn't immediately confirm the status of the North's broadcasts.

The move comes amid a recent thaw in animosities, with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un trying to reach out to Seoul and Washington after conducting his country's sixth and most powerful nuclear test and three long-range missile test launches last year.

Kim and South Korean President Moon Jae-in are to meet at the Korean border village of Panmunjom on Friday in the countries' third-ever summit talks. Kim is to hold separate talks with U.S. President Donald Trump in May or early June in what would be the first North Korea-U.S. summit.

On Monday, the two Koreas held a third round of working-level talks at Panmunjom and agreed to conduct a joint rehearsal Wednesday of the summit, Moon's office said in a statement. It said the two sides agreed that Friday's summit will include a welcoming ceremony and a banquet dinner as well as a formal meeting between Moon and Kim.

The Koreas agreed last week to allow live television broadcasts for key parts of the summit. Monday's statement said North Korea also agreed on live broadcasts by South Korean media of unspecified events at the northern side of Panmunjom.

The Korean summit is to take place at a South Korean building on the southern side of Panmunjom. This means that Kim must cross the border into South Korea in what would be the first such act by a North Korean leader since the end of the 1950-53 Korean War.

Kim has said he is willing to place his nuclear program up for negotiation. But it is unclear what disarmament steps he will offer during the two sets of summit talks. U.S. officials have said they want to the North to complete full nuclear disarmament.

North Korea said Saturday it will close its nuclear testing facility and suspend nuclear and intercontinental ballistic missile tests. But it stopped short of suggesting it will give up its nuclear weapons or scale back its production of missiles and their related components.

Trump nonetheless tweeted Sunday that the North has "agreed to denuclearization (so great for World), site closure, & no more testing!"

Trump's pick to be the next secretary of state, CIA Director Mike Pompeo, traveled to North Korea on Easter weekend to lay the groundwork for the summit meeting. Pompeo's trip was a clear indication that preparations for the North-U.S. summit are under way, though many U.S. and other foreign experts have had doubts.

Travel ban case is justices' first dive into Trump policy

By MARK SHERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court has so far had little to say about Donald Trump's time as president, even as the nation has moved from one Trump controversy to another. That's about to change.

The justices' first deep dive into a Trump administration policy comes in a dispute over the third and latest version of the administration's ban on travel from some countries with majority Muslim populations. Opponents of the policy and some lower courts have labeled it a "Muslim ban," harking back to Trump's campaign call to keep Muslims from entering the country.

The high-stakes arguments at the high court on Wednesday could offer some indication about how a court that runs on respect for traditions and precedent will deal with a president who regularly breaks with convention.

Apart from the campaign statements, Trump's presidential tweets about the travel ban and last fall's retweets of inflammatory videos that stoked anti-Islam sentiment all could feature in the court's discussion of the travel ban's legality.

"The court could get to the right outcome without getting into the question of his tweets. But I think the president set it up so that it's virtually impossible to ignore him when he's shouting from the rooftops about what his purpose was in the three versions of the ban," said Cecillia Wang, the American Civil Liberties Union's deputy legal director.

Solicitor General Noel Francisco, who will argue the administration's case, said in a court filing that the ban is well within the president's authority and is not based on prejudice against Islam.

In a sign of heightened public interest, the court is taking the rare step of making an audio recording of the proceedings available just hours after the arguments end.

One key issue will be how the court evaluates administration actions.

Neil Eggleston, President Barack Obama's last White House counsel, suggested in an online forum last week that Trump does not merit the same measure of latitude that courts usually give presidents, especially in the areas of national security and immigration.

"The court will have to wrestle with how much to defer to a President who has created this record of chaos and animus," Eggleston and co-author Amanda Elbogen wrote on justsecurity.org.

Josh Blackman, a professor at the South Texas College of Law in Houston, cautioned that the court would be breaking new ground if it were to treat Trump differently from other presidents.

The policy under review at the court applies to travelers from five countries with overwhelmingly Muslim populations — Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria and Yemen. It also affects two non-Muslim countries: blocking travelers from North Korea and some Venezuelan government officials and their families. A sixth majority Muslim country, Chad, was removed from the list this month after improving "its identity-management and information sharing practices," Trump said in a proclamation.

Francisco said the Chad decision shows that the restrictions are premised only on national security concerns. He also said that the State Department has cleared more than 430 visa applicants from the affected countries for waivers that would allow them to enter the U.S.

But the challengers argue that the administration cannot ask the court to ignore all that has happened.

Trump's first travel ban was issued just a week after he took office in January 2017, and was aimed at seven countries. It triggered chaos and protests across the U.S. as travelers were stopped from boarding international flights and detained at airports for hours. Trump tweaked the order after the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco refused to reinstate the ban.

The next version, announced in March 2017, dropped Iraq from the list of covered countries and made it clear the 90-day ban covering Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen didn't apply to those travelers who already had visas. It also eliminated language that would give priority to religious minorities. Critics said the changes didn't erase the ban's legal problems.

The 9th Circuit and the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, Virginia, agreed with the ban's opponents. The 4th Circuit said the ban "drips with religious intolerance, animus and discrimination." The

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9th Circuit ruled that Trump violated immigration law.

The third version is indefinite, unlike the other two, and the administration said it is the product of a thorough review of how other countries screen their own citizens and share information with the U.S.

It fared no better than its predecessors in the lower courts, but the Supreme Court said in an unsigned order in December that it could take full effect while the legal dispute continues. The justices said nothing about the substance of the policy, either in December or in earlier actions involving the ban.

Now, though, they are confronted with the administration's view that Trump has broad discretion to impose limits on immigration and that the courts don't even have a role to play. The Justice Department has said throughout the course of the legal fight that the lawsuits challenging the policy should be dismissed without ever reaching the challengers' claims. The administration says that foreigners have no right to enter the United States and no right to challenge their exclusion in American courts.

Supporting briefs for the ban's challengers dwarf filings on the administration's side. Retired high-ranking military officers, former Republican officeholders, Catholic bishops, Amazon, Facebook and 113 other companies, the children of Japanese-Americans who were held in internment camps during World War II and more than a dozen mainly Democratic-led states are among those calling on the court to strike down the Trump policy.

The administration's supporters include roughly the same number of Republican-led states, as well as conservative groups and Jay Sekulow, one of Trump's personal lawyers.

A decision in *Trump v. Hawaii*, 17-965, is expected by late June.

Pompeo facing rare opposition from Senate panel

By LISA MASCARO, AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's nominee for secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, is facing serious opposition before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, which may not have enough votes to recommend him for confirmation because all Democrats, and at least one Republican, have said they will oppose him.

The full Senate is still expected to consider Pompeo's nomination later this week. But the rare rebuke expected from the panel Monday, even after Pompeo's recent visit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, would be the first time in years that a nominee for the high-level Cabinet position did not receive a favorable committee vote.

Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn., the chairman of the committee, blamed partisan politics for opposition to Pompeo, now the CIA director, saying Pompeo is just as qualified as past secretaries of state nominees Hillary Clinton or John Kerry, both of whom received overwhelming support.

"We are in an era where somebody like this, who is qualified, unfortunately, is likely to be voted out without recommendation or with a negative recommendation," Corker said Sunday on "State of the Union" on CNN. "It's just sad that our nation has devolved politically to this point."

Pompeo's confirmation before the full Senate now hangs in balance, with the votes of just a handful of senators determining whether he becomes the nation's top diplomat after Trump fired Rex Tillerson last month.

Key Democrats, including some who had voted for Pompeo as CIA director last year, are peeling away, and Republican Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky remains opposed, despite personal overtures from the president.

Pressure is mounting on senators from both sides. White House allies are unloading ad campaigns against Democrats from Trump-won states, including North Dakota, Indiana and Missouri, to vote for the president's nominee. But progressive groups are pounding senators' offices in opposition to Pompeo's hawkish foreign policy views and negative comments about gay marriage and Muslims. As soon as Sen. Heidi Heitkamp, D-N.D., announced her support last week, one group called on her to switch.

"I don't agree with every position he's taken or every word he has spoken," Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, said Sunday on "Meet the Press" on NBC. "But I believe he has an extensive knowledge of world affairs that has been enhanced by his time at the CIA."

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Sen. Maggie Hassan, D-N.H., who met with the nominee last week, "has concerns about Mr. Pompeo's nomination to serve as secretary of state," said spokesperson Ricki Eshman. The senator "is reviewing his record before making a final decision."

In the committee, the opposition has been building ahead of Monday's session.

Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., who was among the last Democrats on the panel to announce his no vote, said he's concerned that Pompeo "will embolden, rather than moderate or restrain" Trump's "most beligerent and dangerous instincts."

"I do not make this decision lightly or without reservations," Coons said in a statement Friday. "However, I remain concerned that Director Pompeo will not challenge the President in critical moments. On vital decisions facing our country, Director Pompeo seems less concerned with rule of law and partnership with our allies and more inclined to emphasize unilateral action and the use of force."

Rather than allow an unfavorable vote on the panel, where Republicans have a one-seat majority, senators could choose not to issue a recommendation if Pompeo cannot find enough backing.

The committee action won't necessarily stall Pompeo's confirmation before the full Senate, but it would be an unusual setback not seen since the panel took a pass on John Bolton, President George W. Bush's pick for ambassador to the United Nations.

Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., who has been among Pompeo's most vocal champions in the Senate, lambasted his colleagues ahead of voting.

"Democrats, especially on the Foreign Relations Committee, are really engaged in shameful political behavior," Cotton said Sunday on CBS' "Face the Nation."

But several Democratic senators who supported Pompeo for CIA director say Pompeo's views are not reflective of those they want in the top diplomat.

Follow Mascaro on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/LisaMascaro>

Koch network success in Trump era draws Democratic pushback

By LISA MASCARO, AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — The sprawling network funded by the billionaire Koch brothers is having a very good run with President Donald Trump in the White House and Republican control of Congress.

Tax cuts are now signed into law. A conservative judge is seated on the Supreme Court. And many governmental regulations, including those on labor and environmental practices, are facing rollbacks.

That success is starting to get attention. Democrats are increasingly questioning how far the network's influence extends into the White House, casting the groups' backing by industrialists Charles and David Koch as puppeteers behind Trump's agenda and hoping to rouse their own donors to fight back. The network in turn is ratcheting up its focus on areas where it aligns with Democrats— most notably immigration legislation — and reviving calls for bipartisanship.

"We've come off one of the most successful years in our network's history," said James Davis, executive vice president of Koch-backed Freedom Partners and a spokesman for the Seminar Network, the broader organization of groups and donors. "And we're going to turn up the heat on both parties to drive forward."

But there's another outcome, too: Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse, D-R.I., and other senators recently fired off letters to the administration asking for a detailed accounting of the network's role at various government offices including the Environmental Protection Agency, the Labor Department and the Department of Veterans Affairs. The senators name more than a dozen individuals working in the administration with ties to the groups. On Monday, the lawmakers will launch a series of Senate floor speeches turning a spotlight on the influence.

"Americans have a right to know if special interests are unduly influencing public policy decisions that have profound implications for public health, the environment, and the economy," wrote Whitehouse with Sen. Ed Markey, D-Mass.; Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto, D-Nev.; Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass.; Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore.; and Sen. Tom Udall, D-N.M.

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The influence of the Koch-backed groups is somewhat surprising. They are an array of organizations and include Americans for Prosperity, Freedom Partners and Concerned Veterans for America, whose donors include some of the wealthy attendees of the twice-a-year Seminar Network conferences.

The groups took a pass on donating to Trump's presidential bid. But they have managed to influence policy through several top allies in key jobs sprinkled across the administration.

Among those in the Koch orbit with ties to the administration, perhaps the most prominent is Marc Short, the White House director of legislative affairs, who is a past president of Freedom Partners, the network's chamber of commerce-styled group. Short plays a key policy-making role and is a Capitol Hill fixture of legislative battles. The senators mention several others with top policy roles, including Kellyanne Conway, a counselor to the president.

Koch groups have been central to Trump policies Democrats oppose — among them tax cuts for the wealthy, loosening of environmental regulations, and expanding private-sector health care for veterans. Trump's first-year regulatory rollbacks were drafted by one of the Koch-backed groups and became a ready blueprint for action in Congress.

The network, however, doesn't just toe the Trump line. On Monday, the group is stepping up its effort to push Congress not to let up on legislating as lawmakers turn to focus instead on campaigning for mid-term elections.

Two groups in the network are releasing a letter to congressional leaders of both parties, urging them to take up a bipartisan compromise to help young immigrants, known as Dreamers, who have been living in the U.S. illegally since childhood. They want Congress to pass a deal that was on the table earlier this year — a path to citizenship for 1.8 million Dreamers and \$25 billion for border security. Because most Americans want a solution that would allow the Dreamers to avoid deportation, the group says Trump and Congress should be able to come up with a solution.

"There is no reason to continue to delay action on the Dreamers," wrote officials from Freedom Partners and the LIBRE Institute, two network groups. "What are we waiting for?" The group is also pushing Congress to take up criminal justice reform, another issue with bipartisan support that has lagged.

Republicans have little appetite to engage on big-ticket items as they struggle to keep control of their majority in the House, and try to pick off Democratic incumbents up for re-election in the Senate from conservative Trump-won states.

And Democrats, while saying they are willing to engage with the Koch-backed groups, are at times envious of their operation and eager to pound on their influence, which includes chapters that mimic traditional party apparatus in many battleground states.

It doesn't help build bipartisanship when much of the advocacy the Koch groups undertake, unleashing their army of volunteers and spending sums on advertising, ends up going against Democratic senators in Missouri, Wisconsin, North Dakota and others in tough election battles.

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Verne Troyer, Mini-Me from 'Austin Powers' films, has died

By **ANDREW DALTON, AP Entertainment Writer**

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Verne Troyer, who played Dr. Evil's small, silent sidekick "Mini-Me" in the "Austin Powers" movie franchise, has died. He was 49.

A statement provided by Troyer's representatives that was also posted to his Instagram and Facebook accounts said the actor died Saturday.

No cause of death was given, but the statement describes Troyer as a "fighter" who was unable to overcome a recent bout of adversity then goes on to discuss depression and suicide.

"Over the years he's struggled and won, struggled and won, struggled and fought some more, but unfortunately this time was too much," the statement said. "Depression and suicide are very serious issues. You never know what kind of battle someone is going through inside. Be kind to one another. And always

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know, it's never too late to reach out to someone for help."

Troyer became a celebrity and pop-culture phenomenon after starring alongside Mike Myers as "Mini-Me," the tiny, hairless clone of villain Dr. Evil in two of the three "Austin Powers" films.

"Verne was the consummate professional and a beacon of positivity for those of us who had the honor of working with him," Myers said in a statement. "It is a sad day, but I hope he is in a better place. He will be greatly missed."

Troyer appeared in 1999's "Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me" and 2002's "Austin Powers in Goldmember," in which "Mini-Me" switches sides and becomes a miniature version of Powers. Both hero and villain were played by Myers, who also put Troyer in his 2008 film "The Love Guru."

He also played the banker goblin Griphook in 2001's "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone" and appeared on dozens of TV shows including "Boston Public," "Sabrina the Teenage Witch" and "MADtv."

Troyer was born in 1969 in Sturgis, Michigan with achondroplasia, a genetic condition that kept him less than 3 feet tall.

"Even though his stature was small and his parents often wondered if he'd be able to reach up and open doors on his own in his life, he went on to open more doors for himself and others than anyone could have imagined," the statement said. "He inspired people around the world with his drive, determination, and attitude. . . He also touched more people's hearts than he will ever know."

Troyer was baptized surrounded by his family during his recent struggles, the statement said. No place of death was given, but he lived in Los Angeles.

Actress Marlee Matlin was among those who paid tribute on Twitter, posting a picture of him and saying he worked with her to raise money for free hearing aids for the deaf and hard-of-hearing.

"So sad to read of the passing of Verne Troyer," Matlin tweeted, saying Troyer had a "lovely smile with a caring and big heart."

New lynching memorial offers chance to remember, heal

By JAY REEVES and KIM CHANDLER, Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — Elmore Bolling defied the odds against black men and built several successful businesses during the harsh era of Jim Crow segregation in the South. He had more money than a lot of whites, which his descendants believe was all it took to get him lynched in 1947.

He was shot to death by a white neighbor, according to news accounts at the time, and the shooter was never prosecuted.

But Bolling's name is now listed among thousands on a new memorial for victims of hate-inspired lynchings that terrorized generations of U.S. blacks. Daughter Josephine Bolling McCall is anxious to see the monument, located about 20 miles from where her father was killed in rural Lowndes County.

The National Memorial for Peace and Justice, opening Thursday, is a project of the nonprofit Equal Justice Initiative, a legal advocacy group in Montgomery. The organization says the combined museum and memorial will be the nation's first site to document racial inequality in America from slavery through Jim Crow to the issues of today.

"In the American South, we don't talk about slavery. We don't have monuments and memorials that confront the legacy of lynching. We haven't really confronted the difficulties of segregation. And because of that, I think we are still burdened by that history," said EJI executive director Bryan Stevenson.

The site includes a memorial to the victims of 4,400 "terror lynchings" of black people in 800 U.S. counties from 1877 through 1950. All but about 300 were in the South, and prosecutions were rare in any of the cases. Stevenson said they emphasized the lynching era because he believes it's an aspect of the nation's racial history that's discussed the least.

"Most people in this country can't name a single African-American who was lynched between 1877 and 1950 even though thousands of African Americans were subjected to this violence," Stevenson said.

The organization said a common theme ran through the slayings, which it differentiates from extrajudicial killings in places that simply lacked courts: A desire to impose fear on minorities and maintain strict white

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control. Some lynchings drew huge crowds and were even photographed, yet authorities routinely ruled they were committed by "persons unknown."

McCall, 75, said her father's killing still hangs over her family. The memorial could help heal individual families and the nation by acknowledging the painful legacy of racial murders, she said.

"It's important that the people to whom the injustices have been given are actually being recognized and at least some measure — some measure — of relief is sought through discussion," said McCall.

Combined, the memorial and an accompanying museum a few miles away at the Equal Justice Initiative headquarters tell a story spanning slavery, racial segregation, violence and today's era of swollen prison populations. With nearly 7 million people behind bars or on parole or probation nationwide - a disproportionate number of them minorities - the NAACP says blacks are incarcerated at a rate five times that of whites.

E.M. Beck, who studied lynching for 30 years and has written books on the subject, said the memorial might actually understate the scope of lynching even though it lists thousands of victims.

"I think it's an underestimate because the number and amount of violence in early Reconstruction in the 1870s will probably never be known. There was just an incredible amount of violence taking place during that period of time," said Beck, sociology professor emeritus at the University of Georgia.

The memorial's design evokes the image of a racist hanging, featuring scores of dark metal columns suspended in the air from above. The rectangular structures, some of which lie flat on the ground and resemble graves, include the names of counties where lynchings occurred, plus dates and the names of the victims. The goal is for individual counties to claim the columns on the ground and erect their own memorials.

Not all lynchings were by hanging. The Equal Justice Initiative says it scoured old newspapers, archives and court documents to find the stories of victims who were gunned down, drowned, beaten and burned alive. The monument is a memorial to all of them, with room for names to be added as additional victims are identified.

The monument's April 26 opening will be marked by a two-day summit focusing on racial and social justice, to be followed by an April 27 concert featuring top acts including Common, Usher, the Dave Matthews Band and The Roots.

McCall plans to view the memorial with her five living siblings. She says they suffered more than she did, since she was only 5 when their father was slain.

A newspaper account from the time said the 39-year-old Bolling, who owned a store and trucking company and farmed, was shot seven times on a road near his store by a white man, Clarke Luckie, who claimed Bolling had insulted his wife during a phone call.

McCall, who researched the slaying extensively for a book about her father, said it's more likely that Luckie, a stockyard employee, resented her father, who had thousands of dollars in the bank, three tractor-trailer rigs and employed about 40 people.

"He was jealous and he filled him with bullets," she said.

Luckie was arrested, but a grand jury issued no indictment and no one was ever prosecuted. McCall believes the white people who controlled the county at the time purposely covered for the killer, who died decades ago.

One of Alabama's oldest black congregations, Old Ship A.M.E. Zion Church, sits across the street from the memorial. Its pastor plans to offer prayer and conversation to help visitors who are shaken by the experience of visiting the site.

Church members have mixed feelings about the memorial, she said. They want to acknowledge and honor the past, McFadden said, but some are wondering how they'll personally react to visiting the memorial the first time.

"It's something that needs to be talked about, that people need to explore. But it's also something that has the potential to shake people to the core," said Rev. Kathy Thomas McFadden.

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In Denver, trying to put a price on the value of a newspaper

By **NICHOLAS RICCARDI** and **BRADY MCCOMBS**, Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — Across the street from the Colorado Capitol rises an 11-story building emblazoned with The Denver Post's logo. No reporters work out of the building any more, only executives of Digital First Media, whose cuts at the Post triggered an unusual plea from the paper's own editorial page to be sold to another owner.

Five hundred miles to the west, the Salt Lake Tribune newsroom takes up one floor of the building that bears its name, overlooking snow-capped mountains and the arena where the Utah Jazz play. Once a Digital First property that dealt with staff reductions and feared closure, the paper was sold to a prominent local family in 2016. Since then, its reporters received their first raise in a decade and won a Pulitzer Prize for investigative reporting.

Though its home city is less than one-third the size of Denver, the Tribune's newsroom staff of about 90 is larger than the Post's roughly 60, who work out of leased offices in an industrial area northeast of the city.

"Denver is such a big, vibrant community to have a staff that is smaller than ours -- that's just a mockery," said Mike Gorrell, a veteran Tribune reporter.

As Colorado's civic community tries to mount a journalistic rescue mission and buy the Post, it is looking to Salt Lake City and other cities like Boston, Minneapolis and Philadelphia that have seen wealthy residents keep their newspapers viable. What happens in Denver could be a signal to a battered newspaper industry, reeling from dwindling ad revenues, of what the future looks like.

"You've got a better shot when there's a local owner -- there's going to be pressure on that person to keep that asset vibrant," said former Denver Post editor Greg Moore, who contributed a column to the Post's April 9 editorial package. "If Denver's future was like Salt Lake's and they had a local owner with deep pockets who cared, that'd be the best outcome."

That was the hope of the Post's editorial page when it published its rebellious call for a sale with the headline: "As vultures circle, The Denver Post must be saved." Editorial Page Editor Chuck Plunkett did not inform the newspaper's editor or owners of the editorial and accompanying columns slamming Digital First and the New York-based Hedge Fund that owns it, Alden Global Capital, which the editorial called "vulture capitalists."

"The smart money is that in a few years The Denver Post will be rotting bones," the editorial warned.

Digital First and Alden did not reply to requests from The Associated Press for comment. The chain owns more than 80 newspapers and is known for cutting deeply. Critics say it vacuums up the profits from the reduced newsrooms and funnels them into other ventures.

In the days after the Post editorial, the editor of the Bay Area News Group, also owned by Digital First and reeling from heavy cuts, published a sympathetic column. Last week, the editorial page editor of the Boulder Daily Camera, another Digital First property, self-published his plea for a buyer, saying his bosses would not allow it in their newspaper.

It's unclear if the Post is even for sale, and there's no guarantee of a buyer surfacing in Denver.

Colorado's civic scene does not have a dominant family like the one in Utah who purchased the Tribune, the Huntsmans, which includes the recently deceased Jon Huntsman Sr., who founded an \$11 billion industrial company. His son is Jon Huntsman Jr., the former governor of the state who is now the U.S. ambassador to Russia.

Colorado billionaire Phil Anschutz has long been rumored as a possible buyer, but he also owns the rights to the name of the shuttered Rocky Mountain News, and has explored reviving that paper in the past instead. Anschutz owns the Colorado Springs Gazette and has built a political vertical to compete with the Post's coverage.

Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper says he's been talking with local leaders about assembling possible buyers. Potential contributors include Colorado billionaires like John Malone, chairman of the board of Liberty Media, and Pat Stryker, a major liberal political donor. One group of philanthropists is traveling to Philadelphia to study how charities there bought the Philadelphia Inquirer and Daily News in 2016, accord-

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ing to Bruce DeBoskey, a Denver philanthropic adviser.

The only group to surface publicly is a consortium in Colorado Springs that pledged \$10 million toward purchase of the newspaper. "We still believe in print," said John Weiss, publisher of an alternative newspaper in Colorado Springs and six other small newspapers, who is part of the group.

J.B. Holston, dean of the University of Denver's school of engineering and computer science, has been convening meetings about the Post, but said some in the group lean toward starting a new, largely or entirely digital newsroom to bind the fast-growing city together.

But newspaper analyst Ken Doctor warned there's no proven substitute for a local newspaper.

"In this whole debacle of American journalism and especially with what Alden's done, we haven't seen anyone enter the scene with a real replacement," Doctor said.

It's time for Trump's doctor to be examined, for VA chief

By LAURIE KELLMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Rear Adm. Ronny Jackson was tending to grievously injured military personnel in Iraq when he was summoned to Washington to interview for a job he barely knew existed. He didn't see a way to get there.

"I thought this was it — this is where the road stops," he told the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal this month.

Instead, Jackson managed to catch a ride on a transport plane that steered the Levelland, Texas, native toward some of the loftiest corridors of power.

Jackson's journey has wound through the White House and across the globe, treating the blisters, stomach ailments and more of the past three presidents and their retinues. This coming week, Jackson is back on the interview circuit and heading toward the Senate for a hearing Wednesday on his nomination to be President Donald Trump's next secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

"This will be the challenge of his life," said Robert Darling, a former White House physician who still dines occasionally with Jackson at the Army Navy Country Club.

Now it's time for Washington to examine Jackson, universally described as a reassuring presence in the most pressurized of atmospheres. But the 50-year-old apolitical Navy man has no experience leading a massive bureaucracy.

"He's got a great bedside manner you feel comfortable with," Sen. Sherrod Brown, D-Ohio, told The Associated Press. "But it doesn't mean he will be a good leader of the VA."

Some White House veterans privately say they're mystified at why Jackson is willing to move from practicing medicine to the insult-laden world of Trump-era politics at the head of scandal-plagued agency. Jackson did not respond to requests for comment from the AP.

But, in an interview with the Lubbock newspaper, Jackson defended his qualifications for the VA job. "I've been in leadership school for 23 years now. ... I've been confronted on a day-to-day basis with life and death decisions."

Trump abruptly named him to succeed David Shulkin, an Obama-era holdover fired under an ethical cloud and something of a staff rebellion. The president was delighted with Jackson's comprehensive and buoyant — some said fawning — briefing to reporters in January on Trump's "excellent" health and mental acuity.

Jackson has been an unknown on policy and it's not even clear he voted in the 2016 presidential election. The Hockley County Board of Elections in Texas shows he voted in 2015.

The only inkling of where he stands came when a few of the Democratic senators who met Jackson this past week reported that the nominee is promising not to privatize the VA. Shulkin's resistance to partial privatization, through expansion of a program letting veterans choose private care at public expense, compounded his lapses in travel spending and may have been the driving force in his dismissal. Where Jackson stands on enlarging the VA Choice program has yet to be teased out.

His path to this point is a winding one that did not start off pointing to medical school, emergency surgery or service to presidents.

In fact, in high school, Jackson went through "an ornery stage" that featured him cutting classes and

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ending up in the assistant principal's office at the business end of a wooden paddle.

"He got quite a few swats from me," recalls former Levelland High School assistant principal Kelly Baggett, a longtime family friend who now counts himself one of Jackson's biggest fans. "He took it like a man and shook my hand when it was over," Baggett said in a telephone interview. "Just a great kid, the kind you always want to visit with."

Jackson at first wanted to be a marine biologist, not a doctor. His direction changed after he took a job at the University of Texas Medical School as an autopsy assistant and found it interesting, according to an interview in the Lubbock newspaper. He graduated from Texas A&M University with a degree in marine biology in 1991.

He didn't plan on entering the Navy, either. But Jackson needed money for medical school, and he learned of a program in which he could be a Navy diver and a doctor, according to that published account.

Jackson got his medical degree in 1995 from the University of Texas and began active duty naval service that year at the Portsmouth Naval Medical Center in Virginia, his Navy biography says. Jackson graduated from the Navy's Undersea Medical Officer Program in Groton, Connecticut. He completed his residency back in Portsmouth and deployed as the emergency medicine physician in charge of resuscitative medicine for a forward deployed Surgical Shock Trauma Platoon in Taqaddum, Iraq.

The White House was another unplanned destination.

Jackson said he "got an email out of nowhere" saying he'd been nominated for a job at the White House. He then sped to Washington. Since President George W. Bush hired him in 2006, Jackson has cut a widely admired path among some of the nation's fiercest partisans — on intimate terms. Everyone who's recently worked in a president's inner circle, it seems, has a Ronny Jackson story.

Somewhere along the Pacific Rim in 2015, he treated the severely blistered toe of Obama's National Security Council spokesman, recalled the patient, Ned Price.

"Treatment consisted of bandages and tape, and it worked like a charm," said Price, who said he had been suffering from wearing new shoes for 20 hours straight. He like others described Jackson as a cool-headed and pleasant presence, "the guy you always want to be around."

"At no point was he down or stressed out," said Jen Psaki, who was Obama's communications director. She recalled Jackson reassuring her when she was pregnant that "if anything happens, we're good" whether on medically equipped Air Force One or in back in Washington. "I remember telling my husband that there's no safer place I could be than the White House."

It was Obama who elevated Jackson to director of the White House medical team and made him his physician.

Liz Allen, who served as Obama's deputy communications chief, said Jackson monitored her blood pressure for years and routinely would ask, even in passing, how she was doing.

"He is just so genuine," she said. "He treated people well. He always made you feel like you were the priority even when there were competing priorities."

Jackson is known for maintaining relationships. His connection to fellow Texan Bush, for example, survived the Bush presidency. In photos, the former president wears a reddish cap on a 2013 trip to Zambia, emblazoned with the name of Jackson's hometown, Levelland. Freddy Ford, a Bush family spokesman, said the hat had been given to Bush by Jackson's father, Waymon.

Associated Press writers Calvin Woodard, Hope Yen and Stephen Braun in Washington, Jake Pearson in New York, AP researcher Monika Mathur in Washington and AP investigative research Randy Herschaft in New York contributed to this report.

Follow Kellman on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/APLaurieKellman>

Trump says North Korea agreed to denuclearize. It hasn't.

By JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — President Donald Trump on Sunday claimed North Korea has agreed to “denuclearization” before his potential meeting with Kim Jong Un. But that’s not the case.

North Korea said Friday it would suspend nuclear tests and intercontinental ballistic missile launches ahead of summits with the U.S. and South Korea. Kim also said a nuclear test site would be closed and “dismantled” now that the country has learned how to make nuclear weapons and mount warheads on ballistic rockets.

But the North has stopped short of saying it has any intention of abandoning its nuclear arsenal, with Kim making clear that nukes remain a “treasured sword.”

Trump nonetheless tweeted Sunday that the North has “agreed to denuclearization (so great for World), site closure, & no more testing!”

Being committed to the concept of denuclearization, however, is not the same as agreeing to it, as Trump claims.

South Korea, which is set to meet with North Korea later this week, has said Kim has expressed genuine interest in dealing away his nuclear weapons. But the North for decades has been pushing a concept of “denuclearization” that bears no resemblance to the American definition, vowing to pursue nuclear development unless Washington removes its troops from the Korean Peninsula and the nuclear umbrella defending South Korea and Japan.

South Korea’s president has said Kim isn’t asking for the withdrawal of U.S. troops from the Korean Peninsula as a condition for abandoning his nuclear weapons. If true, that would seem to remove a major sticking point to a potential disarmament deal.

But that still doesn’t address a North Korean arsenal that now includes purported thermonuclear warheads and developmental ICBMs developed during a decadeslong cycle of crises, stalemates and broken promises.

Trump agreed to meet with Kim after an invitation was delivered by a South Korean delegation that had just returned from Pyongyang.

“I told President Trump that in our meeting, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un said he’s committed to denuclearization,” South Korea’s national security adviser later told reporters on the White House driveway. “Kim pledged that North Korea will refrain from any further nuclear or missile tests.”

A place and date have yet to be set, but Trump’s pick to be the next secretary of state, CIA Director Mike Pompeo, traveled to North Korea on Easter weekend to lay the groundwork for the meeting. Trump has called the talks a success, but it’s unclear exactly what was agreed to, if anything, as a condition for the leader-to-leader talks.

“Look, this is a great public relations effort by Kim Jong-un. And I think people recognize that,” Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tennessee, said Sunday on CNN’s “State of the Union.” But asked whether he believed the North would denuclearize, Corker offered caution.

“Well, I don’t think he said anything about denuclearizing on the front end necessarily,” he said.

He added on ABC’s “This Week” that it’s unrealistic to think that “somebody’s going to go in and charm” Kim out of keeping his nuclear weapons.

“Is it realistic that he’s just willy-nilly going to do that? Absolutely not,” Corker said. “But, you know, progress can be made, freezing the program, who knows what he’s — what his ambitions are as it relates to South Korea.”

Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Arkansas, was equally as skeptical on CBS’ “Face the Nation,” arguing that North Korea’s recent statements are easily reversible and that no announcement has been made about short- or medium-range ballistic missiles that threaten South Korea and Japan.

“Well, I think this announcement on Friday is better than continued testing, but it’s not much better than that,” he said. “But I do think they show that the president has put Kim Jong Un on the wrong foot for the first time.”

Asked what denuclearization means to both sides, White House Legislative Director Marc Short said on NBC's "Meet the Press" that there needs to be a sit-down meeting to make sure everyone's on the same page.

"But I think from our perspective, it means full denuclearization," he said. "No longer having nuclear weapons that can be used in warfare against any of our allies."

Still, Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-California, told CBS that if the president goes through with the meeting, it's "very important" that it "goes well and that there is an ability to put together some terms of an agreement that might exist."

"The question," she said, "is whether it lasts or not. And of course the reputation of the North Koreans has been that they don't necessarily keep their agreements."

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

Islamic State suicide bomber kills 57 in Afghan capital

By RAHIM FAIEZ, Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — An Islamic State suicide bomber attacked a voter registration center in Afghanistan's capital on Sunday, killing 57 people and wounding more than 100 others, officials said.

Public Health Ministry spokesman Wahid Majro said that among 57 people killed, 22 were women and eight were children. He said 119 people were wounded, among them 17 children and 52 women, and "the tolls could still rise."

The bomber targeted civilians who were registering for national identification cards, Kabul police chief Gen. Daud Amin said.

The large explosion echoed across the city, shattering windows miles from the attack site and damaging nearby vehicles. Police blocked all roads to the blast site, with only ambulances allowed in. TV stations broadcast live footage of hundreds of distraught locals gathered at hospitals seeking word about loved ones.

The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for the attack in a statement carried by its Amaq news agency, saying it had targeted Shiite "apostates."

The attack comes almost a month after an IS suicide bomber carried out an attack near a Shiite shrine in Kabul that targeted attendees celebrating the Persian new year. That attack killed 31 people and wounded 65 others.

In a statement issued by the president's office condemned Sunday's attack and quoted President Ashraf Ghani as saying such "terrorist attacks" won't prevent people from participating in upcoming parliamentary elections.

Afghanistan will hold parliamentary elections in October and voter registration started a week ago.

Last week, three police officers guarding voter registration centers in two Afghan provinces were killed by militants, according to authorities.

Afghan security forces have struggled to prevent attacks by the local Islamic State affiliate as well as the more firmly established Taliban since the U.S. and NATO concluded their combat mission at the end of 2014. Both groups regularly carry out attacks, with the Taliban usually targeting the government and security forces and IS targeting the country's Shiite minority.

Both groups want to establish a strict form of Islamic rule in Afghanistan and are opposed to democratic elections.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres condemned the attack and called for those responsible to be brought to justice, in a statement from his spokesman in New York.

Elsewhere in Afghanistan, at least five people were killed when their vehicle struck a roadside bomb in the northern Baghlan province. Zabihullah Shuja, spokesman for the provincial police chief, said four other people were wounded in Sunday's blast in Puli Khomri, the province's capital.

The Taliban routinely target security forces and government officials with roadside bombs, which often end up killing civilians.

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In the northern Balkh province, a district police chief died of his wounds after being shot Saturday during an exchange of gunfire with insurgents, according to Sher Jan Durrani, spokesman for the provincial police chief. He said around a dozen insurgents were also killed in the battle, which is still underway.

Durrani identified the slain commander as Halim Khanjar, police chief for the Char Bolak district. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the killing.

Associated Press writer Maamoun Youssef in Cairo contributed to this report.

Nicaragua's president cancels social security overhaul

MANAGUA, Nicaragua (AP) — Nicaragua's president on Sunday withdrew changes to the social security system that had triggered deadly protests and looting.

President Daniel Ortega said in a message to the nation that the social security board of directors had canceled the changes implemented on April 16.

The overhaul was intended to shore up Nicaragua's troubled social security system by both reducing benefits and increasing taxes.

The changes touched off protests across the Central American nation that escalated into clashes with police as well as looting. The demonstrations appeared to expand to include broader anti-government grievances.

Human rights groups said at least 26 people were killed in several days of clashes. Dozens of shops in the Nicaraguan capital of Managua were looted during unrest that extended into Sunday.

Unlike his appearance on Saturday with the police chief, Ortega announced the cancellation of the overhaul accompanied by business executives who account for about 130,000 jobs and millions of dollars in exports.

Earlier in the day, Pope Francis said at the Vatican that he was "very worried" about the situation in Nicaragua and echoed the call of local bishops for an end to all violence.

Images broadcast by local news media showed looted shops in the capital's sprawling Oriental Market district and at least one Walmart.

Police apparently did not intervene Sunday, in contrast to what had been a strong response to earlier demonstrations in which dozens were injured or arrested.

"We are seeing social chaos in Nicaragua provoked by the absence of government leadership, and the crisis has been combined with poverty, and that in any society is a time bomb," sociologist and analyst Cirilo Otero said.

Ortega had said Saturday that he was willing to negotiate on the social security overhaul, but said the talks would be only with business leaders.

He seemed to try to justify the tough response against protesters by the government and allied groups, accusing demonstrators, most of them university students, of being manipulated by unspecified "minority" political interests and of being infiltrated by gangsters.

"The kids do not even know the party that is manipulating them. ... Gang members are being brought into the kids' protests and are criminalizing the protests. That is why they are put at risk," Ortega said.

Those remarks appeared to fan the flames, as soon afterward thousands of people spilled back into the streets in seven cities.

Why French globalist Macron is befriending nationalist Trump

By ANGELA CHARLTON and SYLVIE CORBET, Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Of everything Emmanuel Macron has accomplished in nearly a year as France's president, the most important may be his tough-love friendship with Donald Trump.

From their first bone-squeezing handshake to Macron's recent claim that he persuaded Trump to bomb Syria, it's been an improbable relationship. And it will be on pomp-filled display starting Monday as Macron goes on a state visit to Washington, the first by any leader since Trump took office.

Macron calls Trump all the time. With other world leaders too wary or weak to woo the impulsive U.S.

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president, Macron calculates that it's smarter and safer to talk to Trump than isolate him.

The 40-year-old moderate progressive, who had never held elected office before he won France's presidential election, defended his overtures to the 71-year-old conservative Trump in an interview on the broadcast "Fox News Sunday."

"I am not going to judge ... what should be your president, or to consider that because of these controversies or because of these investigations, your president is less credible," he said.

The French president has the most to gain from the three-day state visit. He wants to fortify his image as the face of today's Europe and the No. 1 defender of a liberal world order, as well as prove that France is essential to solving world problems such as Iran's nuclear ambitions and international trade wars.

His aims may sound like French hubris or wishful thinking, but they are consistent with the "France is back" global strategy Macron has set for his tenure.

He talks regularly to Russian President Vladimir Putin and other controversial leaders, too. He also has tried his own diplomatic maneuvering in the Middle East with the goals of defending French interests and making sure Europe has a say in the region's future.

For all their camaraderie, Macron and Trump disagree on some fundamental issues.

Take global warming. Macron mocked Trump's campaign slogan by promising in a Twitter video he recorded in English to "Make our planet great again!" The video was posted moments after Trump announced he wanted to pull out of the U.N.-sponsored Paris climate accord last year.

Policy toward Iran is another point of discord. France is the most vigorous defender of the 2015 deal curbing Iran's nuclear ambitions. Trump is threatening to abandon the agreement next month. Macron hopes to make progress this week on convincing Trump to stay onboard.

And then there's trade. Macron and German Chancellor Angela Merkel — who planned to visit Washington on Friday — have pushed back hard on Trump's steel tariffs and his America First vision, which threaten Europe's powerful single market.

By design, Macron's state visit will be more about symbolism than substance, and no big breakthroughs are expected.

But over the long term, Macron hopes his rapport with Trump will help mitigate some of their policy differences. His office holds up the U.S.-French cooperation on missile strikes on Syria this month as a model for future joint actions.

So how has Macron managed to avoid annoying Trump, famously sensitive to slights?

"He has played Trump very well," said Nicolas Dungan, senior fellow at the Atlantic Council, a Washington-based think tank.

While other world leaders and veterans of Beltway politics have made Trump feel like an outsider, Macron "accepts him and respects him rather than disdaining him," Dungan said. "It's a very effective strategy of influence ... through respect and treating him legitimately."

At least so far. Macron still runs the risk of getting "tagged with Trump's vulgarity, which so far he's been immune to," Dungan said.

Macron's ease in speaking English probably helped in establishing a rapport — as did his ability to play the tough-guy game that Trump relishes.

Despite being smaller and younger than Trump, Macron has been able to spar in a way that begets admiration instead of resentment, starting with their first meeting at a NATO summit in May, where Macron took Trump's hand and wouldn't let go.

In Trump's confrontational world, "Macron comes across as straight arrow, ready for a fight," said Francois Heisbourg, a former French government adviser and current chair of the International Institute for Strategic Studies. At their NATO meeting, "Macron twists his arm. And this is the beginning of a great friendship," Heisbourg said.

The French president's U.S. visit will highlight "Macron's rather uncanny ability" to get along with hard-line leaders, Heisbourg said. "He is apparently the only one who can actually talk with all of them substantively, while at the same time not appearing to be jettisoning his own values."

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Macron also hopes the Washington trip will also raise his profile everywhere else — from the EU to Syria and Israel-Palestinian peacemaking.

The trip will be a welcome distraction from Macron's troubles at home: He takes off the same day labor strikes are expected to halt a majority of French trains and a quarter of Air France flights.

As Macron prepares to be feted at two fancy dinners and give a special speech to Congress, the White House and Elysee Palace are stressing their likenesses instead of points of discord.

Both Macron and Trump are newcomers to politics with a background in business. And France is considered the first American ally, for helping the colonists win the Revolutionary War.

Macron will celebrate the long-running alliance by giving Trump an oak tree sapling from the site of one of the first World War I battles involving American troops, the Battle of Belleau Wood.

It's a sign of appreciation for the sacrifices America made for France— and an apparent nod to Macron's concern for the environment.

He wants it planted in the White House gardens.

Darlene Superville in Washington contributed.

Hillary Clinton, not on ballot, is star of GOP midterm plan

By STEVE PEOPLES, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Almost 18 months have passed since Hillary Clinton lost the presidency. She holds no position of power in government. And she is not expected to run for office again.

Yet Clinton is starring in the Republican Party's 2018 midterm strategy.

With control of Congress up for grabs this fall, the GOP's most powerful players are preparing to spend big on plans to feature Clinton as a central villain in attack ads against vulnerable Democrats nationwide. The strategy, which already has popped up in races in Pennsylvania, Indiana and North Dakota, illustrates the resilience and political potency of Republican voters' antipathy for Clinton. As difficult as it's been for Democrats to move past the Clinton era, it may be even harder for Republicans.

"STOP HILLARY. STOP PELOSI. STOP LAMB," read pamphlets circulated during the special election in Pennsylvania earlier this year.

That's just a taste of what's to come as the November elections grow closer, say those who control the GOP's strategy in the first midterm elections of Donald Trump's presidency.

"I promise you that you'll continue to see it — Hillary Clinton starring in our paid media. She's a very powerful motivator," said Corry Bliss, who leads the Congressional Leadership Fund, a Republican super political action committee ready to spend tens of millions of dollars to shape House races this fall. "It's about what she represents. What she represents, just like what Nancy Pelosi represents, is out-of-touch far-left liberal positions."

Critics suggest the strategy reeks of desperation, if not sexism. But with no Democrat to attack in the White House for the first time in nearly a decade, Republicans are betting big that the ghost of Clinton will serve them well in 2018. Saddled with Trump's poor approval ratings, they may have little choice.

It's helpful, some Republicans say, that Clinton refuses to disappear from national politics altogether.

Less than a year ago, she launched a political organization designed to encourage anti-Trump "resistance" groups. She made two public appearances this week alone. During recent remarks in India, she took a shot at Trump's slogan and his appeal across middle America: "His whole campaign, 'Make America Great Again,' was looking backwards," Clinton said.

The national GOP pounced, running digital ads featuring Clinton's comments — and her image — to attack the 10 Democratic Senate candidates running for re-election in states Trump carried.

"She's called you 'deplorable.' Now, she's called you 'backwards,'" said one ad that targeted Florida Democratic Sen. Bill Nelson.

"If Bill Nelson had his way, Hillary Clinton would be president," the ad continued. "Florida won't forget." Even if Clinton avoids the spotlight moving forward, the Republican Party plans to evoke her early and

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often in key congressional races, particularly in regions Trump won, which feature most of the midterm season's competitive races. They include places like western Pennsylvania's 18th Congressional District, where Republicans spent millions in last month's special election to oppose Democrat Conor Lamb.

Lamb won the election, despite the flood of attack ads.

Internal polling and focus groups conducted by Republican campaigns find that Clinton remains one of the most unpopular high-profile Democrats in the nation, second only to Pelosi, the House minority leader. Just 36 percent of Americans viewed Clinton favorably in a December Gallup poll, an all-time low mark that bucked a trend in which unsuccessful presidential candidates typically gain in popularity over time.

"We're going to make them own her," Republican National Committee spokesman Rick Gorka said.

Clinton is a primary target of conservative media, which largely shifted its focus away from President Barack Obama after he left office last year but did not do the same with Clinton, who last served in the government in 2013.

In some cases, Republicans are using Clinton to go after some of their own.

That's what is happening in Indiana, where Republican congressional candidate Steve Braun is under attack in his primary from conservatives who suggest he may have voted for Clinton in 2008, when he cast a ballot in the state's Democratic primary. A super PAC is set to begin running new TV ads linking Braun and Clinton in the coming days.

A Clinton spokesman declined to respond to requests for comment.

A former Clinton staffer, Democratic strategist Jesse Ferguson, dismissed the Republican strategy as an act of desperation. Gallup reported this week that Trump's job approval is 39 percent, virtually the same as Clinton's.

"Their obsession with her is evidence that they have nothing to run on, and they're scared of running with the president," Ferguson said. "It reminds me of the guy at the office who goes to the water cooler, and all he does is boast about his high school football championships."

On the ground in some races, however, Democrats are still figuring out how to navigate the Republican strategy.

In North Dakota, Democratic Sen. Heidi Heitkamp, who faces a tough re-election in November, was asked last month in a radio interview when Clinton would "ride off into the sunset."

"Not soon enough," Heitkamp responded.

In suburban Philadelphia, Democratic congressional candidate Greg Edwards, who initially supported Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders in the last presidential election, was reluctant to embrace Clinton when asked.

"On both sides of the aisle, I think we have to stop replaying the 2016 election," he said in an interview. "Candidates have to make a decision as to whether her presence will help or hinder. That's an individual choice."

Russian lawyer questions why Mueller hasn't contacted her

By NATALIYA VASILYEVA, Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — A Russian lawyer who discussed sanctions with Donald Trump Jr. in New York during his father's 2016 campaign for the U.S. presidency said Sunday that special counsel Robert Mueller has not contacted her yet.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Natalia Veselnitskaya also detailed her recent meeting in Berlin with investigators from the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee. Like Mueller, the committee is investigating allegations of Russian interference in the U.S. presidential election.

Veselnitskaya met in June 2016 with then-candidate Donald Trump's son, his son-in-law, Jared Kushner, and Paul Manafort, his campaign chairman at the time, Paul Manafort, after Trump Jr. was told the Russian lawyer had potentially incriminating information about Hillary Clinton.

Mueller, a former FBI director, is leading a federal probe of possible collusion between Russia and the Trump campaign. He has filed charges against multiple former Trump campaign aides.

Veselnitskaya alleged in her interview with the AP in downtown Moscow that if Mueller's team never

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questions her, it would mean that it "is not working to discover the truth."

Veselnitskaya is a well-connected Moscow lawyer who has worked with a company called Prevezon Holdings Ltd. The company's owner is the son of a former Russian government official and a fierce advocate for rolling back U.S. sanctions on Russia.

At the time of her 2016 meeting at Trump Tower, she was defending Prevezon against charges it had engaged in money laundering from a \$230 million Russian tax fraud scheme.

Trump Jr. and others in attendance have downplayed the meeting, saying nothing came of it. Trump has denied that he or his campaign coordinated with any Russian attempts to interfere in the election.

The Senate Intelligence Committee has expressed interest in determining whether Veselnitskaya's appointment with Trump Jr., Kushner and Manafort was part of a Russian government effort to help President Donald Trump's campaign for the White House. It was described that way in emails to Trump Jr. before it took place.

Several congressional committees are looking into whether Russia interfered in the 2016 election and whether there were collusion by Trump's campaign. The House Intelligence Committee has finished its investigation and said it found no evidence of collusion or coordination with Russians.

The Senate Intelligence Committee approached Veselnitskaya earlier this year, but she refused to go the United States, saying she feared for her safety. The lawyer and the committee's investigators instead met in a Berlin hotel on March 26 and talked for three hours.

"That was essentially a monologue. They were not interrupting me," Veselnitskaya said. "They listened very carefully...Their questions were very sharp, pin-pointed."

The investigators mainly wanted to know about Trump Tower meeting, she said. Veselnitskaya said she repeated her previous statements about it, insisting that she was not linked to the Russian government and merely wanted to discuss sanctions against Russia.

Veselnitskaya's said the Berlin interview also focused on information in memos compiled by a former British spy whose work was funded by the Democratic National Committee and Clinton's campaign. The dossier contains numerous allegations of Russian ties to Trump, his associates and the Trump campaign.

Veselnitskaya dismissed the dossier as "absolute nonsense." She insisted that Glenn Simpson, whose firm Fusion GPS was hired to compile the dossier and who was questioned by the House Intelligence Committee in January, had been "framed."

The Senate committee has not sent her the minutes of the interview yet, Veselnitskaya said, because no one has figured out a safe way to get them to her.

Asked why she decided to meet with the U.S. investigators in Berlin, Veselnitskaya said she felt compelled to tell her account after being into the heart of the Russia probe.

"I'm ready to explain things that may seem odd to you or maybe you have suspicions," she said.

'A Quiet Place,' 'Rampage' lead newcomers at box office

By LINDSEY BAHR, AP Film Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — It's another weekend of buzz versus pure star power at the box office as the word of mouth sensation "A Quiet Place" finds itself neck-and-neck again with Dwayne Johnson's "Rampage." This time buzz had the slight advantage.

Studio estimates on Sunday have placed "A Quiet Place," with \$22 million, in first, and "Rampage" in second with \$21 million, but it's possible those numbers may shift when final results are tallied on Monday.

Still, John Krasinski's "A Quiet Place" continues to be a mini phenomenon. With a \$17 million production budget, "A Quiet Place" has grossed \$132.4 million from North American theaters in three weeks. "Rampage," too, is down only 41 percent domestically in its second weekend and continues to rake in the dollars globally. The film boasts a worldwide tally of \$283 million, and Johnson has continued using his social media accounts to hype the film and thank audiences.

"I never take success like this for granted. Global success like this means so much," Johnson posted on his Instagram account Saturday night. "I'm not a Marvel movie. It's not Star Wars. 'Rampage' may as well

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have been called 'Dwayne Johnson and his albino gorilla friend' because it's such an obscure video game ... Thank you guys so much."

The staying power of both somewhat overshadowed the newcomers, like Amy Schumer's "I Feel Pretty" and the sequel to the 2001 cult comedy "Super Troopers," both of which nevertheless managed to find their own niche audiences despite largely negative reviews.

"I Feel Pretty," released by STX Entertainment, grossed an estimated \$16.2 million — a little less than half of what Schumer's "Trainwreck" opened to in July 2015. Unlike "Trainwreck," Schumer did not write "I Feel Pretty," which is about an insecure woman who gets a life-changing confidence boost after a head injury. The concept became somewhat divisive and the subject of a fair amount of scrutiny.

"She's a force and that's not going to change," notes comScore senior media analyst Paul Dergarabedian. "She's always going to push the envelope. Sometimes that will bring big box office, sometimes it won't."

The partially crowd-funded "Super Troopers 2," meanwhile, leaned into its April 20 opening and scored a fourth place, \$14.7 million opening weekend for Broken Lizards and distributor 20th Century Fox.

Fifth place went to the Blumhouse horror "Truth or Dare" with \$7.9 million in its second weekend, while Lionsgate's thriller "Traffik," with Paula Patton, launched in ninth with \$3.9 million.

The box office for the year remains down about 2.4 percent from last year, but that will change next week.

"We're going to see a huge turnaround later this week in the box office fortunes with 'Avengers: Infinity War,'" Dergarabedian said.

The film is tracking to make over \$200 million in its first weekend in theaters, leading some experts to wonder whether the superhero pic could have the highest opening of all time, beating out even "Star Wars: The Force Awakens."

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to comScore. Where available, the latest international numbers for Friday through Sunday are also included. Final domestic figures will be released Monday.

1. "A Quiet Place," \$22 million (\$15 million international).
2. "Rampage," \$21 million (\$57 million international).
3. "I Feel Pretty," \$16.2 million (\$2.4 million international).
4. "Super Troopers 2," \$14.7 million.
5. "Truth or Dare," \$7.9 million (\$4.1 million international).
6. "Ready Player One," \$7.5 million (\$23 million international).
7. "Blockers," \$7 million (\$2.6 million international).
8. "Black Panther," \$4.6 million (\$1.2 million international).
9. "Traffik," \$3.9 million.
10. "Isle of Dogs," \$3.4 million (\$5.6 million international).

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at international theaters (excluding the U.S. and Canada), according to comScore:

1. "Rampage," \$57 million.
2. "Ready Player One," \$23 million.
3. "A Quiet Place," \$15 million.
4. "21 Karat," \$10.1 million.
5. "Peter Rabbit," \$6.4 million.
6. "Isle of Dogs," \$5.6 million.
7. "The Coach," \$4.8 million.
8. "Truth or Dare," \$4.1 million.
9. "Taxi 5," \$3.8 million.
10. "Dude's Manual," \$3.7 million.

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Follow AP Film Writer Lindsey Bahr on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/lldbahr>

Syrian military pummels IS-held districts in Damascus

By ZEINA KARAM, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Syrian government forces used warplanes, helicopters and artillery on Sunday to pound districts of the capital held by the Islamic State group, in a bid to enforce an evacuation deal reached with the militants earlier in the week.

Two Palestinian refugees, a father and a son, were killed during the fighting at the Yarmouk refugee camp in Damascus, according to the United Nation's Palestinian refugee agency, which added that thousands of homes have been destroyed in four days of fighting.

Hundreds of IS militants hold parts of the Yarmouk camp and nearby area of Hajar al-Aswad in southern Damascus. They agreed to give up their last pocket there on Friday but have yet to begin surrendering to government forces and relocating to IS-held areas elsewhere in the country.

State-run al-Ikhbariya TV showed thick gray smoke billowing from the Hajar al-Aswad neighborhood on Sunday, and government warplanes streaking overhead amid heavy bombardment of the area.

Residents of Damascus reported hearing loud booms throughout the night and Sunday morning.

UNRWA spokesman Chris Gunnes said that since the start of fighting four days ago, most of the six thousand civilians in Yarmouk camp have been forcibly displaced to the neighboring area of Yalda.

"Most fled their homes with nothing but the clothes on their backs. Their needs are dire. There are reports that people are begging for medicine. Some have spent their first nights in the street," he said in a statement.

Gunnes said added that the camp's last functioning hospital, Palestine Hospital, is now completely unable to operate and called on all sides to allow for the safe evacuation of civilians wishing to leave the area.

President Bashar Assad has escalated his military campaign to retake all remaining enclaves in the capital and surrounding areas. The IS-held areas in southern Damascus are the last holdouts, after rebels evacuated the eastern Ghouta suburbs following a fierce government offensive and an alleged poison gas attack in the town of Douma.

Chemical weapons inspectors collected samples from Douma on Saturday, two weeks after the suspected gas attack there prompted retaliatory strikes by Western powers on the Syrian government's chemical facilities.

The site visit, confirmed by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, will allow the agency to proceed with an independent investigation to determine what chemicals, if any, were used in the April 7 attack that medical workers said killed more than 40 people. The OPCW mission is not mandated to apportion blame for the attack.

Douma was the final target of the government's sweeping campaign to seize back control of eastern Ghouta from rebels after seven years of revolt. Militants gave up the town days after the alleged attack.

The Syrian government and its ally Russia denied responsibility for the suspected chemical attack.

Meanwhile, rebels have begun evacuating three towns in the eastern Qalamoun region in the Damascus countryside.

Al-Ikhbariya TV said that 35 buses left the towns of Ruhaiba, Jayroud, and al-Nasriya on Saturday carrying hundreds of rebels and their families to opposition-held territory in northern Syria.

The station said the evacuations would continue for three days.

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On Sunday, Sweden's Ambassador to the United Nations said that he and other Security Council envoys had agreed to work on a "meaningful mechanism" to work out who was behind the alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria.

Olof Skoog spoke in southern Sweden after an annual, informal working meeting with the U.N. Security Council ambassadors.

The meeting comes just a week after the U.S., France and Britain bombed suspected Syrian chemical weapons facilities, after accusing Assad's government of being behind the attack in Douma.

Associated Press writers Albert Aji in Damascus, Syria and Jari Tanner in Helsinki, Finland, contributed reporting.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Monday, April 23, the 113th day of 2018. There are 252 days left in the year.

Today's Highlights in History:

On April 23, 1968, student protesters began occupying buildings on the campus of Columbia University in New York; police put down the protests a week later. The Methodist Church and the Evangelical United Brethren Church merged to form the United Methodist Church.

On this date:

In 1616 (Old Style calendar), English poet and dramatist William Shakespeare died in Stratford-upon-Avon on what has traditionally been regarded as the 52nd anniversary of his birth in 1564.

In 1789, President-elect George Washington and his wife, Martha, moved into the first executive mansion, the Franklin House, in New York.

In 1791, the 15th president of the United States, James Buchanan, was born in Franklin County, Pennsylvania.

In 1898, Spain declared war on the United States, which responded in kind two days later.

In 1935, Poland adopted a constitution which gave new powers to the presidency.

In 1943, U.S. Navy Lt. (jg) John F. Kennedy assumed command of PT-109, a motor torpedo boat, in the Solomon Islands during World War II. (On Aug. 2, 1943, PT-109 was rammed and sunk by a Japanese destroyer, killing two crew members; Kennedy and 10 others survived.)

In 1954, Hank Aaron of the Milwaukee Braves hit the first of his 755 major-league home runs in a game against the St. Louis Cardinals. (The Braves won, 7-5.)

In 1969, Sirhan Sirhan was sentenced to death for assassinating New York Sen. Robert F. Kennedy. (The sentence was later reduced to life imprisonment.)

In 1971, hundreds of Vietnam War veterans opposed to the conflict protested by tossing their medals and ribbons over a wire fence in front of the U.S. Capitol.

In 1988, Greek cycling champion Kanellos Kanellopoulos pedaled the human-powered aircraft Daedalus over the Aegean Sea for nearly four hours.

In 1998, James Earl Ray, who confessed to assassinating the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and then insisted he'd been framed, died at a Nashville hospital at age 70.

In 2005, the recently created video-sharing website YouTube uploaded its first clip, "Me at the Zoo," which showed YouTube co-founder Jawed Karim standing in front of an elephant enclosure at the San Diego Zoo.

Ten years ago: President George W. Bush, pushing for a Mideast peace agreement, met at the White House with Jordan's King Abdullah II. Defense Secretary Robert Gates announced that Army Gen. David Petraeus (peh-TRAY'-uhs) would be nominated to be the next commander of U.S. Central Command. The Supreme Court unanimously affirmed that police had the power to conduct searches and seize evidence, even when done during an arrest that turned out to have violated state law. The Chicago Cubs won their 10,000th game, joining the Giants in reaching that mark with a 7-6 victory in 10 innings at Colorado.

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Five years ago: A car bomb exploded outside the French Embassy in Tripoli, Libya, wounding three people and partially setting the building on fire. France legalized same-sex marriage after a wrenching national debate that exposed deep conservatism in the nation's heartland and triggered huge demonstrations.

One year ago: Centrist Emmanuel Macron (eh-mahn-yoo-EHL' mah-KROHN') and far-right populist Marine Le Pen advanced to a May runoff in France's presidential election (Macron ended up defeating Le Pen).

Today's Birthdays: Actor Alan Oppenheimer is 88. Actor David Birney is 79. Actor Lee Majors is 79. Hockey Hall of Famer Tony Esposito is 75. Irish nationalist Bernadette Devlin McAliskey is 71. Actress Blair Brown is 71. Writer-director Paul Brickman is 69. Actress Joyce DeWitt is 69. Actor James Russo is 65. Filmmaker-author Michael Moore is 64. Actress Judy Davis is 63. Actress Valerie Bertinelli is 58. Actor Craig Sheffer is 58. Actor-comedian-talk show host George Lopez is 57. U.S. Olympic gold medal skier Donna Weinbrecht is 53. Actress Melina Kanakaredes (kah-nah-KAH'-ree-deez) is 51. Rock musician Stan Frazier (Sugar Ray) is 50. Country musician Tim Womack (Sons of the Desert) is 50. Actor Scott Bairstow (BEHR'-stow) is 48. Actor-writer John Lutz is 45. Actor Barry Watson is 44. Rock musician Aaron Dessner (The National) is 42. Rock musician Bryce Dessner (The National) is 42. Professional wrestler/actor John Cena is 41. Actor-writer-comedian John Oliver is 41. Actor Kal Penn is 41. MLB All-Star Andruw Jones is 41. Actress Jaime King is 39. Pop singer Taio (TY'-oh) Cruz is 35. Actor Aaron Hill is 35. Actor Jesse Lee Soffer is 34. Actress Rachel Skarsten is 33. Rock musician Anthony LaMarca (The War on Drugs) is 31. Singer-songwriter John Fullbright is 30. Tennis player Nicole Vaidisova (vay-deh-SOH'-vuh) is 29. Actor Dev Patel (puh-TEHL') is 28. Actor Matthew Underwood is 28. Actor Camryn Walling is 28. Model Gigi Hadid is 23. Actor Charlie Rowe (TV: "Salvation") is 22. U.S. Olympic gold medal snowboarder Chloe Kim is 18.

Thought for Today: "Curiosity is insubordination in its purest form." — Vladimir Nabokov, Russian-born author (1899-1977).