

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 1 of 71

Chicken Soup
for the Soul.

“One should be able to control and manipulate experiences with an informed and intelligent mind.”

-Sylvia Plath



- 1- Dakota Brush Ad
- 1- Mail Highway Route Relief Driver
- 1- Chicken Soup for the Soul
- 2- United Methodist May Breakfast
- 3- Middle School Spring Concert: “On the Big Screen”
- 6- Paula Krueger Named Head Women’s Basketball Coach
- 9- Curt Fredrickson Announces Retirement after 39 Years as Head Women’s Basketball Coach
- 10- Girl’s Golf at Dell Rapids
- 11- Today in Weather History
- 12- Today’s Forecast
- 13- Yesterday’s Weather
- 13- National Weather map
- 13- Today’s Weather Almanac
- 14- Daily Devotional
- 15- 2018 Groton Community Events
- 16- News from the Associated Press

Mail Highway Route Relief Driver

Position available for Highway Relief Driver
Must be over 21, have a good driving record
Able to lift 70 pounds.

Route is early mornings and late afternoons
Mainly Saturdays and some week days
Contact Dave Miller 605-397-8277 Leave Message

Today’s Events

- 9:00am: Golf: Girls Varsity Meet @ Dell Rapids Golf Course
- 2:00pm: Track: Varsity Meet @ Milbank High School
- 7:00pm: Middle School Spring Concert, GHS Gymnasium

Dakota Brush

Brooms, Brushes, Mops, Can Liners, Paper Products.

Get Ready for Spring With
Wash Brushes & Squeegees

397-9337

104 N. Main, Groton

Open: Recycling Trailer in Groton
The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 2 of 71

Groton United Methodist Women

May Luncheon

Wednesday, May 2nd
serving from 11 am ~ 1 pm

Come and join us for lunch or make your own lunch to go
at the Groton United Methodist Church

No Reservation Required

Men & Women \$8 - Children 6 and under free



Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 3 of 71

Middle School Spring Concert: "On the Big Screen"



The sixth grade choir sang, "Born to Hand Jive" from Grease, and "Stay Tuned!" from various TV shows.



AnneMarie Smith and Tylan Glover were soloists in the song, "Oh Happy Day" from Sister Act 1.



Jackson Garstecki and Anna Bisbee were the speakers during "Stay Tuned!"



The junior high choir, directed by Cody Swanson and accompanied by Desiree Yeigh, sang, "Oh, Happy Day" from Sister Act 2, "Lava" from the Pixar Short Lava, and "This is Me" from The Greatest Showman.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 4 of 71



Stella Meier and Carter Barse were soloists for "Lava."



Cadence Tullis was a soloist for "This is Me."



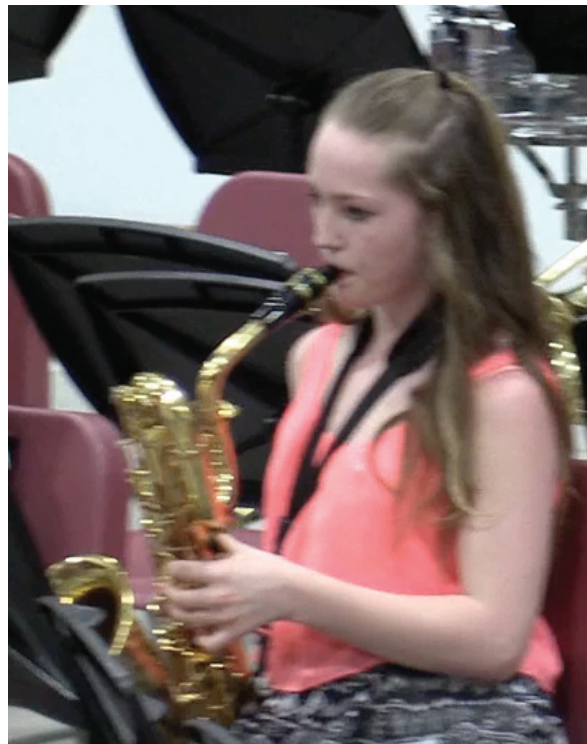
The sixth grade band played, "Linus and Lucy" from The Peanuts Movie, "We Know the Way" from Moana, and the Main Theme for Star Wars.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 5 of 71



Julianna Kosel had a solo on the flute during, "The Best of James Bond."



Cadence Feist had a solo during "We Know the Way," on a Bari Saxophone.



The junior high band played, "The Best of James Bond," "Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest," "Kaboom!" and "Advance (March)."

Paula Krueger Named Head Women's Basketball Coach



Aberdeen, S.D. – Following the retirement of head women's basketball coach Curt Fredrickson, Northern State Director of Athletics Josh Moon has announced the hiring of Paula Krueger to fill the position as the fourth head women's basketball coach in program history. Krueger moved into the head coaching role after spending the last two seasons as the team's associate head coach.

"We are very excited to announce Paula Krueger as the new leader of NSU women's basketball," explained Moon. "Paula knows this program inside and out and has tremendous passion and respect for the rich basketball tradition at NSU. She reached the highest level of success as a student-athlete at NSU, had successful experience as both a high school and NCAA D2 college head coach, and has proven herself as an assistant coach at NSU for nine years. She is clearly ready for this opportunity."

A former NSU standout, Krueger returned to the Northern State sidelines in 2015 after 12 years at the NCAA Division II and high school levels.

"I am humbled, honored and excited to become the next Head Women's Basketball coach at Northern State University," described Krueger. "Northern State, this program and the community of Aberdeen are home to me. I'd like to thank NSU President Tim Downs and Director of Athletics Josh Moon for the confidence they've shown in me and their support throughout this process. This is the opportunity of a lifetime for me; the fulfillment of a dream that started over 25 years ago."

In her three seasons back with the Wolves, Northern made three trips to the NCAA Central Region Tournament, won the 2016-17 NSIC/Sanford Health Tournament, won two NSIC North Division Championships and won a share of the 2017-18 NSIC Overall Championship. NSU went 73-21 overall in those three seasons, with four wins over nationally ranked opponents.

"She has been an assistant coach at Northern State for nine years, and as a former player and assistant coach she has a great passion for NSU basketball," noted Fredrickson. "She is a proven recruiter and has the confidence of our present basketball players. It has been a lifelong dream to be the women's basketball coach at Northern State and I know she will do a great job."

Miranda Ristau was twice named to the NSIC All-Conference teams, and was honored as the 2017-18 NSIC Player of the Year. The Warner native was also named the first CoSIDA Academic All-American® of the Year in school history. Jill Conrad also earned three NSIC All-Conference honors and was named the NSIC Tournament MVP in 2016-17.

"Peter Stroble said 'Legacy is not leaving something for people, it's leaving something in people' and Coach Fredrickson has made a huge imprint on me personally and professionally; challenging me not to be the same, but to be better," noted Krueger. "Coach, I can't thank you enough for your constant teaching and support."

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 7 of 71

Krueger began her basketball career for the Wolves as a student-athlete from 1990 to 1994. In her time on the court, Paula recorded two team NAIA Division II National Championships (1992 and 1994), and one NAIA Division II National Runner Up. In the 1992-93 season, she was awarded the NAIA Division II National Tournament Hustle Award, the NSU Women's Basketball Spirit Award, and was a member of the NSU Scholar-Honor Athlete and Northern Sun Academic All-Conference Teams. A season later, she was named the NAIA Division II National Tournament Most Valuable Player and to the NAIA Division II All-Tournament First-Team. Paula garnered the NSU Women's Basketball Spirit Award for the second year straight, and was named the 1993-94 Hildred Wolfe Female Athlete of the Year Recipient.

"This is a bittersweet moment for Northern – as we close the book on Coach Fredrickson's remarkable career, we're also ushering in a new era of women's basketball," explained NSU President Dr. Tim Downs. "I can't think of a better replacement than Coach Krueger. She knows the kind of players we recruit and the expectations of our fan base. We have every confidence that under her leadership the exceptional tradition of outstanding women's basketball at Northern will continue."

Krueger has been involved at all levels of women's basketball, beginning her coaching career as a varsity assistant and junior varsity head coach at Warner High School. After a stint as Northern's graduate assistant, she moved on to coach one season at Pahrump Valley High School as a varsity assistant and junior varsity head coach in Nevada. She returned to the Northern sidelines in fall 1997 as the women's basketball assistant coach and head softball coach. Krueger spent six seasons in that role, leading the Wolves to both a first- and second-round appearance in the NCAA Division II North Central Regional.

Moon added, "Paula has worked closely with Coach Fredrickson over the past three years to elevate the program, which resulted in our first NSIC overall championship since 1998 and first NCAA Tournament win since 2011. There was only one person who Coach Fred believed was ready to take over the reins after his storied 39-year career, and that was Paula Krueger. Coach Fred's recommendation was really important in our review process and we look forward to the continued elevation of Wolves Women's Basketball under Paula's leadership."

In 2003, Krueger stepped into her first NCAA head coaching role at the Colorado School of Mines. In nine seasons with the Orediggers, her teams tallied two runner-up finishes at the RMAC Championships (2005-06 and 2009-10), seven conference tournament first-round appearances, an NCAA Central Region appearance (2009-10), and an RMAC East Division Co-Championship (2008-09). She tallied the highest winning percentage/most wins in a coach's tenure (133-125) at Colorado Mines.

As a professional, Krueger has served as an NCAA North Central Region Committee Chair, a member of the NCAA Division II Women's Basketball Committee and an NCAA Conference Captain for the RMAC from 2005 to 2008.

Krueger returned to the high school ranks in 2012 as the head girls' basketball coach at Arrupe Jesuit High School. After one season with the Generals, she became the head girls' basketball coach at ThunderRidge High School in Highlands Ranch, Colorado. In two seasons with the Grizzlies, Krueger's teams made two CHSAA 5A State Tournament appearances (2014-15 runner-up) and won the 2014-15 Continental League Championship. She was named the Continental League Girls' Basketball Coach of the Year and Head Coach of the Colorado High School Girls' Basketball All-Star Game that season.

Krueger has been honored as an inductee into the NSU Athletics Hall of Fame (2005), Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference Hall of Fame (2008) and Colorado School of Mines Hall of Fame for her 2004-05 team (2011). She was named the RMAC East Division Coach of the Year, and RMAC Co-Coach of the Year in 2009.

Krueger is a 1995 and 1996 graduate of Northern State University with her Bachelor of Science in education and Master of Arts in teaching. She also received her principal certification from Lamar University

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 8 of 71

in Beaumont, Texas, in April 2015. Krueger resides in Aberdeen with her husband, Brad.

What others are saying

"What a great hire for Northern State. Not only did the Wolves get a great X's and O's coach who prepares her teams as well as anyone that I have ever competed against, but also a great person who cares deeply for her players. She is the type of coach that every parent wants their child to play for. Congratulations, Paula!" – Kip Drown, Head Women's Basketball Coach at Georgia Southern

"I can't think of a better person to take over for Coach Fredrickson than Paula Krueger. As an alum, she knows and understands the expectations and culture of following a legend. When I coached against her in the RMAC when she was at Mines, her teams were always well prepared and very difficult to play against. She is a student of the game with great experience and knowledge. I'm so happy for her to get this opportunity. She is absolutely the perfect 'fit' for Northern and will do an outstanding job! Congratulations, Coach Krueger!" – Tanya Haave, Head Women's Basketball Coach at Metro State University

"What an incredible hire for Northern State Women's Basketball! Paula is an incredibly passionate person, coach, recruiter, mentor and friend! She is going to do a tremendous job for the Wolves." – Dawn Plitzuweit, Head Women's Basketball Coach at the University of South Dakota

"Paula will bring a great deal of energy and enthusiasm to the Northern State women's basketball program. She has been a huge part of their most recent success and will continue to keep that winning tradition alive. Her passion for Northern runs deep and is contagious to everyone around her. She is the perfect fit for this position." – Paul Sather, Head Men's Basketball Coach at Northern State University

"I feel that this news is great for the Northern women's basketball program that Coach Paula Krueger has been promoted to the head coaching position. She is a Northern gal and her roots run very deep here. Coach Krueger knows the program, and what it takes to keep the tradition going forward. Congratulations to Coach Krueger. We are all very excited for her and looking forward to next season." – Bob Olson, Former Northern State Athletic Director and Head Men's Basketball Coach

Curt Fredrickson Announces Retirement after 39 Years as Head Women's Basketball Coach

Aberdeen, S.D.– Northern State University Head Women's Basketball Coach Curt Fredrickson announced this afternoon his retirement after 39 seasons with the Wolves. Fredrickson leaves his post as the winningest coach in Northern State history with an 846-306 record, two NAIA National Championships and numerous conference titles.

"It has been a great 39 years at Northern State," noted Fredrickson. "I am very proud of the fact that all of my collegiate coaching has been at one school; my alma mater. I would like to thank all of my former players for being so supportive and loyal over the years, and my assistant coaches who have helped in our success."

In his final season with the Wolves, Fredrickson won a share of both the NSIC North Division and NSIC Overall Championships. The overall crown was the first for NSU in 20 years, since last winning in 1997-98. Northern went 26-6 overall, qualifying for their fifth straight NCAA Central Region Tournament, and notching their first regional victory in those five seasons over Arkansas Tech. Jill Conrad and Miranda Ristau were named to the NSIC All-Conference teams, with Ristau earning the NSIC Player of the Year honors. The Warner native was named the CoSIDA Academic All-American of the Year®, as well as a member of the D2CCA and WBCA All-America Honorable Mention teams.

"We want to congratulate and thank Coach Fred for a historic career at NSU," explained Josh Moon, NSU director of athletics. "What he has accomplished here is unprecedented – to win 846 games at one institution says a lot about his belief and dedication to NSU, Aberdeen, and the many student-athletes he has coached over the years."

Fredrickson undoubtedly left his mark on Northern State Athletics and the Wolves women's basketball program. The Aberdeen native started his career with the Wolves as a student-athlete on the football and baseball teams, earning All-American honors in both sports in 1974. He joined the NSU coaching staff as a football assistant following his playing career, and was named the head women's basketball coach in 1977-78.

"One word describes Curt Fredrickson from the day he came on campus as a freshman athlete through his career as a coach – COMPETITOR," described former NSU athletics director and head football coach, Jim Kretchman. "Congratulations and thanks for 'finishing the race' the way you began."

He has received Coach of the Year honors from the South Dakota Press Association, Royal Order of the Gyps, Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference (4), Midwest Independent Region (2) and NAIA District 12 (3).

"Coach Fred is a cornerstone of Northern State University athletics," added NSU President Dr. Tim Downs. "His accomplishments at Northern are historic and he will go down as one of the most accomplished coaches in the history of college basketball. Being a coach is a selfless occupation. Being a coach at the same institution for 39 years is exceptional. On behalf of all Northern employees, past and present, I'd like to thank Coach Fred and his family, especially Vicki, for being Wolves for life."

He surpassed 700 wins on Jan. 2, 2012, in a win over Upper Iowa and hurdled the 800-win mark on Nov. 21, 2016, in a victory over Nebraska Kearney. He is a member of four hall of fames (Northern State University, Northern Sun Intercollegiate Conference, NAIA and South Dakota), and has been honored as the NSIC Coach of the Year on seven occasions.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 10 of 71

"He has truly elevated the entire university during his 40+ years as a student-athlete and coach – from an All-American dual-sport athlete, to winning the first and only (so far) team national championships in our history, to finishing his career with five straight NCAA Tournament appearances and an overall NSIC Championship this past season," added Moon. "Our women's basketball program is one of the most respected and tradition-rich programs in the country thanks to the winning culture that Coach Fred has built over the years. We are excited for Coach and Vicki as they begin the next chapter of their lives!"

During Fredrickson's tenure, the Wolves have played in five NAIA national tournaments, winning the NAIA II national title in 1991-92 and 1993-94, finishing second in 1992-93, claiming third in 1980-81, and finishing among the final eight teams in 1994-95. Fredrickson's Wolves also collected two district basketball championships and two regional crowns. Fredrickson was named the NAIA II National Coach of the Year in 1992 and again in 1994.

"The consistent success that Coach Fredrickson has achieved at Northern over his 39-year career is remarkable and legendary," explained Bob Olson, former NSU athletics director and head men's basketball coach. "His impact on student-athletes at NSU over the years is another measure of success. I'm very proud to have worked alongside of Coach Fredrickson for many of those years, and congratulate both him and Vicki and wish them all the best."

His tradition of winning is unprecedented at NSU, recording 23, 20-plus win seasons and two, 30-plus win seasons. He has coached 32, 1,000 point scorers; 63 all-conference selections; eight All-Americans; and three Academic All-Americans®. Coach "Fred" left a legacy of athletic excellence that will live on forever at NSU.

"A big thank you to the fans in the Aberdeen area for treating our players so well, and making us NCAA national attendance leaders at the Division II level for the last 10 years," added Fredrickson.

Fredrickson's family includes his wife, Vicki; daughter, Lindsey; and two boys, Cole and Blair.

Girl's Golf at Dell Rapids

Three Gorton Area girls took part in the Golf Meet held Tuesday at Dell Rapids. Peyton Colestock shot a 49 in the front nine and a 52 in the back nine for a total score of 101. Ashley Flihs shot a 56 and a 61 to finish with a 117. Portia Kettering shot a 62 and a 61 for a score of 123.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 11 of 71

Today in Weather History

1899 - A storm buried Havre, MT, under 24.8 inches of snow, an all-time record for that location. The water equivalent of 2.48 inches was a record 24 hour total for the month of May. (The Weather Channel)

1920 - A swarm of tornadoes in Rogers, Mayes and Cherokee Counties in Oklahoma killed 64 persons. (David Ludlum)

1929 - Virginia's worst tornado disaster occurred. Six tornadoes, two of which were west of the Blue Mountains, killed 22 people. Twelve children and a teacher were killed at Rye Cove, in Scott County. Four schools were destroyed by the storms. (The Weather Channel)

1983 - Severe thunderstorms spawned twenty tornadoes across Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania and New York State. The tornadoes caused five deaths. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms in the Lower Mississippi Valley produced golf ball size hail in northern Louisiana, and wind gusts to 77 mph at Lake Providence LA. Thunderstorms in Arkansas produced 4.20 inches of rain at Arkadelphia and 4.00 inches at Bismarck. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - A powerful storm produced snow and high winds in the Central Rockies and the Central High Plains Region. Snowfall totals in Colorado ranged up to 12 inches at Strasburg, and winds in southeastern Colorado gusted to 87 mph at Lamar. Snow and high winds created blizzard conditions in eastern Colorado and southeastern Wyoming. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)








1989 - Thunderstorms developing to the north of a warm front produced severe weather in Oklahoma and Texas. There were 93 reports of severe weather. Thunderstorm winds gusted to 80 mph at Beatrice, and baseball size hail was reported at Ranger and Breckenridge. Juneau AK reported a record high temperature of 72 degrees while Honolulu equalled their record low for the month of May with a reading of 60 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Fourteen cities in Florida, Georgia and South Carolina reported record high temperatures for the date as readings soared into the 90s. Tampa FL reported a record high of 97 degrees, and Fort Stewart GA was the hot spot in the nation with a reading of 100 degrees.

1990 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from northeastern Texas to western Arkansas during the evening and early nighttime hours. Thunderstorms spawned a tornado which injured thirteen persons at Paris TX, and produced baseball size hail at Rio Vista TX. Thunderstorm rains of four to seven inches caused flash flooding in west central Arkansas, southern and eastern Oklahoma, and northern Texas. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

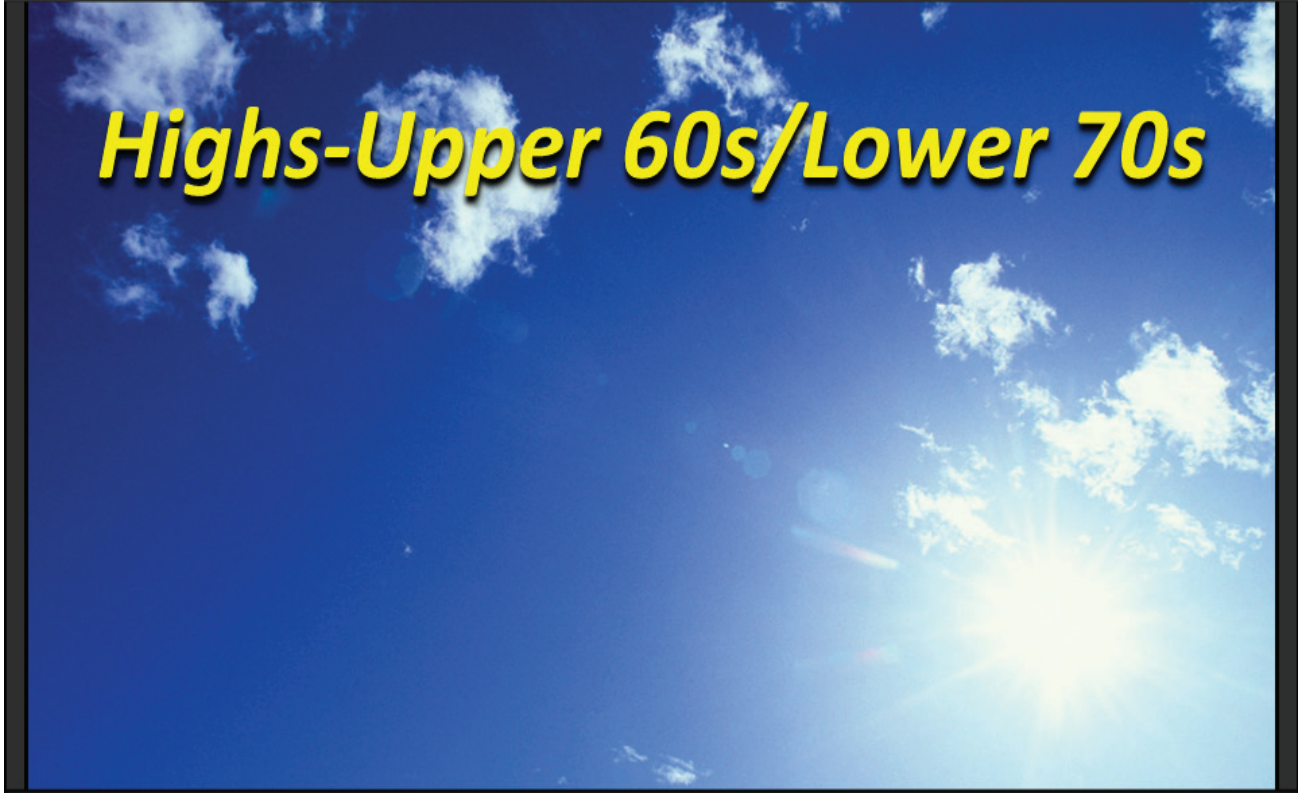
Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 12 of 71

Wed May 2	Thu May 3	Fri May 4	Sat May 5	Sun May 6	Mon May 7	Tue May 8
						
70°F	71°F	76°F	74°F	71°F	73°F	72°F
42°F	43°F	45°F	45°F	45°F	50°F	52°F
SW 9 MPH	NNE 9 MPH	W 11 MPH	ESE 10 MPH	NNE 9 MPH	S 10 MPH	SSE 16 MPH Precip 20%



Mild & Mostly Sunny Today



Highs-Upper 60s/Lower 70s

National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD



weather.gov/Aberdeen



National Weather Service Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen

Updated: 5/2/2018 5:38 AM Central

Published on: 05/02/2018 at 5:42AM

Skies will be mostly sunny today as temperatures rise into the upper 60s to the lower 70s across the region. These conditions will continue through the end of the work week and into the weekend.

Groton Daily Independent

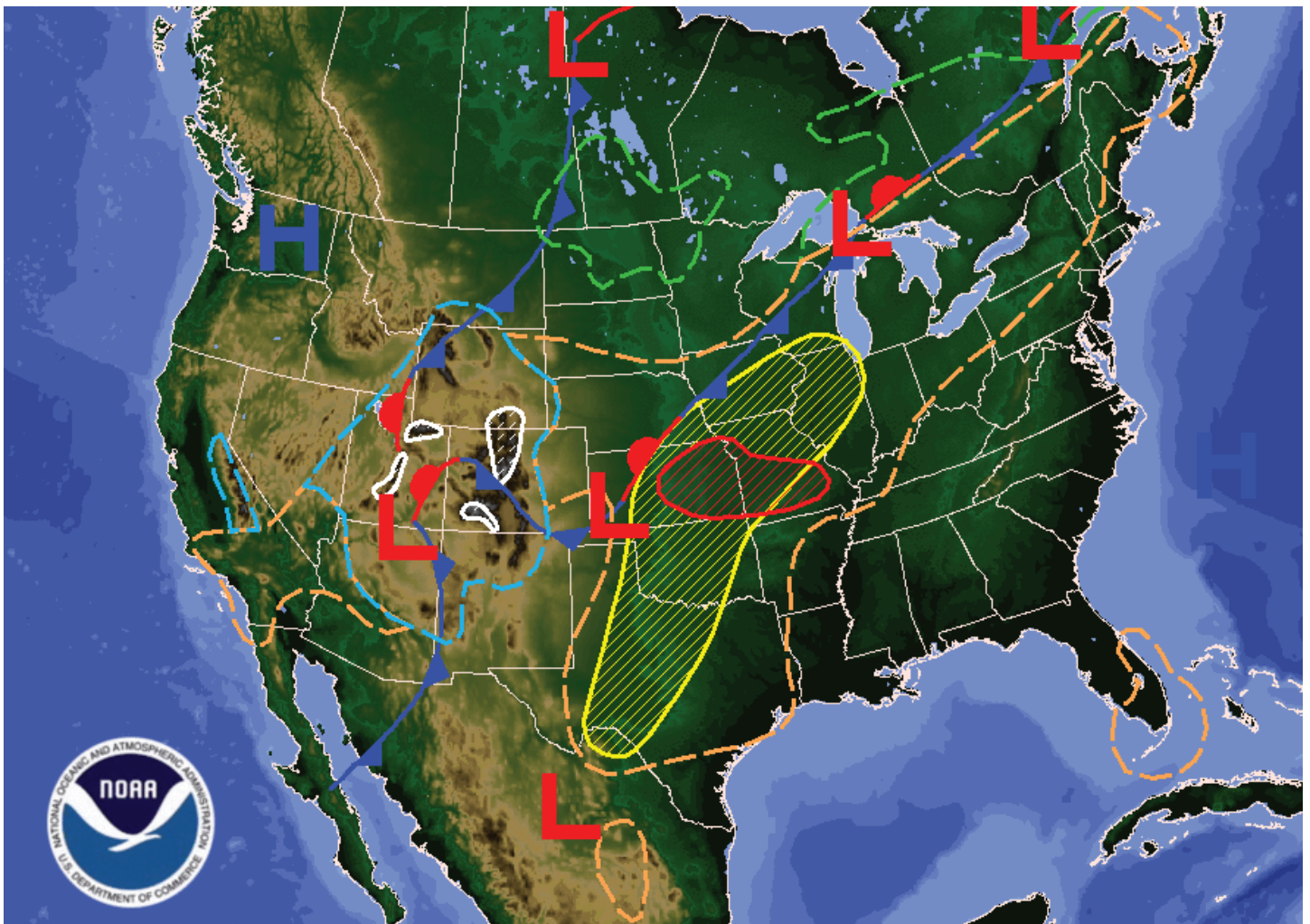
Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 13 of 71

Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 55.5 F at 5:29 PM
Low Outside Temp: 40.3 F at 6:15 AM
Wind Chill:
High Gust: 23.0 Mph at 12:12 AM
Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 90° in 1955
Record Low: 20° in 1909
Average High: 65°F
Average Low: 39°F
Average Precip in May: 0.20
Precip to date in May: 0.05
Average Precip to date: 4.23
Precip Year to Date: 2.73
Sunset Tonight: 8:41 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:18 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Wed, May 02, 2018, issued 4:49 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McReynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

Rain	Flash Flooding Possible (hatched)
Rain and T'Storms	Severe T'Storms Possible (hatched)
Rain and Snow	Freezing Rain Possible (hatched)
Snow	Heavy Snow Possible (hatched)



COWS, CUDS AND MEDITATION

Have you ever watched a cow, lying beneath a tree, quietly looking through its leaves at the puffy clouds that are passing across the soft blue sky? They seem to be concentrating on something far beyond themselves, yet important to them. Their stillness reflects a sense of peace and confidence that "all is well in my world and there's nothing for me to worry about." All the while they are chewing on "cuds" - round balls of grass that they bring up from their stomachs and chew some 30,000 times each day to get all of the nourishment out of them.

Could that not be a picture of meditation for the Christian to adopt? A time when we quietly "chew" on a piece of Scripture that God brings to our minds from His Word that we have hidden in our hearts.

Imagine how our lives would be different if we sat quietly and brought a verse of Scripture from His Word into our minds and then looked to Him to give us all the nourishment that it contains. Imagine the changes that would take place in our lives if we would invest even a small amount of time "chewing" on a verse or two from His Word each day asking Him to "nourish our lives" with its meaning. Imagine the peace and comfort that could be ours if we simply asked His Spirit to use His Word to calm our fears, lift our depression, eliminate our doubts, change our attitudes and convict us of our sins.

If we can imagine it we can do it! God troubles our hearts and minds to get our attention. Then we must submit to His Spirit to work in us as we meditate on Him.

Prayer: Lord, speak to our hearts and change our lives as we willingly ask Your Spirit to guide and guard us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 104:34 May my meditation be pleasing to him, as I rejoice in the Lord.

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
- 4/13/2019 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 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

Planting of small grains in South Dakota continues to lag

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Planting of small grains crops in South Dakota continues to lag behind the average pace.

The federal Agriculture Department says in its weekly crop report that 12 percent of the spring wheat is seeded, behind the five-year average of 63 percent. Last year at this time, 83 percent of the crop was planted.

Seven percent of the oats crop is in the ground, behind the average pace of 68 percent.

The state's winter wheat crop remains mostly in fair-to-good condition.

Topsoil moisture supplies are rated 88 percent adequate to surplus and subsoil moisture is 71 percent in those categories, both relatively unchanged over the week.

TenHaken wins Sioux Falls' mayor's race

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Voters have chosen Paul TenHaken as the next mayor of Sioux Falls.

The 40-year-old entrepreneur won about 63 percent of the vote in a race against Jolene Loetscher, according to unofficial returns. The vote Tuesday is the largest margin of victory in any Sioux Falls mayoral race since the city converted to the mayoral form of government in 1994. TenHaken thanked Loetscher for a competitive race and congratulated her on making the runoff.

The Argus Leader says TenHaken will be sworn in May 15.

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

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Tuesday:

Mega Millions

02-07-20-55-70, Mega Ball: 1, Megaplier: 4

(two, seven, twenty, fifty-five, seventy; Mega Ball: one; Megaplier: four)

Estimated jackpot: \$126 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$195 million

Hopefuls for governor talk economics, other issues at forum

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Attorney General Marty Jackley criticized what he cast as Washington's ineffectiveness during a forum Tuesday for Republican primary candidates vying for South Dakota governor, and U.S. Rep. Kristi Noem touted federal tax cuts and pledged more state government transparency.

The two candidates faced off at the event on economic and regulatory issues hosted by the conservative group Americans for Prosperity-South Dakota in Sioux Falls.

Jackley plugged his executive experience as South Dakota's former U.S. attorney and current attorney general, depicting federal officials in Washington as unproductive on issues ranging from balanced budgeting to repealing former President Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act.

Noem listed as accomplishments working with President Donald Trump on the GOP's tax cuts, shelving government regulations and erasing the tax penalties enforcing the Affordable Care Act's individual mandate. A former state legislator, she said it will take strong governors to reform their states and show

the country "what is possible."

"Marty's throwing a lot of mud at Washington and hoping that it'll stick to me, but my record's clean on this," Noem said, speaking about federal spending.

At the state level, Noem called for overhauling South Dakota's mental health system, improving workforce development and government transparency. She cast their differences as the "status quo or pursuing new opportunities for our state."

Jackley repeatedly criticized Washington — without directly naming Noem — while emphasizing his part in litigation against the Affordable Care Act and his arguments before the U.S. Supreme Court in South Dakota's legal bid to collect sales taxes from out-of-state internet retailers. He said the state needs to create new and better jobs, keep taxes and regulations low, and invest in infrastructure wisely.

"Washington isn't going to fix our problems, but South Dakota doesn't need them to; we need a leader that knows South Dakota best, that loves South Dakota and that will fight for South Dakota," Jackley said. "You've seen me do that every day as your attorney general."

Both candidates have vowed not to raise taxes. The winner of the June 5 Republican primary will face Democratic candidate Billie Sutton, a state senator, in the general election. They are competing to replace outgoing Republican Gov. Dennis Daugaard, who can't run because of term limits.

South Dakota GOP senator stumps for 2 Mississippi senators

By EMILY WAGSTER PETTUS, Associated Press

RIDGELAND, Miss. (AP) — Three Republican U.S. senators said Tuesday that keeping their party in the majority in Congress will protect tax cuts and ensure a conservative judiciary.

Senate Republican Conference Chairman John Thune of South Dakota was in Mississippi raising money for Republicans ahead of midterm elections. He also attended a business conference with Mississippi's two GOP senators, Roger Wicker and Cindy Hyde-Smith. The three spoke to reporters before the private meeting.

Republicans hold 51 of 100 Senate seats.

"Right now, every race is extremely high stakes," said Thune, who holds Senate Republicans' third-highest leadership post. "And, you know, obviously it's an unusual circumstance that we have two Senate races in Mississippi this year, both of which we need to hang onto if we're going to hang onto our majority, which I think is critical to the future of our country."

Wicker has held one of Mississippi's Senate seats for just over a decade, and is seeking another six-year term. He faces one challenger, business owner Richard Boyanton of Diamondhead, in the June 5 GOP primary. Six Democrats are competing in their party primary that day, with a runoff June 26, if needed. A Reform Party candidate will also be on the ballot in November.

Gov. Phil Bryant appointed Hyde-Smith to temporarily succeed longtime Republican Sen. Thad Cochran, who resigned April 1 because of health concerns.

Hyde-Smith is one of five candidates in a Nov. 6 special election, and the winner will serve the final two years of the term Cochran started. Candidates run without party labels in Mississippi special elections. If a runoff is needed, it will be Nov. 27.

Hyde-Smith said Tuesday that she is campaigning while learning to do her new job. She praised a tax cut package that Republicans pushed into law before she went to Washington.

"I just cannot say enough about the tax cuts — from the corporate tax going from 35 percent to 21 percent," Hyde-Smith said. "I've talked to business owners in Mississippi who have actually given raises, so I do think it's helping a lot of families here."

Wicker said that even with tax cuts, "we're going to protect Medicaid, Medicare and Social Security — those three mandatory programs that so many people depend on, that my dad depends on, that we'll all depend on some day."

Wicker said tax cuts would not be a reality if Democrats were in control. He also said the partisan balance determines who can be confirmed to judicial posts: "The majority in the United States Senate means

everything if you want a conservative Supreme Court.”

Follow Emily Wagster Pettus on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/EWagsterPettus> .

Financial officer Sheila Gestring appointed USD president

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — The Board of Regents has named the University of South Dakota’s chief financial officer to replace retiring university President Jim Abbott.

The board announced Tuesday that Sheila Gestring, vice president of finance and chief financial officer, will serve as the university’s 18th president. Abbott is retiring after more than 20 years at the university’s helm.

Gestring will become president at the Vermillion campus on June 22. She holds a master of business administration degree from the university and has worked at USD since 2006.

Regent Kevin Schieffer, who chaired the search committee, says Gestring brings “home-grown brilliance,” legendary South Dakota work ethic and proven executive abilities to the job.

Gestring says she’s “honored and humbled” and pledged to honor Abbott’s legacy.

South Dakota gold drilling project withdraws permit request

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A Canadian company exploring for gold in western South Dakota has withdrawn a water permit request for a controversial drilling project.

Mineral Mountain Resources withdrew its request this week for a new temporary permit to use water from a creek near Rapid City, the Rapid City Journal reported . The company’s current permit for Rapid Creek is set to expire Tuesday.

Mineral Mountain Resources sent a letter to the state Department of Environment and Natural Resources, saying the company “has made alternative arrangements for a water supply.” Company officials didn’t offer details on the new arrangements as of Tuesday.

The Canada-based company drilled and plugged three holes while searching for gold near Rochford earlier this year. Workers pulled more than 460,000 gallons (1,740,000 liters) of water from Rapid Creek to lubricate its drill.

The project has drawn opposition from environmentalists and residents concerned about the potentially negative impact on the land. Some Native American tribes have also criticized the drilling as a desecration of the Black Hills, which holds spiritual significance to the tribes.

Three members of the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe have an ongoing appeal in court against the company’s exploratory permit for the project.

Mineral Mountain is only permitted to explore for gold, not mine the area.

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

Secretary of state reminds voters not to post ballot photos

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota’s secretary of state is reminding voters not to post ballot selfies as the June primary election approaches.

Secretary of State Shantel Krebs says posting on social media a photo of a marked ballot showing how someone voted is illegal.

State law says people can’t publicize official ballots after they’re marked in a way that reveals the contents of the ballot or the candidates who received their vote.

Absentee voting for the primary election started April 20, and the election will be held June 5. High-profile races for voters to decide include Republican primaries for governor and U.S. House.

Report says Midwest business conditions index rose again

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — A business conditions index for nine Midwest and Plains states surged last month to its highest level in a dozen years, according to a report released Tuesday.

The Mid-America Business Conditions Index hit 64.5 in April, compared with 62.1 in March, the report said. The index stood at 65.7 in May 2006.

"Much of the recent growth has been driven by exports," said Creighton University economist Ernie Goss, who oversees the index survey. "Almost four of five companies reported that exports were an important component of their company's profitability."

The regional new export orders index rose to 70.0 last month from 63.6 in March, and the import index dipped just a point to 62.5.

"A cheap U.S. dollar making U.S. goods more competitively priced abroad, and growth among U.S. trading partners, supported regional exports while regional economic growth boosted purchases from abroad," Goss said.

The survey results are compiled into a collection of indexes ranging from zero to 100. Survey organizers say any score above 50 suggests growth in that factor. A score below that suggests decline. The survey covers Arkansas, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma and South Dakota.

The April employment index sank to 48.1 from 58.4 in March — a drop that Goss blamed on labor shortages.

"The share of supply managers reporting labor shortages continues to grow and is now limiting employment growth for the region," he said.

Two-thirds of the supply managers who responded to the survey said their companies intended to add workers for the remainder of 2018.

Economic optimism over the next six months was captured by the business confidence index, which bounded up to 70.2 last month from March's 64.3.

"Healthy profit growth, still low interest rates, and a reduction of global trade tensions pushed business confidence into a range indicating robust business confidence," Goss said.

Commission declines to act on planned Ipswich turkey pods

IPSWICH, S.D. (AP) — A building permit for a turkey facility near Ipswich will move forward after the Edmonds County Commission failed to intervene on the permit application.

The American News reports that the county's planning and zoning board had earlier approved the permit, which led to an appeal by some county residents. Commissioners decided during a special meeting Monday to let the permit stand.

The permit was submitted by a company owned by Hendrix Genetics, which is based in the Netherlands. It allows for seven connected barns to be built as part of a pod that can house nearly 27,000 turkeys.

Some residents had complained about possible odors from the facility, which would be built a half-mile from the nearest home.

Two other Hendrix Genetics building permits in the county have been approved.

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

Defendants in Rapid City homicide say arrests were illegal

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A man and woman accused in a deadly Rapid City shooting are asking the court to throw out evidence gathered after their arrest, saying they were illegally apprehended on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

The Rapid City Journal reports that 21-year-old Maricelo Garcia has pleaded not guilty to first-degree murder in the death of 20-year-old Clinton Farlee in October. Garcia is accused of killing him, and 19-year-old Cierra Walks is charged with being an accessory. She has pleaded not guilty.

The defendants' lawyers believe their arrests were illegal because they were made on the reservation

based on a state warrant.

Prosecutors say that Garcia and Walks were arrested through the authority of the Black Hills Fugitive Task Force, a multi-agency team coordinated by the U.S. Marshals Service.

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

Midwest economy: April state-by-state glance

By The Associated Press

The Institute for Supply Management, formerly the Purchasing Management Association, began formally surveying its membership in 1931 to gauge business conditions.

The Creighton Economic Forecasting Group uses the same methodology as the national survey to consult supply managers and business leaders. Creighton University economics professor Ernie Goss oversees the report.

The overall index ranges between 0 and 100. Growth neutral is 50, and a figure greater than 50 indicates growth in that factor over the next three to six months.

Here are the state-by-state results for April:

Arkansas: The state's overall index rose to 59.6 last month from March's 53.7. Components of the index were new orders at 71.9, production or sales at 65.8, delivery lead time at 57.8, inventories at 59.3 and employment at 43.1. "Over the past 12 months, the Arkansas economy has increased nonfarm jobs by 0.4 percent (below regional average), durable-goods manufacturing jobs by 1.1 percent (below regional average) and nondurable-goods manufacturing jobs by 1.5 percent (above regional average)," Goss said.

Iowa: Iowa's overall index dipped to 63.9 in April, compared with 64.7 in March. Index components were new orders at 69.7, production or sales at 76.8, delivery lead time at 62.4, employment at 47.0 and inventories at 63.4. "Over the past 12 months, the Iowa economy has increased nonfarm jobs by 0.7 percent (below regional average), durable-goods manufacturing jobs by 6.6 percent (above regional average) and nondurable-goods manufacturing jobs by 1.5 percent (above regional average)," he said.

Kansas: The state's overall index rose to 66.5 last month from 63.8 in March. Index components were new orders at 79.8, production or sales at 72.1, delivery lead time at 65.2, employment at 49.3 and inventories at 65.9. "Over the past 12 months, the Kansas economy has increased nonfarm jobs by 0.8 percent (equal regional average), durable-goods manufacturing jobs by 0.9 percent (below regional average) and nondurable-goods manufacturing jobs by 2.1 percent (above regional average)," Goss said.

Minnesota: Minnesota's overall index increased to 63.6 last month from March's 61.0. Index components were new orders at 76.6, production or sales at 69.5, delivery lead time at 62.2, inventories at 63.2 and employment at 46.8. "Over the past 12 months, the Minnesota economy has increased nonfarm jobs by 0.7 percent (below regional average), durable-goods manufacturing jobs by 0.7 percent (below regional average) and nondurable-goods manufacturing jobs by 1.5 percent (above regional average)," he said.

Missouri: The state's overall index jumped to 67.4 in April from 63.2 in March. Index components were new orders at 73.2, production or sales at 80.5, delivery lead time at 65.8, inventories at 66.5 and employment at 51.2. "Over the past 12 months, the Missouri economy has increased nonfarm jobs by 1.0 percent (above regional average) and durable-goods manufacturing jobs by 3.5 percent (above regional average)," Goss said. Nondurable-goods manufacturing jobs dropped 0.5 percent.

Nebraska: Nebraska's overall index rose to 67.0 last month from 63.4 in March. Index components were new orders at 80.5, production or sales at 72.6, delivery lead time at 65.8, inventories at 66.4 and employment at 49.8. "Over the past 12 months, the Nebraska economy has increased nonfarm jobs by 0.6 percent (below regional average), durable-goods manufacturing jobs by 3.9 percent (above regional average) and nondurable-goods manufacturing jobs by 2.6 percent (above regional average)," he said.

North Dakota: The state's overall index remained below growth neutral in April, but it rose to a regional low of 49.8 from 42.5 in March. Index components were new orders at 60.5, production or sales at 56.9, delivery lead time at 47.4, employment at 34.4 and inventories at 49.9. "Over the past 12 months, the

North Dakota economy has lost 1.3 percent of its nonfarm jobs, increased durable-goods manufacturing jobs by 7 percent (above regional average), and shed 1.2 percent of its nondurable-goods manufacturing jobs," said Goss.

Oklahoma: Oklahoma's overall index improved to 62.7 last month from March's 62.4. Index components were new orders at 75.5, production or sales at 68.7, delivery lead time at 61.2, inventories at 62.3 and employment at 46.0. "Over the past 12 months, the Oklahoma economy has increased nonfarm jobs by 1.7 percent (above regional average) and durable-goods manufacturing jobs by 5.7 percent (above regional average)," he said. There was a 4.4 percent decline in nondurable-goods manufacturing jobs.

South Dakota: The state's overall index rose to a regional high of 69.3 in April from 67.4 in March. Index components were new orders at 83.1, production or sales at 74.7, delivery lead time at 68.2, inventories at 68.6, and employment at 51.9. "Over the past 12 months, the South Dakota economy has increased nonfarm jobs by 1.5 percent (above regional average), durable-goods manufacturing jobs by 5.6 percent (above regional average) and nondurable-goods manufacturing jobs by 3.3 percent (above regional average)," Goss said.

Strong winds damage roof of city-owned bar in Newell

NEWELL, S.D. (AP) — The city-owned bar in Newell is facing repairs after strong winds over the weekend blew off part of the building's corrugated metal roof.

Bartender Lynn McClure tells the Black Hills Pioneer that people inside the bar heard bangs and crashes about 2 p.m. Saturday as the metal roof started peeling off. The National Weather Service says wind was gusting to 45 mph at the time.

A local businessman brought in two lift machines to hold down the metal still remaining on the roof, but bar manager Lorri Olson says the whole roof will likely need to be replaced. City officials will be addressing the matter.

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

Cause of Mina grain elevator fire will remain undetermined

MINA, S.D. (AP) — Authorities do not suspect foul play in a fire that extensively damaged an idled grain elevator complex in Mina.

Ipswich Fire Chief Tracy Hutson tells the American News that the state fire marshal will not investigate, and the cause of the Sunday blaze will remain undetermined.

Hutson says the elevator is used during the fall harvest, but it was empty at the time of the fire.

The fire destroyed the main elevator. Two adjacent silos remain standing but their structural integrity isn't yet known. No one was hurt.

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

Is Trump right about judges' leanings? Maybe, review shows

By SUDHIN THANAWALA, Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — President Donald Trump has called courts unfair and political and repeatedly assailed the 9th Circuit, the U.S. court system's westernmost division, where some of his key immigration policies have stalled.

Other observers describe America's judges as conservative or liberal, implying they bring an ideology to their decision-making that goes beyond a careful assessment of law and precedent. That view has made the U.S. Senate's confirmation of federal judges fraught, with each party battling to block nominees they view as unsympathetic to their positions.

But is there any evidence politics plays a role in judicial opinions? An Associated Press review suggests it might.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 22 of 71

The AP looked at opinions by nearly 40 federal district court and appellate judges about Trump's ban on travelers from mostly Muslim countries. It found only one judge nominated by a Democratic president has supported Trump's authority to keep out all travelers or deport those who arrived just as the first ban took effect. With some exceptions, Republican nominees have taken a broader view of presidential power and rejected limits on the executive orders.

The travel ban is now in its third iteration and under consideration by the U.S. Supreme Court.

HOW HAS THIS SPLIT PLAYED OUT IN THE COURTS?

One of the first federal judges to consider the ban gave it the all-clear, saying Trump provided a legitimate reason for his January 2017 executive order and that a lawsuit challenging it was likely to fail.

The decision by U.S. District Judge Nathaniel Gorton in Boston came days after a federal judge in Los Angeles, Andre Birotte, reached the opposite conclusion and ordered the administration to allow immigrants with valid visas into the U.S.

The judges considered different lawsuits in different courts 3,000 miles (4,830 kilometers) apart. But they were also nominated to the bench by presidents from different parties — Gorton by Republican George H.W. Bush and Birotte by Democrat Barack Obama.

For the most part, the judicial split along party lines has continued as the ban's various versions have made their way through federal courts. The three bans have had a tortuous legal journey that has taken them before dozens of district court and appellate judges nominated by presidents from both major parties.

The AP completed an extensive review of that journey, examining 26 decisions by 38 judges. The two key findings:

— A majority of the judges — 24 — were nominated by Democratic presidents. Only one of those judges supported Trump's power to block all travelers. In February, 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals Judge William Traxler, nominated by President Bill Clinton, said in a dissenting opinion that the administration provided "logical conclusions and rationale" for the third ban and addressed his earlier concerns that it was motivated by anti-Muslim bias.

— In contrast, 10 of the 14 Republican judges in the group sided with the administration and moved to uphold restrictions on foreign travelers. One of the notable exceptions is James Robart in Seattle — a nominee of President George W. Bush —, who issued a nationwide order blocking the first ban.

AREN'T JUDGES SUPPOSED TO BE APOLITICAL?

The code of conduct for federal judges says they should not allow "family, social, political, financial or other relationships to influence" their judgment. Judges generally refrain from overt partisanship and often hold themselves up as neutral arbiters of law.

But the law can be unclear and open to varying interpretations.

In a widely cited 2006 book, "Are Judges Political," Harvard University's Cass Sunstein and other researchers studied thousands of decisions by three-judge federal appellate court panels. Some areas of the law — such as appeals of criminal convictions — produced no significant difference in the decisions of Republican and Democratic judicial nominees. But in other areas, political affiliations were good predictors of judges' rulings.

Affirmative action and environmental regulations were among the issues on which Republican nominees were more likely to take a conservative view, while their Democratic counterparts were more likely to go in a liberal direction, the researchers found.

"The reality is, there are certain hot button issues where you've got these splits, and there's not that many people in the middle," said David Levine, a professor at the University of California, Hastings College of the Law who has followed the travel ban cases.

WHERE DO REPUBLICAN AND DEMOCRATIC NOMINEES DIFFER ON THE TRAVEL BAN?

Democratic nominees have pointed to the president's campaign rhetoric about barring Muslims from entering the country as evidence the bans are illegally motivated by religious prejudice. They said the administration provided insufficient evidence for its claim that the bans are needed for U.S. security.

"The 'initial' announcement of the Muslim ban, offered repeatedly and explicitly through President Trump's

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 23 of 71

own statements, forcefully and persuasively expressed his purpose in unequivocal terms," U.S. District Judge Theodore Chuang in Maryland, who was nominated by Obama, said in an October ruling blocking the third ban.

Republican judicial nominees have assailed their Democratic counterparts for second-guessing the president's national security claims by looking beyond his order to campaign statements.

"Even if we have questions about the basis for the President's ultimate findings — whether it was a 'Muslim ban' or something else — we do not get to peek behind the curtain," 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Jay Bybee, a President George W. Bush nominee, said in March 2017.

Bybee was dissenting from the 9th Circuit's decision not to revisit its ruling keeping the first travel ban on hold. Four other judges — all Republican nominees — signed the dissent.

WHAT'S NEXT?

The U.S. Supreme Court will have the final word. It heard arguments April 25 about the ban's latest version, which restricts travel to the United States by residents of five majority-Muslim countries — down from seven in the first ban — as well as North Korea. It also restricts travelers from Venezuela.

The justices in December allowed that version to take full effect even as the legal fight over it continued.

They appeared split during the hearing, though it seemed likely a majority of the justices would uphold the latest version. Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Anthony Kennedy signaled their support for it. The ban's challengers almost certainly need one of those two justices on their side to strike it down.

Anti-Semitic conspiracy theories roil DC city government

By ASHRAF KHALIL, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A spiraling controversy over anti-Semitic comments and conspiracy theories has roiled the Washington city government, seemingly getting worse with every public attempt to ease the tensions.

The issue nearly derailed a City Council meeting Tuesday morning and resulted in the resignation of a city official who organized a disastrous "unity rally" that featured a speaker who called all Jews "termites."

At the heart of the debacle is City Councilman Trayon White, who ignited a firestorm on March 16 by posting a short video on his Facebook page claiming that an unexpected snowfall was because of "the Rothschilds controlling the climate to create natural disasters."

Fellow council members and Jewish community leaders accused White of spreading an anti-Semitic conspiracy theory about Jewish control of world events. The Rothschilds, a prominent Jewish family whose banking dynasty dates back to the 18th century, are a frequent target of global conspiracy theories.

White said he was unaware the Rothschild theory could be construed as anti-Semitic. The first-term African-American councilman reached out to try to mend fences, but several of the gestures seem to have made things worse.

He attended a Passover Seder and met with Jewish community leaders for breakfast over bagels and lox. He went on a guided tour of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum but abruptly left halfway through without explanation.

Then video surfaced from a February meeting of top city officials that showed White floating a similar conspiracy during an innocuous presentation about the University of the District of Columbia. White posed a question centered on the claim that the Rothschilds controlled both the World Bank and the federal government.

The video shows city leaders in the room, including Mayor Muriel Bowser, awkwardly laughing it off and moving on, but the footage further upset Jewish community leaders.

Then a further revelation: White had contributed \$500 from a fund meant for his Ward 8 constituents to a Chicago event for Louis Farrakhan, leader of the Nation of Islam.

Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam have a decades-old history of overtly anti-Semitic rhetoric. The Nation of Islam also does significant social and charitable work in black communities and retains some respect among those who don't share their views.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 24 of 71

Last week, supporters of White held a rally outside City Hall organized by a member of the city's public housing authority board. At the rally, a representative of the Nation of Islam called one of two Jewish DC council members a "fake Jew."

The rally prompted calls for the resignation of Josh Lopez, the mayoral appointee who organized it. White did not attend the rally.

The events came to a head Tuesday morning before the council's regular session. A pre-session breakfast meeting ran an hour long as council members debated how best to respond to the rally and whether to call for Lopez's resignation. A local rabbi who was there as an observer shouted that the council members should be ashamed of themselves.

The council members then held an impromptu press conference outside the building where City Council President Phil Mendelson said that "intolerant speech ... has no place in our city."

As the council returned inside and resumed its normal meeting, news broke that Lopez had resigned.

Bowser's office had called for Lopez to apologize but not resign, but she accepted the resignation and issued a statement calling for unity going forward.

Repeated attempts to contact White for comment were unsuccessful. On Tuesday in City Hall, White pushed past a reporter who tried to ask him a question.

City officials hope the immediate controversy will die down with time, and White doesn't face re-election for another two years. The councilman may still face some sort of public censure if his contribution to Farrakhan is judged as a minor campaign finance violation. But the public and personal scars from the past few weeks could linger.

"Yes, it got personal," said Councilman Jack Evans. "I hope that relationships can be repaired, and they will be, and we will move on."

There's also the issue of White's relationship with the local Jewish community.

"I sincerely think he was just repeating conspiracy theories he had heard somewhere," said Rabbi Batya Glazer, who had met with White on the issue. "It does mean he has an obligation to clarify what his position is."

The controversy has also poked at some long-dormant societal sore spots. The Rothschild conspiracy theory has persisted for decades on the fringes of both black and white culture in America.

"Conspiracy theories are very dangerous ... because they exacerbate splits that already exist," said Andre Perry, who studies race and urban policy for the Brookings Institution. "This isn't about one city council member. This is about how susceptible we are to tribalism that is created by a lack of trust in one another."

Australian cardinal to face 2 trials on sexual abuse charges

By ROD McGUIRK, Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — Australian Cardinal George Pell, the most senior Vatican official to be charged in the Catholic Church sex abuse crisis, will face two trials on sex crime allegations spanning decades, a court heard on Wednesday.

Pell appeared for an administrative first hearing in the Victoria state County Court, where he will be tried after a magistrate decided Tuesday that he should face a jury. The magistrate dismissed around half the charges the cleric had faced.

His lawyer Robert Richter said Wednesday that he agreed with prosecutors to split the remaining charges into two trials.

The charges relating to Pell's time as a priest in his hometown of Ballarat in the 1970s and those relating to his time as archbishop of Melbourne in the 1990s were "of a completely different nature" and "separated by 20 years," Richter told Judge Sue Pullen.

Details of the charges and their number have not been made public.

Pell also wanted the first trial to start soon for several reasons, Richter said.

"Number one, my client is 76 years old, and number two, everyone has to get on with their lives," Richter

said.

Richter also noted that one of the witnesses was 80 years old.

Pell has taken leave from his Vatican job as Pope Francis' finance minister and plans to return to it if he is acquitted.

Prosecutor Mark Gibson anticipated that the prosecution would need three months to compile its case, but later described that estimate as "conservative," meaning prosecutors could be ready sooner.

Pullen said, "I do think three months is a little excessive."

Prosecution and defense lawyers agreed the two separate trials would take a total of between eight and 10 weeks.

Asked by Pullen if Pell could afford his defense, Richter replied the cardinal had "no problem with funding."

Pell was allowed to leave the court on bail ahead of his next administrative hearing on May 16. Pullen rejected an application to excuse Pell from attending that day.

Dozens of police linked arms to escort Pell, wearing a dark suit, white shirt and a cleric's collar, through a media throng from the court to a waiting car.

Lawyers for Australia's highest-ranking Catholic have been fighting the allegations since before he was charged in Rome by summons last June.

When Magistrate Belinda Wallington asked Pell on Tuesday how he pleaded, the cardinal said in a firm voice, "Not guilty." It was the first time after numerous court appearances that he had been required to enter a plea.

After Pell was ordered to stand trial, Vatican spokesman Greg Burke said in a statement: "The Holy See has taken note of the decision issued by judicial authorities in Australia regarding His Eminence Cardinal George Pell. Last year, the Holy Father granted Cardinal Pell a leave of absence so he could defend himself from the accusations. The leave of absence is still in place."

Under his bail conditions, Pell cannot leave Australia or contact prosecution witnesses, and must give police 24 hours' notice of any change of address.

Since Pell returned to Australia from the Vatican in July, he has lived in Sydney and flown to Melbourne for his court hearings. His circumstances are far removed from the years he spent as the high-profile and polarizing archbishop of Melbourne and later Sydney before his promotion to Rome in 2014.

The case places both the cardinal and the pope in potentially perilous territory.

For Pell, the charges are a threat to his freedom, his reputation and his career. For Francis, they are a threat to his credibility, given that he famously promised a "zero tolerance" policy for sex abuse in the church.

Rossi X-ray Timing Explorer ends mission after 'listening' to the universe

Silas Laycock, University of Massachusetts Lowell

(The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.)

Silas Laycock, University of Massachusetts Lowell

(THE CONVERSATION) On May 1, NASA's Rossi X-ray Timing Explorer spacecraft reentered and burned up in Earth's atmosphere. Although not as well-known to the public as Hubble and Chandra, RXTE ranks among NASA's most successful astrophysics missions. For the past 16 years RXTE continuously "listened" to the streams of X-ray radiation coming from black holes, neutron stars and pulsars.

Pulsars probe the physics of matter under the most extreme conditions, answering questions not accessible in earthbound laboratories. Along with black holes, neutron stars are responsible for injecting the majority of ionizing radiation – X-rays and gamma rays – into the the interstellar medium, and their birth and death events produce the majority of the elements heavier than iron. The surprising conclusion is that they sculpt the conditions needed for life to arise in the cosmos.

Whereas some telescopes look at the visible wavelengths that stars emit, RXTE honed in specifically

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 26 of 71

on X-rays. Compared to the relatively unchanging night sky we see with our eyes, the X-ray universe is dynamic and filled with bursts, pulsations and flares. This radiation comes from matter being heated to millions of degrees as it is swallowed up by “zombie stars.”

Far from being super-rare, our own galaxy probably contains millions of these degenerate stellar relics, left behind after massive stars exploded during a supernova. Most such zombie stars are invisible, but RXTE could hear the “sound” of them munching on nearby stars!

You may know the familiar clicking sound of a Geiger counter from TV and movie depictions of scientists working with radioactive materials. Similarly, RXTE was like a giant Geiger counter, the size of an SUV, filled with Xenon gas and a grid of high voltage electrodes. Each individual X-ray photon that passed through the gas generated a tiny voltage pulse that registered on sensitive electronics and recorded its precise arrival.

Using computer codes based on the same math used by the spectrum analyzer in a music recording studio, astrophysicists like me and my students at UMass Lowell scan the stream of incoming photons for patterns. Then we use physics to interpret the patterns much as a cardiologist interprets an EKG trace. We can reveal what is going on as matter falls in into black holes, or as it swirls around a neutron star – the densest and most magnetic objects in the universe.

RXTE detected many pulsars – neutron stars that produce X-rays in a similar way to the auroras on Earth, but at vastly higher energies. The pulsar’s magnetic field (a trillion times stronger than the Earth’s field) captures the stellar wind, a flow of energetic particles from a neighboring star, just like the solar wind is captured by the Earth. The pulsar’s magnetic field then accelerates these particles toward its poles, where they crash down and release their energy, lighting up the polar regions like auroras.

RXTE is dead, but astrophysicists are exploring the fundamental physics of neutron stars and black holes through its huge archive of data. We analyze pulsars’ signals, and the noise emitted by black holes, using a combination of math that includes Einstein’s General Relativity, and Electromagnetism. We then build computer models that try to physically map their X-ray “northern lights.”

When I was a student back in the late 1990s, we pointed RXTE at a nearby galaxy, the Small Magellanic Cloud, hoping to discover how many pulsars existed outside our own galaxy. We were amazed to find three pulsing at the same time. Our record became seven simultaneously active pulsars, eventually reaching a total of more than 50 in that tiny galaxy.

Today other spacecraft, including Chandra, Swift and XMM-Newton, image the X-ray sky, but they cannot provide those all-sky X-ray “ears.” We’re hard at work on a new mission called STROBE-X for launch in the 2020s that will once again let us hear the music.

This article was originally published on The Conversation. Read the original article here: <http://theconversation.com/rossi-x-ray-timing-explorer-ends-mission-after-listening-to-the-universe-95852>.

In Brazil, patients risk everything for the ‘right to beauty’

Alvaro Jarrin, College of the Holy Cross

(The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.)

Alvaro Jarrin, College of the Holy Cross

(THE CONVERSATION) In the U.S., if you want a face lift or a tummy tuck, it’s generally assumed that you’ll be paying out of pocket. Insurance will tend to cover plastic surgery only when the surgery is deemed “medically necessary” and not merely aesthetic.

In Brazil, however, patients are thought of as having the “right to beauty.” In public hospitals, plastic surgeries are free or low-cost, and the government subsidizes nearly half a million surgeries every year.

As a medical anthropologist, I’ve spent years studying Brazilian plastic surgery. While many patients are incredibly thankful for the opportunity to become beautiful, the “right to beauty” has a darker side to it.

Everyone I interviewed in Brazil admitted that plastic surgeries were risky affairs. In the public hospitals where these plastic surgeries are free or much cheaper than in private clinics, I heard many patients declare that they were “cobaias” (guinea pigs) for the medical residents who would operate on them.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 27 of 71

Yet these patients, most of whom were women, also told me that living without beauty in Brazil was to take an even bigger risk. Beauty is perceived as being so central for the job market, so crucial for finding a spouse and so essential for any chances at upward mobility that many can't say no to these surgeries.

The very long queues for plastic surgery in public hospitals – with wait times of several months or even years – seem to confirm this immense longing for beauty. It's made Brazil the second-largest consumer of plastic surgery in the world, with 1.2 million surgeries carried out every year.

Brazil's 'pope of plastic surgery' Today, Brazil considers health to be a basic human right and provides free health care to all its citizens – a hard-won victory of social activists after Brazil's dictatorship fell and a new democratic constitution was written into law in 1988. However, public hospitals remain severely underfunded, and most middle-class and upper-class Brazilians prefer to use private medical services.

In effect, Brazil has a two-tiered system. There is a private health care system that is cutting-edge and luxurious and a public one that is strapped for cash but provides essential services to the working class.

Plastic surgery is considered an essential service largely due to the efforts of a surgeon named Ivo Pitanguy. In the late 1950s, Pitanguy – now known as the "pope of plastic surgery" – convinced President Juscelino Kubitschek that the "right to beauty" was as basic as any other health need. Pitanguy made the case that ugliness caused so much psychological suffering in Brazil that the medical class could not turn its back on this humanitarian issue.

In 1960, he opened the first institute that offered plastic surgery to the poor, one that doubled as a medical school to train new surgeons. It was so successful that it became the educational model followed by most other plastic surgery residencies around the country. In return for free or low-cost surgeries, working-class patients would help surgeons learn and practice their trade.

Brazil was the perfect testing ground for this idea. In the early 1920s, Brazilian eugenic scientists suggested that beauty was a measure of the nation's racial progress. Beauty started to assume more cultural clout, and plastic surgeons inherited these ideals, seeing their trade as "fixing" the errors of too much racial mixture in Brazil, particularly among the lower classes.

Beauty's hidden costs In my recently published book, "The Biopolitics of Beauty," I question the idea that humanitarianism is the driving force of plastic surgery in Brazilian public hospitals.

Burn victims and individuals with congenital deformities were once the main beneficiaries of plastic surgery in these hospitals. But at many of the clinics where I carried out my research, nearly 95 percent of all those surgeries have become purely aesthetic. I documented hundreds of instances where surgeons and residents purposely blurred the boundaries between reconstructive and aesthetic procedures to get them approved by the government.

Since most of the surgeries in public hospitals are carried out by medical residents who are still training to be plastic surgeons, they have a vested interest in learning aesthetic procedures – skills that they'll be able to later market as they open private practices. But they have very little interest in learning the reconstructive procedures that actually improve a bodily function or reduce physical pain.

Additionally, most of Brazil's surgical innovations are first tested by plastic surgeons in public hospitals, exposing those patients to more risks than wealthier patients. Working-class patients are understood as subjects for inquiry, and I spoke to the small but significant number who were very unhappy with the results of their surgery.

Take one woman I interviewed named Renata. The medical resident who operated on her left her with deformed breasts and uneven nipples. She also developed severe infections that took months to heal and left significant scars. She considered suing the doctor, but discovered she would need a costly expert medical evaluation. She also knew that the Brazilian legal system would likely grant her very little in terms of damages. In the end, she settled for another free surgery, one that she hoped would provide a better result and leave her less unhappy.

This was a typical story among low-income patients that were harmed by plastic surgeons. Their lack of financial resources made it nearly impossible for them to find any justice if anything went wrong, so they assumed all of the risk.

Plastic surgeons, on the other hand, are eager to try new techniques if they seem promising, no mat-

ter how risky they might be. A technique known as "bioplastia," for example, consists of injecting a liquid compound called PMMA into the body in order to permanently reshape a patient's features. The compound, which is similar to acrylic glass, doesn't cause problems in most patients. But in a small minority it causes very severe complications, including necrosis of facial tissue. Yet many doctors I interviewed strongly defended the technique, claiming it was a phenomenal tool that allowed them to transform the human body. Risk, they argued, was inherent in any surgical procedure.

Around the world, Brazilian plastic surgeons are known as the best in their field, and they gain global recognition for their daring new techniques. During an international plastic surgery conference in Brazil, an American surgeon I interviewed told me, "Brazilian surgeons are pioneers... You know why? Because [in Brazil] they don't have the institutional or legal barriers to generate new techniques. They can be creative as they want to be."

In other words, there are few regulations in place that could protect low-income patients from malpractice.

In a country where appearance is seen as central to one's very citizenship, patients agree to becoming experimental subjects in exchange for beauty. But it's often a choice made under duress, and the consequences can be dire.

This article was originally published on The Conversation. Read the original article here: <http://theconversation.com/in-brazil-patients-risk-everything-for-the-right-to-beauty-94159>.

Anti-war protests 50 years ago helped mold the modern Christian right

David Mislin, Temple University

(The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.)

David Mislin, Temple University

(THE CONVERSATION) In May of 1968, a high-profile trial began in Boston that dramatically illustrated a larger phenomenon fueling the rise of conservative Christianity in the United States.

Five men had been charged with conspiracy for encouraging Americans to evade the draft. One of the prominent defendants in the trial was a Presbyterian minister and Yale University chaplain, William Sloane Coffin Jr..

Coffin, like many ministers, vehemently opposed the Vietnam War, but many ordinary churchgoers supported it. This disagreement divided denominations.

Eventually, many alienated Protestants abandoned mainline churches in favor of the evangelical congregations that formed the core of the new conservative Christianity.

Who was Coffin? Coffin was a prominent figure in mainline Protestantism, the term given to denominations like Episcopalians, Methodists and Presbyterians. These were the churches of the middle- and upper-class establishment, and their leaders had long enjoyed close connections to political elites.

The Coffin family belonged to the upper-class circles of New York City. Coffin's father led the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and his uncle, Henry, had been minister of the prestigious Madison Avenue Presbyterian Church as well as president of Union Theological Seminary, the divinity school that trained generations of noted ministers and theologians.

Coffin's own life exemplified the overlapping circles of government, academia and religion in which elite Protestants moved. He was a CIA officer during the Korean War, and after completing his studies at Yale, he became the university's chaplain.

From cold warrior to anti-war defendant Coffin, however, turned against the government when it came to Vietnam. In 1965, he helped establish an anti-war group, "Clergy and Laity Concerned About Vietnam." At Yale, he openly argued against the war.

His trial stemmed from a 1967 antiwar rally in Boston. During the protests, Coffin collected the draft cards of men who refused to serve in Vietnam, which was a crime. He later publicized his actions and

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 29 of 71

sought arrest to force a national debate about the draft.

He was charged with encouraging young men to "refuse or evade registration in the armed forces" and faced up to five years in federal prison.

Anti-war action among the clergy Coffin was far from the only mainline Protestant minister to oppose the Vietnam War. Many ministers, in a departure from previous wars, began criticizing U.S. policy in Vietnam in the mid-1960s.

This critique among Protestant leaders grew stronger in early 1968. A crucial event was North Vietnam's Tet Offensive, a large-scale surprise attack on targets throughout South Vietnam, including the U.S. embassy. Though the attacks were ultimately unsuccessful, they caused many Americans to doubt President Lyndon Johnson's assurances that the war's end was in sight.

Soon after, leading Protestant journals offered bolder criticism. The Christian Century, a nondenominational magazine that for decades had been the voice of mainline Protestantism, published an article that condemned the war as antithetical to religious values. Its authors wrote,

"A growing consensus among mature, morally sensitive people is that the spiritual integrity of the United States...cannot be secured by our present policy in Vietnam."

These ministers also joined Coffin in matching their rhetoric with action. The New York Times reported "an increasing number of churchmen are moving toward civil disobedience as a means of expressing dissent."

Clergy promised to support draft resisters, even if it meant they too might be arrested. Younger ministers and divinity school students returned their own draft cards to signal their resistance.

Support for the war in the pews As it became apparent that many mainline church leaders had embraced the anti-war position, it became equally clear that not all U.S. Protestants agreed with them. As The New York Times noted at the time, even the editors of the Christian Century and other Protestant journals recognized that "the majority of church members" did not "share such opposition to American policy in Vietnam."

The most that could be hoped for was that churchgoers would be "willing to listen to reservations about the war."

Times reporter Edward B. Fiske observed how conservative evangelical Protestants supported the war. Many, like the theologian and editor of Christianity Today, Carl F. Henry, believed it to be morally defensible. Fiske wrote that "the majority of laymen and clergy in this country" were more in agreement with Carl Henry than with William Sloane Coffin.

The simmering divisions that boiled over This was not the first time that prominent Protestant leaders found themselves at odds with regular churchgoers or even ordinary ministers.

As I have shown in my work on mainline Protestantism, in the early 20th century, a division had long existed between liberal Protestant leaders and more conservative churchgoers. A significant number of ministers, for example, championed civil rights efforts and affirmed interfaith cooperation with Catholics and Jews – efforts staunchly opposed by many of their congregants.

But, it was in the Vietnam era, when a large numbers of Protestant leaders actively campaigned against U.S. military policy, that for many churchgoers the opposition went too far.

As Cambridge University historian Andrew Preston has written, "divisions between liberal clerics and conservative congregants had always existed...but they were rarely as wide as on Vietnam."

Aftermath These attacks on U.S. war efforts by Coffin and other church leaders alienated many Protestant Americans – with lasting repercussions.

In terms of Coffin and his trial, the minister himself faced few consequences. Though initially found guilty, his conviction was overturned on appeal. He returned to Yale and later became minister of New York's prestigious Riverside Church.

Mainline Protestant denominations, however, did not fare as well. They went into decline, losing nearly

one in six members between 1970 and 1985.

In the same years, Evangelical churches grew by double-digit percentages. They welcomed Americans who had abandoned mainline denominations to protest the liberal views of clergy on many social issues, including the Vietnam War. These churches supported the religious right and its brand of conservative politics.

As historian George Bogaski observed, in the Vietnam War, "mainline churches lost." When prominent ministers like Coffin and writers in leading periodicals attacked the war, they alienated people in the pews.

For decades, mainline Protestant denominations had united liberal leaders with more conservative churchgoers. That union proved unsustainable in the wake of 1968.

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Bacteria may be powerful weapon against antibiotic resistance

Terence Crofts, Washington University in St Louis

(The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.)

Terence Crofts, Washington University in St Louis

(THE CONVERSATION) When I was a child, my parents gave me a sweet pink syrup to destroy the bacteria causing my sore throat. That memory is a testament to the power of antibiotics. But, through my research as a microbiologist over the past few years, I've learned that not only are some microbes immune to antibiotics but they can actually "eat" these drugs, using them as a nutritious food to grow and multiply.

During the past decade, scientists have established that many soil-dwelling bacteria are able to resist and eat the antibiotics we depend upon to fight nasty infections. While this might feel like a rebuke from the world of microbes – a reminder that they can evolve to resist even our most powerful drugs – this is not all bad news.

My colleagues and I in the lab of Gautam Dantas have not only discovered how bacteria are able to eat the drugs that are supposed to kill them, but how this can be useful to people as well. We found we might someday be able to harness these antibiotic-munching microbes to clean up land and water contaminated with these medicines – a major cause of antibiotic-resistant superbugs.

Why antibiotics make a good snack It may seem counterintuitive that microbes can eat the drugs that humans use to wipe them out. But from a bacterium's perspective, antibiotics might be nothing more than a source of elements vital to life: carbon, hydrogen, oxygen and nitrogen. Furthermore, most of the antibiotics your doctor prescribes are made by, or derived from, fungi and bacteria living in the soil. So it makes perfect sense that these benign earthy microorganisms snack on the carbon compounds made by their soil-dwelling neighbors.

For the past 10 years, scientists in the Dantas lab have been investigating how bacteria pull off this seemingly unlikely feat. Now we think we've cracked this mystery. We have identified a collection of genes encoding enzymes necessary for microbes to consume penicillin (which Alexander Fleming discovered in its naturally occurring form in 1928). We discovered that eating the drug is a two-step process in which the bacterium first disarms the antibiotic by breaking a piece called the "β-lactam warhead." Without this, the remaining piece of penicillin is harmless and can be used as food, allowing the microbes to thrive in high concentrations of the drug. Second, the bacterium tears off a ring-shaped portion of the molecule and uses a dedicated family of enzymes to break it down further before eating the pieces.

Now that we understand which enzymes the bacteria use to disable the antibiotic, we can develop defense strategies and fight back. This is vital because antibiotic-resistant bacteria cause severe sickness in more than 2 million Americans, leading to more than 20,000 deaths annually. These infections are more difficult and more costly to treat because they require long stays in the hospital. Every year this leads to losses to the U.S. economy directly due to the costs of treatment (US\$20 billion) and indirectly due to lost productivity (\$35 billion).

Using microbes to eat contamination Ultimately we hope that we may be able to use our findings to curb one of the chief causes of antibiotic resistance: contamination of land and water. These natural resources are polluted by sewage runoff from farms where the animals are fed antibiotics to fatten them up, and illegally dumped pharmaceutical waste or spills – particularly from bulk manufacturers in China and India. We believe we could remove these medicines through bio-remediation, which uses living organisms to clean up man-made messes.

While the bacteria that we identified in our study grew slowly when fed a diet of penicillin, we might be able to engineer new varieties that remove antibiotics more efficiently by speed-eating the drug. As a proof of concept, we cut and pasted genes from our soil microorganisms, as well as a previously discovered gene that we thought would have a similar function, into benign laboratory strains of *E. coli* bacteria and turned them into antibiotic-eating microbes.

Although this might sound simple, figuring out the genetic instructions for penicillin eating and inserting them into *E. coli* took several steps. First we sequenced the entire genetic content – the genomes – of all four of the penicillin-eating bacteria that Dr. Dantas discovered. This yielded a genetic roadmap of all the potential routes the bacteria could use to eat this antibiotic. By studying which genes were turned on by the bacteria while they ate penicillin, we learned which ones were most important.

To confirm that we had figured out the steps the microbes use to eat antibiotics, we broke these genes in one strain of the soil bacteria. This yielded mutants that were incapable of consuming penicillin, helping us to pinpoint which genes were needed to engineer *E. coli* to eat penicillin.

But the really interesting discovery was that penicillin eating requires two separate groups of genes to work together, beginning with an antibiotic resistance gene to break the toxic β -lactam warhead. Without this critical enzyme, the bacteria are unable to disarm the antibiotic, and without the enzyme responsible for removing the ring from penicillin, there is nothing to eat.

This suggests that we may be able to manufacture new strains of benign bacteria to remove antibiotics from the environment. This doesn't mean that people can use antibiotics with impunity, but it might provide a safe way to curb the spread of antibiotic resistance in the future.

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10 years after, Cyclone Nargis still holds lessons for Myanmar

Gregory Gottlieb, Tufts University

(The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.)

Gregory Gottlieb, Tufts University

(THE CONVERSATION) When Cyclone Nargis struck Myanmar 10 years ago, 140,000 lives were lost and 800,000 were displaced. The category 4 storm slammed into Myanmar's low-lying Irrawaddy Delta, an area that usually escapes major typhoons. High winds and a 12-foot storm surge devastated the area, affecting millions.

I was a senior humanitarian assistance officer at the United States Agency for International Development at the time. Myanmar, then under a military dictatorship, was clearly unprepared for a storm of this magnitude.

Not only did the country lack a weather radar network that could predict cyclones, it also had no early warning system, storm shelters or evacuation plans. Housing, built largely of bamboo and thatch, was hardly cyclone resistant.

In the 10 years since the storm, Myanmar has made significant progress on disaster preparedness. But the government's relationship with international and local relief agencies remains fraught – potentially putting future lives at risk.

Unnecessary misery I spent the immediate aftermath of Cyclone Nargis negotiating with the government to gain access for humanitarian organizations to access the country and provide emergency relief.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 32 of 71

Myanmar, formerly known as Burma, was then largely a closed country run by the military. Battling many internal insurgencies over nearly 70 years, the military tended to spend money on security, undermining the growth of social programs. Disaster preparedness was extremely weak.

The security-obsessed Myanmar government made disaster recovery after Nargis infinitely harder than it needed to be because of resistance to international help, which was seen as a potential threat to internal security. The generals I worked with refused visas for international relief staff, delayed entry of ships carrying relief supplies and even arrested citizens for undertaking local relief efforts.

These delays left millions of people injured, hungry and homeless. More than 700,000 homes were fully or partially destroyed. Nearly 75 percent of health clinics were destroyed.

Two weeks later, under pressure from regional leaders, the U.N. secretary general, and critiques from the U.S. and other Western countries, the Association of South East Asian Nations, a regional governance body, brokered an agreement that allowed international organizations into the country to provide relief.

Numerous agencies came into the country, and several, such as Save the Children and World Vision, greatly expanded their programs and staff. It is estimated that more than 1.1 million received food assistance and other relief.

Government changesA few years later, political change began to open Myanmar up to the outside world.

In 2010 a referendum allowed citizens to vote for their first elected leaders in two decades and eased tough restrictions on foreign access to the country.

This political opening also pushed the country to collaborate with neighboring countries and international partners on disaster preparedness. Myanmar worked with ASEAN on several regional storm risk-reduction programs, signed onto international agreements to boost its disaster resiliency and joined the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

It also passed laws aimed at building national, state and local disaster response mechanisms, with the support of the U.S., Japan, the Myanmar Red Cross, the U.N. and other relief agencies.

Similar efforts had been shown to help neighboring Bangladesh greatly reduce its storm deaths in recent decades. In 1991, for example, approximately 135,000 people died in Cyclone 2b. By 2007, just 3,000 were killed in Cyclone Sidr, though it was one of the largest storms ever to hit Bangladesh.

Myanmar is also making an effort to replant coastal mangrove forests. Evidence shows that deforestation of this critical coastline ecosystem worsened the storm surge of Cyclone Nargis.

During Cyclone Nargis, many in the path of the storm doubted weather reports because of the unreliability of previous storm reporting. The country has now made dramatic improvements to its national weather forecasting and disaster warning systems, installing three new radar facilities and 30 new weather observation stations.

The new weather reports, which are broadcast regularly through radio and television, have evidently earned people's trust. When severe weather is predicted, warnings will also be issued via newly installed loudspeaker systems.

The government also hopes to build 50 concrete shelters in cyclone-vulnerable Rakhine state and offer more training to government officials in "resilience training" – teaching them best practices in disaster management and social protection.

Rise of the smartphoneThe most significant disaster mitigation development, however, has nothing to do with government legislation. It is the explosion of smartphones in the country.

In 2008, when I worked in Myanmar, only 3 percent of the population had mobile phones. By June 2017, about 90 percent of the country's 54 million people had access to a phone with internet service.

Now, even the 85 percent of Myanmar citizens who live in rural areas will soon be able to receive storm warnings directly via a smartphone app.

Difficulties remainWhile Myanmar deserves praise for learning from the Cyclone Nargis disaster, I fear that the government's continued resistance to outside influence will undermine progress.

Even with the leadership of the elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who won a Nobel Peace Prize in 1991 for advocating democratic reforms, Myanmar remains something of a rogue state. Most notably, the country is accused of atrocity in its treatment of the Rohingya, a minority Muslim community from Rakhine state.

Thousands have reportedly been killed since August 2017 and many of their villages razed. Some 600,000 Rohingya are now refugees in Bangladesh.

Myanmar has consistently blocked the U.N. and international aid agencies from assisting Rohingya refugees. Just as it did in 2008, when I was negotiating with generals to get foreign aid workers into the country, the government still limits visas and operations for international nonprofit relief groups.

In my assessment, the government's dual strategy – cooperating on disaster preparedness while obstructing humanitarian relief in conflict areas – still puts Burmese lives needlessly in danger.

By hindering relief organizations seeking to provide humanitarian relief to the Rohingya, Myanmar is creating confused and ineffective relationships with the same agencies that it will depend on after the inevitable next natural storm.

Myanmar has made great strides in disaster preparedness since Cyclone Nargis. But unless it builds more open and transparent relationships with international partners, it risks a repeat of another tragedy.

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Nicaragua protests threaten an authoritarian regime that looked like it might never fall

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(The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.)

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(THE CONVERSATION) After a week of political protest in Nicaragua, at least 38 people – and possibly over 60 – are dead. President Daniel Ortega, whose government once seemed unshakable, has emerged weakened in the face of protesters demanding his ouster.

Demonstrations first erupted on April 16 after the government announced social security reforms that would raise costs for retirees and workers. When police cracked down on protesters, they unintentionally fanned the flames. By April 20, tens of thousands of Nicaraguans were taking to the streets daily to protest in cities and towns nationwide.

Ortega, a former leftist revolutionary, has moved to the right since his 2006 election. He has also centralized his power, controlling the media, restricting opposition and giving government jobs to family and friends. His wife, Rosario Murillo, was Ortega's running mate in 2016 and is now Nicaragua's vice president.

In 2014, Ortega abolished term limits for the presidency, with the blessing of a National Assembly stacked with loyalists.

As scholars of social conflict and regime change in Latin America, we know that authoritarian governments' survival depends on controlling institutions and maintaining alliances with powerful forces like the military, the Church and the elite class. Nicaragua's protest movement has imperiled Ortega's carefully constructed coalition – perhaps fatally.

Ortega then and now Ortega first came to power in 1979 after Nicaragua's Sandinista revolution overthrew dictator Anastasio Somoza.

Back then, Ortega's rise hinged on creating a broad coalition. With the support of traditional opposition parties, many business elites, students and peasants, his Sandinista National Liberation Front moved from marginal guerrilla group to ruling party.

The Sandinista government stayed in power for 10 years, creating a socialist economy, undertaking land reform and wealth redistribution.

Ortega returned to power by winning elections in 2006 – this time with a new, right-leaning platform that espoused traditional Christian values and pro-business economic policies.

Ortega had rocky relations with the Catholic Church during the revolution. But since 2006 he has embraced both Catholic bishops and evangelical groups. Beyond religious rhetoric, he has maintained Nicaragua's

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 34 of 71

abortion ban and sought to control LGBTQ activism.

The business elite likewise struck a new bargain with Ortega when he was elected in 2006. In the 1980s, Ortega worked to seize private enterprises and redistribute farmland. Now, he works with business leaders to set Nicaragua's economic policy and labor conditions. In turn, they have supported his regime.

For a while, this coalition held. Until recently, Ortega's opposition was fragmented and weak. Since 2007, there have been few protests, which were usually met with violent repression.

Fractured coalition Ortega's unilateral announcement of the social security reforms on April 16 – a decision he made without consulting Nicaragua's business community – ruptured the business side of this pact.

By April 20, the major business associations were calling on workers to protest the reforms.

Police repression and the perceived injustice of the social security reforms drove the Church away from Ortega, too. First, Managua Bishop Silvio Baéz said that the protesters' cause was "just" and offered the Cathedral in Managua as a refuge for student protesters. Soon, the bishop was publicly calling for negotiation and "democratization" in Nicaragua.

Ortega's coalition has crumbled. In contrast to the spontaneous protests, this government is so unpopular that it has to bus supporters into Managua to stage pro-regime counterdemonstrations.

The military Suddenly, Nicaragua seems to be on the brink of momentous change. What happens next depends heavily on Nicaragua's security forces.

Numerous studies confirm that autocratic leaders can survive mass protest movements only if police and the military are willing to continually repress protesters.

Venezuela's Nicolás Maduro, for example, has stayed in power largely because the security apparatus has suppressed protests and crushed mutinies.

When security forces refuse orders, on the other hand, dictators can fall. The 2011 Tahrir Square protests toppled Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak within weeks, once the military abandoned his regime.

Since 2007, Ortega has worked hard to make Nicaragua's security forces personally loyal to him. He has offered military and police officers promotions, political positions and business opportunities.

These efforts partially succeeded. The police have actively stifled dissent in Nicaragua, beating and arresting protesters. They also cooperate with the Sandinista youth wing as a kind of paramilitary force.

As April's protests expanded, Ortega appeared on television flanked by police commissioner Aminta Granera and military commander General Julio César Áviles, demonstrating that he would use military force to stay in power if necessary.

But neither the police nor soldiers seem keen to shed more blood. On April 20, the military sent troops to guard government buildings – but not to confront protesters themselves.

Around April 20, some police were actually arrested for refusing orders to crack down on protests.

Most significantly, on April 21, as massive protests roiled central Managua, police violence suddenly and completely ceased – a sign that police commissioner Granera issued an order to stand down. She was soon reported to resign.

Legacy of the revolution This resistance to violence is not surprising given the history of Nicaragua's security forces.

During the 1979 revolution, President Somoza's National Guard met the Sandinistas' popular uprising with murderous repression. It was Sandinista troops who helped sweep away the dictator and his predatory security apparatus.

Over time, these revolutionary forces took on a professional, nonpartisan and apolitical identity. Today, Nicaragua's police and the military are considered among the most effective in Central America.

Somoza's legacy looms large in Nicaragua. In our assessment, today's military is far more likely countenance Ortega's ouster than to murder Nicaraguan citizens in his defense.

Repression may be off the table, but Ortega is a wily politician. To stay in office peacefully, he'll have to negotiate his way back into the good graces of the Catholic Church and business leaders. He has dominated Nicaragua's political life and consolidated so much power for so long, however, that he could offer numerous concessions without losing full control.

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sation.com/nicaragua-protests-threaten-an-authoritarian-regime-that-looked-like-it-might-never-fall-95776.

Could bats guide humans to clean drinking water in places where it's scarce?

Theresa Laverty, Colorado State University

(The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.)

Theresa Laverty, Colorado State University

(THE CONVERSATION) Desert life depends on reliable access to water. In Namibia's stark Namib Desert, where I spent 18 months doing research for my Ph.D., wildlife concentrates around natural springs. Increasingly, animals there also rely on man-made ponds intended for livestock.

But water can vary both in quantity and quality, and animals have different needs. Some species, like the kangaroo rat, can survive without drinking water for years by obtaining it instead from its food. More often, the movements of desert animals are restricted by reliable access to water.

Part of my research examines relationships between bat species and water quality in an African desert. Based on my observations, I believe that in arid places, people may be able to locate usable water sources and detect changes in the quality of sources they are already using by observing bats.

Measuring pollution with canaries, moss and fish People have used plants and animals as environmental indicators for many years. Most famously, miners carried canaries into coal mines with them to detect toxic gases, including carbon monoxide, before the development of modern safety equipment.

Today, scientists use many living organisms in their natural habitats to assess changes in the environment. Good bioindicators are typically species that are abundant, common and whose lives are relatively well-understood but also are sensitive to specific disturbances or stresses, such as water scarcity or pollution.

For example, some researchers infer pesticide concentrations by monitoring the population sizes and body conditions of amphibians and fish-eating birds. Plants are useful bioindicators for many types of air pollution because they absorb air through their leaves. Similarly, fish and other small aquatic organisms can be effective bioindicators of water pollution.

Clean drinking water is scarce and dwindling According to the United Nations, global water use has grown at more than twice the rate of human population growth over the last century. In many places groundwater is being used at faster rates than it can be replenished. And water quality is declining. At least a dozen major cities could face limits on water use in the next several decades.

Water quality typically worsens as humans pump up increasing quantities from underground. Salt and toxic substances become more concentrated in the remaining groundwater as its volume decreases. At the surface, pollution from agriculture, mining and human waste reduces water quality in rivers, lakes and ponds.

Government agencies in developed countries monitor and treat freshwater supplies to ensure that they meet drinking water standards designed for humans and livestock. Costs for laboratory analysis often start at US\$100 or more per sample and quickly add up. Therefore, scientists often resort to biological indicators, such as aquatic insects and fish, to assess water quality.

Follow the bats In the Namib Desert, pools of freshwater are rare and isolated. The ephemeral rivers of Namibia flow only a handful of days each year, so it is very hard for aquatic insects and fish to travel between bodies of water. But since bats can fly, they can find freshwater sources over large areas, and may visit multiple ponds in a single night. One question I am studying is whether bats are more likely to travel to seek out high-quality water than to find food.

There are more than 1,300 bat species worldwide, living in diverse environments on every continent except Antarctica. They pollinate plants, disperse seeds and consume insects – including disease-spreading vectors like mosquitoes.

Because their wings are large and uninsulated, bats are vulnerable to dehydration. Even the most desert-

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 36 of 71

adapted species need water. Water quality affects them directly when they drink and indirectly when they consume insect prey, many of which spend part of their lives growing in water. This makes bats excellent indicators of water quality. In extreme cases, they have died after drinking water contaminated with insecticides or heavy metals.

To find high-quality surface waters, people could observe bat activity levels using acoustic detectors to record bats' echolocation calls. Although mostly inaudible to humans, people can typically identify bats to the species level by their calls. Monitoring species that are associated with high-quality water over time would help municipalities detect changes in water quality. During my time in Namibia, I observed that activity by all local bat species dwindled at springs with high salt concentrations.

Water chemistry affects different bat species in different ways. For instance, one study found that certain species in Israel's Negev Desert, such as the lesser horseshoe bat (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*), avoided drinking water of lower quality, while other species appeared to be more pollution-tolerant.

Scientists are still trying to discern whether and how well bats tolerate salty drinking water. A study from western Australia suggests that elevated salt levels in surface waters due to gold mining may decrease bat activity, foraging and drinking. If this is true, people living in those areas could detect changes in water quality, such as increased salinity, by gauging activities and drinking patterns of sensitive bat species. With new tools such as bat detectors for smartphones, this is becoming easier and cheaper than testing water samples in labs.

Water quality near and far Water quality challenges aren't limited to distant deserts or cities in arid regions such as Cape Town, South Africa. In my New Jersey coastal hometown, production wells pump freshwater from about 900 feet below ground out of the Kirkwood-Cohansey aquifer system. As water levels decline in the aquifer, saltwater enters pores previously filled with freshwater. Saltwater is currently approaching my county's wells at a rate of about 300 yards per year.

In addition to groundwater pumping, paved surfaces and deicing road salts have increased salt concentrations in bodies of freshwater across the United States, threatening the state of our drinking water at vast scales.

Bats' potential as environmental indicators is just the latest reason for studying and conserving these important creatures. Worldwide, about one-third of bat species are endangered, vulnerable to extinction or "data deficient," meaning that scientists know too little to make judgments about their status. But with effective protection, monitoring sensitive bat species soon could be a viable way to find clean water in the far reaches of remote deserts – or even the rural United States.

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Are public objections to wind farms overblown?

Jeremy Firestone, University of Delaware

(The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.)

Jeremy Firestone, University of Delaware; Ben Hoen, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, and Joseph Rand, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory

(THE CONVERSATION) While most surveys suggest that the public generally supports wind and solar power, opposition from local communities and residents sometimes blocks or delays specific new projects.

Consider the ill-fated Cape Wind offshore project, which was slated to be powering Cape Cod by now. Although Massachusetts has some of the nation's strongest renewable energy policies, a group of coastal homeowners in that state objected vociferously soon after Cape Wind Associates, the developer, first proposed building it in 2001. They ultimately filed more than a dozen lawsuits over 14 years, creating hassles and delays that along with opposition from other parties doomed it.

As renewable energy researchers witnessing similar storylines play out across the country, we wanted to see how much local opposition there is to existing wind farms. With funding from the Energy Depart-

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 37 of 71

ment and help from our colleagues, we teamed up to undertake the largest scientific study to date on how people who live near U.S. wind farms perceive them.

Wind rushAs of the end of 2017, about 50,000 utility-scale wind turbines were supplying nearly 7 percent of the electricity in the U.S. With experts foreseeing another 3,000 turbines per year on average coming online in the years ahead, more and more people will be living near wind farms.

Clearly, community support or opposition could either speed up or slow down the growth of this renewable energy source.

And there's no doubt that fighting about wind power makes for interesting journalism. It's a story that highlights the conflicts that can arise among local residents and efforts to reap global benefits. While renewable energy is supposed to save the world, questions have arisen regarding its potential impacts on wildlife, public health – in the form of ailments allegedly caused by wind farms – and perceived fears of eroded property values and tourism revenue.

In general, we have observed that the media coverage of attitudes toward wind energy tends to be very anecdotal. Vivid stories of suffering dominate the discussion, which is often devoid of fundamental or methodical analysis of public opinion, the severity of the associated annoyances or even the extent of discontent among people living next to or near wind farms.

Facts vs. anecdotesOur research is meant to help fill that gap. In this Lawrence Berkeley National Lab-led project, we asked 1,700 people living near 250 wind farms across 34 states to tell us how they really felt about being so close to those turbines.

We found that as of 2015, more than 1.3 million homes are within five miles of a utility-scale wind turbine, a number that is increasing. And despite what you may have read in the media, our survey showed that most people living within five miles, and even within a half-mile, of wind farms don't mind the turbines.

We also looked into the most common reactions to wind turbine sounds, shadow flicker, lighting and landscape changes, as well as the perceived fairness of the public planning and siting process.

As it happens, we found that only 16 percent of all residents within five miles of wind farms had ever heard the turbines make any noise. Of those, 27 percent found the noise moderately or very annoying. Further, we learned that roughly two-thirds of those who were aware of their local planning process for the wind project perceived it as having been largely "fair."

In general, the positive attitudes the survey's respondents expressed about wind projects followed a few patterns. People hosting turbines on their property, as well as those being compensated for the power they generate were more apt to say the planning process was fair and to view wind power in a positive light.

People who harbored negative attitudes about wind power were more likely to be annoyed by sounds the turbines make, to say that wind turbines clashed with the surrounding landscape and to say that they found the project's planning process to have been unfair.

Engagement helpsThere is no magical way to resolve siting conflicts that sometimes arise over wind farms.

While turbines may be getting quieter due to technology improvements, they are also getting bigger. Taller towers and longer blades are driving down the cost of energy production and allowing production in areas previously considered uneconomical due to low average wind speeds, such as Delaware, North Carolina and West Virginia.

Since bigger turbines are harder to miss and can be seen from farther away, this change may create more conflict in the future.

But no matter what, wind project developers clearly must actively engage, coordinate and cooperate with local communities and community members. Inclusive and transparent planning processes can dissipate local residents' fears. Local ownership and financial benefits may help sway nearby residents who would otherwise object to a new wind farm.

Taking these steps could help prevent future debacles like Cape Wind in the future, as, finally, offshore wind is poised to take off in the U.S. While there is no silver bullet to ensure a wind farm's successful completion, developers, planners and other stakeholders should heed the lessons from the large body of rigorous analysis rather than unrepresentative anecdotes about public distaste for wind turbines that often garner media coverage.

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Feminist activists today should still look to 'Our Bodies, Ourselves'

Sara Hayden, The University of Montana

(The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.)

Sara Hayden, The University of Montana

(THE CONVERSATION) In April 2018, the Our Bodies, Ourselves collective, the group responsible for publishing the book of the same name, decided to stop offering new editions of its groundbreaking text.

"Our Bodies, Ourselves" has been remarkably successful. It has sold more than 4 million copies and been translated into 31 languages. In 2011, Time magazine recognized "Our Bodies, Ourselves" as one of the best 100 nonfiction books published in English since 1923. In 2012, the Library of Congress included it in its "Books that Shaped America" exhibition.

I first became interested in the collective when I was in graduate school, and I revisit the rhetoric of the group in an upcoming article in the Quarterly Journal of Speech.

From years of studying the group, I've come to believe that although the book is no longer being updated, it nonetheless provides a useful model for contemporary feminist activism – and could possibly alleviate some of the conflicts that continue to roil today's feminist movements.

Feminist rootsThe women who wrote the first edition of "Our Bodies, Ourselves" met at a women's liberation conference in 1969.

They had gathered to discuss the topic of women and their bodies, but it didn't take them long to realize they knew little about their health, sexuality or reproduction. Their subsequent efforts to find this information were unsuccessful. Even physicians were unwilling to answer their questions on issues ranging from childbirth to birth control.

A handful of women decided to take matters into their own hands. They borrowed library cards from medical students, snuck into medical libraries and wrote up what they learned in a series of papers. They included information important to their lives, including anatomy and physiology, sexuality, abortion, pregnancy and prepared childbirth.

The authors shared their papers with one another, and, through the process, they realized the information became even more relevant when presented alongside their personal experiences.

When discussing menstruation, for example, they realized that they had been taught the basics in school, but the material never really stuck. Once they discussed the topic in terms of their personal experiences, such as how they felt about their first periods, the information became much more meaningful.

The women were interested in sharing this information with others, so they decided to publish their papers, along with their personal reflections, as a book. First called "Women and their Bodies," in 1971, the group changed the book's title to "Our Bodies, Ourselves."

Updated every four to six years, the collective published the ninth and final edition in 2011.

Facing up to challengesIn spite of the collective's successes, the group has experienced its share of problems. In its early years, the group struggled to offer suggestions and guidance while also acknowledging that not all women's experiences or beliefs are the same.

In the 1984 edition, for example, they included a note indicating that they chose not to discuss pornography "primarily because we disagree with one another and/or have not come to any clear positions yet on some crucial issues." They continued: "We recognize that some of us will find offensive what others view as erotica, and vice versa... But this need not keep us from speaking out against what we believe is degrading to women and, ultimately, everyone."

A recognition of this – and other – differences led to debates over strategies and goals.

Yet unlike other feminist groups that were torn apart by such issues, the collective prospered for close to 50 years.

An inclusive model for feminist activismThe group's success can be attributed to the model of feminist activism they illustrate in their book.

Based in consciousness-raising, it is a model that prompts women to explore issues in the context of their personal experiences, the experiences of others and the best factual knowledge available to them. As they revised the book, the collective incorporated the voices of more and more women, and they urged their readers to consider the issues being discussed in terms of their own lives.

In early editions of the book, the collective focused on women's health and reproduction. As they updated and rewrote the book, they expanded their coverage to include body image, agriculture and food businesses, environmental and occupational health, and violence against women, among other topics.

The authors discussed these issues in a feminist political context. And, they explained how they and others responded to the problems they unearthed.

Importantly, though, the collective did not direct their readers to a particular course of action.

Recognizing that women's experiences differed, they offered readers guidelines for finding other women who shared their concerns. In addition, they offered a series of questions designed to help women determine the actions they might want to take.

In the 1996 edition, for example, they ask their readers to consider: "Are the women most affected centrally involved in efforts to create solutions?" They add: "Will our work give women a sense of power? Will our work help inform the public and motivate it to work for more improvements in women's health?"

Most significantly, the collective urged readers to seek out and listen to the voices of women from different backgrounds and circumstances. They included such voices in the pages of their book.

Making the world a better place"Our Bodies, Ourselves" doesn't offer a simple, consistent message – there is no prescriptive dogma.

In fact, there are many places where the collective acknowledges that expert opinions vary. The range of testimonies included in the book illustrate the diverse ways women have responded to similar problems, whether it's dealing with a cancer diagnosis or trying to eliminate health hazards in the workplace.

What "Our Bodies, Ourselves" does offer is a model for taking action in the face of diversity and uncertainty.

Contemporary feminists are facing many of the same challenges their predecessors faced. Whether addressing the prevalence of sexual harassment and sexual assault uncovered by the #MeToo movement or determining the next steps to take in the wake of the women's marches, feminists struggle over strategies and goals.

Many of these struggles reflect differences based in race, age and even geographic location.

Organizers of the original Women's March on Washington, for example, are focused on social justice protests. Another group of activists who participated in the women's marches believe that social justice protests will not be well-received in red states. They want to turn the energy of the women's marches toward electoral politics.

What "Our Bodies, Ourselves" teaches is that there is no one correct course of action. Women differ from one another, and various experiences will lead to a range of priorities and goals. This is okay – and it probably has the best chance to make the world a better place.

This article was originally published on The Conversation. Read the original article here: <http://theconversation.com/feminist-activists-today-should-still-look-to-our-bodies-ourselves-95503>.

Elements from the stars: The unexpected discovery that upended astrophysics 66 years ago

Artemis Spyrou, Michigan State University

(The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.)

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Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 40 of 71

(THE CONVERSATION) Nearly 70 years ago, astronomer Paul Merrill was watching the sky through a telescope at Mount Wilson Observatory in Pasadena, California. As he observed the light coming from a distant star, he saw signatures of the element technetium.

This was completely unexpected. Technetium has no stable forms – it's what physicists call an "artificial" element. As Merrill himself put it with a bit of understatement, "It is surprising to find an unstable element in the stars."

Any technetium present when the star formed should have transformed itself into a different element, such as ruthenium or molybdenum, a very long time ago. As an artificial element, someone must have recently created the technetium Merrill spotted. But who or what could have done that in this star?

On May 2, 1952, Merrill reported his discovery in the journal *Science*. Among the three interpretations offered by Merrill was the answer: Stars create heavy elements! Not only had Merrill explained a puzzling observation, he had also opened the door to understand our cosmic origins. Not many discoveries in science completely change our view of the world – but this one did. The newly revealed picture of the universe was simply mind-blowing, and the repercussions of this discovery are still driving nuclear science research today.

Where do elements come from? In the early 1950s, it was still unclear how the elements that make up our universe, our solar system, even our human bodies, were created. Initially, the most popular scenario was that they were all made in the Big Bang.

First alternative scenarios were developed by renowned scientists of the time, like Hans Bethe (Nobel Prize in Physics, 1967), Carl Friedrich von Weizsäcker (Max-Planck Medal, 1957), and Fred Hoyle (Royal Medal, 1974). But no one really had come up with a convincing theory for the origin of the elements – until Paul Merrill's observation.

Merrill's discovery marked the birth of a completely new field: stellar nucleosynthesis. It's the study of how the elements, or more accurately their atomic nuclei, are synthesized in stars. It didn't take long for scientists to start trying to figure out exactly what the process of element synthesis in stars entailed. This is where nuclear physics had to come into play, to help explain Merrill's amazing observation.

Fusing nuclei in the heart of a star brick by brick, element by element, nuclear processes in stars take the abundant hydrogen atoms and build heavier elements, from helium and carbon all the way to technetium and beyond.

Four prominent nuclear (astro)physicists of the time worked together, and in 1957 published the "Synthesis of the Elements in Stars": Margaret Burbidge (Albert Einstein World Award of Science, 1988), Geoffrey Burbidge (Bruce Medal, 1999), William Fowler (Nobel Prize in Physics, 1983), and Fred Hoyle (Royal Medal, 1974). The publication, known as B2FH, still remains a reference for describing astrophysical processes in stars. Al Cameron (Hans Bethe Prize, 2006) in the same year independently arrived at the same theory in his paper "Nuclear Reactions in Stars and Nucleogenesis."

Here's the story they put together.

Stars are heavy. You'd think they would completely collapse in upon themselves because of their own gravity – but they don't. What prevents this collapse is nuclear fusion reactions happening at the star's center.

Within a star are billions and billions of atoms. They're zooming all around, sometimes colliding with one another. Initially the star is too cold, and when atoms' nuclei collide they simply bounce off each other. As the star compresses because of its gravity, though, the temperature at its center increases. In such hot conditions, now when nuclei run into each other they have enough energy to merge together. This is what physicists call a nuclear fusion reaction.

These nuclear reactions serve two purposes.

First, they release energy that heats the star, providing the outward pressure that prevents its gravitational collapse and keeps the star in balance for billions of years. Second, they fuse light elements into heavier ones. And slowly, starting with hydrogen and helium, stars will make the technetium that Merrill observed, the calcium in our bones and the gold in our jewelry.

Many different nuclear reactions are responsible for making all this happen. And they're extremely dif-

difficult to study in the laboratory because nuclei are hard to fuse. That's why, for more than six decades, nuclear physicists have continued to work to get a handle on the nuclear reactions that drive the stars.

Astrophysicists still untangling element origins Today there are many more ways to observe the signatures of element creation throughout the universe.

Very old stars record the composition of the universe way back at the time of their formation. As more and more stars of varying ages are found, their compositions begin to tell the story of element synthesis in our galaxy, from its formation shortly after the Big Bang to today.

And the more researchers learn, the more complex the picture gets. In the last decade, observations provided evidence for a much broader range of element-creating processes than anticipated. For some of these processes, we do not even know yet in what kind of stars or stellar explosions they occur. But astrophysicists think all these stellar events have contributed their characteristic mix of elements into the swirling dust cloud that ultimately became our solar system.

The most recent example comes from a neutron-star merger event tracked by gravitational and electromagnetic observatories around the world. This observation demonstrates that even merging neutron stars make a large contribution to the production of heavy elements in the universe – in this case the so-called Lanthanides that include elements such as Terbium, Neodymium and the Dysprosium used in cellphones. And just like at the time of Merrill's discovery, nuclear scientists around the world are scrambling, working overtime at their accelerators, to figure out what nuclear reactions could possibly explain all these new observations.

Discoveries that change our view of the world don't happen every day. But when they do, they can provide more questions than answers. It takes a lot of additional work to find all the pieces of the new scientific jigsaw puzzle, put them together step by step and eventually arrive at a new understanding. Advanced astronomical observations with modern telescopes continue to reveal more and more secrets hidden in distant stars. State-of-the-art accelerator facilities study the nuclear reactions that create elements in stars. And sophisticated computer models put it all together, trying to recreate the parts of the universe we see, while reaching out toward the ones that are still hiding until the next major discovery.

This article was originally published on The Conversation. Read the original article here: <http://theconversation.com/elements-from-the-stars-the-unexpected-discovery-that-upended-astrophysics-66-years-ago-93916>.

Special counsel team has floated idea of subpoena for Trump

By CHAD DAY and ERIC TUCKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The special counsel leading the Russia investigation raised the prospect in March of issuing a grand jury subpoena for President Donald Trump, his former attorney said, confirming that investigators have floated the extraordinary idea of forcing a sitting president to testify under oath.

Attorney John Dowd told The Associated Press on Tuesday that special counsel Robert Mueller's team broached the subject during a meeting with Trump's legal team while they were negotiating the terms of a possible interview with the president.

It was not immediately clear in what context the possibility of a subpoena was raised or how serious Mueller's prosecutors were about the move. Mueller is probing not only Russian election interference and possible coordination with Trump associates but possible obstruction of justice by Trump.

Even if Mueller's team decided to subpoena Trump as part of the investigation, he could still fight it in court or refuse to answer questions by invoking his Fifth Amendment protection from self-incrimination.

Dowd's comments come more than a month after he resigned from the legal team, and they provide a new window into the nature of the Trump lawyers' interactions with the special counsel, whom the president has increasingly tried to undermine through public attacks.

On Tuesday, Trump said it was "disgraceful" that a list of proposed questions drafted in response to Mueller's negotiations with the legal team was "leaked" to the news media.

The about four dozen questions were compiled by Trump's lawyers during negotiations with Mueller's

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 42 of 71

investigators earlier this year over the prospect of a presidential interview.

A person familiar with the matter, who insisted on anonymity to discuss ongoing negotiations, told the AP that the president's lawyers extrapolated the list of expected questions based off conversations with Mueller's team about the topics prosecutors wanted to cover in a potential sit down with Trump. The questions reflected what the defense lawyers anticipated Trump would be asked, rather than verbatim queries that Mueller's team provided, the person said.

The Washington Post first reported that Mueller's team raised the possibility of a subpoena for Trump. The New York Times first published the list of questions.

According to the list, the questions range from Trump's motivations for firing FBI Director James Comey a year ago to contacts Trump's campaign had with Russians. Although Mueller's team has indicated to Trump's lawyers that he's not considered a target, investigators remain interested in whether the president's actions constitute obstruction of justice and want to interview him about several episodes in office. They have not yet made a decision about an interview.

In his tweet, Trump said there were "no questions on Collusion" and, as he has many times before, called Mueller's investigation a "Russian witch hunt." He said collusion with the Russians "never existed."

In a second tweet, Trump said: "It would seem very hard to obstruct justice for a crime that never happened."

The questions do appear to indicate that Mueller is looking into possible collusion. Some touch on Russian meddling and whether the Trump campaign coordinated in any way with the Kremlin. In one question, Mueller asks what Trump knew about campaign staff, including his former campaign chairman Paul Manafort, reaching out to Moscow.

Mueller has brought several charges against Manafort already, including money laundering and bank fraud. None of the charges relates to allegations of Russian election interference and possible coordination with Trump associates, and Manafort has denied having anything to do with such an effort.

The questions also involve key moments from the early months of the Trump administration, including his reaction to Attorney General Jeff Sessions' recusal from the Russia investigation and Trump's firing of his national security adviser, Michael Flynn.

One question asks whether there were any efforts to reach out to Flynn "about seeking immunity or possible pardon" ahead of his guilty plea last year. Flynn is now cooperating with Mueller.

Associated Press writers Mary Clare Jalonick and Darlene Superville contributed to this report.

France, Australia call on China to observe rules

By **TREVOR MARSHALLSEA, Associates Press**

SYDNEY (AP) — French President Emmanuel Macron and Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull on Wednesday issued a reminder to China to respect a "rules-based" order in the South Pacific amid concerns about Beijing's growing influence in the region.

Macron also stepped up his calls for the renegotiation of the Iran nuclear agreement, regardless of the outcome of the May 12 deadline for President Donald Trump to decide whether to abandon the deal and reimpose sanctions against the country.

Macron's comments came during a three-day visit to Australia, during which the two nations signed a range of agreements, including a pact to strengthen defense ties.

The two leaders were also expected to discuss China's growing influence in the South Pacific. Australia has become concerned about increasing Chinese investment in infrastructure projects in the area, especially reports — denied by Beijing — that it wants to establish a permanent military base in Vanuatu. This follows China's contentious claiming of islands in recent years in the South China Sea.

Macron was scheduled to depart on Thursday for New Caledonia, a French-controlled island near Vanuatu, which will hold a referendum in November on breaking away from France's protection and becoming a republic.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 43 of 71

While Macron and Turnbull did not specifically confirm they discussed China during their Sydney meetings. But when asked about Beijing's South Pacific push at a joint news conference, the two leaders were eager to stress the need for lawful development in the area.

"China's rise is very good news for everybody. It's good for China itself, its middle classes, and it's good for global growth, and regional growth," Macron said. "What's important is to preserve a rules-based development in the region, especially in the Indo-Pacific region, and to preserve the necessary balances in the region."

"And it's important not to have any hegemony in the region," he said.

Turnbull said the economic rise of China was made possible "by a ruled-based order in our region".

"We welcome further Chinese investment in our region. We welcome the benefits of the growth of China. But of course we are committed to the maintenance of the rules-based international order, to good governance, strong standards, that will enable us all to continue this remarkable arc of prosperity that has been enabled by that rule of law," Turnbull said.

Turnbull cited an oft-used quote from former Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Kwan Yew in pushing for mutual respect among nations in Asia, saying "big fish cannot eat little fish, and little fish cannot eat shrimps." Macron added: "And especially New Caledonian shrimps."

France is the only European nation with direct territorial links to Pacific region countries, which play a role in its defense building. It has more than 1.5 million citizens and 8,000 military personnel spread across several territories in the Pacific and Indian oceans.

Macron said he was keen for France to build a broader strategic relationship with Australia. Already, a French company Naval Group is building Australia's new fleet of 12 submarines at a facility in Adelaide, under a deal worth \$36.3 billion.

Also as part of Macron's visit, France and Australia signed pacts to strengthen military ties, both through cooperation in maritime activities and the establishment of an annual Franco-Australian defense industry symposium.

Macron also expressed a desire for France to be "at the heart" of the Indo-Pacific region.

"I believe we have one shared goal, that is to turn our two countries to place them at the heart of a new axis, an Indo-Pacific axis," Macron said.

Asked about growing tensions about Iran's nuclear weapons capabilities, Macron said that regardless of Trump's May 12 decision a new agreement should be negotiated with Teheran.

Macron, who told the United Nations last September that the current deal was not sufficient, said it should be broadened to address three new main areas — Iran's nuclear activity after the current deal expires in 2025; improvements in the monitoring and controlling of Iran's domestic nuclear activity, and to have better containment of Iranian activity in the Middle East, especially in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen.

Macron, who visited Washington last week, said Trump responded "positively" to his recent suggestion for a new agreement while he had also "exchanged about that" in the past few days with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani and Russian leader Vladimir Putin.

Macron said whatever Trump's coming decision, a broader deal was needed because "nobody wants a war in the region and nobody wants an escalation in terms of tension in the region."

With trade talks also a key part of the visit, Macron said France would support formal talks on a free trade deal between Australia and the European Union after it found solutions to concerns it had on agriculture.

The countries also signed agreements to counter cyberwarfare and on committing to strategies addressing climate change, including working to make coral reefs in the Pacific more resilient.

Macron also used a ceremony commemorating Australia's wartime cooperation with France to highlight a global worldview as a counter to nationalism.

A week after criticizing Trump's "America first" policies on his trip to Washington, and hours after a May Day gathering of European anti-immigration populist leaders and violent right-wing protests in his home country, Macron said the Australia's wartime sacrifice in Europe should serve as "a powerful message at a time when nationalism is looming, entrenched behind its borders and its hostility to the rest of the world."

"No great nation has ever been built by turning its back on the world," he said.

Waffle House regulars seek return to normal after massacre

By **CLAIRE GALOFARO, AP National Writer**

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — He felt like an invisible force was drawing him into the parking lot, past the four new white crosses in the driveway, the balloons and the flowers, and the letters addressed to the dead.

He felt it pulling him into his regular spot, the one where he had been sitting in his car when a stranger, three spaces over, stepped out of a truck carrying an AR-15. He surprised himself by walking into the restaurant and sitting down in his regular booth, which had always seemed like the most comfortable seat in the world — until all of a sudden it didn't.

At 3:25 a.m. on April 22, a Waffle House in Nashville joined the growing list of cherished American places morphed into the site of a massacre. And Chuck Cordero, a regular customer, joined the growing list of survivors left traumatized and struggling with how to move on.

Children often have little choice but to return to their schools after a mass shooting and employees must return to their offices. But 51-year-old Cordero thought at first he'd never come back here. Then he found himself again and again back at his Waffle House — No. 2,267 in the ubiquitous chain of yellow and black storefronts that are open 24/7, 365 days a year.

The eateries are so ingrained in American culture the federal government uses them after hurricanes to help gauge suffering: An open Waffle House signals hope for recovery; a closed one means disaster. Cordero's Waffle House was closed for three days.

Four young people died, the oldest of them a 29-year-old cook, Taurean Sanderlin, whom Cordero had always called "T." He saw the gunman shoot him in the parking lot, and now he feels compelled to come back, multiple times a day, desperate to cling to a community he never realized he was so attached to until a man with a gun threatened to destroy it.

"I don't know why I'm doing it," Cordero says. "Maybe I want to make sure my friends are OK. Maybe I want to know that I'm OK. Maybe I don't want to let the bad people win. I just don't know."

Dozens of others feel it, too. The restaurant has been packed after the company pledged to donate a month's worth of profits to the families of the victims, and people have come from hours away, insisting on buying strangers' meals.

Cordero is grateful but also eager for this to be his normal Waffle House again, the place where his favorite waitress always had his coffee ready just how he likes it, with cream and three packets of Splenda. On the night of the shooting, her fiance, a cook, threw her to the ground and lay on top of her as bullets whizzed by.

Before all of this, Cordero had thought of the restaurant as a utilitarian stop, a place to pass the time between calls on his overnight shift with a roadside assistance company. Though he's not crazy about the greasy food, Cordero likes the people who cook and serve it, and the familiarity of the jukebox and the bright fluorescent lights in the middle of the night.

"Chuck's a special guy. But Chuck's a normal guy for Waffle House," says Jeff Camp, a manager for the chain. "We have a Chuck in every store: that guy that associates know, that comes in every night, that sits in the same seat, eats the same food."

Now, people on the street recognize Cordero from the news, and he knows they mean well when they stop him. "They say, 'God bless you. Nice to see you,' and then I start thinking to myself, 'It's nice to be here.' And then I get all emotional about how close it came."

He pictures himself dying — not the death itself, but the news of it being delivered to his 5-year-old daughter, Emily. So he shaved his head so that people might stop recognizing him. He sometimes fantasizes about moving out to the mountains so his daughter never has to feel fear like this. He feels hopeless, like the shooting will never make sense and gun violence will never be stopped.

When he ran into a pastor one day outside the Waffle House, he told him, "It seems like the bad people are winning."

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 45 of 71

The pastor replied: "They're not winning."

Cordero is struggling to believe it: "They're terrorizing us. To me, that's them winning. To me, keeping someone from going into their restaurant without feeling scared means they won."

Then he feels awful for feeling so awful because he lived and four others didn't.

When he heard a community group had planned a vigil exactly one week after the shooting, at 3:25 a.m. Sunday morning, he pulled back into the parking lot for the second time that day. His favorite waitress, Virginia Stanley, was waiting for him at his spot, wearing a T-shirt she'd hand-painted with the phrase "Waffle House Strong." They hadn't seen each other since the shooting, so they hugged and cried and he immediately felt relieved — like things might be normal again. They went inside and slid into a booth along with her fiancé, Douglas Lauderdale.

Cordero had, for a week, struggled to find the right adjectives to convey what had happened to them. Scary. Horrible. Devastating. None seemed big enough to describe it: the first glimpse of the gun, the blood, what it feels like to consider that inches or seconds separated those who lived from those who didn't.

But sitting with others who had experienced it all, too: "I don't have to say that I was scared," he says. "They were there. They know that."

Stanley promised Cordero she'd return to work soon, and then she raised her sleeve to show him a new tattoo: "spread love," it said, with the L drawn in the shape of an orange ribbon.

They should all get matching ones, she told him, all of the survivors.

Faux pas: France's Macron says Aussie PM's wife 'delicious'

By TREVOR MARSHALLSEA, Associated Press

SYDNEY (AP) — Was it a Freudian slip by French President Emmanuel Macron? A joke linked to French gastronomy? Or even, a week after his visit to Washington, a parody of President Donald Trump's infamous comments about Macron's wife?

Whatever the case, Macron raised eyebrows in Sydney on Wednesday by calling Australian Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull's wife "delicious."

Wrapping up a joint news conference during his brief Australian visit, Macron moved to thank the Turnbells for their hospitality.

"I want to thank you for your welcome, thank you and your delicious wife for your warm welcome," he said.

The comment quickly sparked some lighthearted reaction on social media and in the Australian press amid lively conjecture about the French leader's intent.

"Macron just said he wanted to thank Malcolm Turnbull and his 'delicious wife'. You can take the man out of France but ...," tweeted Alice Workman, a journalist.

Australian ABC News tweeted, "Lost in translation: Emmanuel Macron thanks the PM's 'delicious wife.'"

Despite Macron's deadpan delivery, some observers felt he may have been making a joke. Turnbull had just mentioned Macron's imminent lunch with members of Sydney's French community, and had followed with comments about French gastronomy and wine.

Pardoning generalizations about the French obsession with food, Macron minutes earlier had also been talking about shrimp, picking up on Turnbull's comment relating to China's growing influence in the South Pacific, when the Australian leader said that "big fish cannot eat little fish, and little fish cannot eat shrimp."

Others felt Macron may simply have slipped up in his use of English, since the French word for delicious — *delicieux* — also translates as "delightful."

The more mischievous may have even considered Macron's comment to possibly be a tongue-in-cheek reference to Trump's visit to Paris last year, when he was caught telling Macron's wife, Brigitte, that she was "in such great shape," before looking to her husband and saying, "Beautiful."

In any case, the moment made headlines in Australia as a somewhat comedic ending to a serious news conference focusing on violent May Day protests in Paris, the Iran nuclear deal and China's growing influence.

Hit Chinese propaganda film celebrates Ivanka Trump supplier

By ERIKA KINETZ and ELIAS MESERET, Associated Press

SHANGHAI (AP) — A Chinese company that manufactured Ivanka Trump shoes and has been accused of serious labor abuses is being celebrated in a blockbuster propaganda film for extending China's influence around the globe.

The state-backed documentary "Amazing China" portrays the Huajian Group as a beneficent force spreading prosperity — in this case, by hiring thousands of Ethiopians at wages a fraction of what they'd have to pay in China. But in Ethiopia, Huajian workers told The Associated Press they work without safety equipment for pay so low they can barely make ends meet.

"I'm left with nothing at the end of the month," said Ayelech Geletu, 21, who told the AP she earns a base monthly salary of 1,400 Birr (\$51) at Huajian's factory in Lebu, outside Addis Ababa. "Plus, their treatment is bad. They shout at us whenever they want."

With epic cinematography, "Amazing China" — produced by China Central Television and the state-owned China Film Group Co. Ltd. — articulates a message of how China would like to be seen as it pursues President Xi Jinping's vision of a globally resurgent nation, against a reality that doesn't always measure up.

China's ruling Communist Party recently announced it would take direct control of major broadcasters and assume regulatory power over everything from film and TV to books and news.

As the party deepens its ability to cultivate "unity of thought" among citizens, "Amazing China" demonstrates the scope of China's propaganda machine, which not only crafted a stirring documentary about China's renaissance under Xi but also helped manufacture an adoring audience for it.

The movie, which weaves together extraordinary feats of engineering and military, environmental and cultural achievements, hit theaters three days before China's rubber-stamp legislature convened to amend the constitution and allow Xi to potentially rule China for life.

The star — duly noted by IMDb.com — is Xi himself, who appears more than 30 times in the 90-minute film.

"Amazing China" presents Huajian as an inspiring example of China exporting the success of its own economic miracle by creating transformative jobs for thousands of poor Ethiopians and sharing China's knowledge, language and can-do discipline to build a new industrial foundation for Ethiopia's economy.

The company is celebrated as a model of the inclusiveness at the heart of a much larger project: Xi's signature One Belt One Road initiative, a plan to spread Chinese infrastructure and influence across dozens of countries so ambitious in scope that it's been compared to the U.S.-led Marshall Plan after World War II.

"In opening to the outside world, China's pursuit is not to only make our lives better, but to make the lives of others better," the narrator says.

In the film, Huajian chairman Zhang Huarong stands before neat rows of Ethiopian workers singing a song about unity, describing himself as a father to his employees, who "like me very much."

But four current and former Huajian employees told the AP their wages were so low that they struggled to pay their bills. They said they had no protective gear, were forced to work 12 hours a day and participate in military-style physical drills, were not permitted to form a union and were regularly yelled at by their Chinese managers.

All that made it hard for them to relate to the inspirational video about Huajian circulated by mobile phone with its sweeping shots of a gleaming factory and a soundtrack that repeats in operatic Mandarin: "Huajian has come, Huajian has come ... holding the torch of hope."

"If someone complains, he will be accused of disturbing the workplace and will be fired right away," said Ebissa Gari, a 22-year-old who estimated he earns 960 Birr (\$35) a month. "That's why we keep quiet and work no matter how much we are subdued."

Getahun Alemu, a 20-year-old who quit Huajian last year to continue his studies, complained of inadequate safety gear.

"There are chemicals that hurt our eyes and nose, and machines that cut our hands," he said. "They

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 47 of 71

have no idea about hand gloves! If you refuse to work without that protective gear, then you will be told to leave the company.”

Huajian declined the AP’s requests for comment. Ivanka Trump’s brand said it no longer does business with Huajian and “has always and continues to take supply chain integrity very seriously.”

Huajian’s investment in Ethiopia was part of a government-led industrialization drive. In the last few years, Ethiopia’s leaders and business allies came under intense criticism, with more than 300 businesses attacked by protesters who saw them as bolstering a repressive regime.

These days, armed soldiers stand guard at the entrance to the Eastern Industrial Zone in Ethiopia’s Oromia region, where Huajian opened its first factory.

Six years after the company’s arrival, the dream of turning Ethiopia into a shoe-manufacturing hub remains unrealized, and few harbor illusions about the main incentive for Huajian’s investment in a country where there is no legal minimum wage.

“These companies are moving out of Asia and coming to Africa to save labor costs,” said Fitsum Arega, who recently stepped down as head of the Ethiopian Investment Commission to become an adviser to the new prime minister. He praised Huajian for employing more than 5,000 Ethiopians, but said the company “could have done better.”

“I’m not saying all employees are happy and there are no abuses here and there,” Arega said, adding that the government pushes companies to protect workers. “There’s a labor law which actually the companies say favors the employees.”

The Chinese-owned Eastern Industrial Zone effectively took fertile land from Ethiopian farmers and handed it over to foreign investors — a strategy the Ethiopian government is rethinking, according to Nemera Mamo, a teaching fellow in economics at the University of London.

“You can clearly see that these industrial zones are absolutely favorable to the Chinese investors, but not to the local communities or the local private investors,” he said. Huajian workers told the AP they made 960 Birr (\$35) to 1,700 Birr (\$62) a month. A basic living wage in Ethiopia is about 3,000 Birr (\$109) a month, according to Ayele Gelan, a research economist at the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research.

In a post promoting “Amazing China” on its official WeChat account, Huajian claimed to be Ethiopia’s largest exporter — an exaggeration also promulgated by China’s official Xinhua News Agency.

Huajian is Ethiopia’s largest shoe exporter, shipping out \$19.3 million worth of goods last fiscal year, according to Ethiopia’s Leather Industry Development Institute. But coffee producer Mullege PLC said it exported \$42 million worth of coffee during the same period and that other companies export even more.

Huajian’s record within China also has been troubled. In at least five cases since 2015, Huajian sued workers in Chinese court rather than pay compensation mandated by a government arbitration panel. Huajian lost every case, court records show, and the court had to freeze Huajian’s assets to get one worker the 44,174 yuan (\$7,000) he was owed.

Last year, Huajian found itself entangled in labor and human rights controversies that made global headlines but attracted little attention in China’s official media. Three men working with the New York-based non-profit group China Labor Watch were arrested after their investigation of Ivanka Trump’s suppliers zeroed in on Huajian. The men are out on bail, but remain under police surveillance.

China Labor Watch founder Li Qiang said Huajian’s factory in Ganzhou, in southeastern Jiangxi province, had some of the worst conditions he has ever encountered, including excessive overtime, low pay, and verbal and physical abuse.

Huajian has called those allegations “completely not true to the facts, taken out of context, exaggerated” and accused the investigators of conducting industrial espionage — a charge that was parroted in China’s party-controlled media.

Wei Tie, the director of “Amazing China,” said he wasn’t aware of the controversy surrounding Huajian until the AP informed him. That’s not too surprising given the years of positive coverage of Huajian in party-controlled media and the fact that many foreign news sites, especially Chinese-language ones, are blocked inside China.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 48 of 71

Wei said he included the company in the film because it is "introducing China's experience of prosperity to Africa."

He said he prefers to focus on the good. "What I did was absorb the essence and discard the dross," he said, citing a longstanding aphorism of Chinese political thought.

At first glance, Wei's selective approach appears to have resonated with Chinese audiences. "Amazing China" smashed box-office records for documentary films, raking in 456 million yuan (\$72 million) in its first five weeks, according to ticketing website Maoyan.com. It even thumped "Star Wars: The Last Jedi."

Wei attributed this success to the "spontaneous feeling" of citizens inspired by the arc of tremendous progress they've witnessed, a national rejuvenation forged with sweat and skill that he compared to Europe's Renaissance and the pioneering days of the American republic.

In Shanghai, midday screenings during the week sold out immediately, suggesting either unquenchable public appetite or organized bulk ticket sales.

None of the viewers surveyed by AP had purchased their own tickets. Instead, they said they got them from state-run companies, neighborhood committees or government departments that handed them out as part of their "party building work."

Douban, a popular film review website, blocked users from rating and commenting on the movie. The only entries came from official media, which gave it an 8.5 out of 10 ranking. On IMDb.com, a subsidiary of Amazon, "Amazing China" earned only one star.

But for some, "Amazing China" is balm for old feelings of inferiority and a welcome reaffirmation that China is ready to resume its rightful place in the community of great nations.

"I did not know how good our country is until I watched this movie," said Zuo Qianyi, a 68-year-old retiree. "I have been to many countries, Britain, Spain, and they are not as good as China, at least not as Shanghai. I am very happy, and I will love my country more."

Meseret contributed from Addis Ababa. Associated Press writer Chris Hulme in New York and researchers Si Chen and Fu Ting in Shanghai and Shanshan Wang in Beijing contributed to this report.

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Next steps for caravan will unfold mostly out of public view

By ELLIOT SPAGAT, Associated Press

TIJUANA, Mexico (AP) — The caravan of Central Americans seeking asylum in the United States sought the world's attention as scores of migrants traveled through Mexico on a journey to escape their violent homelands.

Now that the group has arrived at the border, the next steps in their journey will unfold mostly out of public view.

The caravan first drew attention in the U.S. when President Donald Trump promised that his administration would seek to turn the families away. The rest of the asylum-seeking process will happen slowly and secretly in immigration courts.

Dan Kowalski, editor of Bender's Immigration Bulletin, said the public will "probably see very little (of the caravan cases) unless the applicant is represented and the attorney makes an effort to bring the client into the limelight."

A total of 28 caravan members were accepted for processing Monday and Tuesday by U.S. border inspectors at San Diego's San Ysidro crossing, an official with U.S. Customs and Border Protection said. The crossing, the nation's busiest, processed about 50 asylum seekers a day from October through February, suggesting the wait will be short.

Under U.S. asylum practices, people spend up to three days at the border inspection facility before being transferred to a long-term detention center. An asylum officer interviews them for an initial screening, usually within a week or so, to determine if their cases should advance to immigration court, which can

take several years.

The courts often conduct business behind closed doors. Files are not public, and, unlike criminal or civil courts, access for journalists and others is limited.

The caravan's numbers, while tiny compared to previous surges of Central Americans to South Texas and Haitians to San Diego, will be a test of Trump's tough words. Administration officials have railed against what they call legal loopholes and "catch-and-release" policies that allow people seeking asylum to be freed while their cases are adjudicated, but any significant changes must be addressed by Congress or in the courts.

Attorney General Jeff Sessions has pledged to send more immigration judges to the border if needed and threatened criminal prosecution. On Monday, the Justice Department said it filed illegal-entry charges against 11 people identified as caravan members.

Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen said asylum claims will be resolved "efficiently and expeditiously." She also warned that anyone making false claims could be prosecuted and said asylum seekers should seek protection in the first safe country they reach, including Mexico.

U.S. attorneys who counseled asylum seekers in Tijuana warned that they could be separated from family and spend many months in detention, a shift from the Obama administration.

Separating asylum-seeking families has become more common, as has detaining them while their cases wind through the courts, said Leon Rodriguez, director of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service from 2014 to 2017, which oversees asylum petitions.

The U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency has limited beds in family detention centers and may also choose to release adults and their children while their cases wind through the system, often with orders that some of them wear ankle monitors. Children traveling alone are placed with family, other sponsors or in group homes overseen by the Health and Human Services Department.

Nearly 80 percent of asylum-seekers passed the initial screening from October through December, but few are likely to win asylum, which requires the petitioner to show well-founded fear of persecution on grounds of race, religion, nationality, political beliefs or membership in a social group.

The denial rate for El Salvadorans seeking asylum was 79 percent from 2012 to 2017, according to Syracuse University's Transactional Records Action Clearinghouse. Hondurans were close behind with a 78 percent denial rate, followed Guatemalans at 75 percent.

Associated Press videographer Gerardo Carrillo in Tijuana contributed to this report.

China's foreign minister in N. Korea seeks role for Beijing

By KIM TONG-HYUNG, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — China's foreign minister arrived in North Korea's capital on Wednesday and could meet with leader Kim Jong Un while trying to ensure a larger role for Beijing in the new round of nuclear diplomacy with Pyongyang that had been driven by Seoul and Washington.

Wang Yi's visit came days after Kim and South Korean President Moon Jae-in vowed to work toward the "complete denuclearization" of the Korean Peninsula, though they did not mention specific plans or timetables.

They also agreed to work toward formally ending the 1950-53 Korean War and push for three-way talks with Washington or four-way talks that also include Beijing to do so. The Koreans can't officially end the war themselves because South Korea wasn't a direct signatory to the armistice that stopped the fighting but left the peninsula technically in a state of war.

More substantial discussions on the North's denuclearization — including what, when and how it would occur — are expected between Kim and President Donald Trump, who could meet in May or June. The North's state-media have not yet commented on Wang's arrival in Pyongyang.

Wang is likely to use his visit to further ensure that Beijing would not be sidelined in the high-stakes discussions surrounding the North. Some South Korean analysts believe Wang would specifically seek

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 50 of 71

Kim's commitment that the process on formally ending the war would include China.

The meeting between Kim and Moon at the border truce village of Panmunjom on Friday came a month after Kim made a surprise visit to Beijing and met with Chinese President Xi Jinping. Kim's Beijing visit was widely seen as a move to strengthen his leverage ahead of his talks with Trump by re-introducing China as a major player in the global diplomatic push to resolve the nuclear standoff.

Analysts say Kim would have asked China, North Korea's only major ally and main economic lifeline, to soften its enforcement of sanctions aimed at the North. Kim also may have sought Chinese commitments to strongly oppose any military measure the United States might take should his talks with Trump fall apart and the North starts testing missiles again.

While the Kim-Trump talks is shaping up to be crucial, there's still widespread doubt whether Kim will ever agree to entirely abandon his nuclear weapons when he apparently sees them as providing his only guarantee of survival in a region surrounded by enemies.

Seoul has said Kim expressed genuine interest in dealing away his nuclear weapons. But North Korea 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 and the nuclear umbrella defending South Korea and Japan.

Kim's move to re-insert China as a major player in the process has been seen as a sign that the North's traditional stance essentially remains. Beijing has been calling for a "dual suspension" — of the North's nuclear and missile activities and of the large-scale military exercises between the U.S. and South Korea.

Shooting suspect's brother arrested on probation violation

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — The brother of the suspected Florida high school gunman has been arrested for violating the terms of his probation.

The Sun Sentinel reports that a warrant says Zachary Cruz was booked into the Palm Beach County jail Tuesday evening.

The 18-year-old is the younger brother of Nikolas Cruz, who is accused of killing 17 at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in February.

Cruz was on six months' probation after pleading no contest in March for trespassing at the Parkland school. He was ordered to stay at least a mile away from any schools unless enrolled.

The warrant says Cruz on April 28 drove without a valid license and was within 25 feet of a parking lot at a Lake Worth high school.

It was not immediately known if he has an attorney.

Fed set to leave rates alone amid signs of rising inflation

By MARTIN CRUTSINGER, AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Federal Reserve achieved an inflation milestone this week, but that isn't likely to alter expectations for what the Fed will announce when its latest policy meeting ends Wednesday.

After six years of mostly missing its annual 2 percent target for inflation, the Fed learned Monday that its preferred gauge of consumer inflation had reached a year-over-year pace of 2 percent. And in the coming months, inflation is widely expected to stay around that level.

The debate the Fed is now likely to have is whether it should accept a period in which inflation rises above 2 percent without accelerating its pace of rate increases. But for now, a rate increase is considered unlikely. In a statement it will issue Wednesday afternoon, the Fed is expected to leave its benchmark rate unchanged at a still-low level of 1.5 percent to 1.75 percent.

Solid economic growth, low unemployment and evidence of inflation pressures, though, are expected to keep the central bank on a path of gradual rate hikes the rest of the year. Most Fed watchers foresee either two or three additional increases in the Fed's key rate by year's end, coming after an earlier hike in January.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 51 of 71

The central bank is meeting as its board is undergoing a makeover, with a raft of new appointees by President Donald Trump who appear generally supportive of the Fed's cautious approach to rates since the Great Recession ended.

Despite Trump's complaints during the presidential race that the Fed was aiding Democrats in keeping rates ultra-low under President Barack Obama, his choices for a chairman and for other slots on the Fed's board have been moderates rather than hard-core conservatives who would favor a faster tightening of credit.

"The Trump Fed could have been a much more hawkish Fed but so far, these choices are pretty middle-of-the road," said Diane Swonk, chief economist at Grant Thornton in Chicago.

As Jerome Powell, Trump's hand-picked new Fed chairman, said at a news conference after the central bank's most recent meeting in March, "We're trying to take the middle ground, and the committee continues to believe that the middle ground consists of further gradual increases in the federal-funds rate."

Bond investors are signaling that they expect a pickup in U.S. inflation, having bid up the yield on the 10-year Treasury note last week above 3 percent before the yield settled just below that by week's end. A year ago, the 10-year yield was just 2.3 percent.

Under Powell's predecessors, Janet Yellen and Ben Bernanke, the Fed's board endured criticism from House Republicans over its decision to pursue a bond purchase program designed to lower long-term borrowing rates and to leave its key rate at a record low near zero for seven years. The critics charged that those policies would eventually produce destructive bubbles in the prices of stocks and other assets and, eventually, undesirably high inflation.

But so far, Trump's reshaping of the Fed's board reflects a generally status quo approach.

"Trump's criticisms during the campaign have not been borne out by his decisions on who to put on the Fed," said Mark Zandi, chief economist at Moody's Analytics.

Since the Fed began raising rates in December 2015, the pace has been modest and gradual: One quarter-point rate increase in 2015, one in 2016, three in 2017 and one so far this year.

When the Fed announced its most recent rate hike in March, it forecast that it would raise rates twice more this year. But some economists think that the Fed will respond to the increased government stimulus in the form of tax cuts and higher spending to accelerate the rate hikes slightly from three to four this year.

Congress in December passed a \$1.5 trillion tax cut that took effect in January. And then in February, it approved \$300 billion more in government spending for this year and next year. That stimulus, coming at a time when unemployment is at a 17-year low of 4.1 percent, could raise the threat of higher inflation.

Yet even against this backdrop, the prevailing view is that the Trump-shaped Fed will remain cautious about rate increases.

"The central bank does not want to make the mistakes made in the past when the Fed raised rates too high, too fast and became the No. 1 cause of a recession," said Sung Won Sohn, an economics professor at California State University, Channel Islands.

Outsiders face uphill battle in Lebanese elections

By PHILIP ISSA, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — With campaigning in full swing for Lebanon's first national election in nine years, parliament candidate Laury Haytayan was trying to rope in passers-by with her message: She and other political outsiders are running in a new coalition that aims to be an alternative to the country's traditional powers.

Some were clearly reluctant to engage, but that didn't stop the irrepressible Haytayan.

"Hello! Are you registered to vote in Beirut?" she asked as she canvassed the capital's Ashrafieh neighborhood one recent afternoon.

Some acknowledged they were not.

"That's no problem," said Haytayan, as she handed out brochures about the coalition, Kulna Watani — "We Are All Patriots," in Arabic. Explaining that it was a break with the politicians who have run Lebanon for decades since the 1975-1990 civil war, she urged them to vote for it in their own districts.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 52 of 71

Watani is hoping to ride a wave of discontent over the country's failing public services, its daily water and power cuts, and its pervasive corruption to create an independent bloc in parliament.

But short on money and campaigning to an electorate doubtful that change is even possible, it is unlikely to win more than a handful of seats in Sunday's parliamentary election.

"We are going to the streets and meeting lots of people who say to us, 'We can't change anything in Lebanon,'" the 42-year-old Haytayan said. "Their experience is right because every time they vote for the same individuals and same people and same political class, because there was no alternative. But today, we created an alternative."

Pierre Choueiry, 27, said he agreed it was time for a change, but wouldn't promise his vote. He said he thought the Lebanese Forces, a former Christian militia during the civil war, was needed to protect Lebanon's Christian population.

"We hope one day we can have someone like you with us," he told Haytayan.

Philippe Aoun, who greeted Haytayan with a smile at his hair salon, said he was voting for the party of incumbent President Michel Aoun. He said he was confident Aoun, who has been in office for 18 months, would steer the country out of its many crises. The two are not related.

Fielding 66 candidates in nine of Lebanon's 15 election districts, Watani is the largest coalition of political outsiders and independents to run for office since the civil war.

Many are civic activists who rose to prominence as organizers of protests over a 2015 trash collection crisis that left garbage in the streets for months and laid bare the extent of the public sector mismanagement plaguing Lebanon. And many were active well before that, struggling to chip away at the complex political patronage networks that have kept the country's civil war-era warlords and their sons in power since 1990.

Other candidates are businessmen, engineers and former journalists like Haytayan, who used to be a reporter on a 1990s TV political news program that has since gone off air. Today she is a manager at the Natural Resource Governance Institute, an international nonprofit.

Haytayan has made a run for parliament twice before, in 2013 and 2014, but those votes were cancelled by politicians who extended their own mandates, citing security concerns caused by the war in neighboring Syria.

Despite a climate ripe for change in this election, polls indicate the Watani coalition's only hope for victory is in a small Beirut district represented by eight seats in the 128-seat national assembly, according to political analyst Abdo Saad, the director of the Beirut Center for Research and Information.

Aware of the challenges, Haytayan and other Watani candidates have adjusted their expectations.

"There will be pressure on the incumbents for them to change their ways," even if few political outsiders get in, Haytayan said.

Sunday's election is the first since the reorganization of Lebanon's electoral map, which consolidated 23 districts into 15 and awarded seats by the share of the vote received, instead of on the principle of winner-takes-all.

Politicians sold it as a more flexible map. But the biggest winner appears to be Hezbollah and its allies, who look set to scoop up some of the seats lost by Prime Minister Saad Hariri's coalition.

For outsiders and independents to win big there would have to be a single electoral district for the whole country, where their influence can't be diluted through gerrymandering, Saad said.

Facing political dynasties that have raised fortunes through political deal-making, the Watani coalition and another list of political outsiders, Sawt al-Nas, or "The Voice of the People," are finding themselves hopelessly outspent in the contest for airtime and votes.

The main news channels, which once showered the 2015 garbage pickup demonstrations with favorable coverage, are now charging candidates tens of thousands of dollars for interviews.

Just registering a candidacy costs \$5,300 in fees.

And many voters are expecting to be compensated for their vote by establishment candidates promising \$200 and sometimes many times more, Saad said.

"In Lebanon, we have nothing called fair and equal. Our elections are for the rich," said Naamet Badred-

dine, 37, a candidate for Sawt al-Nas and a former leader of the 2015 demonstrations over the trash crisis.

Stephen Curry returns to score 28, Warriors beat Pelicans

By JANIE McCAULEY, AP Sports Writer

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — Long before tipoff, Stephen Curry swished his routine tunnel shot on the second try. Once the game began, the two-time MVP stood along the bench anxiously waiting for his turn, shaking his legs and clapping his hands with nervous energy and anticipation.

Then — mouthpiece dangling, of course — Curry finally entered at the 4:20 mark of the first quarter to a roaring ovation from the Oracle Arena crowd and immediately got to work. He knocked down a 3-pointer from the left wing 11 seconds later and was off and running in Golden State's 121-116 victory over the New Orleans Pelicans on Tuesday night.

"It was an eternity it felt like, for sure," Curry said. "When the lights come back on after the starting lineups you're usually in the go kind of mind frame. I had to kind of pace myself and be patient with it. It seemed like it took forever but it was a good feeling to get back out on the floor and just let loose and have fun."

Curry came off the bench to score 28 points in a triumphant return from a knee injury and nearly six weeks off, and the Warriors held off Anthony Davis and the pesky Pelicans to go ahead 2-0 in the Western Conference semifinals.

All is right with the Warriors again now that No. 30 is back on the floor — even as a backup.

"It brought a lot of life to the building, a lot of life to our team's spirit. Pretty fitting for sure," Draymond Green said of Curry's immediate 3.

Kevin Durant scored 29 points with a huge 3-pointer with 3:10 to play, to go with seven assists and six rebounds in Golden State's franchise-record 14th consecutive postseason victory at Oracle Arena. Green contributed 20 points, 12 assists and nine rebounds while battling Davis on both ends all night.

Davis finished with 25 points and 15 rebounds, and Jrue Holiday had 24 points, eight rebounds and eight assists for the Pelicans, who also got 22 points and 12 assists from Rajon Rondo.

"It was tough," Davis said. "We were in it the whole game."

Andre Iguodala converted a snazzy three-point play with 6:41 left when he flipped the ball up and it came back down and through the net as he was fouled by Rondo, then Golden State pulled away.

The best-of-seven series resumes with Game 3 on Friday at New Orleans.

Curry shot 8 for 15 with five 3-pointers and grabbed seven rebounds in 27 minutes. He let it fly for a 30-foot 3 in the closing minute of the third.

"He's going to score," New Orleans coach Alvin Gentry said.

The Warriors were focused on keeping their edge after a blowout Game 1 win.

Just the energy Curry brings helped that cause.

The whole place came alive when he made his first appearance on the floor.

"That was a special moment when Steph checked into the game," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said.

Curry had been sidelined since spraining his left knee March 23, the same day he came back from a six-game absence with a right ankle injury.

He already had a history of brilliant returns from injuries.

In late December against Memphis, Curry came back after being sidelined 11 games with a sprained right ankle to score 38 points with 10 3-pointers.

Curry returned for Game 4 of the Warriors' five-game Western Conference semifinals against Portland two years ago and made 16 of 32 shots with five 3-pointers and scored 17 points in overtime on the way to 40 in a 132-125 victory. He grabbed nine rebounds and dished out eight assists.

The game had its testy moments.

Curry made a bounce pass in transition to Iguodala late in the third and Solomon Hill was hit with a flagrant 1 for grabbing Iguodala's neck area as he shot. That came 14 seconds after a double-technical against Davis and Green after they got tangled and rolled around and over each other.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 54 of 71

"I live for playoff basketball. It's the most fun time of the year for me," Green said.

Klay Thompson never found his groove and went 4 for 20, 2 of 11 on 3s, and scored 10 points. Iguodala scored 15.

Green drove coast to coast for a three-point play 2:08 before halftime, then Thompson banked in a 3 at the halftime buzzer for a 58-55 Warriors edge at intermission.

Even a balanced Pelicans attack — they took 105 shots — with all five starters scoring in double figures wasn't enough to stop the explosive defending champions.

TIP-INS

Pelicans: Nikola Mirotic fouled out with 2:43 left after scoring 18 points. ... The Pelicans scored 38 points in the paint the first two quarters. ... New Orleans went 13 for 37 from deep, 4 of 20 in the first half.

Warriors: Curry came off the bench for just the second time in 76 career playoff games. ... Nick Young started a second straight game. ... Golden State has won 26 of the last 28 meetings overall vs. the Pelicans. ... Home run king Barry Bonds sat courtside and congratulated Curry afterward.

REBOUNDING GREEN

Green had games of 19, 18 and 15 rebounds the previous three games and a triple-double in Game 1 — then was one board shy of another.

"He's been saving himself for the playoffs," Kerr said.

QUOTEABLE

"It was a lot more fun when I was over there," Gentry joked of preparing for the Warriors, referring to his time as Golden State's top assistant during the franchise's 2014-15 championship season.

More AP NBA: <https://apnews.com/tag/NBAbasketball>

West's wild words stir again: Kanye calls slavery a 'choice'

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Before the last one had a chance to simmer down, Kanye West caused another stir, calling American slavery a "choice" in an interview Tuesday.

"When you hear about slavery for 400 years, for 400 years, that sounds like choice," West said on "TMZ Live" after questions on his pro-President Donald Trump posts and pictures that caused a dust-up last week. "You was there for 400 years, and it's all of y'all?"

"Do you feel like I'm thinking free and feeling free?" West asked the TMZ employees in the room.

"I actually don't think you're thinking anything," TMZ's Van Lathan quickly cracked back at West, as many would in the ensuing hours.

Lathan said while West gets to live the elite artist's life, "the rest of us in society have to deal with these threats in our lives. We have to deal with the marginalization that has come from the 400 years of slavery that you said for our people was our choice."

Symone D. Sanders, political commentator and CNN contributor, led the anti-West chorus on Twitter.

"Kanye is a dangerous caricature of a 'free-thinking' black person in America," Sanders tweeted. "Frankly, I am disgusted and I'm over it. Also (I can't believe I have to say this): Slavery was far from a choice."

Others put it more briefly.

"Slavery wasn't a choice," Russ Bengtson tweeted, "but listening to Kanye is."

West also told TMZ that he became addicted to opioids that doctors prescribed after he had liposuction surgery in 2016. He was hospitalized for a week and had to cut short his "Pablo" tour. West said the painkillers drove him to a "breakdown," which became a "breakthrough" when he found himself again.

West also doubled down on his love of the president, which Trump has been returning in tweets.

"I just love Trump," West said, adding that most in hip-hop agreed with him before Trump became president. "Trump is one of rap's favorite people."

Private equity firm is winning bidder for Weinstein Co.

By ALEXANDRA OLSON, AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — A private equity firm emerged Tuesday as the winning bidder for the Weinstein Co., the studio forced into bankruptcy by the sexual misconduct scandal that brought down Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein.

The Weinstein Co. announced in a statement that no other bidder made a better offer than Dallas-based Lantern Capital, which made a “stalking-horse” bid last month to pay \$310 million in cash for the Weinstein Co.’s assets. The emergence of another qualified bidder would have triggered an auction leading to higher sale price.

The sale is subject to approval by a Delaware bankruptcy court, which has set a sale hearing for next week. The sale faces numerous objections that must be resolved, some from actors including Jennifer Lawrence, Meryl Streep and Brad Pitt, who claim they are owed profit participation from projects.

The Weinstein Co. filed for bankruptcy in March, succumbing to a fate it had tried to avoid since the scandal that forced Harvey Weinstein’s ouster as CEO in October. Some 80 women, including prominent actresses, have accused Harvey Weinstein of misconduct ranging from rape to harassment.

The New York company’s primary assets are a lucrative 277-film library, a television production business, and an unreleased film portfolio that includes four distribution-ready films and other projects in various stages of development.

Lantern also has agreed to assume about \$125 million in project-related debt and to cover obligations related to the assumption of certain contracts and leases.

“We are honored by the board’s recognition and acceptance of Lantern’s planned acquisition,” Lantern said in statement.

The company said it was “committed to providing premier content with a diverse workforce and a safe environment founded on a culture of respect and creativity.”

In a last-minute twist, a company formed by Broadway producer Howard Kagan made an offer Tuesday, asking for an extension to complete due diligence. But the Weinstein Co. declined to consider the bid, saying it lacked “a purchase agreement, a financing commitment, a deposit, or a number of other requirements for a qualified bid.”

Kagan’s offer had the support of five women who have filed a class action lawsuit against Harvey Weinstein. In a statement, the plaintiffs said they opposed the sale to Lantern because it contained no guarantee of a settlement fund for Weinstein’s accusers.

In a letter, Kagan outlined a plan that would have included \$25 million, along with 4 percent of the equity of the company, for a fund for Weinstein’s accusers. He also proposed a cash payment of \$5 million plus 1 percent of the equity in the new company for employees and former employees with claims against Weinstein.

“What really should happen here is that the company should be sold in a way that the victims are taken care of,” Kagan told The Associated Press.

Kagan, a former hedge fund manager-turned-Broadway-producer, often works alongside his wife, Janet. They won Tony Awards for the 2013 revival of “Pippen” and the 2012 revival of “Porgy and Bess.” Their most recent foray onto Broadway ended disastrously. Having taken “Natasha, Pierre and The Great Comet of 1812” to Broadway with Josh Groban, the Kagans faced criticism over how they handled replacing the pop singer.

Lantern has been in talks for months about acquiring The Weinstein Co. It had been part a group of investors led by businesswoman Maria Contreras-Sweet that had been involved in long and ultimately unsuccessful negotiations to buy the company.

New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, who has filed a lawsuit on behalf of the Weinstein Co.’s employees, had urged any bidders for the company to include compensation for the victims.

“From the start, we’ve underscored the importance of adequately compensating victims, protecting current employees, and ensuring that wrongdoers are not rewarded,” said Amy Spitalnick, a spokeswoman

for Schneiderman's office. "We'll continue to push for those critical goals."

NASA sending robotic geologist to Mars to dig super deep

By MARCIA DUNN, AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Six years after last landing on Mars, NASA is sending a robotic geologist to dig deeper than ever before to take the planet's temperature.

The Mars InSight spacecraft, set to launch this weekend, will also take the planet's pulse by making the first measurements of "marsquakes." And to check its reflexes, scientists will track the wobbly rotation of Mars on its axis to better understand the size and makeup of its core.

The lander's instruments will allow scientists "to stare down deep into the planet," said the mission's chief scientist, Bruce Banerdt of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory.

"Beauty's not just skin deep here," he said.

The \$1 billion U.S.-European mission is the first dedicated to studying the innards of Mars. By probing Mars' insides, scientists hope to better understand how the red planet — any rocky planet, including our own— formed 4.5 billion years ago.

Mars is smaller and geologically less active than its neighbor Earth, where plate tectonics and other processes have obscured our planet's original makeup. As a result, Mars has retained the "fingerprints" of early evolution, said Banerdt.

In another first for the mission, a pair of briefcase-size satellites will launch aboard InSight, break free after liftoff, then follow the spacecraft for six months all the way to Mars. They won't stop at Mars, just fly past. The point is to test the two CubeSats as a potential communication link with InSight as it descends to the red planet on Nov. 26.

These Mars-bound cubes are nicknamed WALL-E and EVE after the animated movie characters. That's because they're equipped with the same type of propulsion used in fire extinguishers to expel foam. In the 2008 movie, WALL-E used a fire extinguisher to propel through space.

InSight is scheduled to rocket away from central California's Vandenberg Air Force Base early Saturday. It will be NASA's first interplanetary mission launched from somewhere other than Florida's Cape Canaveral. Californians along the coast down to Baja will have front-row seats for the pre-dawn flight. (7:05 a.m. EDT/4:05 a.m. PDT)

No matter the launching point, getting to Mars is hard.

The success rate, counting orbiters and landers by NASA and others, is only about 40 percent. The U.S. is the only country to have successfully landed and operated spacecraft on Mars. The 1976 Vikings were the first landing successes. The most recent was the 2012 Curiosity rover.

InSight will use the same type of straightforward parachute deployment and engine firings during descent as Phoenix lander did in 2008. No bouncy air bags like the Spirit and Opportunity rovers in 2004. No sky crane drop like Curiosity.

Landing on Mars with a spacecraft that's not much bigger than a couple of office desks is "a hugely difficult task, and every time we do it, we're on pins and needles," Banerdt said.

It will take seven minutes for the spacecraft's entry, descent and landing.

"Hopefully, we won't get any surprises on our landing day. But you never know," said NASA project manager Tom Hoffman.

Once on the surface, InSight will take interplanetary excavation to a "whole new level," according to NASA's science mission director Thomas Zurbuchen.

A slender cylindrical probe dubbed the mole is designed to tunnel nearly 16 feet (5 meters) into the Martian soil. A quake-measuring seismometer, meanwhile, will be removed from the lander by a mechanical arm and placed directly on the surface for better vibration monitoring. InSight is actually two years late flying because of problems with the French-supplied seismometer system that had to be fixed.

The 1,530-pound (694-kilogram) InSight builds on the design of the Phoenix lander and, before that, the Viking landers. They're all stationary three-legged landers; no roaming around. InSight stands for "Interior

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 57 of 71

Exploration using Seismic Investigations, Geodesy and Heat Transport.”

InSight’s science objectives, however, are reminiscent of NASA’s Apollo program.

Back in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the Apollo moonwalkers drilled up to 8 feet (2.5 meters) into the lunar surface so scientists back home could measure the underground flow of lunar heat. The moon still holds seismometers left behind by the 12 moonmen.

Previous Mars missions have focused on surface or close-to-the-surface rocks and mineral. Phoenix, for instance, dug just several inches down for samples. The Martian atmosphere and magnetic field also have been examined in detail over the decades.

“But we have never probed sort of beneath the outermost skin of the planet,” said Banerdt.

The landing site, Elysium Planitia, is a flat equatorial region with few big rocks that could damage the spacecraft on touchdown or block the mechanical mole’s drilling. Banerdt jokingly calls it “the biggest parking lot on Mars.”

Scientists are shooting for two years of work — that’s two years by Earth standards, or the equivalent of one full Martian year.

“Mars is still a pretty mysterious planet,” Banerdt said. “Even with all the studying that we’ve done, it could throw us a curveball.”

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IMF: Mideast not growing fast enough to reduce unemployment

By AYA BATRAWY, Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The International Monetary Fund said Wednesday that nearly a quarter of the Middle East’s youth are unemployed, warning that unless deeper reforms are made, millions of young people entering the labor market each year may not find jobs.

The IMF says current levels of growth across the region will not generate a sufficient number of jobs to reduce unemployment, which was one of the main grievances behind the 2011 Arab Spring uprisings.

Economic growth for oil-exporting countries in the region topped 5 percent in 2016, but slowed to 1.7 percent just a year later. The IMF predicts an upward trend of close to 3 percent this year and 3.3 percent in 2019. For the Middle East’s oil-importing nations, economic growth is expected to remain steady at well over 4 percent.

“This region is a very young region. Almost 60 percent of the population is below 30 and the level of unemployment at the youth level exceeds 30 percent,” said Jihad Azour, the IMF’s Mideast and Central Asia department director. “This needs to be addressed.”

Azour, who spoke with The Associated Press for the launch of a new report, said countries in the region must push ahead with deeper structural reforms. The IMF is urging governments to upgrade the skills of their workforce and provide the private sector with greater access to finance.

The IMF has also encouraged Mideast oil importers and exporters to reduce spending and find new sources of revenue by introducing new taxes and lifting subsidies. This year, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain—traditionally known for being tax-free havens—introduced a 5 percent value-added tax to most goods and services to increase state revenue.

Despite such efforts, the cumulative fiscal deficit for the six oil-exporting countries in the Gulf, plus Algeria, Iraq, Iran, Yemen and Libya, is projected to reach \$294 billion over the next five years, the IMF report found.

Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman launched a sweeping anti-corruption campaign last year that targeted potential rivals to the throne and dozens of the country’s top businessmen. The government says the campaign netted \$106 billion in financial settlements in closed-door exchanges with detainees—many of them held at the Ritz-Carlton for weeks. Many investors, however, remain concerned about the lack of transparency in the process.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 58 of 71

The IMF's report stressed that structural reforms in the region "should also be underpinned by efforts to increase transparency and accountability, and by stronger institutions and governance."

The IMF predicts growth rates of about 4.9 percent over the coming five years for oil-importing Middle Eastern countries, but says these "growth rates remain too low to effectively reduce unemployment, particularly for young people."

These countries, which include Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco and Syria, would need sustained growth of at least 6.2 percent a year just to keep unemployment at its current average rate of 10 percent, the IMF report found.

The IMF's updated regional outlook says that governments in the region continue to spend heavily to employ their nationals with large and growing public sector wage bills. Despite this, the IMF says "unemployment has remained high, and overly generous public sector compensation has distorted labor markets."

In Gulf Arab countries there are numerous perks to working for the government. In some of these countries, for example, the IMF says the gap between public sector wages and those in the private sector is 200 percent, making government jobs that much more coveted.

At 50 percent, Oman has the highest percentage of youth unemployment of any Arab country. Seventy percent of women in Oman are also outside the labor force, according to the IMF. In countries like Egypt and Saudi Arabia, more than 30 percent of youth are unemployed and close to 80 percent of women are outside the labor force.

The lender noted some positive steps taken by countries to address these issues. The UAE, for example, has invested in education and innovation. Egypt doubled its budget allocation for public day care to assist women going back to work. Iran has developed job-creation programs for women and young people.

In oil-importing Egypt, tourism and export levels have improved since last year. Growth is projected to rise to 5.2 percent this year, up 1 percent from last year. The IMF expects growth to reach 5.5 percent in 2019, aided by an increase in gas production.

Azour said Egypt needs to create between 700,000 to 1 million new jobs per year. He said Egypt must take steps to allow the private sector to create these jobs sustainably.

"Allow the private sector to be in the leading role and for the state to move from being an operator to an enabler, and give more room for the private sector to invest" he said.

In oil-exporting Iran, growth has slowed over the past two years. Iran recently announced it will switch from the U.S. dollar to the euro as its official reporting foreign currency, in part to reduce its reliance on the dollar amid tensions with Washington. Iran's currency has lost nearly half its value since September, sinking to a record low against the dollar before authorities enforced a fixed rate.

Asian shares mostly lower after topsy-turvy day on Wall St

By ELAINE KURTENBACH, AP Business Writer

BANGKOK (AP) — Shares are mixed in Asia after a topsy-turvy May Day session on Wall Street, where most benchmarks recovered from early losses as Apple led a rally in technology companies.

KEEPING SCORE: Japan's Nikkei 225 index slipped 0.3 percent to 22,444.09 and the Hang Seng in Hong Kong lost 0.6 percent to 30,622.73. The Shanghai Composite index shed 0.4 percent to 3,070.45 and South Korea's Kospi gave up 0.4 percent to 2,506.55. Australia's S&P ASX 200 advanced 0.5 percent to 6,045.70. Shares were lower in Thailand, Singapore and Indonesia.

WALL STREET: U.S. stocks clawed back early losses Tuesday as the rally in technology and smaller, domestically-focused companies helped offset a slump in household goods makers and industrial companies. The Dow Jones industrial average fell as much as 354 points, then recovered to close down 64. The S&P 500 index rose 0.3 percent to 2,654.80. The Dow slipped 0.3 percent to 24,099, while the tech-heavy Nasdaq composite jumped 0.9 percent to 7,130.55. The Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks added 0.5 percent to 1,550.33.

TRADE: Top trade officials from the U.S. are due to meet in Beijing with senior Chinese leaders to discuss ways to defuse worsening tensions over the trade imbalance. The Trump administration decision Monday

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 59 of 71

to delay a decision on imposing tariffs on steel and aluminum imports sidesteps a potential trade battle with Europe for now, but European Union leaders want a permanent exemption and say the uncertainty caused by delays is bad for business.

ANALYST'S VIEWPOINT: "The optimism stemming from the delay of metal tariffs in the U.S. ... appears to have dissipated into today's session with trade tensions also looming ahead. As investors look ahead to the meeting between US and Chinese delegates into the end of the week, both the trade and commerce representatives in the U.S. spoke of challenges," Jingyi Pan of IG said in a commentary.

U.S. ECONOMY: U.S. manufacturing grew at a slower pace in April, according to the Institute for Supply Management, a trade group of purchasing managers. Many factories said shortages of workers and skills affected their productivity. Meanwhile the Commerce Department said construction spending fell in March as home building dropped sharply.

SAMSUNG BIOLOGICS: South Korean biotech company Samsung Biologics Co.'s shares plunged as much as 11 percent in Seoul after a regulator said Samsung breached accounting rules. Samsung said it will defend itself and has abided by accounting rules. At stake is whether or not the way Samsung Biologics evaluated the value of its affiliate Samsung Bioepis violated rules.

ENERGY: Overnight, oil prices gave up some of their recent gains. But they bounced back Wednesday in Asia, with benchmark U.S. crude gaining 27 cents to \$67.52 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It fell 1.9 percent to \$67.25 a barrel in New York on Tuesday. Brent crude, the international standard, added 7 cents to \$73.20 per barrel. It dropped 2.1 percent to \$73.13 a barrel in London.

CURRENCIES: The dollar slipped to 109.74 Japanese yen from 109.88 yen. The euro rose to \$1.2004 from \$1.1993.

AP Markets Writer Marley Jay can be reached at <http://twitter.com/MarleyJayAP> . His work can be found at <https://apnews.com/search/marley%20jay>

Trump's longtime doctor describes 'raid' to obtain records

By JILL COLVIN and JONATHAN LEMIRE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House said that President Donald Trump's former bodyguard did nothing out of the ordinary when he took possession of the president's medical records last year, despite a claim by Trump's former doctor that the episode felt like a "raid."

Harold Bornstein, Trump's longtime personal doctor, told NBC News that Keith Schiller, the president's longtime bodyguard and former director of Oval Office operations, showed up at his office in February 2017 along with two other men to collect the records, leaving Bornstein feeling "raped, frightened and sad."

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders disputed the doctor's characterization of the episode.

"As is standard operating procedure for a new president, the White House Medical Unit took possession of the president's medical records," she told reporters at a White House briefing Tuesday.

As for Bornstein's description that it had had the feel of a raid, she said, "No, that is not my understanding."

Bornstein told NBC that Schiller and another "large man" were in his office about 30 minutes and "created a lot of chaos." The doctor said the two men were joined by Alan Garten, the chief legal officer for the Trump Organization. A spokeswoman for the Trump Organization did not respond to a request for comment Tuesday.

The incident at Bornstein's office came two days after the doctor told The New York Times that Trump takes Propecia, a drug for enlarged prostates that is often prescribed to stimulate hair growth in men. Bornstein told the Times that he prescribed Trump drugs for rosacea and cholesterol as well.

Bornstein told NBC that Trump's longtime personal secretary called him after the story ran and said: "So you wanted to be the White House doctor? Forget it, you're out."

Bornstein said he wasn't given a form authorizing him to release Trump's records, but said Schiller and

Garten took the originals and copies of Trump's charts and lab reports, including records filed under pseudonyms the office used.

Questions were raised about the legality of the seizure. Patients have a right to a copy of their medical records but the original physical record belongs to the doctor, said Dr. Matthew Wynia, director of the Center for Bioethics and Humanities at the University of Colorado.

"If a patient wants a copy, they can have a copy, but they don't get the original. Patients can also ask for their records to be transferred to a new doctor, but that also involves making copies (i.e., transferring the information), not literally packaging up the originals and sending them off," Wynia said in an email.

Most states require doctors to keep and maintain records, Wynia said. Federal patient privacy law bars doctors from relinquishing records without a signed release from the patient.

"Law enforcement can get copies of medical records, under some specific circumstances, but it doesn't seem like the people gathering these records were acting as law enforcement officers," Wynia said.

Bornstein did not respond to a request for comment Tuesday. Schiller departed the White House last fall and also could not be reached.

With his long flowing hair and large glasses, Bornstein became a colorful character in Trump's unlikely 2016 campaign for the presidency. In a letter released in December 2015, Bornstein wrote that Trump would "unequivocally" be the healthiest president in history and deemed the celebrity businessman's condition "astonishingly excellent."

He later said he wrote the note in five minutes while a limo sent by the candidate waited outside his office.

Bornstein's return to the headlines comes just days after Trump's White House physician, Dr. Ronny Jackson, withdrew his nomination to the head of the Department of Veterans Affairs after allegations of workplace misconduct. Jackson has denied the claims.

Lemire reported from New York. Associated Press writer Carla K. Johnson contributed to this report from Seattle.

Follow Lemire on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/@JonLemire> , Colvin at <http://twitter.com/@colvinj> and Johnson at <http://twitter.com/@CarlaKJohnson>

Ovechkin's late goal lifts Capitals by Penguins 4-3

By WILL GRAVES, AP Sports Writer

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Alex Ovechkin and Nicklas Backstrom have spent their entire careers chasing the Pittsburgh Penguins and shouldering their own franchise's onerous history of playoff failures.

One brilliant end-to-end rush gave the two Washington Capitals teammates and their resilient club something they've rarely enjoyed against the two-time defending Stanley Cup champions: momentum.

Ovechkin knocked his own rebound out of midair and by Matt Murray with 1:07 remaining to lift the Capitals to a 4-3 victory on Tuesday night in Game 3 of their increasingly testy Eastern Conference semi-final series with Pittsburgh.

Ovechkin's initial shot smacked off the far post.

The Russian star, however, stayed with the play and with Murray out of position, he deftly flicked it into the open net to give the Capitals a 2-1 series lead.

"It's a good thing I didn't raise my arms up (after the first shot), you know to (celebrate) the play," Ovechkin said after scoring his eighth goal of the playoffs. "Got lucky."

Matt Niskanen, John Carlson and Chandler Stephenson also scored for Washington, which improved to 4-0 on the road in the postseason. Braden Holtby finished with 19 saves. Backstrom had three assists, including the helper on Ovechkin's winner.

"It's huge, huge goal," Ovechkin said. "Obviously for our team, you know we want to win tonight and we did. It doesn't matter what, it doesn't matter who scored. We sacrifice. We play hard. And we have to do the same moving forward."

Game 4 is in Pittsburgh on Thursday night.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 61 of 71

Jake Guentzel had a goal and an assist for Pittsburgh. Sidney Crosby and Patric Hornqvist also scored, but the Penguins lost consecutive playoff games for only the fourth time since the start of their run to consecutive Stanley Cups began in 2016.

Pittsburgh also lost forward Zach Aston-Reese to a broken jaw and a concussion following a violent collision with Washington's Tom Wilson at the game's midway point.

Aston-Reese was stickhandling near the Washington bench when Wilson slammed into him, sending the 6-foot-4 Aston-Reese to the ice.

Wilson was not penalized on the play, the second time in as many games he was not disciplined for a borderline hit.

Pittsburgh defenseman Brian Dumoulin went into the league's concussion protocol after Wilson blindsided him in Game 2 while Dumoulin was bracing for a collision with Ovechkin.

The NHL's Department of Player safety didn't ask Wilson to explain himself during a hearing and Dumoulin was back in the lineup to start Game 3.

Both teams stressed the need to move forward with so much at stake. But that was before Aston-Reese slowly made his way off the ice, flinging one of his gloves at the Washington bench in frustration, his jaw mangled and his status for the rest of the postseason uncertain.

The initial point of contact was hard to discern, even on replay. Was it the shoulders? The head? Either way the tenor changed considerably.

Asked afterward about the hit, Pittsburgh coach Mike Sullivan replied "at some point we hope the league might do something."

Maybe not. Officials conferred for several minutes before deciding to take no action against Wilson.

"They all got together and they said, 'You know what, we've got a good, clean check here,'" NHL on-site supervisor Paul Devorski said through a pool reporter.

Stephenson tied the game shortly after the sequence and a crescendo of pushing, shoving and jawing followed.

Crosby put the Penguins back in front with 3:33 left in the second when he took a pretty pass from Guentzel — who occupied three Capitals before sliding the puck to his teammate — and buried it into an open net.

Niskanen, who spent four seasons in Pittsburgh before signing with Washington in the summer of 2014, blasted a one-timer by Murray 5:06 into the third to set up the finish.

Ovechkin and Backstrom's two-on-one gave the Capitals the series lead over Washington for the first time since they won Game 1 of the 2016 Eastern Conference semifinal.

Of course, the Capitals lost that series. As they almost always do when the Penguins are on the other side of the ice.

The champions have proven to be an impossible out during their current reign. Three tight games in, Washington is well aware there's little margin for error.

"It's a funny game," Niskanen said. "Boy, sometimes the puck takes a different bounce and the score can be completely different."

NOTES: Penguins C Evgeni Malkin played 19:07 and assisted on Hornqvist's goal in his return after missing three games with a lower-body injury. ... The Penguins hosted Humboldt Broncos junior hockey player Brayden Camrud, a survivor of the bus crash that killed 16 people — many of them teammates — last month. ... Pittsburgh F Carl Hagelin skated with his teammates for a second straight day, but remained out of the lineup. Hagelin is dealing with an upper-body injury and has worn a full face shield while on the ice. ... Both teams went 1 for 4 on the power play. ... Guentzel has recorded a point in seven straight playoff games.

For more NFL coverage: <http://www.pro32.ap.org> and http://www.twitter.com/AP_NFL

Gibson guitar maker sees a future with bankruptcy protection

By JONATHAN MATTISE, Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Gibson guitars have been such a fixture in music history that Chuck Berry was laid to rest with his, B.B. King affectionately named his "Lucille," and Eric Clapton borrowed one from George Harrison to play the solo on the Beatles' "While My Guitar Gently Weeps."

The maker of the iconic instrument, a constant across generations of American music, filed for bankruptcy protection Tuesday after wrestling for years with debt. The decision came with an assurance from Gibson that it is refocusing on its specialty, musical instruments, and moving away from its debt-plagued push to sell home electronics.

In the hands of musicians from Jimmy Page to Duane Allman and Slash, Gibson's electric guitars have been a foundational element of blues and rock.

Legendary jazz guitar player Charlie Christian made history playing a Gibson ES-150 — one of the first ever electric guitars — through an amplifier with the Benny Goodman orchestra. The later big-bodied Gibson jazz guitars have been in the arsenal of many great players since then, such as Wes Montgomery and Joe Pass.

"It's hard to name any guitar players who play electric or steel-string acoustics who don't own a Gibson," said George Gruhn of Gruhn Guitars, a world-famous vintage instrument store in Nashville.

One of the only known photographs of iconic Delta blues pioneer Robert Johnson shows him with a Gibson L-1 guitar.

And the folk revival of the 1950s and 1960s wouldn't have sounded quite so mellow without battalions of steel-string Gibson acoustic guitars among the Martins and Guilds.

Elvis Presley didn't start out with a Gibson but he went on to own and play many of them, according to the website for Graceland, his Memphis home.

And Jimmy Page, the legendary guitarist for blues rockers Led Zeppelin, was and remains a longtime Gibson loyalist. David Bowie favored the 1989 Gibson L4 when he fronted Tin Machine. Slash swears by them.

Gibson, founded in 1894 and based in Nashville, Tennessee, has the top market share in premium electric guitars. It sells more than 170,000 guitars a year in more than 80 countries, including more than 40 percent of all electric guitars that cost more than \$2,000, according to a bankruptcy filing.

The pre-negotiated reorganization plan filed Tuesday will allow Gibson Brands Inc. to continue operations with \$135 million in financing from lenders.

Gibson has already sold off some noncore brands, acquisitions that contributed to its burdensome debt load. Gibson has begun the liquidation process for its struggling international Gibson Innovations division, which sells headphones, speakers, accessories and other electronics.

"The decision to re-focus on our core business, musical instruments, combined with the significant support from our noteholders, we believe will assure the company's long-term stability and financial health," Henry Juskiewicz, Gibson chairman and CEO, said in a news release.

Gruhn, an expert on guitars of all kinds, said the company's bankruptcy was predictable after it expanded into the home electronics business. But he noted that doesn't mean the Gibson brand will simply fade away.

"The brand name and company's reputation for making guitars is tarnished, but not dead by any means, and it's very much capable of being resuscitated," Gruhn said.

UN Security Council delegation seeks Rohingya's safe return

NAYPYITAW, Myanmar (AP) — A U.N. Security Council delegation on Tuesday visited Myanmar's Rakhine state, where hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslims have fled military-led violence, and urged the government to improve the security conditions for the return of the refugees.

Around 700,000 Rohingya fled their homes to squalid camps in Bangladesh last year as Myanmar's army launched a brutal crackdown following insurgent attacks on security posts.

State television showed the ambassadors touring the border area. Travelling by helicopter, they visited

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 63 of 71

two villages, one transit center and one reception camp, where refugees who return will initially be housed. They also met with members of different groups affected by the violence, including Rakhine Buddhists, Hindus and some Muslims who did not flee.

The ambassadors visited refugees in Bangladesh over the weekend, and on Monday held talks with Myanmar officials, including the country's leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, and military commander-in-chief Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing.

At a news conference in Myanmar's capital, Naypyitaw, before flying out of the country, the ambassadors reminded Myanmar's government of its obligations as a member of the United Nations. The envoys represent the 15 countries making up the Security Council, the U.N.'s most powerful body.

"We are not asking Myanmar government something new. They are a member of the United Nations and they are a member and state party to many U.N. conventions. The return of refugees should be in conformity with international standards," said Kuwait's representative, Mansour Al-Otaibi.

Bangladesh and Myanmar agreed in December to begin repatriating the refugees in January, but there were concerns among rights groups and Rohingya that they would be forced to return and face unsafe conditions in Myanmar.

In its counterinsurgency sweeps in Rakhine state after the attacks last August on security personnel, Myanmar's military was accused of massive human rights violations, including rape, killing, torture, and the burning of Rohingya homes, that U.N. and U.S. officials have called ethnic cleansing. Thousands are believed to have died.

The Rohingya face official and social discrimination in predominantly Buddhist Myanmar, which denies most of them citizenship and basic rights because they are looked on as immigrants from Bangladesh, even though many settled in Myanmar generations ago.

"Basically the message we convey is it is very important to improve the security conditions for the return of the refugees, and also collaboration with the international organization, particularly the United Nations," said Gustavo Meza-Cuadra, ambassador of Peru. "And we also mentioned the importance of the investigation regarding what happened here before the refugees went to Bangladesh."

The U.N. refugee agency and Bangladesh recently finalized a memorandum of understanding that said the repatriation process must be "safe, voluntary and dignified, in line with international standards." The Security Council delegation has asked Myanmar's government to sign the memorandum as well.

"We believe that if the memorandum of understanding can be signed quickly and the U.N. agencies given unconditional access, that would be the best thing to do with the scale of the problem," said Karen Pierce, Britain's ambassador to the United Nations.

Pierce parried a journalist's question about whether the U.N. should make a referral to the International Criminal Court to investigate the atrocities alleged to have been carried out by Myanmar security forces, acknowledging only that it could be one avenue of investigation.

In New York, U.N. deputy spokesman Farhan Haq noted at a briefing that around 500,000 Rohingya still live in Rakhine, "facing continued discrimination and marginalization, including around 130,000 men, women and children who are trapped in appalling conditions in camps."

"Severe restrictions on their freedom of movement persist, grossly restricting their access to health care, education and livelihoods," he said. "This is the reality that must be changed if refugees are to be reasonably expected to return."

He also pointed out that many of the Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh, already living in poor and crowded conditions, face further misery with the early onset on the monsoon season, with a strong risk of landslides and flooding.

An international appeal for \$951 million for humanitarian aid for the refugees and their host communities was only 10 percent funded, he added.

Myanmar's government agreed to allow the Security Council to visit after previously rejecting U.N. requests for a trip by a specially appointed independent fact-finding committee. The team said in March that it found evidence of human rights violations against the Kachin, Shan and Rohingya minorities "in all likelihood amounting to crimes under international law."

Associated Press writer Edith M. Lederer at the United Nations contributed to this report.

Arizona teachers vow to end strike if funding plan passes

By **BOB CHRISTIE** and **MELISSA DANIELS**, Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Arizona teachers said they will end a historic statewide strike Thursday that shut down schools for days if lawmakers pass a plan that offers big raises and increased school funding but that still falls short of their demands.

Organizers made the announcement Tuesday after educators statewide walked off the job last week and closed schools to demand higher pay and more education spending. The Arizona action followed a teacher uprising that started in other parts of the U.S. and was punctuated by a march of tens of thousands of red-clad supporters.

Those mobilizing teachers criticized a Republican-led funding plan but said it was time to go back to work. "Our fight is not over, we have options," said Rebecca Garelli, a teacher and strike organizer. "But it is time for us to get back to our students and get back into our classrooms."

Republican Gov. Doug Ducey and GOP legislative leaders have agreed on a state budget proposal that could be passed into law this week but doesn't increase classroom resources as much as educators sought.

The plan moving through the Republican-led Legislature gives teachers a 10 percent raise next year and starts restoring some of the nearly \$400 million in cuts to a fund that pays for supplies, repairs and some support staff salaries. It is expected to pass Wednesday, setting the stage for the walkout to end.

The governor has promised to bump teacher pay 20 percent by 2020 and restore payments to that fund to pre-recession levels in five years. Ducey had resisted giving teachers more than a 1 percent raise that he promised in January until teachers neared a strike vote. Then he came up with a new spending plan.

"We're glad the strike is coming to an end. We've been working exceptionally hard to pass this budget and get this money to teachers," Ducey spokesman Daniel Scarpinato said. "While our students head back to the classroom, we hope our teachers will head back knowing we have worked very hard to take a major step toward rewarding them for their invaluable work."

An Arizona grass-roots group that launched in early March after West Virginia teachers won a 5 percent raise said they would not let off the pressure, despite the decision to go back to work. Before teachers return to school Thursday, they will hold walk-ins, dressing in red T-shirts and standing in solidarity.

After that, the long game is to push for a ballot initiative that creates new funding streams for education and to elect policymakers who support increasing school funding, said Joe Thomas, president of the Arizona Education Association, the largest teacher membership group.

"We have so many people now that are paying attention to what's going on, they will never turn away from this fight now," he said. "They understand that there are people down here who do not care as much about students as they care."

The walkout began last Thursday, shutting down most public schools. Two-thirds of Arizona's student population was still out of school through Tuesday, and some districts were expected to stay closed Wednesday.

Teachers have packed raucous rallies at the state Capitol for days, while others have helped care for students and tried to maintain community support.

Organizers urged teachers to hold community events, with some talking to parents over coffee and others crowding street corners in red shirts.

Gladys Garcia said many of her students rely on free or reduced price meals at Challenger Middle School in Tucson and she organized with colleagues to collect food to hand out at a public library.

"It's our way to let the kids know, 'We're actively trying to do something for you, please don't feel like we're turning our backs on you,'" the first-year teacher said.

Many community members supported teachers' efforts, but pressure was increasing on some parents and school administrators.

Gabriel Trujillo, superintendent of the Tucson Unified School District, the second-largest in the state,

said he didn't support the walkout because it takes teachers out of classrooms. He said he does back the objectives of the so-called #RedforEd movement, with his schools facing a host of funding needs.

But Trujillo was concerned teachers would lose public support if the strike dragged on. He said when he called off school for the fourth day in a row, he received more "angry communications" from parents than he had last week.

"I felt like the energy on Thursday was palpable," Trujillo said of the launch of the walkout. "Now that we're into day four, I think that's on the line."

Organizers seemed to acknowledge the strain but reasserted what the walkout was about.

"Our greatest victory is the powerful movement we have created, which we are going to continue on behalf of our students, because this movement has always been about our students," Garelli said.

EPA security chief, Superfund head leave amid ethics probes

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The two top officials in charge of security and toxic-waste cleanups at the Environmental Protection Agency have abruptly left their jobs, days after EPA administrator Scott Pruitt told lawmakers that his subordinates were to blame for alleged ethical lapses that have prompted more than a dozen federal investigations of the agency.

In statements Tuesday, Pruitt praised the two men — security chief Pasquale "Nino" Perrotta and Albert Kelly, a former Oklahoma banker who ran the EPA's Superfund program — and gave no reason for their unexpected departures.

Perrotta is due to appear Wednesday for a transcribed interview by staffers of the House Oversight Committee, one of the congressional bodies and federal agencies that are probing reported excessive spending by Pruitt and other issues at the agency. Committee aides said Perrotta's resignation was not expected to derail his appearance.

EPA spokespeople Jahan Wilcox said the two men's departures were unrelated to the ongoing federal investigations, and said the agency was fully cooperating with the congressional probe, led by House Oversight Chairman Rep. Trey Gowdy, a South Carolina Republican.

Pruitt's spending on security, and some of the security contracts with Perrotta, are among the topics of the federal probes involving the EPA under Pruitt, a former Oklahoma attorney general. Pruitt, an ardent advocate of minimizing regulation who moves in conservative political circles, evangelical Christian ones, and business groups, has survived the kind of scandals that have brought down several other Cabinet appointees of President Donald Trump.

On Tuesday, The Washington Post reported that a Pruitt trip to Morocco last December was partly arranged by a longtime friend and lobbyist, Richard Smotkin, who last month received a \$40,000-a-month contract with the Moroccan government to promote its cultural and economic interests. The trip, which has drawn scrutiny from federal watchdogs, cost more than \$100,000, more than twice the amount previously estimated, the Post said.

At House hearings last week, Pruitt weathered six hours of scathing questions, criticism, and a couple calls from congressional Democrat to resign over the steady flow of news reports and announcements of new investigations involving alleged ethical lapses at his agency. They include spending on Pruitt's behalf for round-the-clock security guards, first-class plane tickets, and a \$43,000 soundproof telephone booth.

Pruitt repeatedly deflected blame last week, describing subordinates as going too far in carrying out their duties, in excesses that occurred without his knowledge.

In the case of the \$43,000 booth, for example, Pruitt acknowledged to lawmakers he had asked for a private and secure phone line when he arrived at the agency, but said staffers took it upon themselves to spend tens of thousands of dollars in providing it. It was security officials, not Pruitt, who decided he should fly first-class, he said.

Pruitt pledged last week to take care of the problems. "Ultimately, as the administrator of the EPA, the responsibility of identifying and making necessary changes rests with me and no one else," Pruitt told

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 66 of 71

lawmakers then.

Notably, most Republican lawmakers at the hearings declined to join the Democratic dog-pile on Pruitt. It was unclear Tuesday whether lawmakers from Pruitt's majority party would take the internal shake-up as a needed and promised house-cleaning by Pruitt or indication of even greater trouble at the agency.

"I don't know how to take this, yet," Rep. Ryan Costello of Pennsylvania, one of the few Republican lawmakers last week to fault Pruitt on expenditures such as taking bodyguards with him to Disneyland and the Rose Bowl, said in a statement by email. "I'm waiting on more details ...to shed more light on what, if anything, to make of it."

Pruitt said in his statements that Perrotta was retiring after a 23-year government career that included time in the Secret Service and under previous EPA administrators. He praised Perrotta for hard work and dedication.

Pruitt thanked Kelly for what he said was his "tremendous impact" in Kelly's year overseeing the nation's Superfund program, charged with handling the cleanup of toxic waste sites.

Pruitt hired Kelly, an Oklahoma banker, at the EPA after federal banking regulators banned the man from banking for life. Regulators have not publicly specified the actions that led to the banking ban. . Days ago, Rep. Scott Peters, D-Calif., pressed Pruitt for more details about why exactly Kelly had been sanctioned by regulators.

"I think Mr. Kelly, if he's willing to share that with you, he should do that," Pruitt said Thursday.

The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, believing Kelly "violated a law or regulation," a year ago fined him \$125,000. The undisclosed incident involved a loan by SpiritBank — which Kelly's family has owned for generations — allegedly made without FDIC approval.

Democrats in Congress also are asking for federal investigations of Kelly's reported loans to Pruitt himself while the two were still in Oklahoma. Kelly is not among the EPA officials whom the House Oversight Committee members had summoned for questioning.

Rep. Don Beyer, a Virginia Democrat who has been one of those pushing for more federal probes into newspaper reports of ethical problems under Pruitt, said in a statement Tuesday that "Pruitt should be the next to go."

"Albert Kelly was never qualified to run Superfund, his banking ban was a huge red flag, and his resignation is a positive development," Beyer said.

Separately, three House Democrats raised new allegations Tuesday that staffers working on Pruitt's behalf in early 2017 looked into the possibility of opening an EPA office in Tulsa, a city of 400,000 and Pruitt's home.

They provided no supporting documentation. Neither EPA spokesmen nor any of the people supposed to have knowledge of the alleged request could be reached for comment at the close of the business day, when the Democrats' letter with the allegations was released. Pruitt has drawn criticism for frequent trips home to Tulsa at taxpayer expense.

Comey: Trump's attacks on the FBI make America less safe

By ERIC TUCKER and CHAD DAY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's political attacks on the FBI make America less safe because they undermine public confidence that the bureau is an "honest, competent and independent" institution, fired director James Comey told The Associated Press on Tuesday.

In a telephone interview, Comey also said it was logical that special counsel Robert Mueller would seek to interview Trump since the president is a subject of an investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 presidential election. Comey ruled out seeking elected office and said that, as a leader, he took responsibility for some of the turmoil that has surrounded the FBI in recent months.

The ex-FBI chief said it was clear the president's blistering attacks on the bureau, including Trump's calls for scrutiny of his political opponents and his suggestion that Comey should be jailed, affect public safety in "hundreds and thousands of ways" — especially if crime victims no longer believe that an agent

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 67 of 71

knocking on their door will help them or that an agent testifying before a jury can be believed.

"To the extent there's been a marginal decrease in their credibility at that doorway, in that courtroom and in thousands of other ways, their effectiveness is hit. So it's hard," Comey said.

"You're not going to be able to see it, but logic tells me that it's there, which is why it's so important that we knock it off as a political culture."

Trump fired Comey last May, an act now under investigation by Mueller for possible obstruction of justice. The White House initially said Trump had fired him over his handling of the Hillary Clinton email case, but the president later said he was thinking of "this Russia thing" when he made the move.

Comey is now promoting his new book, "A Higher Loyalty," and has given a series of interviews in which he has described his interactions with the president and characterized him as morally unfit for office.

But his departure from the bureau has also been followed by a cascade of negative headlines that seem to have given ammunition to critics of the FBI, including Trump.

For one thing, Comey is involved in an unusually public disagreement with his former deputy director, Andrew McCabe, over the authorization of a news media disclosure. McCabe was fired in March amid a report from the Justice Department's inspector general that concluded he had misled internal affairs investigators.

Comey declined to say if he thought McCabe's firing was appropriate, but he did say the FBI should hold people accountable "in situations where they think they've been less than candid."

In addition, the watchdog office is examining how Comey wrote and stored memos that documented his conversations with Trump. He provided one of the memos to a friend and told him to disclose the substance of it to the media in hopes of getting a special counsel appointed. That memo was unclassified, but Trump has repeatedly criticized Comey as a "leaker."

The FBI also has been besieged by allegations of political bias following anti-Trump text messages between two senior FBI officials who were, for a time, working on Mueller's investigation.

Comey told the AP the text exchanges reflected "extremely poor judgment" on the part of the officials.

"The question I have to answer is: 'Should I have done more to communicate to — especially to the people working on the most sensitive matters — a standard of behavior?' And that's a fair question," Comey said.

But he also said many of the attacks, including on McCabe, were politically motivated and driven by "the president's effort to undermine the rule of law and the credibility of the entire institution."

Asked about his interactions with the president, Comey defended his decision to brief Trump as president-elect on the existence of salacious allegations in a dossier compiled as political opposition research. And he said he probably made the right call by informing Trump that he wasn't personally under investigation even though he declined to give Congress the same public reassurance.

"If I was still going to be in the position of having to brief him privately, had I not said that, what would have happened thereafter?" Comey said.

Comey declined to discuss details of Mueller's investigation, but he praised Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who wrote a memo used to justify Comey's firing.

"I think he's conducted himself honorably since my firing, especially in regard to protecting the special counsel, the department and the rule of law," Comey said. He also praised his own replacement, Christopher Wray, calling him a "person of integrity."

"This is a person of deep values," he said. "I would rather be FBI director, but if I can't be, I would want it to be someone like Chris."

Comey wouldn't say what questions he'd ask Trump if he were Mueller, but said it makes sense for Mueller to seek to question the president.

"It doesn't surprise me, and just as we've done in many investigations, you want to develop a complete understanding of the facts and then check them with the subject and see what they say about it," he said.

Comey said he is committed to teaching and lecturing about leadership and ethics. He said he is not interested in running for office or returning to a large law firm.

"I don't see myself ever returning to government," Comey said. "Certainly I never see myself running for office, and I can't imagine an appointed return."

"That's why," he joked, "I'm not wearing ties anymore."

Philly Naked Bike Ride to feature body-painting exhibition

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — The City of Brotherly Love apparently loves getting naked.

The annual ride of naked bicyclists through Philadelphia's streets has been so popular organizers are teaming up with the artist behind New York City's Bodypainting Day to launch another body-painting event. Philly Bodypainting Day will debut Sept. 8, the day of the 10th Philly Naked Bike Ride.

Nude public body painting will take place before the bike ride starts.

The ride protests dependence on fossil fuels, advocates for bike safety and promotes positive body image. About 3,000 cyclists and artists from around the country are expected.

Philly Bodypainting Day is being presented by Bodypaint.Me and Human Connection Arts, a nonprofit organization that promotes artistic expression and body acceptance through events such as NYC Bodypainting Day.

Bodypaint.Me artist Matt Deifer (DY'-fer) says he's excited "to showcase all of this art."

Zuckerberg pledges to 'keep building' in no-apology address

By **MICHAEL LIEDTKE, BARBARA ORTUTAY and RYAN NAKASHIMA, AP Technology Writers**

SAN JOSE, Calif. (AP) — With a smile that suggested the hard part of an "intense year" may be behind him, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg addressed developers Tuesday and pledged the company will build its way out of its worst-ever privacy debacle.

It was a clear and deliberate turning point for a company that's been hunkered down since mid-March. For first time in several weeks, Zuckerberg went before a public audience and didn't apologize for the Cambridge Analytica scandal, in which a political data-mining firm accessed data from as many as 87 million Facebook accounts for the purpose of influencing elections. Or for a deluge of fake news and Russian election interference.

Instead, Zuckerberg sought to project a "we're all in this together" mood that was markedly different from his demeanor during 10 hours of congressional testimony just a few weeks ago. His presentation also marked a major change for the company, which seems relieved to be largely done with the damage control that has preoccupied it for the past six weeks.

On Tuesday, speaking in San Jose, California, at the F8 gathering of software developers, Zuckerberg said to cheers that the company is re-opening app reviews, the process that gets new and updated apps on its services, which Facebook had shut down in late March as a result of the privacy scandal.

Zuckerberg then vowed to "keep building," and reiterated that Facebook is investing a lot in security and in strengthening its systems so they can't be exploited to meddle with elections, including the U.S. midterms later this year. The company had previously announced almost all of those measures.

"The hardest decision I made wasn't to invest in safety and security," Zuckerberg said. "The hard part was figuring out how to move forward on everything else we need to do too."

He also unveiled a new feature that gives users the ability to clear their browsing history from the platform, much the same way people can do in web browsers. Then Zuckerberg returned to techno-enthusiasm mode.

Facebook executives trotted out fun features, most notably a new dating service aimed at building "meaningful, long-term relationships," in a swipe at sites like Tinder. After Facebook announced its entry into the online dating game, shares of Tinder owner Match Group Inc. plummeted 22 percent.

Poking fun at himself, Zuckerberg unveiled a "Watch Party" feature that gives users the ability to watch video together — such as, he suggested, "your friend testifying before Congress." Up flashed video of Zuckerberg's own turn on Capitol Hill.

"Let's not do that again soon," he said.

Zuckerberg did "remarkably well in a really rough environment," said Ben Parr, co-founder of Octane AI,

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 69 of 71

a startup that helps companies market their wares on Facebook's Messenger app. "I think it helped a lot that he was joking, he was confident and he was comfortable."

Facebook's next actions will speak far louder than anything Zuckerberg during his 35-minute presentation Tuesday, predicted Cubeyou CEO Federico Treu, who is battling Facebook over what he believes was the unjustified suspension of his company app in the wake of the Cambridge Analytica scandal.

"Developers are going to be the type who say, 'You spoke about a lot of things, but we will wait and see,'" Treu said.

Zuckerberg won over the crowd again when he announced that the thousands of people in attendance would get Facebook's latest virtual reality headset — the portable, \$199 Oculus Go — for free. "Thank you!" someone yelled to Zuckerberg from the audience.

Zuckerberg also went out of his way to thank Jan Koum, the co-founder and CEO of messaging platform WhatsApp, who announced his departure Tuesday. Facebook paid \$19.3 billion for WhatsApp in 2014.

Despite reports that Koum left over concerns about how Facebook handles private data, Zuckerberg described him warmly as "a tireless advocate for privacy and encryption."

Some analysts said Zuckerberg's performance bolsters his chances of navigating the company out of its privacy scandal and overcoming concerns that it can't handle its fake-news and election problems.

By leading off with Facebook's security and privacy responsibilities, then continuing to extend Facebook's ambitions to connect people in new ways, Zuckerberg successfully "walked the tightrope," said Geoff Blaber, vice president of research and market analysis firm CCS Insight.

"F8 felt like the first time Facebook has been on the front foot since the Cambridge Analytica scandal broke," Blaber said.

Emarketer analyst Debra Aho Williamson said it seemed like Facebook was "able to strike the right chord" with developers; she figured some might respond to Zuckerberg with boos and heckles, although none seemed to. She was surprised that the event wasn't more subdued with fewer gee-whiz announcements — and definitely didn't expect a dating service.

Ortutay reported from New York and Nakashima reported from San Francisco.

White House delays a trade war but intensifies uncertainty

By PAUL WISEMAN, AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House's on-again, off-again tariffs are heightening uncertainty for U.S. companies that buy steel and aluminum and the foreign companies that supply them.

And major American allies, from Europe to Canada and Mexico, are signaling increasing resentment.

Delivering its second reprieve for steel and aluminum imports, the Trump administration late Monday postponed the tariffs that had been set to take effect Tuesday. But it decided to limit the delay to 30 days. After that, no one knows what the administration will do.

"It's nice to have a little breather," said John McDonald, an executive at Trans-Matic Manufacturing, a supplier of precision metal components in Holland, Michigan, which buys \$16.5 million in steel annually, some of it from Finland, the Netherlands, Russia and Taiwan.

But "the uncertainty is going to continue," McDonald said. "We're struggling with supply availability, lead times."

With the potential conflict only delayed, the European Union, which has vowed to slap tariffs on American bourbon, motorcycles, blue jeans and other goods if the U.S. taxes its steel and aluminum, warned that it won't "negotiate under threat."

The delay comes just as the United States prepares for high-stakes trade talks with China this week over Beijing's efforts to challenge U.S. technological dominance.

The rift with the EU and other allies stems from the Trump administration's decision in March to impose tariffs of 25 percent on steel and 10 percent on aluminum imports. In doing so, it made the unusual claim that a dependence on imported metals posed a national security threat to the United States.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 70 of 71

But it soon backed off, for a time. It granted the EU, Mexico and Canada exemptions from the tariffs that were to expire Tuesday before they were extended for a month at the last minute.

Separately, the United States has reached a deal with South Korea, which agreed to limit steel shipments to the U.S. in exchange for being spared the tariffs. Some analysts suspect that the Trump trade team hopes to pressure the EU and others to accept quotas on their steel exports to the United States as the price for having the tariffs lifted.

Speaking Tuesday at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, U.S. Trade Rep. Robert Lighthizer avoided saying whether the administration would be willing to extend again the one-month delay in the tariffs. Lighthizer also said "we more or less have an agreement" to permanently exempt Argentina, Australia and Brazil from the metals tariffs.

The U.S. is seeking to use the tariff threat to pressure Canada and Mexico to rewrite the North American Free Trade Agreement more to President Donald Trump's liking. Among other things, Trump wants to see more auto production moved to the United States.

But Chad Bown, senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, says "Canada and Mexico look at the NAFTA negotiations as a long-term deal. They're not going to take shortcuts and agree to a bad deal that has long-term implications" just to escape the immediate threat of steel and aluminum tariffs.

"The administration has created a moment of crisis but made it very difficult politically for all sides to get out of this and still claim victory," Bown says.

In the meantime, manufacturers that buy steel and aluminum are struggling with uncertainty. The Swedish appliance maker Electrolux in March postponed plans to modernize a plant in Springfield, Tennessee. That decision had consequences for the tool-and-dye maker Vaughn Manufacturing in Nashville, which has been supplying Electrolux for years. Vaughn has had to delay plans to expand its staff of 60 until the tariff situation is resolved.

Tuesday's extension of the tariff reprieve "just lengthens the uncertainty," says Mark Vaughn, the company president.

The U.S. tariffs would likely raise steel prices in the United States, thereby increasing costs for American manufacturers that buy steel and putting them at a competitive disadvantage with foreign rivals that can buy cheaper steel.

"If those tariffs were to hit, our prices would go up and we would no longer be competitive," says Trans-Matic President Patrick J. Thompson.

_____ AP Economics Writer Martin Crutsinger contributed to this report.

_____ Follow Paul Wiseman on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/PaulWisemanAP>

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, May 2, the 122nd day of 2018. There are 243 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On May 2, 1908, the original version of "Take Me Out to the Ball Game," with music by Albert Von Tilzer and lyrics by Jack Norworth, was published by Von Tilzer's York Music Co.

On this date:

In 1536, Anne Boleyn, second wife of King Henry VIII, was arrested and charged with adultery; she was beheaded 17 days later.

In 1670, the Hudson's Bay Co. was chartered by England's King Charles II.

In 1863, during the Civil War, Confederate Gen. Thomas "Stonewall" Jackson was accidentally wounded by his own men at Chancellorsville, Virginia; he died eight days later.

In 1927, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Buck v. Bell*, upheld 8-1 a Virginia law allowing the forced sterilization of people to promote the "health of the patient and the welfare of society."

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 02, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 292 ~ 71 of 71

In 1936, "Peter and the Wolf," a symphonic tale for children by Sergei Prokofiev, had its world premiere in Moscow.

In 1946, violence erupted during a foiled escape attempt at the Alcatraz Federal Penitentiary in San Francisco Bay; the "Battle of Alcatraz" claimed the lives of three inmates and two correctional officers before it was put down two days later.

In 1957, crime boss Frank Costello narrowly survived an attempt on his life in New York; the alleged gunman, Vincent "The Chin" Gigante, was acquitted at trial after Costello refused to identify him as the shooter. Sen. Joseph R. McCarthy, R-Wis., died at Bethesda Naval Hospital in Maryland.

In 1968, "The Odd Couple," the movie version of the Neil Simon comedy starring Jack Lemmon and Walter Matthau, opened in New York.

In 1970, jockey Diane Crump became the first woman to ride in the Kentucky Derby; she finished in 15th place aboard Fathom. (The winning horse was Dust Commander.)

In 1982, the Weather Channel made its debut.

In 1994, Nelson Mandela claimed victory in the wake of South Africa's first democratic elections; President F.W. de Klerk acknowledged defeat.

In 2011, Osama bin Laden was killed by elite American forces at his Pakistan compound, then quickly buried at sea after a decade on the run.

Ten years ago: President George W. Bush sent lawmakers a \$70 billion request to fund U.S. operations in Iraq and Afghanistan into the following spring. Tropical Cyclone Nargis struck Myanmar, leading to an eventual official death toll of 84,537, with 53,836 listed as missing. Mildred Loving, a black woman whose challenge to Virginia's ban on interracial marriage led to a landmark Supreme Court ruling striking down such laws across the United States, died in Milford, Virginia, at age 68.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama arrived in Mexico City on his first trip to Latin America since winning re-election. Dutchman Robert-Jan Derksen shot a 6-under 66 to take the first-round lead in the China Open, while 12-year-old Ye Wocheng opened with a 79 at Binhai Lake; at 12 years, 242 days, Ye became the youngest player in European Tour history, breaking Guan Tianlang's mark of 13 years, 177 days. Jeff Hanneman, 49, a founding member of heavy metal band Slayer, died in Hemet, California.

One year ago: Michael Slager, a white former police officer whose killing of Walter Scott, an unarmed black man running from a traffic stop, was captured on cellphone video, pleaded guilty to federal civil rights charges in Charleston, South Carolina. (Slager was sentenced to 20 years in prison.) United Airlines CEO Oscar Munoz apologized on Capitol Hill for an incident in which a passenger was dragged off a flight, calling it "a mistake of epic proportions" as frustrated lawmakers warned airline executives to improve customer service or face congressional intervention. Disgraced preacher Tony Alamo, who was convicted in Arkansas of sexually abusing young girls he considered his wives, died at a prison hospital in North Carolina; he was 82.

Today's Birthdays: Singer Engelbert Humperdinck is 82. Former International Olympic Committee President Jacques Rogge is 76. Actress-activist Bianca Jagger is 73. Country singer R.C. Bannon is 73. Actor David Suchet (SOO'-shay) is 72. Singer-songwriter Larry Gatlin is 70. Rock singer Lou Gramm (Foreigner) is 68. Actress Christine Baranski is 66. Singer Angela Bofill is 64. Fashion designer Donatella Versace is 63. Actor Brian Tochi is 59. Movie director Stephen Daldry is 58. Actress Elizabeth Berridge is 56. Country singer Ty Herndon is 56. Actress Mitzi Kapture is 56. Commentator Mika Brzezinski is 51. Indiana Gov. Eric Holcomb is 50. Rock musician Todd Sucherman (Styx) is 49. Wrestler-turned-actor Dwayne Johnson (AKA The Rock) is 46. Soccer player David Beckham is 43. Rock singer Jeff Gutt (goot) (Stone Temple Pilots) is 42. Actress Jenna Von Oy is 41. Actress Ellie Kemper is 38. Actor Robert Buckley is 37. Actor Gaius (GY'-ehs) Charles is 35. Pop singer Lily Rose Cooper is 33. Olympic gold medal figure skater Sarah Hughes is 33. Rock musician Jim Almgren (Carolina Liar) is 32. Actor Thomas McDonell is 32. Actress Kay Panabaker is 28. Princess Charlotte of Cambridge is three.

Thought for Today: "Like ships, men founder time and again." — Henry Miller, American novelist (1891-1980).