

Groton Daily Independent

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“My mother gave me life and never asked for anything in return. That is her secret, you know, always giving without any expectations.”

-Author Unknown

Chicken Soup
for the Soul

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Lewandowski Bridal Shower

Come and Go Bridal Shower honoring Bride to Be, Sarah Lewandowski, Saturday, June 2, 2018 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church – Groton. Lance Dennert and Sarah are registered at Bed, Bath and Beyond and Target.

Monday, May 21

7 p.m.: City Council Meeting at Groton Community Center



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The 125th Commencement Service was held Sunday, May 20, at the GHS Arena. School Board Vice President, Marty Weismantel, handed out the diplomas this year, including one for his daughter, Hattie Weismantel. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)



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Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jordan Wright

For the past few weeks we have covered the NFL draft. First with an in-depth look at the Vikings' draft picks, then an overview look at the rest of the NFC North. This week we will cover the rest of the NFL. Obviously, there isn't enough time or space to get into every draft pick for every team in the NFL, so we'll be covering the best and worst picks from the draft.

Draft day winners

The Arizona Cardinals were one team that had a great draft. Last year they were very interested in drafting Patrick Mahomes but ended up watching the Chiefs leapfrog them and draft Mahomes instead. This year they were determined to draft their quarterback of the future, and when Josh Rosen started to fall down the draft, the Cardinals were able to move up into the top 10 to get him. The crazy thing is they only had to give up a third and a fifth-round pick to move up! The Cardinals entered the offseason with one of the worst quarterback depth charts in the NFL, but now have Sam Bradford, Josh Rosen and Mike Glennon. That's a heck of an improvement in a short amount of time.

The Baltimore Ravens also had a great draft that has set their team up for success down the road. Ravens' General Manager Ozzie Newsome decided to retire after the 2018 NFL draft, and he wanted to make sure he left the team in great hands. Knowing Joe Flacco is not a great quarterback, Newsome moved back into the first round to select QB Lamar Jackson. The plan right now is for Flacco to start at least one more season, but since the two quarterbacks have vastly different playing styles, it will be interesting to see how long it takes the team to embrace Jackson and alter the offense to fit his strengths.

The team who had the best draft in the NFL just might be the Cleveland Browns. Holding the first and fourth overall picks in a draft comes with an immense amount of pressure and a high probability to screw things up. The Browns took a long look at all the quarterbacks in the draft and decided Baker Mayfield was their guy. Once that decision was made, they didn't waver and took their guy at number one. I might not agree with them picking Denzel Ward over Bradley Chubb three picks later, but Ward is still a great player who will help solidify the Browns' secondary.

Draft day losers

The New Orleans Saints had one of the greatest drafts in NFL history last year, but they followed it up with a head-scratching move in 2018. The Saints traded their 2018 first and fifth round draft picks, as well as their first-round pick next year, to move up 13 spots (from 27 to 14). That's a lot of draft capital to give up for anyone, but what makes it worse is the pick was used on a pass rusher (Marcus Davenport) who has hit-or-miss written all over him. I thought Davenport would go in the late first or early second round, and he has tons of potential, I just don't believe he will return the investment the Saints have already made in him.

The New York Giants were another team that had a poor draft. In the ten drafts before 2018, the Giants' average draft slot was 20th and they haven't had a top-five pick since 2004 (which is when they acquired Eli Manning). The Giants were positioned to replace the 37-year-old Manning with the second overall pick this year, but they ended up drafting a running back instead. Running back is not a vital position in today's NFL. Saquon Barkley is very talented, and will be a great running back in the NFL. However, there is not a huge talent gap between him and the other running backs that were taken later in the draft. The Giants had a chance to take a quarterback and secure their franchise for the next 15 years. Instead they took a running back, and as Vikings fans we know that having the greatest running back in the NFL doesn't always lead to success.

The biggest draft day loser was the Las Vegas Raiders (it still feels weird to type that). It was no secret the Raiders coveted offensive tackle Mike McGlinchey from Notre Dame, so when the 49ers took McGlinchey with the ninth overall pick (one pick before the Raiders), the Raiders panicked and elected to move back in the draft. To move back to the 15th pick, the Raiders only got a third and a fifth-round pick in return. With the 15th pick, the Raiders drafted Kolton Miller who is a second or third round prospect. The rest of their draft picks were very underwhelming, with the possible exception of Arden Key, a defensive end who could turn into a player similar to Danielle Hunter.

Next week, we will start going through the Vikings roster starting with the quarterback position. If you have any questions or comments, reach out to me on Twitter (@JordanWrightNFL) Skoll!

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South Dakota Governor
Dennis Daugaard



\$30.7 Million More To Support Education

If you've ever taken a course on psychology, you have probably heard of the marshmallow test. The social experiment was first initiated at Stanford in the 1960s and it involves sitting a child in a room by themselves with a marshmallow. If the child can refrain from eating the marshmallow for 15 minutes, they are then rewarded with a second marshmallow. The study found that, for the most part, the kids who were willing to wait for the second marshmallow went on to achieve better outcomes in life.

I can't speak to whether the science behind the study is sound – or claim that I would have held off for that second marshmallow as a child – but there is no doubting the power of delayed gratification and the rewards it can bring. That's true for us as a state as well, and the reason why we recently received payments totaling \$30.7 million that will go toward education.

The majority of the funds came from previously disputed tobacco payments that have been held in an escrow account since 2004 regarding the enforcement of the tobacco Master Settlement Agreement. The Master Settlement Agreement (MSA) was an accord between 46 states and the major cigarette manufacturers in 1998, which provides yearly payments to participating states. Some states securitized their MSA payments through issuing bonds to receive large upfront sums of cash and forgo their future payments. In many cases, states spent this one-time cash many years ago, on budget deficits or capital projects, and it is gone.

In South Dakota, we took a different approach. In 2001, the citizens passed an amendment to the South Dakota Constitution with a 72 percent "yes" vote to create the Education Enhancement Trust Fund. This constitutional amendment directed any proceeds from the MSA to the Education Enhancement Trust Fund.

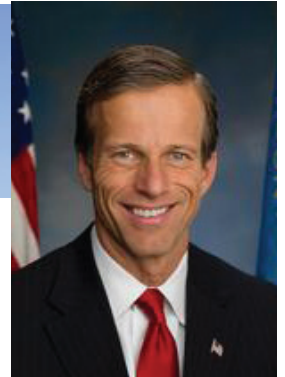
The South Dakota Investment Council invests the assets of the trust. State law allows a 4 percent distribution from the trust fund to the general fund each year, without invading principal, to support education in South Dakota.

Since 2003, more than \$220 million has been distributed from the trust fund to support education. During the Great Recession, the market value of the trust fund dropped below \$270 million. Today, the Education Enhancement Trust Fund has more than \$595 million in assets. Plus, this July 1, an additional \$20.4 million will be distributed from the trust fund.

Thanks to the Investment Council and the fiscally responsible decisions of our citizens and state leaders, the annual distribution from the trust has grown every year since 2011 and is expected to continue for future generations. Meanwhile, other states have spent their tobacco funds or are receiving MSA payments that are declining. When this \$30.7 million is fully realized in the trust distribution formula, it will provide more than \$1 million in additional ongoing support for education in future years.

I am grateful for all of the Investment Council's hard work and that South Dakota is comprised of individuals willing to forgo an immediate benefit to gain even more later. In this case, the second marshmallow was really worth the wait.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



Service and Sacrifice

While Abraham Lincoln thought “The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here ...,” he underestimated the importance of what would become one of the greatest speeches in American history. He didn’t expect people to remember the words he said on that Gettysburg battlefield, but he hoped they would instead remember and honor the men who gave “the last full measure of devotion” to their cause. Words matter, but it’s what they mean that truly counts.

With Memorial Day right around the corner, Lincoln’s tribute to the fallen is also a good reminder that the cause of freedom and democracy is a long road, and it continues to come at a cost – one that America has never and will never be able to fully repay. That’s why each generation of Americans is tasked with the special responsibility of ensuring that the service and sacrifice made by our men and women in uniform never goes unnoticed or unappreciated.

Congress recently helped deliver on that responsibility when it sent to the president my bill that will double the size of the Black Hills National Cemetery (BHNC) near Sturgis by permanently transferring approximately 200 acres of adjacent land to the BHNC. This is the culmination of a years-long initiative that will help to continue honoring our heroes – now and for generations to come. It’s a small, yet meaningful gesture to our service members and their families.

This has long been a priority for me, which is why I joined my South Dakota Senate colleague, Mike Rounds, and our neighbor to the west, Sen. Mike Enzi (R-Wyo.), whose constituents also look to the BHNC as a place to honor their loved ones, in reintroducing this bill during the first week of the 115th Congress. I’m grateful for everything Sens. Rounds and Enzi and Rep. Kristi Noem (R-S.D.) did to help get this bill across the finish line.

America has been blessed by having so many brave men and women who’ve answered the call to duty throughout our history. Since the very beginning, when we fought for our independence in the Revolutionary War, there’s always been a group of freedom fighters who were willing to lay it all on the line. One of the greatest examples of this heroism is the men and women who served during World War II. Sadly, the group of soldiers who returned home from that war is only getting smaller by the day.

That’s why I was honored to have recently met a few of these South Dakota service members in Washington, D.C., including dozens from the Korea and Vietnam conflicts, at the very memorials that are dedicated to their service. I have to say, there’s nothing quite like seeing these veterans at their memorials being greeted and celebrated by Americans eight decades or more their junior. It’s a literal representation of that generational responsibility to honor these heroes and ensure they aren’t forgotten.

Whether it’s Memorial Day or Veterans Day or any day in between, we should always offer our gratitude to the people who have given the rest of us the gift of freedom and democracy. Remember those we’ve lost, and honor those who have or continue to serve. Having seen it firsthand during this recent honor flight in Washington, a simple and sincere “thank you” goes far further than you might imagine.

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Today in Weather History

May 21, 1977: Observers south of Clear Lake saw five tornadoes. One was five miles south of town moving northeast. Another was four miles south and one mile west of Clear Lake. Both destroyed trees and some small buildings. Three other tornadoes were sighted about two miles south of town. These touched down only momentarily with no damage occurring.

Two tornadoes were seen in southern Codington County. One was seen at Grover, and the other was five miles south of Watertown. No damage was reported.

A tornado was on the ground in the vicinity of Revillo. A few barns and some outbuilding were damaged.

May 21, 1992: A severe thunderstorm moved over Northwestern Edmunds County causing high winds and penny size hail. In Bowdle, there was considerable wind damage. Tree limbs more than five inches in diameter were broken off and fell on a car. Other tree branches went through the roof of a home. Two pickup trucks were rolled on their side. Three miles ENE of Bowdle a garage was moved 20 feet off its foundation and was stopped by a large tractor.

1881: Clara Barton and a circle of close friends found the American Red Cross. Click [HERE](#) for more information from the History Channel.

1949: A violent tornado crossed the Mississippi River from the St. Louis area into Wood River, then to Roxanna. This tornado damaged or destroyed 300 homes in these two towns, killing five people. Four people died in a destroyed restaurant in Palestine, Illinois; one body was recovered from a tree. A tornado causing estimated F4 damage killed five people and injured 55 in St. Louis and St. Charles counties in Missouri and Madison County in Illinois. This tornado was part of an outbreak that produced four different tornadoes and was responsible for five deaths and 57 injuries.

2001: Golfers participating in a golf tournament at the Majestic Golf Course in Hartland, Michigan received an urgent message on the G.P.S. on their carts. The message, relayed from the clubhouse, was that a tornado was bearing down on the course. Most of the golfers made it to safety in the clubhouse, although some had to take shelter on the course. Only one golfer suffered a minor injury. The F2 tornado damaged 70 cars in the parking lot along with numerous golf carts and a pontoon boat.



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



1106 N. 2nd Street, Groton

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Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
May 21	May 22	May 23	May 24	May 25	May 26	May 27
						
71°F	83°F	85°F	86°F	85°F	82°F	80°F
51°F	60°F	64°F	61°F	59°F	56°F	63°F
ESE 7 MPH	SE 7 MPH	ESE 14 MPH Precip 30%	SSE 10 MPH	SW 13 MPH Precip 20%	NW 15 MPH Precip 20%	NNW 9 MPH

MIX OF SUN & CLOUDS (west) VS CLOUDS TODAY (east)



Gradual Increase In Temperatures/Humidity This Week
Mid-Week Threat For Storms



National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD

weather.gov/Aberdeen



National Weather Service Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen

Updated: 5/21/2018 4:56 AM Central

Published on: 05/21/2018 at 5:15AM

A weak system overhead is responsible for clouds and a few sprinkles. As this system continues to drift over the region, expect cloud cover to limit how warm eastern South Dakota and western Minnesota gets, while central South Dakota will end up with mostly sunny skies. As we go through the week, expect a warming trend with higher humidity and a greater threat for thunderstorms.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 71.1 F at 6:00 PM

Low Outside Temp: 41.6 F at 6:14 AM

Wind Chill:

High Gust: 16.0 Mph at 10:59 AM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 94° in 1925

Record Low: 22° in 1895

Average High: 70°F

Average Low: 46°F

Average Precip in May: 2.15

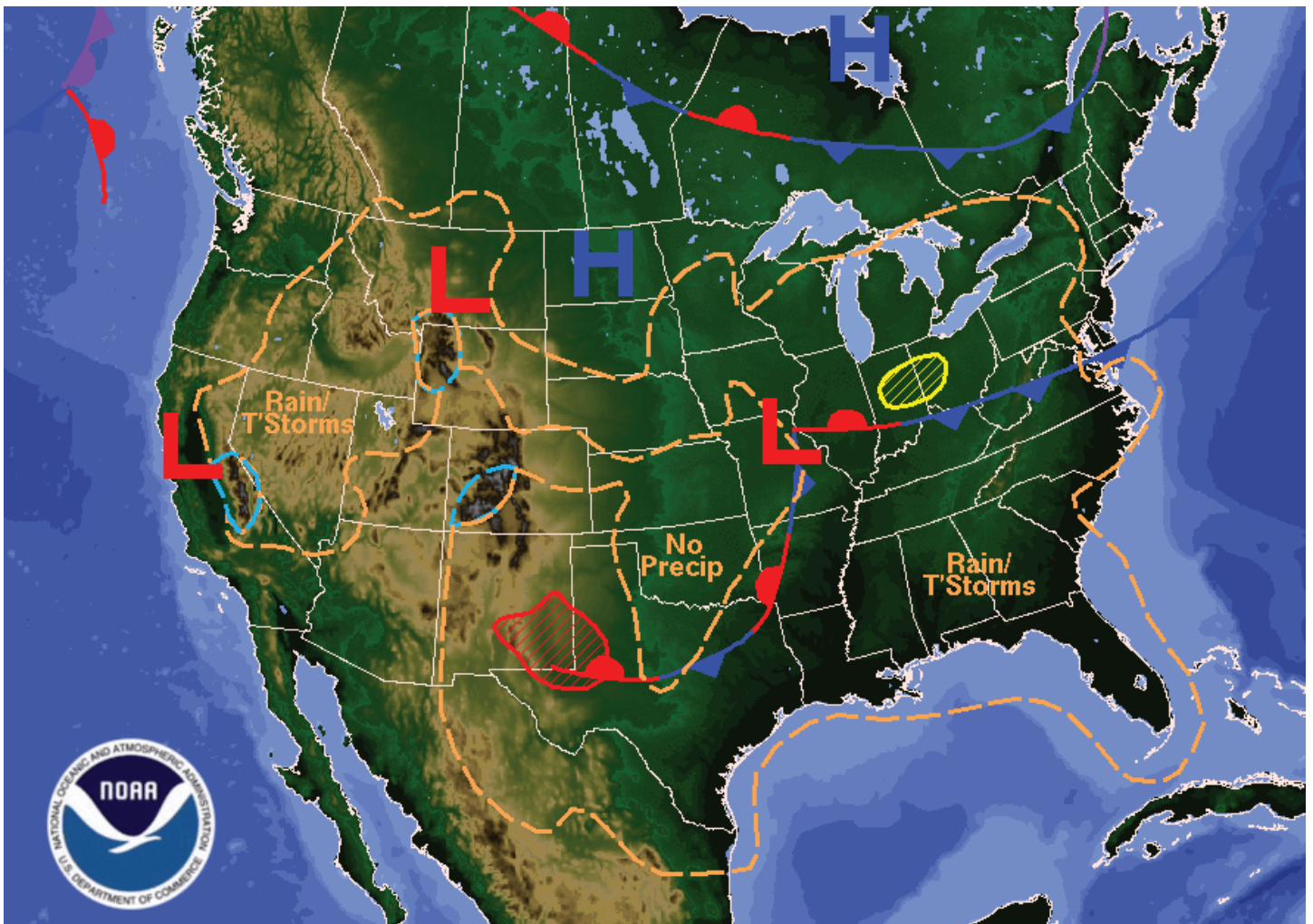
Precip to date in May: 1.31

Average Precip to date: 6.18

Precip Year to Date: 3.99

Sunset Tonight: 9:04 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:55 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Mon, May 21, 2018, issued 4:51 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McReynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

Rain

Rain and T'Storms

Rain and Snow

Snow

Flash Flooding Possible (hatched)

Severe T'Storms Possible (hatched)

Freezing Rain Possible (hatched)

Heavy Snow Possible (hatched)

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FINDING FAITH

QUESTION: Which is stronger in your life - faith or fear?

God never promised Christians freedom from fear or immunity from trouble. Nor are we assured that every day will be filled with sunshine and smiling flowers. But He did promise His presence and power.

Unfortunately, it is our thoughts of terrible things that bring us worry and fear.

We often think about our past: our failures and flaws. Or we think about the future: the "might" happens or the "surely" will occurs.

When we confess our shortcomings of the past, God forgives them and forgets them. And if we allow Him, He can and will turn them into triumphs and our setbacks into successes.

But what of the future? We must commit it to our God because He is in control of tomorrow - not circumstances of fate. He can turn what we see as obstacles into opportunities and what threatens us into triumphs.

Sir Henry Lauder was an internationally known Scottish entertainer. He visited many hospitals where the wounded were recovering. One day he received news that his son had been killed in combat. He turned to a friend and said, "At a time like this a man can turn to many things that could destroy him. I will turn to Christ."

The Psalmist said, "He will have no fear of bad news; his heart is steadfast, trusting in the Lord. His heart is secure, he will have no fear..."

Prayer: Give us, Lord, the peace of Your presence and the guarantee of Your guidance in uncertain times. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 112:7-8 They will have no fear of bad news; their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the Lord. Their hearts are secure, they will have no fear; in the end they will look in triumph on their foes.

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2018 Groton SD Community Events

- Groton Lion's Club Bingo- Wednesday Nights 6:30pm at the Groton Legion (Year Round)
- 11/18/2017-3/31/2018 Groton Lion's Club Wheel of Meat- Saturday Nights 7pm at the Groton Legion (Fall/Winter Months)
- 1/27/2019 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm
- 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

Native American lacrosse teams leagueless in South Dakota

By BLAKE NICHOLSON, Associated Press

Travis Brave Heart was planning to spend his senior season this spring and summer tuning up to play college lacrosse in the fall. Instead, the 17-year-old standout from Aberdeen, South Dakota, is faced with the prospect of not playing at all.

His Lightning Stick Society team was one of three Native American clubs kicked out of a developmental league in North Dakota and South Dakota amid their concerns about racial abuse, leaving players and coaches upset and scrambling to find ways to continue playing a game that originated with their ancestors and means more to them than just competition.

"I got my anger out of the way," Brave Heart said. "I went outside and practiced lacrosse, even though it was snowing. After I played, I wasn't angry anymore. Then I thought, 'What do we need to get past this? To get playing again?'"

The head of the league rejected any notion of widespread racism, and said the teams were removed not for complaining but for issues such as unreliable attendance.

Lacrosse is considered America's oldest sport — an important part of Native American cultures long before the arrival of Europeans. It's still used to teach Native youth about culture, values and life skills like keeping emotions under control. It can also be a path to college for players who often come from impoverished reservations.

The Dakota Premier Lacrosse League is part of a surge in popularity. Participation on organized teams — mostly youth and high school level — more than tripled over 15 years to a record 825,000 players in 2016, according to U.S. Lacrosse, the sport's national governing body.

Since the Dakota league launched in 2016, Native American teams have experienced racial abuse that they don't experience in neighboring states like Minnesota and Nebraska, said Kevin DeCora, a Lightning Stick Society coach.

"Racism kind of goes across the board with all sports," he said. "It's the attitude and belief that people in the Dakotas have always had to the indigenous population, for hundreds of years."

As an example, Lightning Stick director and co-coach Franky Jackson and others cited a 2015 incident in which Native American children were sprayed with beer while watching a minor league hockey game in Rapid City.

Brave Heart said he has endured taunts about his Native American ancestry from white players and their parents, rough play he feels crosses the line into abuse and what he views as biased refereeing toward white players. He described an incident after one game, as his team was resting in the shade under some trees, in which a parent from another team carrying a cellphone camera came looking for evidence of drugs or alcohol, "assuming we were a bunch of drunk Natives."

The primarily Native teams expelled from the Dakota league — Susbeca and 7 Flames are the others — say they were kicked out after asking the league to address their allegations. They provided copies of letters they said they sent to the league and to U.S. Lacrosse in 2016 and 2017, detailing the cellphone-toting parent incident and other specific instances of racial slurs and overly rough play.

League Administrator Corey Mitchell said he received only one formal complaint, in 2016. He said he investigated and found no evidence of misconduct warranting punishment, but he provided a copy of an email he sent to people in the league after the complaint informing them of a zero-tolerance policy for discrimination or racial slurs.

Mitchell said the league had problems with the Native American teams including unreliable attendance and improper registration of some coaches and players.

"I think this is nothing more than a response to being held accountable," he said.

Ali Vincent, who writes grant requests to fund the 7 Flames, said the teams dispute they did anything

that warranted expulsion.

U.S. Lacrosse in a statement said "diversity and inclusion are essential components of our sport" and that it would investigate.

Mitchell acknowledged that the fledgling league has had its struggles, including inexperienced referees, but said it has strived to improve through such measures as requiring U.S. Lacrosse certification for coaches. He has formed a board of directors with Native American representation to run the league and said he will step down as director after this season.

None of the league's predominantly white teams responded to requests for comment, though the association that runs the team in Fargo, North Dakota, quit the league and issued a statement saying it doesn't condone racism. That association's president didn't respond to an interview request.

The Native teams said they are getting support and offers to play from teams around the country, and are lining up other opponents.

"At the end of the day, we only want these kids to play," Jackson said. "We deal with disenfranchised youth that can't even afford to buy a mouth guard half the time. We understand how to empower these kids."

That's true for Brave Heart, an Oglala Sioux tribal member who helped captain his team to a league championship last year and parlayed that success into an athletic scholarship at Emmanuel College in Georgia. But the sport means much more to him than a pathway to a future as an historic preservation officer.

"We play for the Creator, and we play for the community," he said. "You think of all the people who can't play, like people in wheelchairs and the sick, and when you play for them, you get this drive you just can't explain."

"The day just gets better when you start playing," Brave Heart added. "It's definitely more than a game."

Follow Blake Nicholson on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/NicholsonBlake>

Questions remain about Custer State Park fire

By **SETH TUPPER**, Rapid City Journal

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — If a wildfire has to start, a place like the origin point of the Legion Lake Fire might seem preferable.

The wintertime blaze ignited alongside a highway, diagonally across the road from an occupied residence, where two people spotted the fire and reported it within minutes of its ignition.

How, then, did a fire that was quickly noticed in an accessible spot ultimately grow to burn 84 square miles and become the third-largest wildfire ever measured in the Black Hills?

Paul Schnose, one of the many ranchers who lost grazing grass and fences to the fire after it burned its way out of Custer State Park, was hesitant to blame Black Hills Energy, park officials, firefighters or anyone else this spring as green grass sprouted from the charred earth.

"I don't know if I feel they're responsible," Schnose said. "It was just an accident, it seems to me."

The fire was indeed accidental, and weather was a prime culprit in its ignition and spread. But increased scrutiny of other factors has bubbled up during the months since the December fire as more information, criticism and speculation have emerged regarding the expectations of the firefighters, the presence of logging debris piles that may have fueled the fire's spread, the diminished wintertime availability of firefighting resources, and the strategies and tactics used to fight the fire.

The fire began at about 7:30 a.m. Dec. 11 when wind gusts of up to 50 mph blew a tree onto a power line in Custer State Park, The Rapid City Journal reported.

According to rough measurements by the newspaper, the tree was perhaps 10 to 15 yards from the south shoulder of U.S. Highway 16A, about a half-mile northeast of Legion Lake and 200 feet west of a junction with Needles Highway. The power line crosses over Highway 16A at that location.

The 70-foot-tall tree, a seemingly healthy ponderosa pine, fell onto the power line from outside the line's right of way corridor. The line broke and threw off sparks that ignited the fire, according to an origin and cause report filed later by Phil Geenen, a fire investigator for the Wildland Fire Division of the state

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Department of Agriculture.

Conditions were ripe for the wildfire to spread. Besides the wind, which had been blowing strongly for about a week, there was no snow cover over the dormant vegetation in the state park, the ground was not uniformly frozen, and relative humidity was low.

Yet, according to Darren Clabo, who is the state fire meteorologist and a research scientist at the South Dakota School of Mines & Technology, firefighters who responded to the Legion Lake Fire were trained by experience to assume they would face a small, manageable blaze. Clabo said during an April 19 presentation at a scientific conference in Rapid City that the largest previous December wildfire in the post-settlement history of the Black Hills was 20 acres, which equates to 0.03 square miles.

"That's the 'slide' in the firefighters' heads when they're rolling up on a fire in December in the Black Hills: 'This fire might only get to 10 or 20 acres, at most,'" Clabo said.

But Clabo said dormant wintertime vegetation can ignite in warm, dry and windy conditions much the same way that drought-affected vegetation might ignite during the height of summer.

As the wind pushed the fire southeast up a forested hill from the ignition point, the flames spread into a nearly 2-square-mile patch of forested terrain crossed only by power lines and logging roads. In that area, satellite images from before the fire show there were perhaps 10 large piles of treetops and other unwanted natural debris left behind by a logging operation in 2016.

"After logging goes in, you get tops of the trees, they cut 'em off, they stack 'em all up in these 20- or 30-foot-tall piles that are the size of this room," Clabo said during his April 19 presentation in a meeting room at the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center. "Just old, dead tree stuff."

The fire ignited those piles.

"All of that heat within these machine piles gave you 100- to 200-foot flame lengths," Clabo said, adding that the embers from those flames were driven ahead by the wind.

Had the fire not started in an area where the wind could push it into the machine piles, Clabo said, firefighters would have gotten the blaze under control much sooner.

"It would've been a little 7-acre postage stamp that we wouldn't be talking about here today," Clabo said.

Ben Wudtke, executive director of the Black Hills Forest Resource Association, a timber-industry trade group, said in a recent Journal interview that he disagrees with Clabo's assessment of the role played by the machine piles.

Wudtke said the logging that had occurred in the area of the fire's ignition removed potential fuel and kept the fire intensity lower than it might have been otherwise. He does not believe the ignition of the piles was a key factor in the growth of the wildfire.

"Most foresters really don't view piles as a main hazard," said Wudtke, who has a master's degree in forest ecology. "The main hazard is the actual fuel in the forest before the harvesting is done."

The presence of the machine piles — which are also called slash piles — was not unusual. There are thousands of slash piles of varying sizes in the Black Hills, not only in Custer State Park but also on other public land, including the Black Hills National Forest. The public agencies send firefighters out to eliminate the piles with controlled burns when there is snow cover to prevent the controlled burns from spreading.

State officials connected with Custer State Park declined to be interviewed for this story, citing the potential for litigation arising from the Legion Lake Fire. For a separate and broader perspective on the management of slash piles, the Journal interviewed Todd Pechota, acting deputy supervisor of the Black Hills National Forest.

Pechota said there are currently about 5,600 piles on Black Hills National Forest land, and the agency burns about 3,325 piles per year. Keeping up with pile-burning is a never-ending job in one of the country's most actively logged national forests.

"I can assure you that someplace, somewhere on the Black Hills National Forest, a new machine pile is being constructed as we speak," Pechota said.

The location of the piles is predetermined as part of the contracts awarded to loggers, and the proximity to power lines is one of numerous factors considered.

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"I'm not saying piles couldn't be in close proximity to a power line," Pechota said, "but we typically try to avoid it."

As the fire spread during the first few hours after it ignited, there was a need for more firefighters and equipment. According to Clabo, those resources were not as easy to gather up as they would have been during the busier summertime fire season.

Some wildfire-fighting specialists known as Hotshots were not under contract, Clabo said, while Forest Service engines were not fully staffed and seasonal firefighting employees had been released for the winter.

"So we were pulling in resources from all across the region, all across the area," Clabo said. Those resources included volunteer and professional fire departments from area communities, and other firefighters from state and federal agencies.

Former wildland firefighter Bill Gabbert made similar comments on his Wildfire Today blog, which is published from the Black Hills and is well-read within the wildland firefighting community.

"Finding enough firefighting resources for a large fire in South Dakota in December is very difficult," Gabbert wrote. "The very large Thomas Fire burning hundreds of thousands of Southern California acres could have complicated the process of ordering out-of-region fire suppression resources."

Nevertheless, by about 4 p.m. on the first day of the Legion Lake Fire, the firefighting force had grown to a reported 200 personnel while the fire itself had grown to 2,500 acres.

Rather than try to put out the flames, firefighters used a common wildfire-fighting strategy and tried to contain the fire within an area where it could burn itself out. That included digging lines and purposefully torching some areas ahead of the fire's footprint, to create a fuel-free containment boundary.

The firefighters dug their lines far beyond the fire — 1 to 4 miles ahead of it, according to an analysis by Gabbert. The plan, Gabbert wrote, was to let the fire grow to about 16,000 acres within the containment area.

Command of the firefighting effort came under the authority of the Rocky Mountain Blue Team, a roster of fire officials from various state and federal agencies. Travis Lipp, an operation section chief for the team, explained the chosen strategy in a public video posted to Facebook on the afternoon of the fire's second day, Dec. 12.

Lipp said the fire had burned into Custer State Park's French Creek Natural Area, which is a particularly rugged and densely forested part of the park where it would have been difficult to extract firefighters who encountered danger.

"That's why we're looking to back off and fight this fire on our terms and put in containment lines where we feel we'll be successful," Lipp said in the video.

Lipp also said there were two heavy air tankers — planes that drop red fire retardant — at Rapid City that were not being utilized.

By late afternoon of that second day, the fire was still only a reported 4,000 acres, or about 6 square miles. Then, that night, stronger-than-expected wind gusts fanned the fire and sent it on a nearly 45,000-acre run, beyond the intended containment area. Rural residents east of the park were evacuated, as were residents of the communities of Fairburn and Buffalo Gap.

An air tanker was called in on the fire's third day to drop retardant around the edges of the fire. That day, Dec. 13, Lipp explained in another public Facebook video why the air tankers were not used sooner.

"We didn't have the conditions," he said, referring to high winds, "and where the fire activity was, we didn't have the resources in place where it would've been effective to put retardant down and then go in and follow behind the retardant with resources."

Over the next several days, weather conditions grew more favorable, and the fire was finally fully contained Dec. 19. About 300 personnel were on hand at the peak of the firefight, and the fire's final footprint was 54,023 acres, or 84 square miles. The leading edge of the fire was about 18 miles southeast of where it began.

Wudtke, of the timber-industry trade association, was critical of the tactics used to fight the fire.

"This strategy implemented on the Legion Lake Fire, of backing off great distances from fires and lighting backburns, is part of a larger national problem," Wudtke said. "Nobody wants any firefighters hurt or

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killed, but there must be greater recognition of natural resource concerns and property ownership.”

Authorities with the Wildland Fire Division of the state Department of Agriculture declined interview requests for this story and instead supplied a written comment: “Our first priority is always the protection of human lives, followed by the protection of people’s homes. Our firefighters accomplished both those objectives on the Legion Lake Fire.”

Homes and lives were indeed protected, but some other buildings were destroyed. Some livestock died, and pastures and fence posts were burned.

Some of the pasture grass was burned not by the wildfire itself, but by firefighters as they torch-lit grass to eliminate fuel ahead of the fire’s advance.

That approach angered some ranchers, including Randy Schroth. When the leading edge of the wildfire approached some of the land he ranches in the Buffalo Gap area, he gathered up fellow ranchers who had pickup-mounted tanks, plus firefighters from area volunteer departments, and went out to fight the flames with water.

Schroth was relatively unconcerned about the grass that had already been grazed during the summer, but he had hoped to save about 400 acres of grass that was reserved for his cattle to graze during the winter.

He eventually encountered firefighters torching his reserved winter grass.

His reaction?

“I’m sure you wouldn’t want to print that,” he said.

By the time the wildfire was fully contained, Schroth had lost not only his winter grass, but also one bull and lots of fence.

He appreciated the efforts of some firefighters from state and federal agencies who tried to work closely with him to protect his land and property. But he said there were other firefighters on the federal-state team who did not seem to care what damage he suffered.

Schroth said he was out among the firefighters continuously and had a radio, and he wishes there could have been better communication and coordination regarding the burns that firefighters conducted. If that had happened, Schroth said, he might have been able to show them other places to burn that could have saved his winter grass.

“It’s not the last fire we’re going to have,” Schroth said, “and we need to come into an understanding with these guys so we can work together rather than apart.”

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

New Bar and Grill opens in city struck by 2015 tornado

By AJAUHOLA, The Daily Republic

DELMONT, S.D. (AP) — Opening weekend for The Blacksheep Bar & Grill in Delmont was at least twice as busy as expected. New owners Kim and Ken Rosewall expected a few people to trickle in and try out the food, but never thought it would be so packed.

“We had a steady flow for five hours on Saturday night,” Kim Rosewall said. “And people have been coming in every day to eat since we opened. That has made it worth the six weeks of hard work, stress and anxiety.”

They ran low on several foods and completely ran out of Bud Light cans on the first night. They anticipated shutting off the grill at 9 p.m., but found farmers are calling for takeout orders around 9:30 p.m. They’re still working on how to accommodate those late orders.

The Rosewalls considered taking over ownership of the restaurant last year, but the time wasn’t quite right. When their youngest son entered school this year, they again approached Leo Holzbauer who bought the former Delmont Steakhouse in 2015 after the devastating Mother’s Day tornado. He never operated the restaurant but wanted to ensure it didn’t become another empty building. It has been his mission to find the right owner and turn over the building and business to them, free of charge.

Initially, his terms were the owners must make the business successful over a five-year period, but he

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realized that was too much commitment.

He changed the terms to one year and the Rosewalls agreed.

"Ken and I kept talking about it and said, 'You know, we should just go for it. What's the worst we can do, fail?'" Kim told The Daily Republic. "You never know if you don't try."

And the Rosewalls have tried, and succeeded, and plan to continue succeeding for the long haul.

They spent six weeks revamping and cleaning the building, including building a backroom for two pool tables, two dart boards and eventually video lottery machines. The rest of the building will be used for dining and a hometown gathering place.

While preparing the building for opening day, Kim found Delmont class pictures from the 1940s through 1989 when the school closed. She decided to hang them in the main restaurant and bar area, which has been a great hit. Many locals come in and see their own pictures hanging on the walls or their parents, grandparents or other relatives.

"It's a great conversation starter," she said.

The couple moved to Delmont two years ago from Randolph, Nebraska, and has declared Delmont to be home. Ken works at Dakota Plains in Napa Junction as a locomotive operator. So, Kim runs the restaurant with help from her servers and cooks, and sometimes with a little help from regular customers.

"We're not from the community, but there's a lot of support here," she said.

On Sunday morning, Kim was working alone and a rush of customers filed in the door to accompany the regular clientele already dining, including Holzbauer.

"Leo got up and filled water cups for me, and another regular filled coffee cups," Kim said. "When you have regulars, they know you bust your butt and they're willing to step in. That's what the community is all about. You treat them well and they treat you well."

That philosophy has been working so far, and not only for regular customers. People from as far as Mitchell, Yankton and Tyndall have been traveling to Delmont for the good food and atmosphere at The Blacksheep. In fact, several people in town and out of town have called to reserve seating over the weekend, particularly for the Mother's Day buffet on Sunday, which includes roasted chicken and roast beef, with corn, mashed potatoes and gravy, homemade mac and cheese, rolls, plus a chocolate fountain and fresh fruit.

"All roads lead to Delmont," Kim said, referencing the town's location a couple miles off Old Highway 18's route. "If there's good food, they will drive to get good food. It may not help us get 600 more residents, but it shows all hope is not lost."

Delmont is centrally located for a good outing from neighboring towns like Armour, Parkston, Tripp, Avon and Tyndall. It's only a 45-minute drive from Mitchell. As of Thursday, Kim said she had a group of 15 and a group of four reserve space for the Sunday brunch buffet.

"They just wanted to make sure they had a spot," she said.

Kim has been enjoying dozens of great compliments from customers both in person and online since they opened a week ago. The restaurant's Facebook page has been flooded with reviews about the great food, amazing atmosphere and fun, friendly people.

One area person approached Kim this week after he had his meal and voiced concern. He said her food was so delicious he was scared she'd take the restaurant to a larger town.

"He said, 'You're too good, you're going to end up in Mitchell or Sioux Falls.'" Kim shook her head. "I said, 'No. We're going to stay home. This is where we want to be.'"

3 Republicans compete in high-profile US House primary race

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — An energetic former South Dakota public utilities commissioner campaigning on making tough choices to tackle the federal debt. A self-described reformer secretary of state seeking to apply business principles to government like she did in overhauling the elections office. An entrepreneur and state senator who headed President Donald Trump's South Dakota campaign mounting an outsider

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bid in his image.

The three South Dakota Republicans competing in a high-profile race to be their party's congressional candidate are running in a tough race to replace outgoing Rep. Kristi Noem. Former Public Utilities Commission member and top gubernatorial aide Dusty Johnson is running a well-funded campaign as a more traditional conservative, while Secretary of State Shantel Krebs, a past state legislator, and first-term Sen. Neal Tapio have aligned themselves closer to Trump.

They're in the final weeks of the campaign — crossing the state to hold coffee meet and greets, visit small businesses or attend county party events — to win the June 5 Republican primary election. The winner is set to face Democrat Tim Bjorkman, a former judge, and Libertarian George Hendrickson and independent Ronald Wieczorek in November.

Northern State University political science professor Jon Schaff said Johnson is running as a "mainstream conservative Republican," while Krebs has positioned herself as a more conservative alternative and Tapio is running as the "Donald Trump candidate."

Krebs and Tapio are making more overt populist appeals with an overlap in the voters they're trying to court — a slight benefit for Johnson, Schaff said.

"I think all three candidates have an avenue to victory that is plausible," Schaff said. "It just strikes me that Johnson's avenue is the most plausible of the three."

Krebs, secretary of state since 2015, said her life experiences, agricultural and business background and success turning around the "most failing bureaucratic office in state government" qualify her to serve South Dakota in Congress

"We operate at the speed of business, not at the speed of government," Krebs said. "I've proven that it can be done, and President Trump is doing the same thing. I want to go help President Trump deliver those results."

A longtime former state lawmaker who chaired the state Senate Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee, Krebs said her priorities are cutting government spending, removing regulations on businesses including farmers and ranchers and replacing former President Barack Obama's health care law.

Krebs said she's the "tested government reformer that has actually driven and given results to our taxpayers."

A self-styled "happy warrior," Johnson said he has the political will to make hard decisions in Washington. He has focused on fiscal discipline, proposing changes such as raising the age for Medicare and Social Security eligibility for younger people.

"Many candidates are unwilling to talk about those things because they're scared of the political repercussions, but anybody who's telling you we can balance the budget without tackling spending on those kinds of programs is more interested in getting elected than they are in governing," said Johnson, who was twice elected to the Public Utilities Commission and later served as chief of staff to Republican Gov. Dennis Daugaard.

Johnson has also put out a list of 12 proposals — "Dusty's Dozen" — with policies ranging from imposing U.S. House term limits to giving states more flexibility to drug test welfare recipients. Johnson said he's a results-oriented conservative with an independent streak who looks forward to working with the president.

Tapio, a first-term state senator, has been an enthusiastic Trump supporter and served as state campaign director in South Dakota. During this year's state legislative session, he proposed unsuccessful measures to suspend refugee resettlements into South Dakota from countries on "any federal travel ban list" and press federal officials to identify the "root cause" of terrorism.

In his January campaign announcement, Tapio said he was answering the call to public service to usher in an American golden age of economic, social and cultural rebirth set in motion by Trump's economic policies.

"People should pay close attention, because we're watching an American comeback of historic proportions in just the first year of the Trump administration," Tapio said in the statement. "I'm asking South Dakotans to help continue the resurgence by sending me to Congress to help this President undo the damage and political sabotage we've been living under for more than 40 years."

Tapio didn't immediately answer a telephone call from The Associated Press or return an email requesting comment about the race.

Johnson leads in the GOP primary money race. He ended March with about \$490,000 in the bank, compared to Krebs' below-\$400,000 campaign account balance; Tapio has self-funded, trailing with about \$96,000 on hand. The next campaign finance filing deadline is Thursday, May 24.

South Dakota museum's cannonball isn't explosive threat

YANKTON, S.D. (AP) — Experts say a Civil War-era cannonball at the Dakota Territorial Museum is non-explosive.

Museum officials began looking into whether the cannonball is an explosive threat while the museum prepared to move into the Mead Cultural Education Center, the Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan reported.

"When we were talking about moving it across town, that was a different story," said Crystal Nelson, curator and director of the Yankton County Historical Society. "We were not going to change the atmosphere, temperature and avoid bumps, so we decided we finally had to take care of it."

Yankton Police Lt. Mike Burgeson said he contacted the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives to examine the cannonball. The bureau then called Ellsworth Air Force members to X-ray the device for gunpowder or explosive primer.

The police department would confiscate and dispose of the cannonball if any explosive contents were found.

"It's a museum piece so we really didn't want to destroy it, but we don't know if it's live or much about it," Burgeson said. "It turned out to be a solid steel ball, so they were able to retain it, but if it had an explosive piece in it, we would've had to take it and blow it up which is sad, because you lose a bit of history that way."

Museum records don't show how the cannonball came into curators' possession.

Nelson believes it's related to the museum's cannon, which was brought to the area in the 1860s. It's around the same time period when explosive components were added to cannonballs.

Nelson said the museum hasn't set a specific date to move into the Mead Cultural Education Center, but hope to do so this summer.

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

Community movie theater struck by lightning in South Dakota

FAULKTON, S.D. (AP) — The future of a central South Dakota movie theater is uncertain after lightning struck the facility, according to its owners.

A digital projector, server and computer components were damaged last month at the Lyric Theatre in Faulkton, Aberdeen American News reported.

Owner Dave Huss said he found an electrical surge through the theater equipment at the end of April. A technician determined the damage to be the result of a lightning strike sending current through ground wires into the back end of the system, he said.

Whether the community movie theater will be able to reopen depends on the outcome of a \$45,000 insurance claim.

"It already cost us about \$45,000 in 2014 to put that equipment in," said Huss. "We're a small operation. If we're not covered that would force us to close the theater down. I had everything covered for replacement cost value. It's a wait and see for the adjuster to get back to us."

Huss' parents built the Lyric Theatre in 1950.

Huss said he usually keeps the theater open from around late April through November.

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

In North Korea nuke site closure, spectacle trumps substance

By ERIC TALMADGE, Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — Foreign journalists will be allowed to journey deep into the mountains of North Korea this week to observe the closing of the country's Punggye-ri nuclear test site in a much-touted display of goodwill before leader Kim Jong Un's planned summit with President Donald Trump next month.

Expect good imagery, but not much else.

The public display of the closure of the facility on Mount Mantap will likely be heavy on spectacle and light on substance. And the media will be spending much of their time in an unrelated tourism zone that North Korea hopes will be the next big thing for its economy if Kim's diplomatic overtures pay off in the months ahead.

For sure, the closure is a milestone, marking an end to the world's last active underground testing site and offering some important insights into Kim's mindset as he sets the stage for his meeting with Trump.

A look at what's hype and what's worth paying attention to:

THE SUBSTANCE

Kim announced his plan to close the test site during a gathering of senior party leaders last month, just ahead of his summit with South Korean President Moon Jae-in. His explanation to the party was that North Korea's nuclear development is now complete and further underground testing is unnecessary.

North Korea has conducted six underground nuclear tests since 2006. Its most recent and most powerful explosion, which the North claims tested a hydrogen bomb, was in September. All of its tests have been carried out at Punggye-ri, in the country's mountainous northeast interior.

Before Kim's announcement, North Korea was the only country that still conducted underground tests.

Kim's claim that such tests are no longer needed may have an element of bravado to it. While the North has demonstrated beyond a doubt that it can produce viable, high-yield nuclear weapons, many experts believe it could still benefit considerably by conducting more tests.

"North Korea certainly would need more tests to have any confidence in its H-bomb," said physicist David Wright, co-director of the global security program of the Union of Concerned Scientists. Wright said the North's most recent test is a prime example. He believes it was a "demonstration-of-principle device" that was not designed to be small or light enough to be delivered by missile.

"The bottom line is that stopping testing is important to limit its ability to build reliable, deliverable warheads — especially for an H-bomb," he said.

So in that sense, Kim is making a significant concession. And if Kim were to switch gears and decide to test again, he would almost certainly be caught. It's hard to hide a high-powered nuclear blast. Compliance is verifiable.

But the way Kim plans to dismantle the site shows he is, as yet, only willing to go so far.

Adam Mount, a senior fellow with the Federation of American Scientists, believes that by inviting international media instead of international monitors, North Korea has "stepped back from a principle of verification." Journalists do not have the technical expertise, the time spent on site or the equipment necessary to properly analyze and assess the process.

"When the United States did not hold Pyongyang to this standard, it lost the first public quarrel over verification," he said.

THE DOG AND PONY SHOW

The site's closure will take place sometime between Wednesday and Friday, depending on the weather.

North Korea's Foreign Ministry has invited journalists from China, Russia, the United States, the United Kingdom and South Korea to fly on a charter aircraft from Beijing for what it is calling a "ceremony" marking the event.

North Korea says the process will involve collapsing all tunnels with explosions, completely blocking tunnel entrances, removing all observation and research facilities and taking down structures used for guarding

the site. Satellite imagery suggests some of the work has already begun.

How much of it the journalists, including an Associated Press Television crew, will be able to see is an open question. They will be put up at a hotel in faraway Wonsan, where the press center will be located, and make what promises to be a lengthy trip to the nuclear site by special train. It's unclear how long they will be allowed to stay at the site.

What is clear is why they are going to Wonsan, which is probably the most presentable city in North Korea after the capital.

It's the center of a tourism zone the North has been pouring money into and is trying hard to promote.

The media will fly into its shiny new airport and stay at one of its opulent new tourist hotels. If not actually bused there, they will undoubtedly be reminded that Masik Pass, the North's luxury ski resort, and scenic Mount Kumgang, which just a decade ago was open to South Korean tourists, are just a short drive away.

Two birds, one stone, as they say.

THE TAKEAWAY

Veteran North Korea watchers note that we have been to this rodeo before.

With international talks to dismantle its nuclear program underway in 2008, North Korea called in the foreign media to film the demolition of a 20-meter (66-foot) -tall cooling tower at its Yongbyon nuclear reactor. The move prompted Washington to take North Korea off its list of state sponsors of terrorism and lift some sanctions.

The talks later fell apart, and the reactor at Yongbyon is once again producing plutonium.

So caution is warranted. None of this is necessarily about denuclearization.

The North's declaration that it will end its underground testing and close the Punggye-ri site could just as well be interpreted as a move to bolster Kim's claim that his country is now a responsible nuclear power and appease the concerns of its neighbor and economic lifeline, China.

"Nobody else does it anymore," said Joshua Pollack, a senior research associate with the Middlebury Institute of International Studies at Monterey, in California. "So if you want to claim that you're a full-fledged nuclear-armed state, it tends to undercut your message if you keep testing."

Talmadge is the AP's Pyongyang bureau chief. Follow him on Instagram and Twitter: @EricTalmadge

Trials for violent protest framed as Trump vs the resistance

By ASHRAF KHALIL, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — When police arrested more than 200 anti-Trump protesters on Inauguration Day 2017, it touched off a long-term battle of wits and wills.

On one side: a Justice Department that has sought to incarcerate scores of people over a violent protest that smashed downtown storefront windows and set a limousine ablaze.

On the other side: an intensely coordinated grassroots political opposition network that has made Washington the focus of a nationwide support campaign, offering free lodging for defendants, legal coordination and other support.

The stand-off entered a home stretch last week when a trial began for four people, the first in a series of group trials for 58 defendants that should last the rest of the year. Charges include property destruction and conspiracy to engage in a riot.

The trial represents a fresh start for prosecutors, who were forced to abandon most of their charges after a serious defeat last year. For the opposition — a network of activists and organizations loosely grouped as the Defend J20 Resistance movement — the new trial represents a chance to kill the government's case.

Defendants and their supporters have framed the case as an indiscriminate police round-up followed by a concerted Justice Department effort to criminalize legitimate dissent. Assistant U.S. Attorney Jennifer Kerkhoff sought to neutralize that point in her opening statement.

"This is Washington, D.C.," she said. "We know protest and we know dissent. But this wasn't a protest."

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This was violence and destruction.”

This nationwide opposition network has been a visible presence since the trial of the first six defendants began in the fall.

Tapping into fundraising efforts around the country, defendants were reimbursed for their housing in Washington. Activists packed the courtroom, some serving as media liaisons, while others prepared meals for the defendants and their supporters.

“That support is absolutely essential to our ability to actually have a resistance,” said Michelle Macchio, an Asheville, North Carolina, resident who was part of that first defendant group. “We had to disrupt our lives. Some of us were paying rent back home, some of us had school, some of us had jobs. I was away from home for two months.”

Movement members refer to themselves as “the resistance,” a term that predates President Donald Trump’s election by decades. Sam Menefee-Libey, a local organizer and member of an activist collective called the DC Legal Posse, says Defend J20 is the inheritor of the anti-capitalist and anti-globalization movement that coalesced in Europe and first made headlines in America during massive protests against the World Trade Organization in Seattle in 1999 and later in the Occupy movement. J20 stands for Jan. 20, Inauguration Day.

“Every 3-5 years there’s a new wave and new faces come in,” Menefee-Libey said. “There was a big surge after Trump was elected. There’s more people than we’re used to and it’s sustaining far longer.”

The movement focuses far more on street-level action than on winning elections. Under Trump it has begun to unify and cross-pollinate with other movements like Black Lives Matter and immigration advocates.

In supporting the inauguration protesters, social media campaigns have encouraged callers to flood the U.S. Attorney’s Office and the Justice Department. Activists recently held a small rally headlined by Chelsea Manning to urge the government to drop all charges.

While defendants have secured their own lawyers, the Defend J20 movement helped organize a unified trial strategy. This included persuading defendants — sometimes over the objections of their lawyers — not to accept plea bargains.

They claim their unified strategy has already paid off. The trial of the first set of the original 160 defendants was supposed to start in early 2018. But when an unexpected hole in the court schedule opened in November, a group of defendants, including Macchio, volunteered to go on trial first. The defendants and movement organizers presumed that prosecutors had set up the schedule in order to begin with other defendants — those who could be more easily linked to the violence.

“They were forced to prosecute people who they didn’t have any evidence of doing property damage,” said Kris Hermes, a veteran legal activist who served as a media liaison on that first trial. “They wouldn’t have preferred to try these cases in this order.”

Prosecutors admitted from the start that they had no evidence proving these specific defendants had committed violence or vandalism. Most protesters had dressed in black and covered their faces. Prosecutors could only claim that the entire group was guilty of supporting and providing cover for the vandals.

All six were acquitted and the government eventually dropped charges against 129 other defendants.

It’s not clear whether the scheduling switch hurt the government’s case. The U.S. Attorney’s Office declined a request to interview prosecutors or senior officials about the issue. However, movement leaders believe their maneuver wrong-footed the prosecution.

“It was apparent they were super-frustrated with having to take these people to trial first,” said Jude Ortiz, head of the National Lawyers Guild’s Mass Defense Committee. “It’s a reasonable conclusion to draw that having to do that group first really messed up their strategy.”

Prosecutor Kerkhoff, in the current trial, pledged to convince jurors through a mountain of photographic and video evidence that the masked vandals on screen were among the four suit-clad defendants in the room.

“You will have a chance to be the detectives,” she said. “The defendants need to be held accountable for their choice to express themselves with violence and destruction.”

Texas mom marched after Parkland, then her town was next

By **CLAIRE GALOFARO, AP National Writer**

SANTA FE, Texas (AP) — She stood at her bedroom door for five minutes Saturday morning trying to work up the courage to turn the knob and re-enter a world she worried would never feel safe or whole again. Then she crept down the hallway, toward the front porch where she stood the morning before to watch police cars screaming down the highway toward the high school, and imagined she'd never forget the screech of their sirens.

Christina Delgado had been dreading the next school shooting for months, since a gunman stormed a high school 1,000 miles (1,600 kilometers) away in Parkland, Florida, killing 17 people. Her 13-year-old daughter watched it unfold on television and said she was afraid to go to school. So Delgado had taken an unpopular stand in her home state of Texas, with some of the most permissible gun laws in America: She attended town hall meetings, quizzed candidates running for office about their stance on guns and drove to Houston to join the March for Our Lives rally — as thousands across the country, galvanized by the outspoken students who survived the Parkland shooting, took to the streets to call for gun laws that might stop the all-too-common occurrence of children being massacred in their classrooms.

Then Delgado woke up Friday morning to find that the very thing she had marched against had arrived on her own doorstep. A teenage boy opened fire with his father's shotgun and handgun at Santa Fe High School a few miles down the road, in an attack that left 10 dead, eight of them children, in the first mass school shooting amid the Parkland students' movement.

"I want people to know how real and how terrifying and how painful and how possible this is," Delgado said. "It's not supposed to happen here. We're Texas, we're responsible gun owners. We care about our kids, we care about our communities, we care about our families. And we failed them. It's like a slap in the face."

Delgado, a hairdresser and mother of two, remembers the day like a dream: a call from her best friend who couldn't find her children, running down the highway in her pajamas, passing screaming parents and teenagers covered in blood. The chaotic day devastated this small, conservative city, where everyone knows their neighbors and just about everyone owns a gun. And it thrust Santa Fe and its population of 13,000 people into the center of the intractable battle over firearms, the nuance of which Delgado worries will be lost again in the country's caustic, us-versus-them political climate.

On Sunday morning, even as residents sought refuge in their churches, the simmering debate was never far away.

At Arcadia First Baptist Church, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, a staunch advocate for gun rights, hugged grieving parishioners as they arrived, surrounded by dozens of television cameras, photographers and reporters. Monica Bracknell, an 18-year-old senior who survived the shooting, stopped to tell the governor that the attack should not be used as a political push for gun control.

"People are making this into a political issue," she said. "This is not a political issue. This is not a gun law issue."

Texas has been among the states most strident in its support for gun rights, even as mass shootings have caused other states to slowly start tightening laws. But after a gunman killed 20 elementary school children and six adults at a school in Connecticut in 2012, Texas lawmakers expanded gun rights in the state. When a man killed more than two dozen people at a church last year in Sutherland Springs, Texas, the state's attorney general, Ken Paxton, said there ought to be more guns in churches.

In the days after the high school shooting, little evidence was emerging that it would rouse a different sentiment this time from Texas' pro-gun lawmakers. In Parkland, students united in a fervent call for change. In Texas, many students and their parents echoed Bracknell: that something needs to be done to protect students, but something other than enacting gun control laws.

On Sunday, the National Rifle Association's incoming president blamed Ritalin for school shootings, although there is no indication it or any other drugs are being looked into in this case. Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick blamed abortions and violent video games.

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Gov. Abbott pledged to convene a roundtable of experts and advocates for both gun rights and gun control to discuss what needs to change to protect schoolchildren. He laid lilies under the sign at Santa Fe High School on Sunday, then spoke to the media about possible solutions: hardening schools, metal detectors, monitoring students' social media accounts.

He promised "swift and meaningful action" to "ensure that we will build a pathway to reforms so that other students will not have to live through a nightmare like these students had to go through."

It was the most terrifying event of Heidi McMillen's life. The sophomore had been on the other side of the school when the shots broke out, and ran down the highway with a mob of other teens desperate to get to safety. Just 93 days had passed since children in Parkland had done the same.

"We can't just keep going the way that we are, because it's just going to keep happening," she said. "It feels like there's not much we can do in the amount of time we have. Who knows when the next school shooting is going to happen."

She reflected on her word choice: when, not if, another gunman will terrorize another school.

"That's not OK," she said. "It's not OK that we have to assume it will happen again. It should never happen again. But what do we do?"

She doesn't think gun regulations are the answer. She lives in a home with guns, she respects them and she believes they make her safer — until the wrong person gets ahold of one. But she said something must be done or more children will die in shootings, and even more will survive them and be left to feel guilty, like she does, for laughing, for having fun, for being a kid.

"It's hard for me to be OK with thinking that I can have a life after this," she said.

Delgado, too, woke up Saturday morning, with an aching feeling of guilt that she and her kids were alive, while families in her town, people she knows, were confronting the unthinkable — that their child was taken by such a senseless spasm of violence.

When she first started wearing a March for Our Lives band around her wrist a few months ago, many of her friends and neighbors expressed skepticism of her intentions.

"They think we're leftist nutcases coming for everyone's guns," she said. But Delgado said she grew up in a house with guns, and respects them and how much they mean to the Texas identity. When she's able to explain her opinion to people, they tend to understand and often even agree: universal background checks, age requirements to purchase guns, a better way to keep guns away from the mentally ill. But the political divisions have cast the conversation as an all-or-nothing battle of extremes, leaving many to believe that lawmakers have only two options: either do nothing or snatch up everyone's guns.

"We talk about things in black and white, but the answer is in the gray, it's in the shadow, no one sees it, everyone just sees north or south, no one sees the middle ground, it's not popular," Delgado said. "But that's where we'll find a solution."

Associated Press writers Jim Vertuno and Paul J. Weber contributed to this report.

Lava from Kilauea volcano enters ocean, creates toxic cloud

By **CALEB JONES** and **AUDREY McAVOY**, Associated Press

PAHOA, Hawaii (AP) — White plumes of acid and extremely fine shards of glass billowed into the sky over Hawaii as molten rock from Kilauea volcano poured into the ocean, creating yet another hazard from an eruption that began more than two weeks ago.

Authorities on Sunday warned the public to stay away from the toxic steam cloud, which is formed by a chemical reaction when lava touches seawater.

Further upslope, lava continued to gush out of large cracks in the ground that formed in residential neighborhoods in a rural part of the Big Island. The molten rock formed rivers that bisected forests and farms as it meandered toward the coast.

The rate of sulfur dioxide gas shooting from the ground fissures tripled, leading Hawaii County to repeat warnings about air quality. At the volcano's summit, two explosive eruptions unleashed clouds of ash.

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Winds carried much of the ash toward the southwest.

Joseph Kekedi, an orchid grower who lives and works about 3 miles (5 kilometers) from where lava dropped into the sea, said luckily the flow didn't head toward him. At one point, it was about a mile upslope from his property in the coastal community of Kapoho.

He said residents can't do much but stay informed and be ready to get out of the way.

"Here's nature reminding us again who's boss," Kekedi said.

Scientists said the steam clouds at the spots where lava entered the ocean were laced with hydrochloric acid and fine glass particles that can irritate the skin and eyes and cause breathing problems.

The lava haze, or "laze," from the plume spread as far as 15 miles (24 kilometers) west of where the lava met the ocean on the Big Island's southern coast. It was just offshore and running parallel to the coast, said U.S. Geological Survey scientist Wendy Stovall.

Scientists said the acid in the plume was about as corrosive as diluted battery acid. The glass was in the form of fine glass shards. Getting hit by it might feel like being sprinkled with glitter.

"If you're feeling stinging on your skin, go inside," Stovall said. Authorities warned that the plume could shift direction if the winds changed.

The Coast Guard said it was enforcing a safety zone extending 984 feet (300 meters) around the ocean entry point.

Coast Guard Lt. Cmdr. John Bannon said in a statement Sunday that "getting too close to the lava can result in serious injury or death."

Gov. David Ige told reporters in Hilo that the state was monitoring the volcano and keeping people safe. "Like typical eruptions and lava flows, it's really allowing Madam Pele to run its course," he said, referring to the Hawaiian goddess of volcanoes and fire.

Ige said he was thankful that the current flows weren't risking homes and hoped it would stay that way.

On Saturday, the eruption claimed its first major injury. David Mace, a spokesman for the Federal Emergency Management Agency who was helping Hawaii County respond to the disaster, said a man was struck in the leg by a flying piece of lava. He didn't have further details, including what condition the man was in.

Kilauea has burned some 40 structures, including two dozen homes, since it began erupting in people's backyards in the Leilani Estates neighborhood on May 3. Some 2,000 people have evacuated their homes, including 300 who were staying in shelters.

In recent days, the lava began to move more quickly and emerge from the ground in greater volume. Scientists said that's because the lava that first erupted was magma left over from a 1955 eruption that had been stored in the ground for the past six decades. The molten rock that began emerging over the past few days was from magma that has recently moved down the volcano's eastern flank from one or two craters that sit further upslope — the Puu Oo crater and the summit crater.

The new lava is hotter, moves faster and has spread over a wider area.

Scientists say they don't know how long the eruption will last. The volcano has opened more than 20 vents, including four that have merged into one large crack. This vent has been gushing lava high into the sky and sending a river of molten rock toward the ocean at about 300 yards (274 meters) per hour.

Hawaii tourism officials have stressed that most of the Big Island remains unaffected by the eruption and is open for business.

McAvoy reported from Honolulu. Associated Press journalists Jae C. Hong and Marco Garcia in Pahoehoe contributed to this report.

Trump to DOJ: Investigate whether FBI infiltrated campaign

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said he will "demand" that the Justice Department investigate whether the FBI infiltrated his presidential campaign, an extraordinary order that came hours before his legal team said the special counsel indicated the investigation into the president could be concluded

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by September.

Trump tweeted Sunday: "I hereby demand, and will do so officially tomorrow, that the Department of Justice look into whether or not the FBI/DOJ infiltrated or surveilled the Trump Campaign for Political Purposes - and if any such demands or requests were made by people within the Obama Administration!"

Trump's demand puts further pressure on the Justice Department, which later Sunday asked its inspector general to expand an existing investigation into the Russia probe by examining whether there was any improper politically motivated surveillance. It comes as the White House tries to combat the threat posed by special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into potential ties between Russia and the Trump campaign.

The president's lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, said Mueller recently shared a timetable that suggested his probe could end by Sept. 1 if Trump were to sit for an interview in July, which is the legal team's new working plan.

"We said to them, 'If we're going to be interviewed in July, how much time until the report gets issued?'" Giuliani told The Associated Press on Sunday, referring to the report Mueller is expected to issue to Congress at the conclusion of his investigation. "They said September, which is good for everyone, because no one wants this to drag into the midterms."

Giuliani said he did not want a repeat of what happened in 2016, when FBI Director James Comey announced in the campaign's final days that he was reopening the investigation into Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server, a decision Democrats believe cost Clinton the race. Giuliani, the former mayor of New York, also said Mueller's team indicated that the entire probe could end by September, not just its investigation into potential obstruction of justice.

"This would be the culmination of the investigation into the president," Giuliani said.

The special counsel's office did not respond to a request for comment.

It is not certain that Trump will sit for an interview with Mueller, though the president has publicly said he would. Giuliani said a decision would not be made until after Trump's summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Singapore, which is slated for June 12. Giuliani said Sunday the two sides "were getting closer" to agreeing on the parameters on a potential interview but would not put the odds of it happening at better than 50/50.

Giuliani's apparent attempt to publicly pressure Mueller on the timeline amid interview negotiations came just hours after Trump's demand for a new inquiry, which moved beyond his usual blustery accusations of institutional wrongdoing and into the realm of applying presidential pressure on the Justice Department, a move few of his predecessors have made.

Trump made the order amid days of public venting about the special counsel investigation, which he has deemed a "witch hunt" that he says has yielded no evidence of collusion between his campaign and Russia. In response, the Justice Department moved Sunday to defuse a growing confrontation with the White House by asking its watchdog to investigate whether there was inappropriate surveillance.

It was not immediately clear if that move would satisfy Trump, or if any further demands could lead to a confrontation with FBI Director Christopher Wray or Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who is overseeing the Mueller investigation. Rosenstein released a statement Sunday saying, "If anyone did infiltrate or surveil participants in a presidential campaign for inappropriate purposes, we need to know about it and take appropriate action."

The Justice Department probe had begun in March at the request of Attorney General Jeff Sessions and congressional Republicans. Sessions and the lawmakers had urged Inspector General Michael Horowitz to review whether FBI and Justice Department officials abused their surveillance powers by using information compiled by Christopher Steele, a former British spy, and paid for by Democrats to justify monitoring Carter Page, a former campaign adviser to Trump.

Horowitz said his office will look at those claims as well as communications between Steele and DOJ and FBI officials.

Trump did not elaborate on the promised "demand," which he included in one of a series of tweets he sent throughout the day Sunday. On Saturday, Trump tweeted, "If the FBI or DOJ was infiltrating a cam-

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campaign for the benefit of another campaign, that is a really big deal." He said only the release or review of documents the House Intelligence Committee is seeking from the Justice Department "can give conclusive answers."

Rep. Adam Schiff of California, the senior Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, called Trump's claim of an embedded spy "nonsense."

"His 'demand' DOJ investigate something they know to be untrue is an abuse of power, and an effort to distract from his growing legal problems," Schiff tweeted. "Never mind that DOJ has warned that lives and alliances are at risk. He doesn't care."

Trump's extraordinary demand of the Justice Department alarmed many observers, who felt it not only violated presidential protocol but also could have a chilling effect on federal law enforcement or its use of informants. Giuliani defended the president's actions.

"As the president's lawyer, I can't be concerned on what effect it may have," he said. "To me, there's not much of a difference between an informant's ongoing collection of information in a surreptitious way or a spy."

"If this guy was an FBI implant into the campaign," Giuliani said, "that's as offensive as Watergate."

The New York Times was the first to report that the FBI had an informant who met several times with Trump campaign officials who had suspicious contacts linked to Russia.

Giuliani said the information discovered by the source should eventually be made public and released to Congress, even if the source's identity is kept confidential.

The GOP-led House Intelligence Committee closed its Russian meddling probe last month, saying it found no evidence of collusion or coordination between Trump's campaign and Russia. Schiff and other committee Democrats were furious and argued that Republicans had not subpoenaed many witnesses they considered essential to the committee's work.

Sunday was not the first time that Trump accused his predecessor of politically motivated activity against him.

Without substantiation, Trump tweeted in March 2017 that former President Barack Obama had conducted surveillance the previous October at Trump Tower, the New York skyscraper where Trump ran his campaign and transition and maintains a residence. Comey later testified to Congress that internal reviews found no information to support the president's tweets. Trump fired Comey over the bureau's Russia investigation.

Lemire reported from New York. Associated Press writer Eric Tucker contributed to this report.

Follow Lemire on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/@JonLemire> and Superville at <http://www.twitter.com/dsupervilleap>

Maduro wins Venezuela election challengers call illegitimate

By JOSHUA GOODMAN and SCOTT SMITH, Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Embattled socialist incumbent Nicolas Maduro won Venezuela's presidential election by a landslide in a disputed vote marred by irregularities and mass absenteeism that led his main rivals to call for a re-run to prevent a national social crisis from exploding.

The National Election Council announced that with more than 92 percent of polling stations reporting, Maduro won nearly 68 percent of the votes Sunday, beating his nearest challenger Henri Falcon by more than 40 points.

As the results were being announced, residents of downtown Caracas just a few blocks from where Maduro supporters were celebrating banged on pots and pans in protest. Falcon accused the government of buying votes and dirty tricks to boost turnout among poor voters most hurt by widespread food shortages and hyperinflation in what was once Latin America's wealthiest nation.

The election "without any doubt lacks legitimacy and we categorically refuse to recognize this process," Falcon told supporters minutes before the results were announced, vowing to fight on instead of joining

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a growing list of beleaguered anti-government politicians who've fled into exile of late.

The disputed victory is likely to heighten international pressure on Maduro. Even as voting was taking place Sunday, a senior U.S. official said the Trump administration might press ahead on threats of imposing crippling oil sanctions and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo warned "sham elections change nothing."

Falcon was joined in his demand for a new election by third-place finisher Javier Bertucci, who won around 11 percent of the vote. Bertucci, a TV evangelist who handed out soup at his campaign rallies, stopped short of challenging the results, partly blaming what he called a mistaken opposition boycott that led to a turnout of around 46 percent — the lowest in a presidential race in two decades of revolution.

But he said he nonetheless favors a new election soon and urged Maduro to do the courageous thing and desist from running. If Maduro presses forward, he warned, Venezuela will explode before his new six-year term is scheduled to begin in January.

A social crisis years in the making has worsened as Venezuela's oil production — the source of almost all of its foreign income — has collapsed to the lowest level in decades and financial sanctions by the Trump administration has made it impossible for the government to renegotiate its debts. More than 1 million people have fled the country in the past two years and 14,000 percent inflation has crushed the minimum wage to less than \$2 a month.

Maduro, 55, immediately called for dialogue with his opponents and put the best face forward on what analysts said were nonetheless disappointing results underscoring how vulnerable his hold on power remains. Despite energetic campaigning his overall vote haul slipped by 1.6 million from 2013, when he was first elected after Hugo Chavez's death from cancer.

But he showed no sign of replaying Sunday's vote.

"We will be the most powerful and largest political force in Venezuela for a long time," he told a festive crowd of die-hard supporters who poured into the grounds of the presidential palace to celebrate. "It doesn't faze me when they say I'm a dictator."

He promised to spend the next two years before scheduled congressional elections repairing an economy he says has been badly damaged by mafias backed by Colombia and the U.S. He also slammed Falcon, who like him was an acolyte of Chavez, saying he had never seen a candidate dispute results before they were even announced.

"Sooner or later, they all break in the face of threats from the imperialists," he said, pleading with the U.S. to reconsider its belligerence.

Both of Maduro's opponents accused electoral authorities of being blind to blatant violations before the vote and on election day. Falcon said that at 86 percent of voting centers ruling party activists set up so-called "Red Points" where they scanned on cellphones QR codes on government-issued "Fatherland Cards."

Some poor cardholders in Caracas — there are 16.5 million nationwide — said they hoped Maduro would deliver on his campaign promise of a "prize" to those who demonstrated their loyalty. Maduro accused his opponents of trying to "demonize" a program intended to address the social crisis and not assert political control.

Under Venezuela's electoral law, any political activity must take place at least 650 feet (200 meters) from voting centers. But most "Red Points" were just a few steps away. As in past elections, government supporters driving around in vans with Maduro posters could also be seen transporting voters to polling sites.

Luis Emilio Rondon, the sole opposition voice on the electoral council, backed Falcon and Bertucci's claims of irregularities and said he too refused to recognize the results.

National Electoral Council President Tibusay Lucena acknowledged a handful of complaints, but insisted they were minor compared to past elections.

"The people of Venezuela have made their pronouncement and we ask everyone, nationally and international, to respect the results," she said.

Voting centers appeared largely empty in opposition areas across Venezuela and were even lackluster in government strongholds. Turnout in the previous three presidential elections averaged 79 percent.

Opposition leaders said the lifeless voting centers were evidence that Venezuelans heeded their call to abstain from voting in an election they contended was certain to be rigged in Maduro's favor.

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"This was a farce by a dictator that wants to stay in power without popular support," said lawmaker Juan Pablo Guanipa, speaking on behalf of the newly created Broad Front coalition that had been behind the stay-at-home strategy.

Opinion polls say the overwhelming majority of Venezuelans distrust the electoral council. Turnout figures in last year's elections for a constitutional assembly, which the opposition also boycotted, were inflated by at least 1 million votes, according to the company that provided technology for Venezuela's electronic voting machines for more than a decade.

But despite the unlevelled playing field and concerns of fraud, some government critics nonetheless questioned the wisdom of not participating in an election that looked to be its best chance in years to defeat Chavismo.

"If you're sick and the doctor gives you few days to live, you don't lie in bed waiting to die. You seek treatment," said Nayra Martinez, a city employee in the wealthy Caracas district of Chacao who decided to buck her party's call to abstain. "That's what we need to do with our country. Venezuela is very sick and we the people are the medicine."

AP writers Jorge Rueda and Fabiola Sanchez contributed to this report.

Scott Smith on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ScottSmithAP>

Joshua Goodman on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/APjoshgoodman>

Stanley Cup-bound Vegas turning impossible into possible

By W.G. RAMIREZ, Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Welcome to Impossible.

Those words have been projected onto the ice in big, bold letters at T-Mobile Arena before each game during the Stanley Cup Playoffs. Well, the Vegas Golden Knights are turning impossible into possible.

The stunningly successful expansion squad is headed to the Stanley Cup Final after beating the Winnipeg Jets 2-1 on Sunday to win the Western Conference final series in five games.

"I remember eight months ago, when we won against Dallas (in the season opener), we had that unbelievable feeling," Vegas center Pierre-Edouard Bellemare said. "Doesn't feel like we're satisfied. It's a good feeling when you know the guys are excited for the next one."

The Golden Knights are the third franchise in NHL history to clinch a berth in the Stanley Cup Final in its inaugural season, joining the Toronto Arenas in 1918 and St. Louis Blues in 1968.

Vegas will play either Tampa Bay or Washington on hockey's biggest stage. The Lightning lead the Eastern Conference final 3-2, but the Capitals host Game 6 on Monday night.

"Either way, we're not going to be favorites," said Jonathan Marchessault, who leads Vegas with 18 points in the postseason. "That's been the case all year. Tampa has been the best team all year. Washington, (they're) playing great hockey right now. Either way, we're not going to be favorites, and that's fine with us. We went all year like that and we're going to keep going."

Hence, "The Golden Misfits" tag.

Nobody could have scripted Vegas, a 500-1 long shot at the start of the season, making the playoffs — let alone earning a shot at Lord Stanley's Cup.

But the Golden Knights, who finished fifth in the league during the regular season, just knocked off the No. 2 team in the regular season in Winnipeg, which in the conference semifinals knocked off the No. 1 team in the regular season, Nashville.

Vegas clinched all three of its Western Conference series on the road, becoming the seventh team in NHL history to accomplish such a feat.

"Everybody on this team has something to prove," said Winnipeg native Ryan Reaves, who scored the winning goal Sunday in his hometown. "We call ourselves 'The Golden Misfits' for a reason. We're doing a good job of proving everybody wrong."

Just as they have all season, they are living in the moment.

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Vegas, which had just two players under contract at this time last year, heads into the final round with a 12-3 playoff record after outscoring its Western Conference opponents 42-27.

It's a credit to coach Gerard Gallant's philosophy of having a well-conditioned, confident group of forwards who work well together, focus on short effective shifts, and exude confidence on the ice - all while, as he reiterates it daily, playing 200 feet of hockey.

And while the Golden Knights haven't necessarily been a high-scoring threat, scoring just three or fewer goals in 12 of their 15 playoff games, their defensemen have played exceptional to this point. Vegas has allowed the least amount of goals in the playoffs, among teams that have played 10 games. It was a stifling and disruptive defense that helped propel the Golden Knights past the Jets on Sunday, with their sixth win in eight road games during the postseason.

"Everybody's stepping up at different times during the season," said goalie Marc-Andre Fleury, who has 12 wins, four shutouts, a .947 save percentage and 1.68 goals against average. "That's a big reason why we've been playing consistently."

The key cog in Vegas' engine has been Fleury, whose remarkable play has translated into a career-best postseason. He has allowed two or fewer goals in 10 of 15 playoff games, and is heading to the Stanley Cup final for a third consecutive year. And whether he admits it or not, the 14-year veteran still bears the scars of being left exposed by Pittsburgh last summer after spending the first 13 years of his career with the Penguins.

Gallant, who remained coy about his team's aspirations during the regular season, made it clear the Golden Knights haven't reached their goal.

"It's been an awesome ride so far," said Gallant, who some might also consider a "misfit" after Florida fired him following a road game at Carolina last season, then left him and his luggage on the curb outside PNC Arena. "We're going to the Stanley Cup Final, but again, this isn't what we want. We want to win.

"It's great to win tonight and it's great to be the (conference) champions," Gallant added, "but that's not what we're here for."

Even as impossible as that all seemed just a few months ago.

More NHL hockey: <https://apnews.com/tag/NHLhockey>

Police: Suspect faces 2 murder charges in restaurant plowing

BESSEMER CITY, N.C. (AP) — A man intentionally rammed a vehicle into a North Carolina restaurant busy serving Sunday lunch, killing his daughter and another person and injuring several others, authorities said.

Bessemer City Police said in a statement that preliminary evidence indicates Roger Self, 62, purposely smashed his way into the Surf and Turf Lodge where reports say families were eating a relaxed midday meal.

Footage from the scene showed emergency responders treating people on the ground outside the restaurant as shocked patrons milled about in the aftermath of the crash. Killed was 26-year-old Katelyn Tyler Self, the daughter of the driver and a Gaston County Sheriff's Office deputy. Authorities haven't released the name of the second person fatally injured, saying they were still notifying relatives.

Police said Roger Self was arrested after the vehicle had fully slammed its way inside the steak and seafood restaurant in Bessemer City, about 30 miles (50 kilometers) west of Charlotte. Jail records show he's been charged with two counts of first-degree murder in the deaths of his daughter and his daughter-in-law, Amanda Self, a nurse. The Gaston Gazette reports Amanda Self was the wife of Gaston County Police Officer Josh Self, who also was seriously injured, along with Roger Self's wife, Diane, and the 13-year-old daughter of Josh and Amanda Self.

The paper identified Roger Self as a businessman from Dallas, North Carolina.

Charlotte-Mecklenburg police spokesman Rob Tufano called the crash a "mass casualty" incident, and reports said some of the victims were flown by helicopter to Carolinas Medical Center. There was no immediate count on the number of injured or the extent of the injuries.

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"He drove his car into the building, killing people, so that's why we took him into custody immediately," Bessemer City Police Chief Thomas Ellis Jr. said. He gave no indication what might have prompted the crash.

Photographs from the scene showed a shattered opening in a restaurant wall, where the car had smashed inside the building.

The Gaston Gazette identified the vehicle as a sports utility vehicle.

Caleb Martin, a 14-year-old who busses tables at the restaurant, told a broadcast outlet that he saw the vehicle suddenly smash through a wall into the restaurant.

"I walked over to my station and I heard a loud boom," he told WSOC-TV. "It went straight through."

He added, "The one guy I could help in back, he was pretty hurt." He said he was stunned but managed to help paramedics move tables off the person and debris out of the way so the injured could be treated.

Katelyn Self was a four-year veteran of the Gaston County Sheriff's Office, Sheriff Alan Cloninger told The Charlotte Observer. The sheriff said the deputy had worked as a corporal in the jail and was off duty when she was fatally injured.

Cloninger choked up as he spoke about the crash.

"Tragic, tragic loss of life," he told reporters. "I'm asking people just to keep the family in your prayers, and the sheriff's office, because we're suffering right now."

The sheriff's office later tweeted a photograph of the deputy via social media, adding "Our hearts are broken" and that the agency was asking for thoughts and prayers not only for the deputy's family and friends but also for her "brothers and sisters in uniform."

A 2017 profile in the Gazette said Roger Self ran a private investigations business called Southeastern Loss Management. It said the business opened in 1989 and mostly helped companies investigate employees' wrongdoing.

Authorities said the family was requesting privacy and referred any questions to the family's pastor. Messages left at the phone of the pastor by The Associated Press were not immediately returned.

Maduro declared winner in disputed Venezuela election

By **SCOTT SMITH** and **JOSHUA GOODMAN**, Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Venezuelan officials declared socialist leader Nicolas Maduro the easy winner of Sunday's presidential election, while his leading challenger questioned the legitimacy of a vote marred by irregularities and called for a new ballot to prevent a brewing social crisis from exploding.

The National Election Council announced that with almost 93 percent of polling stations reporting, Maduro won nearly 68 percent of the votes, beating nearest challenger Henri Falcon by more than 40 points.

The disputed victory is likely to heighten international pressure on Maduro, as voter turnout was the lowest in a presidential race since the start of Venezuela's leftist revolution two decades ago. Even as voting was taking place Sunday, a senior State Department official warned that the U.S. might press ahead on threats of imposing crippling oil sanctions on the nation that sits atop the world's largest crude reserves.

The election "without any doubt lacks legitimacy and we categorically refuse to recognize this process," Falcon told supporters before the results were announced.

Falcon was joined in his call for a new election by third-place finisher Javier Bertucci, who got around 11 percent of the vote. Bertucci, a TV evangelist, stopped short of challenging the results, saying what he called a mistaken opposition boycott that led to the lowest voter turnout in two decades of socialist rule also boosted Maduro.

But he said that in the event of a new vote, Maduro should do the courageous thing and desist from running. If Maduro presses forward, he said, Venezuela would explode from a social crisis marked by widespread food shortages and hyperinflation before his new six-year term starts next January.

Maduro immediately called for dialogue with his presidential opponents. But he showed no sign of re-playing Sunday's vote.

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"The electoral processes have ended for now," he said, saying that he wanted to spend the next two years before scheduled congressional elections to focus on repairing the economy.

He also slammed Falcon, who like him was an acolyte of the late President Hugo Chavez. Maduro said he had never seen a candidate dispute results even before they were announced.

"Sooner or later, they all break in the face of threats from the imperialists," he said, appealing to the U.S. to also reconsider its belligerent stance toward his government.

Both of Maduro's opponents accused electoral authorities of turning a blind eye to a slew of blatant violations, including the establishment of red tents just steps away from voting centers where ruling party activists scanned on cellphones government-issued "Fatherland Cards." Many voters said they hoped it would bring them a cash bonus or even a free apartment.

Under Venezuela's electoral law, any political activity must take place at least 650 feet (200 meters) from voting centers. National Electoral Council president Tibisay Lucena acknowledged a handful of complaints, but insisted they were minor compared to past elections.

Falcon said his campaign found "red points" at 86 percent of polling sites nationwide. He called them a "pressure mechanism, an element of political and social blackmail" directed at the poor.

Voting centers across Venezuela appeared largely empty for the election despite assurances from government officials that millions had turned out to vote by midmorning.

Turnout in the previous three presidential elections averaged around 79 percent. Chavez, after taking office in 1999, eliminated mandatory voting in Venezuela.

Opposition leaders said the lifeless voting centers were evidence that Venezuelans heeded their call to abstain from voting in an election they contended was certain to be rigged in favor of Maduro's socialist policies.

Opinion polls say the overwhelming majority of Venezuelans distrust the electoral council. Turnout figures in last year's elections for a constitutional assembly, which the opposition also boycotted, were inflated by at least 1 million votes, according to the company that provided technology for Venezuela's electronic voting machines for more than a decade.

Both Maduro and the two anti-government presidential candidates who broke with the opposition's push to boycott the election had urged voters to go to the polls.

Maduro, setting an example for government supporters who he called on to vote early, cast his ballot in Caracas shortly after fireworks and loud speakers blasting a military hymn roused Venezuelans from sleep around 5 a.m.

He said Venezuelans would provide an example of democracy to the world and brushed back suggestions he was taking the country down an authoritarian path.

"It's offensive when they say the Venezuelan people are falling under dictatorship," he said after voting.

Maduro also said that if he won the election, he would seek an understanding with his opponents on a way forward for the crisis-wracked country. "I'm going to stubbornly and obsessively insist in dialogue for peace," he said.

Scott Smith on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ScottSmithAP>

Joshua Goodman on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/APjoshgoodman>

School victims honored at Billboard Awards; Janet, BTS shine

By MESFIN FEKADU, AP Music Writer

The 2018 Billboard Music Awards paid tribute to the students and teachers affected by recent deadly shootings in Texas and Florida, while the night also featured show-stopping performances by iconic singer Janet Jackson and K-pop group BTS.

A tearful and emotional Kelly Clarkson, who hosted the awards, opened the show in honor of the 10 people who died Friday at Santa Fe High School, barely able to speak as she urged the audience and the world to do more to prevent deadly shootings from happening. She said she was asked to hold a moment

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of silence, but chose instead to call for "a moment of action."

"Once again we're grieving for more kids that have died ... I'm so sick of moment of silences ... it's not working," she said Sunday, almost in tears. "Mommies and daddies should be able to send their kids to school."

Shawn Mendes and Khalid were joined onstage by the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Show Choir for the song "Youth," a performance occurring three months after 17 people were killed at the school in Parkland, Florida.

Mendes and the choir members wore sweaters that read "Youth," while Khalid's shirt read "Protect Our Guns Children" with "Guns" crossed out.

The show wasn't all somber though: Jackson rocked the Billboard Awards with an energetic and powerful performance of her past hits in an epic week that included her 52nd birthday and the 25th anniversary of her groundbreaking "janet." album.

In a glittery gold sweater-dress and thigh-high boots, Jackson sang "Nasty," "If" and "Throb" as audience members such as Ciara and Tyra Banks danced along at the MGM Grand Garden Arena in Las Vegas.

Bruno Mars made a surprise appearance to introduce the singer, who earned the Icon Award.

Jackson used her speech to pay tribute to powerful women.

"Women have made it clear that we no longer will be controlled, manipulated or abused. I stand with those women and with those men equally outraged by discrimination who support us in heart and mind," she said onstage.

Another highlight came when BTS, who won top social artist Sunday night, performed onstage.

Clarkson sported huge, puffy earmuffs as she introduced the K-pop group, who easily earned the loudest applause from the audience throughout the night. Whenever their name was mentioned, or when the camera panned to the band members, the audience erupted — some even holding fan made signs.

The seven-member group danced slickly onstage as they sang "Fake Love," the single from their album "Love Yourself: Tear," released Friday.

Ed Sheeran, who didn't attend the show but performed from Dublin, won the night's biggest honor — top artist — besting Mars, Drake, Kendrick Lamar and Taylor Swift.

But Swift didn't leave empty-handed: She won top female artist and top selling album for "reputation."

She said that before she created "reputation" she "felt really misunderstood by a lot of people."

"Thank you for making me feel understood again," Swift said to her fans.

Luis Fonsi was passionate when he picked up top Hot 100 song for "Despacito," the biggest hit of the last year which also included Daddy Yankee and Justin Bieber.

"Thank you, guys, so much for embracing a mostly Spanish song," he said. "This goes out to my Latino brothers, the immigrants ... to all of those when they say 'Speak English,' this goes out to you."

Before presenting the award to Fonsi, the Chainsmokers and Halsey remembered Avicii, the DJ-producer who died last month at age 28. The Chainsmokers also paid tribute to Avicii when the duo won top dance/electronic artist.

"We want to dedicate this award to Avicii," said Andrew Taggart, adding that the Swedish musician "inspired all of us, influenced our music."

"He will be missed," Taggart said. "I hope you found peace."

Camila Cabello won the chart achievement award and also won over the crowd with her performance of "Havana," as audience members Mila Kunis and Rebel Wilson sang along and danced happily.

Cabello's former Fifth harmony bandmate, Normani, was fierce as she performed "Love Lies" alongside Khalid; Grande followed Clarkson's emotional words with an energetic performance of "No Tears Left to Cry"; and John Legend's performance ended with a photo of his new baby boy displayed on the large screens at the arena.

Salt-N-Pepa closed the show with high-energy, performing the hits "Push It" and "Whatta Man" alongside R&B group En Vogue and even Clarkson.

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US, China putting trade war on hold after progress in talks

By **MARTIN CRUTSINGER** and **PAUL WISEMAN**, AP Economics Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States and China are pulling back from the brink of a trade war after the world's two biggest economies reported progress in talks aimed at bringing down America's massive trade deficit with Beijing.

"We are putting the trade war on hold," Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said Sunday.

After high-level talks Thursday and Friday in Washington, Beijing agreed in a joint statement with the U.S. to "substantially reduce" America's trade deficit with China, but did not commit to cut the gap by any specific amount. The Trump administration had sought to slash the deficit by \$200 billion.

Still, Mnuchin said the two countries had made "meaningful progress" and that the administration has agreed to put on hold proposed tariffs on up to \$150 billion in Chinese products. China had promised to retaliate in a move that threatened a tit for tat trade war.

He said they expect to see a big increase — 35 percent to 45 percent this year alone — in U.S. farm sales to China. Mnuchin also forecast a doubling in sales of U.S. energy products to the Chinese market, increasing energy exports by \$50 billion to \$60 billion in the next three years to five years.

Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, who has been part of the U.S. negotiating team, will go to China soon to follow up on last week's discussions, Mnuchin said.

In Saturday's statement, Beijing committed to "significantly increase" its purchases of American goods and services, saying the increase would "meet the growing consumption needs of the Chinese people and the need for high-quality economic development."

Last year, the U.S. had a record \$376 billion deficit with China in the trade of goods; that was the largest by far with any nation.

Trade analysts were not surprised that China refused to agree to a numerical target for cutting the trade gap, but they said the talks probably were more successful in easing trade tensions.

"The Trump administration seems eager to engineer at minimum a temporary peace with China to ensure a smooth run-up to the Kim-Trump summit in June," Cornell University economist Eswar Prasad said, referring to the June 12 meeting scheduled between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

If there is success in the U.S.-China discussions, analysts suggest it likely would involve the countries' presidents this fall before the November elections.

"Part of the good news for markets: As long as both sides continue to be 'constructively' engaged, imposition of additional tariffs by either side is very unlikely," analysts at investment management firm Evercore ISI said in a research note. "There is no reason for either side — particularly the U.S. — to destroy the process that both sides are building, which is what imposing tariffs would do."

Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., praised the administration's efforts with China.

"It's smart to engage China on trade abuses, and it would also be smart to get them more involved in trying to help us with North Korea," Graham said.

Trump campaigned in 2016 on a pledge to get tough on China and other U.S. trading partners. He views the U.S. trade deficit with China as evidence that Beijing is engaged in abusive trading practices and has outmaneuvered previous U.S. administrations.

Last August, U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer began investigating Beijing's strong-arm tactics to challenge U.S. technological dominance. These include outright cybertheft of U.S. companies' trade secrets and China's demands that American corporations hand over technology in exchange for access to the Chinese markets.

Last month, the administration proposed tariffs on \$50 billion of Chinese imports to protest the forced technology transfers. Trump later ordered Lighthizer to seek up to an additional \$100 billion in Chinese products to tax.

China responded by targeting \$50 billion in U.S. products, including soybeans — a shot at Trump supporters in America's heartland. The prospect of an escalating trade war has shaken financial markets and

alarmed business leaders.

In a separate controversy, the Commerce Department last month blocked China's ZTE Corp. from importing American components for seven years, accusing the telecommunications company of misleading U.S. regulators after it settled charges last year of violating sanctions against Iran and North Korea.

The ban amounted to a death sentence for ZTE, which relies heavily on U.S. parts, and the company announced that it was halting operations. A week ago, Trump tweeted that he was working with Chinese President Xi Jinping to put ZTE "back in business, fast." Media reports suggested that the U.S. was offering to swap a ZTE rescue for an end to proposed Chinese tariffs on U.S. farm products.

Sen. Mark Warner of Virginia, the top Democrat on the Senate Intelligence Committee, called Trump's intervention in the case "outrageous" and said that using ZTE "as a bargaining chip ... is not in the best interests of our national security."

White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow said there could be "some small changes around the edges" in the sanctions against ZTE. But Kudlow added: "Do not expect ZTE to get off scot-free. It ain't gonna happen."

Mnuchin and Graham appeared on "Fox News Sunday," Warner spoke on CNN's "State of the Union" and Kudlow was interviewed on ABC's "This Week."

AP Business Writer Marcy Gordon contributed to this report.

As Trump pressures DOJ, Giuliani says probe may end by Sept

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Sunday that he will "demand" that the Justice Department open an investigation into whether the FBI infiltrated his presidential campaign, an extraordinary order that came hours before his legal team said that the special counsel indicated its investigation into the president could be concluded by September.

Trump tweeted: "I hereby demand, and will do so officially tomorrow, that the Department of Justice look into whether or not the FBI/DOJ infiltrated or surveilled the Trump Campaign for Political Purposes - and if any such demands or requests were made by people within the Obama Administration!"

Trump's pressure on the Justice Department — it asked its watchdog later Sunday to expand an existing probe of FBI actions — reached a new intensity with the demand, and came amid a White House strategy to combat the threat posed by special counsel Robert Mueller's ongoing investigation into potential ties between Russia and the Trump campaign. And the president's lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, said that Mueller recently shared a timetable that suggested that its probe could end by Sept. 1 if Trump were to sit for an interview in July, which is the legal team's new working plan.

"We said to them, 'If we're going to be interviewed in July, how much time until the report gets issued?'" Giuliani told The Associated Press on Sunday, referring to the report Mueller is expected to issue to Congress at the conclusion of his investigation. "They said September, which is good for everyone, because no one wants this to drag into the midterms."

Giuliani said he did not want a repeat of what happened in 2016, when FBI Director James Comey announced in the campaign's final days that he was reopening the investigation into Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server, a decision Democrats believe cost Clinton the race. Giuliani, the former mayor of New York, also said that Mueller's team indicated that the entire probe could end by September, not just its investigation into potential obstruction of justice.

"This would be the culmination of the investigation into the president," Giuliani said.

The special counsel's office did not respond to a request for comment.

It is not certain if Trump will sit for an interview with Mueller, though the president has publicly said he would. Giuliani said a decision on that would not be made until after Trump's summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in Singapore, which is slated for June 12. The former mayor said Sunday the two sides "were getting closer" to agreeing on the parameters on a potential interview but would not put the odds

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of it happening at better than 50/50.

Giuliani's apparent attempt to publicly pressure Mueller amid interview negotiations came just hours after Trump's demand for a new inquiry, which moved beyond his usual blustery accusations of institutional wrongdoing and into the realm of applying presidential pressure on the Justice Department, a move few of his predecessors have made.

Trump made the order amid days of public venting about the special counsel investigation, which he has deemed a "witch hunt" that has yielded no evidence of collusion between his campaign and Russia. In response, the Justice Department moved Sunday to defuse a growing confrontation with the White House by asking its inspector general to expand an existing investigation into the Russia probe by examining whether there was any improper politically motivated surveillance.

It was not immediately clear if that move would satisfy Trump, or if any further demands could lead to a confrontation with FBI Director Christopher Wray or Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, who is overseeing the Mueller investigation. Rosenstein released a statement Sunday that read, "If anyone did infiltrate or surveil participants in a presidential campaign for inappropriate purposes, we need to know about it and take appropriate action."

The Justice Department probe had begun in March at the request of Attorney General Jeff Sessions and congressional Republicans. Sessions and the lawmakers had urged Inspector General Michael Horowitz to review whether FBI and Justice Department officials abused their surveillance powers by using information compiled by Christopher Steele, a former British spy, and paid for by Democrats to justify monitoring Carter Page, a former campaign adviser to Trump.

Horowitz said his office will look at those claims as well as communications between Steele and DOJ and FBI officials.

Trump did not elaborate on the promised "demand," which he included in one of a series of tweets he sent throughout the day Sunday. On Saturday, Trump tweeted, "If the FBI or DOJ was infiltrating a campaign for the benefit of another campaign, that is a really big deal." He said only the release or review of documents the House Intelligence Committee is seeking from the Justice Department "can give conclusive answers."

Rep. Adam Schiff of California, the senior Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, called Trump's claim of an embedded spy "nonsense."

"His 'demand' DOJ investigate something they know to be untrue is an abuse of power, and an effort to distract from his growing legal problems," Schiff said on Twitter. "Never mind that DOJ has warned that lives and alliances are at risk. He doesn't care."

Trump's extraordinary demand of the Justice Department alarmed many observers, who felt it not only violated presidential protocol but could have a chilling effect on federal law enforcement or its use of informants. Giuliani defended the president's actions.

"As the president's lawyer, I can't be concerned on what effect it may have," he said. "To me, there's not much of a difference between an informant's ongoing collection of information in a surreptitious way or a spy."

"If this guy was an FBI implant into the campaign," Giuliani said, "that's as offensive as Watergate."

Giuliani said the information discovered by the source, who was first reported by The New York Times to have met several times with Trump campaign officials who had suspicious contacts linked to Russia, should eventually be made public and released to Congress, even if his identity is kept confidential.

The GOP-led House Intelligence Committee closed its Russian meddling probe last month, saying it found no evidence of collusion or coordination between Trump's campaign and Russia, which Mueller is looking into. Schiff and other committee Democrats were furious and argued that Republicans had not subpoenaed many witnesses they considered essential to the committee's work.

Sunday was not the first time that Trump accused his predecessor of politically motivated activity against him.

Without substantiation, Trump tweeted in March 2017 that former President Barack Obama had conducted surveillance the previous October at Trump Tower, the New York skyscraper where Trump ran his

campaign and transition and maintains a residence. Comey later testified to Congress that internal reviews found no information to support the president's tweets. Trump later fired Comey over the bureau's Russia investigation.

Lemire reported from New York. Associated Press writer Eric Tucker contributed to this report.

Follow Lemire on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/@JonLemire> and Superville at <http://www.twitter.com/dsupervilleap>

Texas mourners endure grief that 'none of us can comprehend'

By **JUAN A. LOZANO and CLAIRE GALOFARO, Associated Press**

SANTA FE, Texas (AP) — Congregations in this deeply religious community near Houston gathered Sunday for their first services since a gunman blasted his way into a high school and killed 10 people, with one pastor lamenting the grief "that none of us can comprehend."

Just two days after the deaths of eight students and two substitute teachers, graduating seniors also marked the end of the school year with a baccalaureate service that acknowledged the pain wracking Santa Fe, a town of 13,000, while Muslim mourners remembered the life of a slain exchange student from Pakistan.

"They will never be forgotten in this community, these young people, children just going to school," said Brad Drake, pastor of the Dayspring Church, where a service was held that included memories of a slain student who was a congregant there. "We have families today that are grieving a grief that none of us can comprehend."

Drake read the names of the dead, including Angelique Ramirez who attended Dayspring and was a member of the church's youth ministry. Angelique's family was not at the service.

"She was a sweet young lady, had a style all of her own," he recalled. "She almost always had a new hairstyle."

Kelly Ward, a licensed counselor who runs a ministry in Springfield, Missouri, took the stage to urge congregants not to suppress emotions.

"How do we get through this? What do we do?" Ward asked. "The answer is to let everyone grieve, including yourselves."

He said people can help mourning families or friends simply by listening "because dwelling in us is the spirit of God."

Church leaders wore green T-shirts with gold lettering —the colors of Santa Fe High School. Inside an outline of the state of Texas, the letters spelled out a verse from 2 Corinthians 4:8-9: "We are hard pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed."

In a nearby church kitchen, parishioners prepared plates of barbecue to be sold after the service, with all proceeds going to victims' families.

At Arcadia First Baptist Church, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott hugged parishioners as they arrived. Among them was Monica Bracknell, an 18-year-old senior who survived the shooting. She stopped to tell the governor that the attack should not be turned into a political battle over gun control.

Surrounded by television cameras, photographers and reporters, she told Abbott guns were not to blame.

"People are making this into a political issue," she said. "This is not a political issue. It's not a gun-law issue."

Arcadia First Baptist also hosted the baccalaureate service Sunday evening, which was moved from the school auditorium in the wake of the shooting. Speaker and Santa Fe graduate Aaron Chenoweth gave a short testimony about the trials and tribulations this graduating class had faced.

Chenoweth called on the community's faith in God, saying, "If you give God the glory, you will always find comfort and love."

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It was not the first time faith in Santa Fe has been tested with the whole country watching. In 2000, the city was at the center of a landmark U.S. Supreme Court decision that banned students from leading pregame prayer over loudspeakers.

The court ruled 6-3 that the school district's policy of allowing student-led prayers at campus events violated the constitutionally required separation of church and state. Justices said giving students a public forum for prayer was effectively sponsoring the message.

Also Sunday, Texas Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick called for a "hardening" of the nation's school buildings in the wake of Friday's attack.

Patrick, a Republican, blamed a "culture of violence" and said more needs to be done to keep shooters away from students, such as restricting school entrances and arming teachers.

"When you're facing someone who's an active shooter, the best way to take that shooter down is with a gun. But even better than that is four to five guns to one," he told CNN's "State of the Union."

On ABC's "The Week," Patrick said he supports background checks for gun purchasers but stressed that "gun regulation starts at home."

Meanwhile, hundreds of members of Houston's Muslim community attended a service for Sabika Sheikh, a 17-year-old exchange student from Pakistan who talked about one day becoming a diplomat.

Her host mother, Joleen Cogburn, recalled asking Sheikh why she came to study in the U.S. She said she wanted to learn American culture and to share Pakistani culture with Americans.

"And I want us to come together and unite," she told Cogburn. "I don't know if they know us the way they should."

Houston Mayor Sylvester Turner said Sheikh continues to be a diplomat "because even in her death, she is pulling the relationships between Pakistan and the United States, specifically the Houston area, even closer." Her body was to be returned to Karachi.

The suspect, Dimitrios Pagourtzis, also 17, has been jailed on capital murder charges.

In their first statement since the massacre, Pagourtzis' family said Saturday that the bloodshed "seems incompatible with the boy we love."

"We are as shocked and confused as anyone else by these events," said the statement, which offered prayers and condolences to the victims.

Relatives said they remained "mostly in the dark about the specifics" of the attack and shared "the public's hunger for answers."

The suspect's attorney, Nicholas Poehl, said he was investigating whether his client endured any "teacher-on-student" bullying after reading reports of Pagourtzis being mistreated by football coaches.

In an online statement, the school district said it investigated the accusations and "confirmed that these reports were untrue."

Poehl said that there was no history of mental health issues with his client, though there may be "some indications of family history." He said it was too early to elaborate.

Associated Press writers P. Solomon Banda and Nomaan Merchant in Santa Fe and Paul J. Weber in Austin, Texas, contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected to fix the spelling of the suspect's first name.

Follow AP's coverage of the Santa Fe High School shooting here: <https://apnews.com/tag/Schoolshootings> .

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Monday, May 21, the 141st day of 2018. There are 224 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

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On May 21, 1927, Charles A. Lindbergh landed his Spirit of St. Louis monoplane near Paris, completing the first solo airplane flight across the Atlantic Ocean in 33 1/2 hours.

On this date:

In 1542, Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto died while searching for gold along the Mississippi River.

In 1868, Ulysses S. Grant was nominated for president by the Republican national convention in Chicago.

In 1881, Clara Barton founded the American Red Cross.

In 1917, the Great Atlanta Fire broke out, burning 300 acres, destroying nearly 2,000 buildings and displacing some 10,000 residents.

In 1924, in a case that drew much notoriety, 14-year-old Bobby Franks was murdered in a "thrill killing" carried out by University of Chicago students Nathan Leopold Jr. and Richard Loeb (Bobby's cousin).

In 1932, Amelia Earhart became the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean as she landed in Northern Ireland, about 15 hours after leaving Newfoundland.

In 1945, actors Humphrey Bogart, 45, and Lauren Bacall, 20, were married at Malabar Farm in Lucas, Ohio (it was his fourth marriage, her first, and would last until Bogart's death in 1957).

In 1955, Chuck Berry recorded his first single, "Maybellene," for Chess Records in Chicago.

In 1972, Michelangelo's Pieta, on display at the Vatican, was damaged by a hammer-wielding man who shouted he was Jesus Christ.

In 1982, during the Falklands War, British amphibious forces landed on the beach at San Carlos Bay.

In 1991, former Indian Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi was assassinated during national elections by a suicide bomber.

In 1998, a teen gunman opened fire inside Thurston High School in Springfield, Oregon, killing two students, a day after he killed his parents. (The shooter was sentenced to nearly 112 years in prison.) In the wake of deadly protests, Indonesian President Suharto stepped down after 32 years in power.

Ten years ago: Oil prices blew past \$130 a barrel for the first time and gas prices climbed above \$3.80 a gallon. Israel and Syria unexpectedly announced the resumption of peace talks after an eight-year break. David Cook won "American Idol" in a landslide over David Archuleta.

Five years ago: Former IRS Commissioner Douglas Shulman told the Senate Finance Committee he first learned in the spring of 2012 that agents had improperly targeted political groups that vehemently opposed President Barack Obama's policies, saying he decided to let the inspector general look into the matter. Singer Kellie Pickler and pro partner Derek Hough were named "Dancing with the Stars" champions.

One year ago: President Donald Trump, visiting Riyadh, implored Saudi Arabia and other Middle Eastern countries to extinguish "Islamic extremism" emanating from the region, describing a "battle between good and evil" rather than a clash between the West and Islam. North Korea fired a solid-fuel ballistic missile, saying the test was hailed as perfect by leader Kim Jong Un. The Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus received its final standing ovation as it performed its last show at the Nassau County Coliseum in Uniondale, New York, ending a 146-year run. Sweden won the ice hockey world championship with a 2-1 shootout victory over two-time defending champion Canada.

Today's Birthdays: Rhythm-and-blues singer Ron Isley (The Isley Brothers) is 77. Rock musician Hilton Valentine (The Animals) is 75. Musician Bill Champlin is 71. Singer Leo Sayer is 70. Actress Carol Potter is 70. Former Sen. Al Franken, D-Minn., is 67. Actor Mr. T is 66. Music producer Stan Lynch is 63. Actor Judge Reinhold is 61. Actor-director Nick Cassavetes is 59. Actor Brent Briscoe is 57. Actress Lisa Edelstein is 52. Actress Fairuza Balk is 44. Rock singer-musician Mikel Jollett (Airborne Toxic Event) is 44. Rapper Havoc (Mobb Deep) is 44. Rock musician Tony LoGerfo (Lukas Nelson & Promise of the Real) is 35. Actor Sunkrish Bala is 34. Actor David Ajala is 32. Actress Ashlie Brillault is 31. Country singer Cody Johnson is 31. Actor Scott Leavenworth is 28. Actress Sarah Ramos is 27.

Thought for Today: "If you want to be free, there is but one way; it is to guarantee an equally full measure of liberty to all your neighbors. There is no other." — Carl Schurz, American politician (1829-1906).