

Groton Daily Independent

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Harry Implement
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Ferney

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

Today
Last day of school!

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.

Three local students named to LATI President's List

Braiden Craig, Brady Graf and Lane Weig, all of Groton, were named to the President's List at the Lake Area Technical Institute, Watertown. The President's List is a list of outstanding students who, through their initiative and ability, have indicated a seriousness of purpose in their educational program. The President's List is limited to full-time students who have achieved a semester grade point average of 3.5 to 4.0.

Students Named to Spring SD Mines Dean's List

RAPID CITY, SD (May 24, 2018) – Nearly 600 South Dakota School of Mines & Technology, Rapid City, students were named to the Dean's List for the 2018 spring semester.

In order to merit a spot on the Dean's List, students must earn a grade point average of 3.5 or higher for the semester. Local students are Matthew Achen, Computer Engineering, Frederick; Landon Marzahn, Mechanical Engineering, Groton; Jacob Milbrandt, Chemical Engineering, Groton; and Kayla Bailly, Chemical Engineering, Stratford.

Fliehs, Colestock to advance to state golf

Ashley Fliehs and Payton Colestock will represent Groton Area at the state Golf Tournament June 4-5 in Dell Rapids. The two girls placed in the top 20 in the regional tournament held Thursday in Dell Rapids.

Fliehs placed 13th with a total score of 103, shooting a 49 in the front nine and a 54 in the back nine. Payton Colestock placed 17th with a 108, having a 51 in the front nine and a 57 in the back nine. Portia Kettering shot a 127 with a 61 in the front nine and a 66 in the back nine.



Portia Kettering, Payton Colestock and Ashley Fliehs participated in the Region 1A Golf Meet held Thursday in Dell Rapids.

(Courtesy photo)

Mesonet at SD State Installs Inversion Sensors, Releases Spray Tool to Aid Ag Sprayers with Weather Decisions

BROOKINGS, S.D. - The Mesonet at SD State has installed dozens of inversion sensors and released a web-based Mesonet Spray Tool to help agricultural pesticide applicators.

The Mesonet Spray Tool reports directly measured inversion and wind conditions in real-time. Mesonet at SD State is South Dakota's weather network component of the South Dakota Agricultural Experiment Station at SDSU.

Available at mesonet.sdstate.edu, this project is supported in part by the South Dakota Soybean Research and Promotion Council.

Real-time spray conditions maximizes field time

When it comes to spray application, weather conditions determine timing, explains Nathan Edwards, Mesonet Engineer/Director at South Dakota State University.

"Applicators are always thinking in the term of how many minutes they can apply while the weather cooperates - this is why real-time information is invaluable," Edwards said. "Hourly weather leaves sprayable weather conditions unused, something you can't afford - especially with some newer products."

Agriculture and pesticide applicators have always utilized the weather data provided by Mesonet weather stations positioned throughout the state - outnumbering federal airport stations and providing updated information every 5 minutes.

"These are important factors when your livelihood depends on responding to rapidly changing weather conditions," Edwards said.

Direct measurement of temperature inversions

A major contributor to pesticide drift, inversions occur when cooler air layers under warmer air. This concentrates clouds of droplets that pose a drift risk.

Edwards stresses that the Mesonet Spray Tool is not based on an algorithm or estimated data. All Mesonet stations have been equipped with additional temperature sensors to directly measure temperature inversions.

It is the only network in the state with this capability.

Tailored to the Needs of Sprayers

The Mesonet Spray Tool is color-coded to match commonly used thresholds for wind speed and inversion.

Delta T, which is a measurement that relates temperature and humidity, is used to evaluate pesticide droplet lifetimes and evaporation rates. Delta T is not part of U.S. pesticide labeling, but is included for those who find it useful for nozzle selection and drift avoidance.

Growing the Mesonet

The Mesonet relies on local station sponsors to cover the costs of bringing stations to communities.

Because the Mesonet Spray Tool will enable sprayers to make the most of sprayable weather, Edwards is preparing for increased demand for new weather stations to bring these capabilities to even more areas of the state.

"We're only able to operate these stations with the support of coops, conservation districts, county governments and others," Edwards said.

To learn more about how you can get a Mesonet Weather Station in your area, contact Edwards at Nathan.Edwards@sdstate.edu.

Spray Tool and Mesonet at SD State

The Mesonet consists of 27 locally-supported stations across the state that are maintained by South Dakota State University.

The Mesonet serves the public, agriculture, natural resources, emergency management and research from its website at mesonet.sdstate.edu.

South Dakota Named the "Most Promising Destination" by Chinese Tourism Group

PIERRE, S.D. – South Dakota was recently named the "Most Promising Destination" in the United States at a National Tourism Award Ceremony held by Tourism Media Group, an official partner of the China Travel Service Association.

"The partnership with our Chinese tourism marketing agency East-West Marketing has brought us tremendous growth in this market," said James Hagen, Secretary of the Department of Tourism. "This award demonstrates that South Dakota is a destination that Chinese travelers want to visit and experience. We are excited about the potential for growth in the number of Chinese travelers coming to South Dakota in the years and decades to come."

For seven years, the Department of Tourism has been building relationships with traditional travel agencies and online travel agencies in the Chinese market. The department has launched tour routes to meet outbound travel demand from Chinese tourists, and engaged with Chinese media to keep them informed of the latest South Dakota offerings. Unique marketing campaigns have been launched, including a partnership with DiDi Rental Car, a ride-sharing company similar to Uber and Lyft, that targets tourists who have an interest in road trip vacations.

"In the past seven years, South Dakota has seen a steady increase of Chinese visitors to our state," said Hagen. "China is the fastest growing group of visitors to the United States and, within a few years, more Chinese visitors will be traveling to the United States than from any other country. It's an important market for our state, especially since Chinese travelers stay in our country longer and spend more money than other international visitors," continued Hagen.

Hagen notes that the Department of Tourism is continuing to monitor the Chinese market for potential investment of marketing dollars since the Chinese are typically interested in South Dakota's monuments, memorials, and Old West and Native American cultures.

The National Tourism Award Ceremony is held by Tourism Media Group, the official media partner of the China Travel Service Association. National Tourism Magazine is a leading tourism industry magazine in China and produced by National Media Group. The magazine produces and distributes 15,000 issues each month, 80 percent of which go to travel agencies. Readers of the magazine include millions of Chinese tourism professionals.

The South Dakota Department of Tourism is comprised of Tourism and the South Dakota Arts Council. The department is led by Secretary James Hagen.

Prevent Tick-Borne Illness

PIERRE, S.D. –Head outdoors and enjoy the spring weather this Memorial Day weekend but keep an eye out for ticks to prevent tularemia and other tick-borne diseases, says a state health official.

“We see cases of tick-borne illness every year in South Dakota,” said Dr. Joshua Clayton, state epidemiologist for the Department of Health. “You can protect yourself when you’re outside by checking yourself and young children often and removing any ticks you find right away. It also helps to tuck your pant legs into your socks and spray your clothes and any exposed skin with repellent.”

In 2017 the department investigated 13 cases of tularemia, 11 cases of Spotted Fever Rickettsiosis and 11 of Lyme disease. Lyme disease is carried by the Ixodes deer tick, which prefers heavily forested areas. The tick has been found in some eastern counties but most areas of the state are not suitable habitat. Most Lyme disease cases reported in South Dakota had deer tick bites out of state.

A tick bite is a small, painless red bump. If a tick is attached, use tweezers or tissue to grasp the tick close to the skin without crushing it. Pull upward with steady, even pressure to remove the tick. Clean the bite area and your hands with soap and water, especially if you remove the tick with bare hands.

Symptoms of tick-borne illness occur several weeks after the tick bite and might include fever, chills, headache, muscle aches, joint pain, a rash on the arms or legs or around the site of the bite, and swollen lymph nodes. Call your doctor immediately if you develop these symptoms.

Activities you can do to prevent tick-borne illness:

- Wear repellent (products with 20% DEET or more, picardin, or IR3535 on exposed skin) or permethrin treated clothes.
- Check yourself for ticks daily after you have been outside, especially in wooded or brushy areas with high grass.
- Parents should check their children for ticks under the arms, in and around the ears, inside the belly button, behind the knees, between the legs, around the waist, and especially in their hair.
- Check (and treat with insecticide) your pets for ticks. Remove ticks from pets frequently as ticks can ride into your home on pets.
- Call your doctor if you develop a fever or rash. Be sure to tell your doctor about any recent tick bite or time spent in areas with ticks.
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Fact sheets on specific tick-borne diseases can be found at: <http://doh.sd.gov/diseases/>.

Preventing and controlling infectious disease is one objective of the Department of Health’s 2015-2020 strategic plan.

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DPS Officials Encourage Driving Safety During Memorial Day Holiday

PIERRE, S.D. – With the number of motor vehicle fatalities, especially those not wearing seatbelts, already higher than last year, officials of South Dakota’s Department of Public Safety are encouraging drivers to be careful as the summer traveling season officially begins Friday.

This weekend is not only the Memorial Day holiday weekend, but it is also considered the start of summer. And with more vehicles on the road comes an increased risk of roadway crashes.

“Roadway safety is important at all times of the year, but especially during the summer,” says Lee Axdahl, director of the state Office of Highway Safety. “With more people out on the roads, it is even more important that you be careful.”

As of Tuesday, May 22, there had been 40 motor vehicle fatalities this year in South Dakota, including 10 already in May. That is a 60 percent increase from the same time last year. Even more concerning is that of the 33 fatalities where seatbelts could have been used, 64 percent of the fatalities did not.

“There is no downside to using seatbelts,” Axdahl says. “They help keep you in the vehicle which gives you a better chance to survive crashes from the minor ones to the terrible ones.”

Besides seatbelts, Axdahl encourages people to slow down, put down the distractions like cell phones, watch for others and don’t drink and drive.

“This should be a fun time of the year,” Axdahl says. “By being a safe driver, you can get to your destination and make pleasant memories, not tragic ones.”

South Dakota Highway Patrol troopers also plan to be out on the highways, making sure motorists are obeying the law. The Highway Patrol is conducting a joint I-90 safety operation with Minnesota and Wyoming for a 23-hour period that starts Friday morning and ends early Saturday.

Both the Office of Highway Safety and the Highway Patrol are part of the Department of Public Safety.

2018 Eastern South Dakota Grasshopper Forecast

BROOKINGS, S.D. - The 2018 cool wet spring may lead to reduced grasshopper populations, compared to 2017 says SDSU Extension entomology team.

"During 2017, many of the grasshoppers that we observed were several weeks behind schedule in growth," said Adam J. Varenhorst, Assistant Professor & SDSU Extension Field Crop Entomologist.

However, Varenhorst explained that trying to predict insect populations is difficult as many additional factors can contribute to their winter survival and overall spring populations.

"Our recommendation is to scout for spring grasshopper populations, as they will be the first indicator of potential problem areas," he said. "Depending on the 2018 growing season, areas with limited rainfall or drought conditions may experience increased grasshopper populations."

A look back on 2017

In 2017, researchers at South Dakota State University completed a grasshopper survey of Eastern South Dakota (Figure 1).

The last grasshopper survey conducted in Eastern South Dakota was published in 1925. Those involved in this survey included: Erica Anderson, SDSU Graduate Student; Patrick Wagner, SDSU Extension Entomology Field Specialist; Philip Rozeboom, Research Associate; Laura Edwards, SDSU Extension State Climatologist and Amanda Bachmann, SDSU Extension Pesticide Education & Urban Entomology Field Specialist.

2017 was an interesting growing season with areas of South Dakota experiencing severe drought conditions.

"In some of these areas, we found that grasshopper populations were causing defoliation injury to already drought-stressed crops," Varenhorst said.

He explained that factors that can lead to increased grasshopper populations include long, warm falls, decreased ground cover, and limited spring rainfall.

Leading up to 2017, we experienced several warm falls where the first frost date occurred much later than normal.

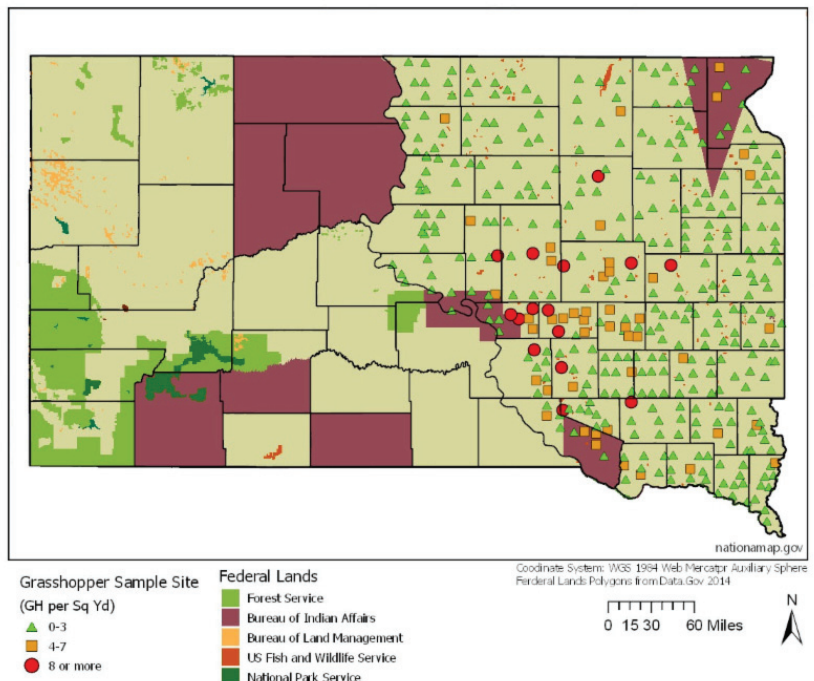
"These conditions allowed grasshoppers to successfully lay eggs for a much longer period of time and were likely part of the reason why we saw increased grasshopper populations in the eastern half of the state," he said.

Areas of South Dakota with grasshopper populations that reached or exceeded the threshold of eight or more grasshoppers per square yard included: Hyde, Hand, Beadle, Kingsbury, Spink, Buffalo, Jerauld, Brule, Aurora, Douglas and Hutchinson counties. In addition, there were several other counties that had multiple samples near threshold levels (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Map of 2017 grasshopper abundance for Eastern South Dakota. Green triangles indicate grasshopper populations that were below threshold, orange squares represent grasshopper populations that were approaching threshold, and red circles indicate grasshopper populations that exceeded the threshold. Map courtesy of Erica Anderson.

Graphic key: Image of South Dakota with green areas indicating forested area and dark red colors indicating reservation land. There are green triangles representing areas with low grasshopper populations, orange squares representing medium grasshopper populations, and red circles representing grasshopper populations that exceeded thresholds.

2017 Grasshopper Abundance for Eastern South Dakota



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Jamie Stevens Named Men's Basketball Assistant Coach

Aberdeen, S.D. – Northern State University head men's basketball coach, Paul Sather announced on Thursday the addition of Jamie Stevens to the Wolves coaching staff. Stevens will assume the assistant coach role, after spending the last seven seasons as the head men's basketball coach at Montana State University Billings.

"We couldn't be more excited about having Jamie join our men's basketball program," explained Sather. "He has 16 years of coaching experience at the college level, and the last 10 as a successful head coach. He'll be a great addition on the court with our players and will also open up different recruiting areas for us to pursue."

In his seven seasons, the Yellowjackets went 89-113 overall, and advanced to the Great Northwest Athletic Conference Championships in 2012, 2013, 2014, and 2017. In 2012, MSUB went 18-12 to claim the program's first GNAC Championship and a trip to the NCAA Tournament.

"My family and I are absolutely thrilled to be joining the Northern State family," noted Stevens. "I have known Coach Sather for several years and am so impressed with the culture he has engineered here at Northern State."

Prior to his time at MSU Billings, Stevens spent four seasons at Central Wyoming College, where he resurrected a program that had been out of existence for nearly two decades. In the three competition years under his guidance, CWC compiled a 53-39 record with three consecutive winning seasons. In his first season the team finished 19-11 and tied for first in sub-region play, earning Stevens the Wyoming Community College Athletic Conference Coach of the Year. In 2010-11 the Rustlers finished 17-15 overall and advanced to the second round of the Region IX Tournament in Norfolk, Neb. Under Stevens, numerous players earned postseason recognitions as six players earned all-conference honors and two earned all-region honors. His inaugural team (2008-09) also carried a 3.17 team GPA that earned them a National

Just A Reminder



Sump Pumps
Must Be
Discharged

Outside (NOT In The
Sanitary Sewer)!

Thanks For Your
Immediate Compliance!

If You Are Already Pumping Outside
Please Disregard This Notice.

Groton City Council

Failure To Comply Will Result In Fines

Robert Whitmyre

Democrat for District 1

House of Representatives



I would like to be a new voice in Pierre to work for our rural areas, the needs and rights of our citizens, and improve the opportunities for our young people that want to make South Dakota their home.

I ask for your vote in the June 5th primary.

- Lifelong Day County Ag Producer
- 30 Years in Manufacturing Industry
 - WEB Water Board of Directors
- National Farmers Union Policy Committee
- Odin Lodge Sons of Norway President
 - Webster High School Graduate
- BS in Mechanical Engineering from SDSU

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Whitmyre for District 1 House Committee, |
David Sigdestad Treasurer - 42449 133rd St. -
Pierpont, SD 57468

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Academic Team of the Year distinction by the NNJCAA.

Stevens added, "During my 16 years of college coaching, I have become good friends with many former Wolves. Their loyalty and passion for Northern State basketball has always stuck with me. It is an honor to join the Northern family and I look forward to going to work. Go Wolves!"

Stevens began his coaching career as the assistant men's basketball coach at the Colorado School of Mines for six seasons. During the 2005-06 season, Stevens was a part of an Oredigger squad that had a 15-14 overall record and advanced to the RMAC/Wells Fargo Shootout after an opening round victory in the conference quarterfinals. It was the first win in the RMAC tournament for Mines since 1996.

"Anywhere Jamie and his family have been, they have built incredible relationships and made an impact in the community," continued Sather. "They'll be a great fit to our basketball program, Northern State University, and the community of Aberdeen."

He played collegiately at Montana State University Billings from 1994-99 and is known as one of the most prolific passers in the programs history. In four seasons, Stevens set records for most assists in a game (16) and in a career (805), and also left the school with the most career steals (167). Stevens helped the Yellowjackets to a Pacific West Conference championship during the 1995-96 season and a trip to the NCAA Division II Sweet 16 during the 1996-97 season. His play and dedication to the program earned him induction into the Eastern Montana College/Montana State University Billings Athletic Hall of Fame in February of 2008.

Jamie and his wife Sarah, as well as his three daughters, Clara, Marcella, and Catie, will move to Aberdeen.



**The Groton American Legion
will perform Military honors
as follows on Memorial Day:**

Huffton 7:30

James 8:15

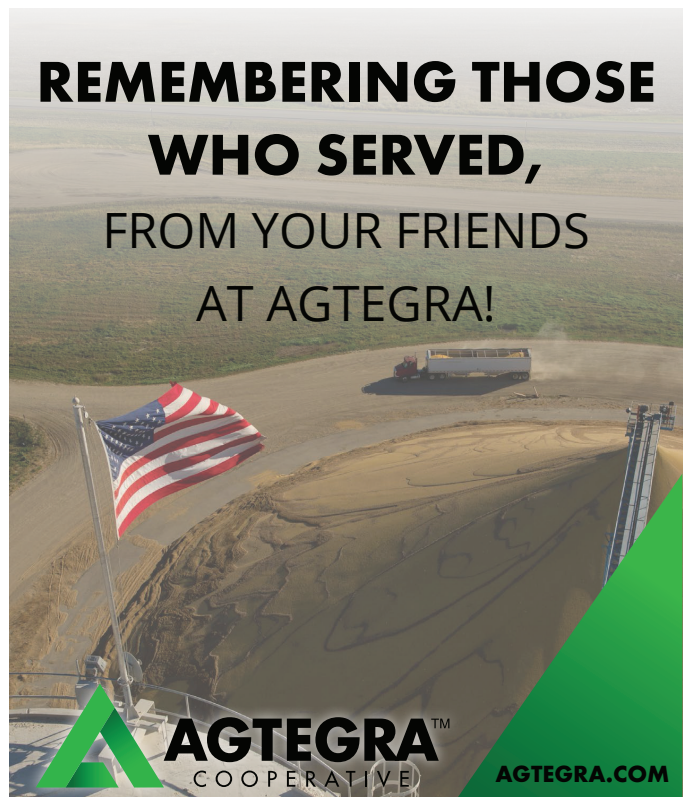
Verdon 8:45

Bates-Scotland 9:15

Ferney 10:00

**Groton 11:00 (Lunch to follow
at Groton Post #39)**

**REMEMBERING THOSE
WHO SERVED,
FROM YOUR FRIENDS
AT AGTEGRA!**



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2018 South Dakota High School Track and Field Academic All-State Athletes

Aberdeen Central – Preston Barr, Paiton Burckhard, Katherine Erickson, Mason Flakus, Adrianna Hase, Jacob Kuch, Myah Malchow, Haylee Mork, CollinStoebner

Arlington – Will Parry

Avon – Brady Cameron, Jacob Cihak, Weston Frank, Tate Wynia

Baltic – Makay Paszek, Jayden Pittmann, Tessa Steinmiller

Belle Forche – Dylan Burns, Shayla Howell

Beresford – Hannah Ebert, Hope Johnson, Cait Savey

Bon Homme – Paige Eddy, Elizabeth Garness, David Hassing, Nate Klinnert, Maloree Lanphear, Mace Merkuan, Rachel Sestak

Brandon Valley – Joshua Donahoe, Hannah Hendrick, Elizabeth Holmes, Felicity Klinkhammer, Braiden Petersen, Marya Schlitz, Arianna Stangohr, Haylee Waterfall, Max Wilde

Britton/Hecla – Preston Jones, Parker Marlow

Burke/South Central – Teah Serr

Canton – Danissa Vetos

Chester – Dakota Alfson, Devin Eppard

Corsica/Stickney – Landon DeBoer, Jacob Joachim, Bryce Plamp

Custer – Cassie Bawdon, Logan Bllock, Tyler Carlson, Tori Glazier, Kyle Kobza, Mackenzie Laverick, Joe Rush, Ben Wahlstrom, Leah Zacher

Dell Rapids – ShayleeHoff, Adam Nagelhout, Jeffery Schuch, Sydney Stofferahn, Regan Stone, Amanda Tomes

Deubrook Area – Courtney Bauman

Faulkton – James Bowar, Nathan Vetch

Flandreau Public – Ben Hobbie, Andrew Julson, Mara Lunday, Kathy Parsley, Austin Weber

Gayville/Volin – Parker Bailey, Meghan Buckman, Meghan Buckman, Elianna Clark, Taven McKee, Cade Rickford

Gregory – Blake Boes, AaronVoight, Jayd VanDerWerff

Hamlin – Allie Anderson, Brock Brown, Miranda Lakness, FaithLeiseth, Chance Niemann, Mara Sprang, Lucas Trooien

Hanson – Heather Kayser, Matt Kayser, Brooke Slaba, Amber Thelen, Brooke Weber, Tessa Zens

Huron – Susanna Camacho, Isaac Carr, Quincee Goeller, Alex Hill, Travis Kleinsasser, Reagan Rozell, Kayla Schimke, Gracie Schoenfelder

Ipswich – Bethany Lange, Allison Severson, Josie Sylte, Colton Weeldryer

James Valley Christian – Ryan Wager, Michael Waldner

Langford – Dylan Frey

Lemmon – Sage Peterson

Lennox – Holden Breck, Max Bultena, Ethan Gilbert, Rachel Jenson, Emma Mechels, Joshua VanHouten

Madison – Thomas Bulfer, Jenni Giles, Jessi Giles, Josh Giles, Jadon Janke, Ramsey Leighton, Olivia Rud, Elsa Schwebach, Taelor Smith,Anna Theophilus

McCook Central/Montrose – Morgan Edwards, Natalie Gottlob, Leslie Kolbeck, Harley Miles, Hayley Miles

Milbank – Christina Lusk, Allison Pillatzki, Molly Rick, Sophia Seffrood

Miller – Connor Bertsch, Camden Breitling, Annie Keeter, Tianna Pawlowski

Mitchell – Kyla Crago, Tate Larson, Jared Mauer, Courtney Miller, Miles Rolle, Jarod Uher

Mt. Vernon/Plankinton – Grace Bultsma, Kylee Guindon

Newell – Delaney Leber

Philip – Kobie Davis, Conner Dekker, AnnaBelle McIlravy, Scott Rafter

Pierre T.F. Riggs – Erick Colman, Addison Eisenbeisz, Caleb Lusk, CarstenMueller, Evan Rumrill, Erika Stout,Joana Zanin

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PotterCounty – Ben Krueger
Rapid City Central – Abigail Baker, Maria Bunkers, Cherady Fine, Ryder Gary, Sarra Gutknecht, Dylan Hay, Kolby Kost, Joran Ladson, Jacob Lindenberg, Darren Pekas, Tod Stephens
Rapid City Stevens – Erica Dykstra, Jay Dykstra, Anders Enevoldsen, Erin Fine, Sarah Keen, Claire Martin, Jonathan Miklos, Joshua Schumacher, Jamin Wurtz
Scotland- Taylor Gall
Selby Area – Trevor Begeman, Breanna Fuehrer, Charlie Tisdall
Sioux Falls Christian – Rachel Barkema, Joel DeHaai, Hannah Dosch, Cooper Hitt, Jordan Holthe, Daniel Moe, Grace Perrenoud, Julia Richardson, Daniel Strand, Lauren Tousignant, Bailey VandeGriend, Lance VanZee, Connor Watley, Kendal Zylstra
Sioux Falls Lincoln – Keegan Dykstra, Allison Engel, Courtney Klatt, Jack Meyers, Eliza Peters, Evgeni Radichev, Tiegen Salava, Jared Schroeder, Colin Schuller, Wini Yohana
Sioux Falls O’Gorman – Lauren Crouch, Tres Jones, Elizabeth Ratzloff, T.J. Ripperda, Drake Schafer, Sam Sutcliff, Emily Wilde
Sioux Falls Roosevelt – Rylee Amato, Jennifer Chatwell, Isaiah Lee, Lydia Pearson, Jayden Slaba
Sioux Falls Washington – Haley Christopherson, Megan Etrheim, Carlie Kray, Brock Walker, Topher Zahn
Spearfish – Matt Ackerman, Madeline Boe, Amanda Dean, Drake Dittman, Madison Gould, Lauren Hight, Stran Holben
Stanley County – Ryan Habeck, Cale Meiners, Logan Rosenberger, Jennifer Sweetman
St. Thomas More – Brigit Blote, Aislinn Duffy, Elizabeth Erlandson
Sully Buttes – Maranda Archer, Rachel Guthmiller, Jacob Howard, Lincoln Jorde
Tri State – Mollie Anderson, Kailey Jackson, Tana Lick, Sydney Madsen
Tri Valley – Jacob Kasowski, Emily McDonald
Watertown – Alec Berg, Tava Berg, Grace Geier, Marissa Holinka, Kallie Jurgens, Jenica Moes, Nick O’Connor, Darrin VanMeter
Webster – Olivia Breske, Brianna Mount
West Central – Kyle Becker, Jacob Harden, Gabe Lorang, Eli McMahon, Derick Peters, Branzon Underwood, Hunter Wilebski
Wilmot – Saraya Bronson, Dylan Jurgens, Gabby Renelt
Winner – Riley Calhoon, Levi McClanahan
Wolsey/Wessington – Tyler Babcock, Matthew Larsen, Citlali Reyes, Taylor Sprecher, Jaron Waters



90th Birthday

LaVonne J. Helmer of Groton will be honored for her 90th birthday on May 27th from 3 to 5 p.m. at the Groton Community Center. Her family will host the event.

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Kurt Holinka Announced as Wolves Football Assistant Coach

Aberdeen, S.D. – Northern State head football coach Tom Dosch announced today the hiring of Kurt Holinka as the Wolves next defensive line coach. Holinka assumes the full time roll after spending the previous two seasons as the running backs coach for the Wolves.

“We are excited to have Coach Holinka on board as our defensive line coach,” noted Dosch. “He brings eight years of college football coaching experience, including special teams and defensive coordinator experience, to our program.”

He returned to the NSU sidelines in 2016 after a stint with Presentation College, as the running backs coach for the Wolves. Holinka was previously the Wolves graduate assistant linebackers coach in 2011 and 2012.

“I feel extremely lucky to have an opportunity to coach at Northern State University,” explained Holinka. “At NSU we are surrounded by people of high character which is shown each and every day.”

In 2017 Holinka coached All-NSIC first team selection Nicholas Truen. The senior rushed for 1,061 yards, making him the first Wolf since 2003 to overcome the 1,000 yard mark. He was twice named the NSIC Offensive Player of the Week, and also earned D2Football.com National Offensive Player of the Week honors.

“In addition, he has extensive experience coaching special teams, which will be a major part of his role within our staff,” noted Dosch. “Because he has spent the past two seasons with us, coach Holinka has been able to hit the ground running this spring preparing for the 2018 season. We are happy to have Kurt, Andrea and Hudson in the Wolves Football Family.”

While at Presentation, Holinka was promoted in every season; from defensive line (2013), to special teams coordinator (2014), and then defensive coordinator (2015). As the defensive line coach he mentored six players who received all-conference honors, as well as a Cliff Harris Award Finalist (National Small College Defensive Player of the year) in 2013.

“My overarching goal is to help our young men develop and do it the Right Way,” Holinka continued. “Which is easily done by the example of Coach Dosch and the rest of the Athletic Department here at Northern.”

A native of Dickinson, North Dakota, Holinka comes to NSU after a playing career at Jamestown College as a defensive lineman. Holinka graduated from Dickinson Trinity High School in 2005, and was named a member of the 2004 All-State team. Football coaching is in his blood, his father, Jerry, coached high school football in North Dakota for 40 years and his brother, Brett, is the current defensive coordinator and assistant head coach at the University of Mary.

Holinka earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Criminal Justice from Jamestown College in 2010, and a Master's in Educational Studies from NSU in 2018.

Kurt and his wife, Andrea have one son, Hudson (2).

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National Gas Price Average Jumps 12-Cents in 14-Days; 127,500 South Dakotas Expected to Travel Over Memorial Day Weekend

May 21, 2018 - Gas prices jumped 12 cents over the past 14 days, and six-cents since last Monday, landing the national average at \$2.93 – the highest price point going into the Memorial Day weekend since 2014.

AAA is predicting the highest travel volume for Memorial Day weekend since 2005, both nationwide and in South Dakota. The auto club expects 128,000 South Dakotans will travel 50 miles or more from home this year, 89 percent of them by motor vehicle, a jump of 4.3 percent in total travel over Memorial Day, 2017. The number of Americans traveling over the holiday – nearly 42 million – is five percent more than last year and the most in more than a dozen years.

Previous Memorial Day Weekend Average Price

National Gas Price

May 22 - May 26, 2014 \$3.65

May 21 - May 25, 2015 \$2.74

May 26 - May 30, 2016 \$2.32

May 25 - May 29, 2017 \$2.37

“AAA forecasts nearly 37 million travelers will hit the road for the holiday weekend. Compared to an average of the last three Memorial Day weekends, pump prices are nearly 50 cents more expensive and climbing,” said Marilyn Buskohl, AAA spokesperson. “Trends are indicating that this summer is likely to bring the national average to at least \$3/gallon.”

South Dakota Average Gas Prices:

Current Avg. \$2.80

Yesterday Avg. \$2.81

Week Ago Avg. \$2.73

Month Ago Avg. \$2.64

Year Ago Avg. \$2.37

Today, 14 states tout an average of \$3.00 or more. Outside of the typical West Coast states, Idaho and Utah, this count includes six Northeast and Mid-West states: Connecticut, Pennsylvania, New York, Washington, D.C., Illinois and Michigan. In addition, Arizona, New Jersey, and Rhode Island are all within four-cents of hitting the \$3 mark.

Quick Stats

The largest monthly increases are: Minnesota (+28 cents), Wisconsin (+27 cents), Missouri (+25 cents), Connecticut (+23 cents), Delaware (+23 cents), Illinois (+23 cents), Wyoming (+22 cents), Kansas (+22 cents), Arizona (+21 cents) and Texas (+21 cents).

The nation's top ten most expensive markets are: California (\$3.71), Hawaii (\$3.68), Washington (\$3.41), Alaska (\$3.36), Nevada (\$3.32), Oregon (\$3.31), Idaho (\$3.16), Utah (\$3.14), Connecticut (\$3.11) and Pennsylvania (\$3.08).

Central and Great Lakes Region

As gas prices continue to increase across the country, two Great Lakes and Central states have averages of \$3 or more: Illinois (\$3.04) and Michigan (\$3.00). At \$2.95, Indiana may hit the \$3/gal mark before June arrives.

On the week, seven states made their way on to the Top 10 list with the biggest increases: Indiana (+9 cents), Minnesota (+9 cents), Wisconsin (+9 cents), North Dakota (+9 cents), Kansas (+8 cents), Michigan (+8 cents) and Illinois (+8 cents).

In the region, motorists in Illinois (+65 cents) and Indiana (+63 cents) are seeing the largest year-over-year difference in gas price averages.

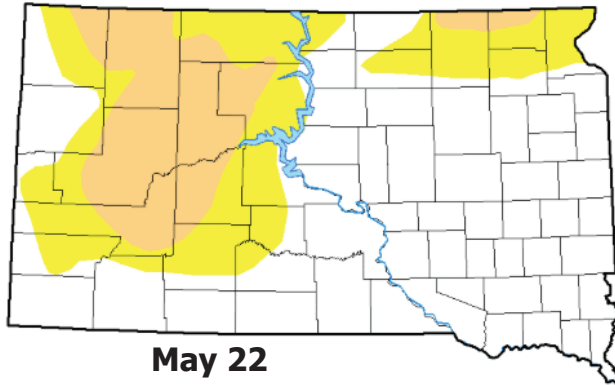
Oil market dynamics

At the close of Friday's formal trading session on the NYMEX, WTI fell 21 cents to settle at \$71.28. Oil prices edged higher last week following the release of EIA's weekly petroleum report that showed total crude inventories dropped by 1.4 million bbl. If this week's EIA report shows another inventory draw, we can expect crude prices to continue climbing.

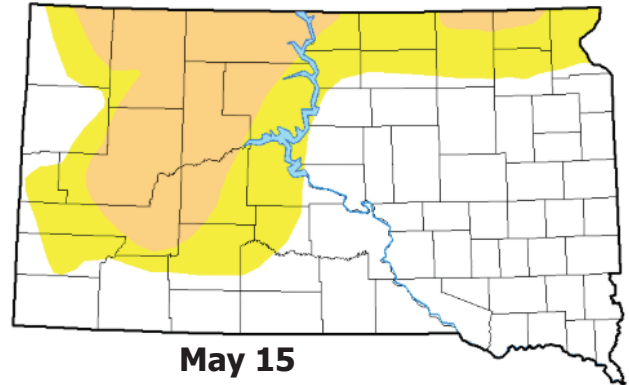
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Drought Monitor



May 22



May 15

The overall trend toward improving conditions in the south contrasting with increasingly dry weather in the far north continued, though some northerly areas benefited from locally heavy rain. In southern Kansas, another week with moderate to locally heavy showers (1-3 inches, as high as 3.72 inches in Longton, KS) led to widespread reductions of drought intensity and coverage. Nevertheless, 6-month precipitation in the state's lingering Extreme Drought (D3) was less than half of normal, while the Exceptional Drought (D4) in the state's southwestern corner stood at less than one third of normal over the same time period. Moderate to heavy rainfall (locally more than 3 inches) in northeastern Colorado likewise trimmed the coverage of Abnormal Dryness (D0). In south-central Nebraska and north-central Kansas, heavy rain (2-3 inches; Phillipsburg, KS, reported 3.95 inches) yielded a corresponding reduction of D0. In southeastern Nebraska, increasingly dry conditions over the past 90 days (40-60 percent of normal) led to a modest increase of Moderate Drought (D1) southwest of Lincoln. Farther north, sharply wetter conditions between Bismarck, ND, and Aberdeen, SD, (6.17 inches in Java, SD) resulted in a considerable reduction of D0. Beneficial rain (1-2 inches) was also reported in northeastern Montana, where D0 was reduced accordingly. Meanwhile, D1 and D2 were increased somewhat in North Dakota from Bismarck to the Canadian border, where 60-day rainfall shortfalls (locally less than 30 percent of normal) have added to the region's lingering long-term drought.

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Today in Weather History

May 25, 1880: An estimated F2 tornado moved northeast through the town of Mitchell. Two men were killed when they ran out the back door of a saloon to reach the cellar entrance. The caulk stone saloon was destroyed along with two homes and several businesses. This tornado was one of the first significant tornadoes on record for the state of South Dakota.

May 25, 1985: During the afternoon hours, thunderstorms developed along the east side of the Black Hills. The storms produced quite a bit of lightning and over the course of 2 hours started 18 small fires in the Black Hills. Fortunately, most of the fires were small and quickly contained. One unfortunate firefighter was struck by lightning as he was helping to extinguish a blaze that burned some 50 acres of grassland and forest. Thankfully, the man lived, but he did suffer several broken bones, burns, and major damage to his ears. The strike was so powerful that a man standing over 150 feet away was dropped to his knees.

1896: An estimated F5 tornado hit Oakwood, Ortonville, and Thomas, Michigan. Forty-seven people were killed, and 100 were injured. Trees were debarked "even to the twigs, as though done by the careful hand of an experienced artisan." Parts of houses were found up to 12 miles away.

1955: An estimated F5 tornado moved north and NNW through the heart of Blackwell, Oklahoma. About 400 homes were destroyed, and many were leveled and swept away. About 500 other homes were damaged. The tornado dissipated just over the Kansas border, as the Udall, Kansas tornado was forming to the east. The Blackwell tornado was accompanied by unusual electrical activity, with up to 25 discharges per second recorded on sferics equipment. The funnel was said to glow and have "arcs" of glowing light. The Udall, Kansas tornado was estimated to be an F5 as well. Over half of the population of Udall was killed or injured as the tornado completely devastated a large portion of town. Seventy-five people were killed, and many of the 270 injuries were serious.

1975: On Raccoon Lake, Indiana, lightning struck the motor of a speedboat and traveled up the control wires, killing the driver. The 38-year-old man was knocked into the water by the bolt. His wife and two children, also in the boat, were not injured.

2008: A rare, large and destructive EF5 tornado created a 43-mile long path across Butler and Black Hawk counties in Iowa. This tornado killed eight people, injured dozens and caused several millions of dollars in damage. The tornado was nearly three-quarters of a mile wide as it moved through the southern end of Parkersburg. A third of the town was affected by devastating damage with nearly 200 homes destroyed. This storm produced the first EF5 tornado in Iowa since 6/13/1976 and only the third EF5 tornado to occur in the United States in the past ten years.

Groton Job Opportunities C.N.A.s ~ Nurses Part-Time Cook

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

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



1106 N. 2nd Street, Groton


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Fri May 25	Sat May 26	Sun May 27	Mon May 28	Tue May 29	Wed May 30	Thu May 31
93°F	94°F	95°F	90°F	84°F	84°F	81°F
58°F	64°F	67°F	66°F	62°F	61°F	64°F
SSW 14 MPH	SW 7 MPH	SSE 11 MPH Precip 20%	ESE 10 MPH Precip 20%	SE 14 MPH Precip 50%	SSW 11 MPH Precip 20%	NW 12 MPH Precip 20%

Heat Related Deaths **ARE** Preventable


LOOK BEFORE YOU LOCK



The temperature in your car can quickly become deadly!

Outside Temperature 80°

Inside 99° Time Elapsed: 10 Minutes	Inside 109° Time Elapsed: 20 Minutes
Inside 114° Time Elapsed: 30 Minutes	Inside 123° Time Elapsed: 60 Minutes

 weather.gov/heat

Published on: 05/24/2018 at 3:02PM

It's only May, so you might not be thinking about heat safety, but we are headed into a very warm stretch over the long holiday weekend. Remember -- never leave children, disabled or elderly adults or pets in parked vehicles. Although it might be hard to understand how this can happen, most parents who leave their children behind simply forgot. Pay attention over this unseasonably warm Memorial Weekend and #LookBeforeYouLock!

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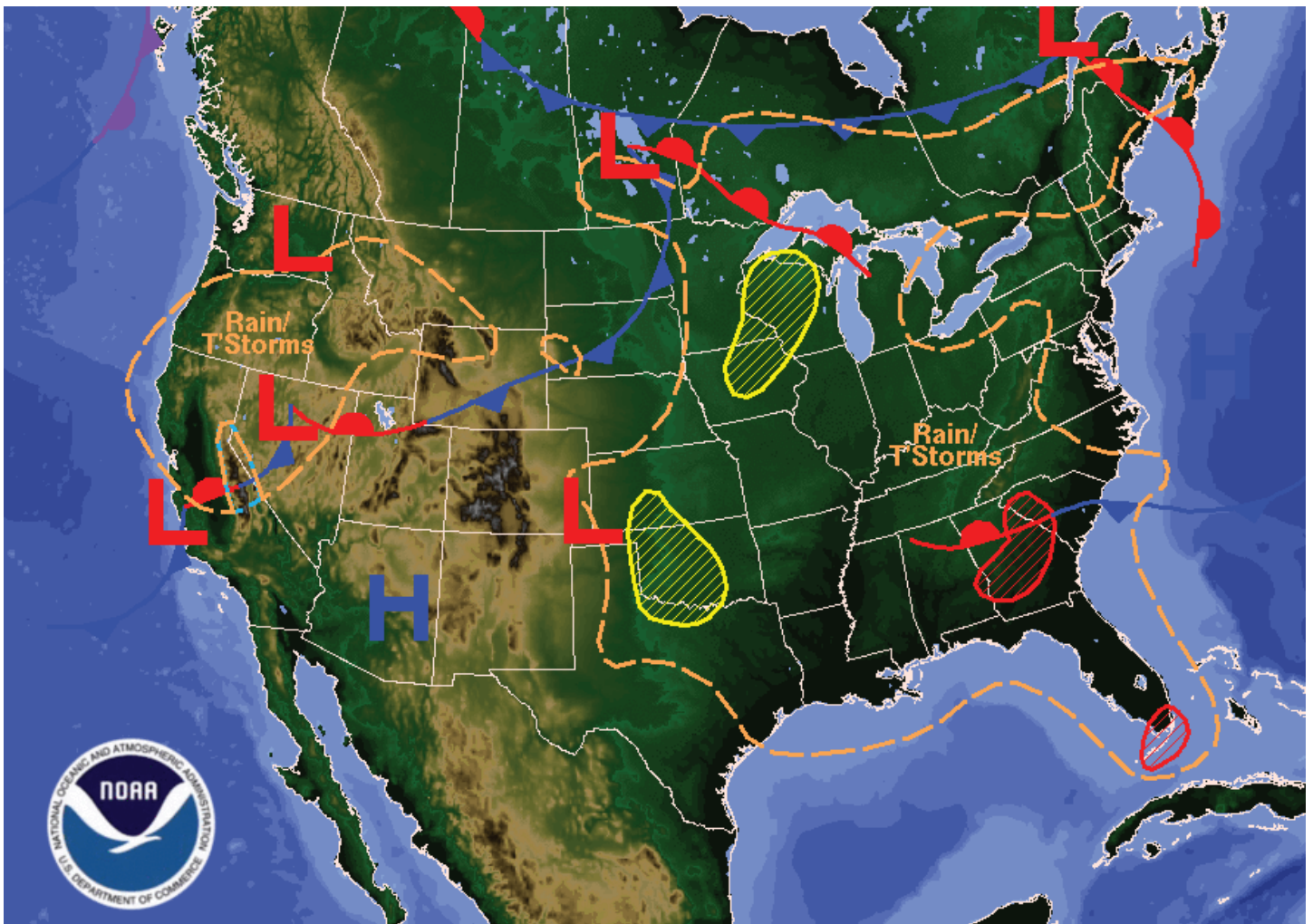
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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 88.9 F at 4:12 PM
Low Outside Temp: 67.4 F at 5:59 AM
Wind Chill:
High Gust: 28.0 Mph at 4:01 PM
Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 93° in 1941
Record Low: 29° in 1924
Average High: 71°F
Average Low: 47°F
Average Precip in May: 2.53
Precip to date in May: 1.55
Average Precip to date: 6.56
Precip Year to Date: 4.23
Sunset Tonight: 9:08 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:52 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Fri, May 25, 2018, issued 4:39 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McCreynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

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

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"DON'T LEAVE YET, LORD"

Tina and Sue, five-year-old twins, were saying their prayers before crawling into bed. Sue prayed first, and as she was about to end her prayer, said, "Don't leave just yet, Lord, Tina has something to add."

The Psalmist assured us that our God will always be there when we need Him. "Because He turned His ear to me," he wrote, "I will call on Him as long as I live." God is waiting to do His part but we must be willing to do ours.

An important element in prayer is companionship. We must keep company with God. Charles Spurgeon, who was considered the "Prince of Preachers," put it this way: "Not an hour passes during my day but that I am in conscious communion with my Lord." Prayer, to him, was as important as breathing: He could not live without it.

When we pray we are in communication with God. There are two parts in effective communication: sending and receiving. Unfortunately, for many, prayer is a one-way operation: sending. We are anxious, often driven, when things are bad, to go to God in prayer. We send our needs to Him because we know He "turns His ear to us." But we must also "tune our ear" to Him by spending time with Him in His Word. The writer of Psalm 119 said that His Word is a "lamp to my feet and a light for our path." When we read His Word we allow the Holy Spirit to speak to our hearts, open our minds and find answers to the needs we take to God in prayer.

For our prayers to be effective we must stay as close to God as we do with our best friend: we talk - we listen.

Prayer: Lord, may we become as attentive to Your voice as You are to ours. May we walk close to You each day. In Jesus' Name.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 116:2 Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live.

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

Arrest made in fatal hit-and-run in Lincoln County

CANTON, S.D. (AP) — Lincoln County sheriff's officials have made an arrest in a hit-and-run crash that killed a woman out for a walk near Worthing.

Authorities say information from the public led to the arrest of a 21-year-old Sioux Falls man. He's being held on a possible charge of first-degree manslaughter.

Authorities began a search for 34-year-old Tessa Jacobs Wednesday evening after she failed to return from a walk. Her body was found early the next morning in a ditch along a gravel road.

Based on evidence at the scene, deputies were able to determine it was a Chevy Silverado pickup truck that struck her. And, that led to an arrest.

South Dakota teen awaiting crash sentence to skip graduation

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota teenager awaiting sentencing in a fatal crash has decided to skip his high school graduation.

Seventeen-year-old Alex Lingor of Sioux Falls was granted a furlough from Minnehaha County Juvenile Detention Center so he could receive his diploma from Roosevelt High School next week.

But the Argus Leader reports Lingor turned down the furlough Thursday. His attorney says Lingor did not want to cause further grief to the victim's family or distract from the accomplishments of his graduating classmates.

Lingor pleaded guilty to manslaughter and other charges in the death of 15-year-old Kareem Cisse last year. Lingor was driving a truck and forced a sedan off the road in February 2017. Cisse, a passenger in the sedan, died.

Family and friends of the victim had criticized a judge's decision to temporarily release Lingor for the ceremony.

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

Security company, state argue venue in Dakota Access dispute

By BLAKE NICHOLSON, Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Attorneys for North Dakota regulators and a North Carolina-based private security company argued in court Thursday over the proper venue to resolve a dispute over whether the company acted illegally during protests against the Dakota Access oil pipeline and should be fined.

North Dakota's Private Investigative and Security Board wants the matter left in civil court, where it began a year ago when the board sued. The company, TigerSwan, maintains that any decision on fines should be handled administratively.

Texas-based pipeline developer Energy Transfer Partners hired TigerSwan to handle security as pipe was laid in North Dakota — work that drew large protests by environmentalists and American Indian tribes in 2016 and 2017.

The dispute between TigerSwan and the state regulatory board centers around whether the company provided actual investigative or security services within the state without a license, or consulting services that are outside of the board's jurisdiction.

Settlement negotiations have proved fruitless. TigerSwan has said it would be willing to pay fines to settle the legal dispute as long as it's not required to admit any wrongdoing — a stipulation that does not appear to be acceptable to the board.

Judge John Grinsteiner in late April decided not to ban TigerSwan from the state because it isn't licensed, but he didn't rule on whether the company acted illegally during the protests, which could make it subject

to tens of thousands of dollars in fines.

Board attorney Monte Rogneby wants the judge to reconsider his earlier ruling and to keep any decision on fines in the civil court system, arguing that it's up to the board, not the defendants, to choose the venue.

"At the core ... this is really a jurisdiction claim by the defendant," he told the judge.

TigerSwan attorney Lynn Boughey contends that any decision on fines should be handled through the administrative process, which he said would provide better protections for his client in part because alleged violations would need to be more detailed. He asked Grinsteiner to throw the state's complaint out of civil court, where he said the board is making "bald assertions with no proof," leading to "shadow-boxing."

Grinsteiner said he expects to rule within a week.

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

Trump administration defends Keystone XL pipeline in court

By **MATTHEW BROWN, Associated Press**

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — Trump administration attorneys defended the disputed Keystone XL oil sands pipeline in federal court on Thursday against environmentalists and Native American groups that want to derail the project.

President Barack Obama rejected the 1,179-mile (1,800-kilometer) line proposed by TransCanada Corporation in 2015 because of its potential to exacerbate climate change.

President Donald Trump revived the project soon after taking office last year, citing its potential to create jobs and advance energy independence.

Environmentalists and Native American groups sued to stop the line and asked U.S. District Judge Brian Morris to halt the project. They and others, including landowners, are worried about spills that could foul groundwater and the pipeline's impacts to their property rights.

Morris did not immediately rule following a four-hour Thursday hearing in federal court in Great Falls.

U.S. government attorneys asserted that Trump's change in course from Obama's focus on climate change reflected a legitimate shift in policy, not an arbitrary rejection of previous studies of the project.

"While the importance of climate change was considered, the interests of energy security and economic development outweighed those concerns," the attorneys recently wrote.

Morris previously rejected a bid by the administration to dismiss the lawsuit on the grounds that Trump had constitutional authority over the pipeline as a matter of national security.

Keystone XL would cost an estimated \$8 billion. It would begin in Alberta and transport up to 830,000 barrels a day of crude through Montana and South Dakota to Nebraska, where it would connect with lines to carry oil to Gulf Coast refineries.

Federal approval is required because the route crosses an international border.

TransCanada, based in Calgary, said in court submissions that the pipeline would operate safely and help reduce U.S. reliance on crude from the Middle East and other regions.

The project is facing a separate legal challenge in Nebraska, where landowners have filed a lawsuit challenging the Nebraska Public Service Commission's decision to approve a route through the state.

Follow Matthew Brown on Twitter at @matthewbrownap

Rancher gets 3 months to shoot or drown thousands of rodents

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A judge has given a South Dakota woman who opposes using poison to control a prairie dog infestation on her ranch three months to shoot or drown 80 percent of the rodents, which number in the thousands.

Judge Jane Pfeifle on Wednesday gave Susan Henderson until Aug. 27 to comply with a prairie dog infestation notice from the Fall River County Weed & Pest Board, the Rapid City Journal reported. Henderson refuses to use the county's preferred elimination method of tablets that release poisonous gas.

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The judge determined that the poison, Fumitoxin, could harm other animals on Henderson's land.

"Everybody who testified said that Fumitoxin will kill everything in that burrow, including the burrowing owls," Pfeifle said.

The owls are protected by the 1918 Migratory Bird Treaty Act and listed as a species of "concern" in South Dakota. Bald and golden eagles, which are both federally protected, would also be at risk if should they eat a poisoned rodent.

Pfeifle ruled that Henderson can shoot or drown the prairie dog colonies to an 80 percent kill rate.

Board supervisors inspected the property after Henderson's neighbors complained last June about the prairie dogs, which can endanger cattle and damage grass. The board ordered Henderson to control the rodents in December, but specialists said she didn't comply.

"I guess there's approximately 8,000 dogs on her land," said Ron Moehring, a state weed and pest specialist.

Henderson's hired hunter, Mick Stoddard, promised to more actively shoot prairie dogs on the property. Pfeifle scheduled a hearing for Sept. 5 to revisit if Henderson has controlled the infestation.

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

Officials: Efforts failing to save US West sagebrush land

By KEITH RIDLER, Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — Public lands managers are losing a battle against a devastating combination of invasive plant species and wildfires in the vast sagebrush habitats in the U.S. West that support cattle ranching and recreation and are home to an imperiled bird, officials said.

The Western Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies in a 58-page report released this month says invasive plants on nearly 160,000 square miles (414,400 sq. kilometers) of public and private lands have reached enormous levels and are spreading.

That could mean more giant rangeland wildfires that in recent decades destroyed vast areas of sagebrush country that support some 350 species of wildlife, including imperiled sage grouse.

The top problem identified in the report is the limited ability at all levels of government to prevent invasive plants such as fire-prone cheatgrass from spreading and displacing native plants.

"There is widespread recognition that invasive annual grasses and wildland fire are the most crucial threats to the sagebrush ecosystem, yet invasive annual grass management is not funded at a level to be effective in breaking the invasive annual grass/fire cycle," the report said.

Most invasive weed management programs tackle less than 10 percent of the infested areas while the annual rate at which the invasive plants spread is 15 to 35 percent, the report noted. Another invasive is medusahead, a winter annual grass that crowds out native species and forage for livestock.

The report, "Wildfire and Invasive Plant Species in the Sagebrush Biome," is an update to the 2013 "Gap Analysis Report" produced by the Western Association of Fish & Wildlife Agencies' multi-agency Wildfire and Invasive Species Working Group.

Both reports were requested by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and U.S. Bureau of Land Management. The 2013 report came out at a time when federal agencies were trying to identify gaps in a strategy to avoid listing greater sage grouse as a protected species under the Endangered Species Act.

In 2015, the federal government declined to list sage grouse but imposed land-use restrictions, leading to multiple lawsuits. Federal officials are scheduled to review that decision in 2020, a main factor in why officials decided to update the 2013 report.

The ground-dwelling, chicken-sized sage grouse are found in 11 Western states. Between 200,000 and 500,000 sage grouse remain, down from a peak population of about 16 million.

The vast areas of sagebrush inhabited by the bird stretch through open country, leading some to refer to it as the sagebrush sea.

The landscape is "iconic to a lot of people," said John Freemuth, a Boise State University professor and

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public lands expert. But “in terms of rangeland health and sustainable ranching, we’re just getting that up to speed.”

The most recent report examines efforts over the last several years to close the gaps identified in 2013 and adds several new ones. One of those is the new No. 1 priority of identifying limitations at preventing invasive plants from spreading.

Cheatgrass spreads by growing earlier than native plants each spring, using up moisture in the soil and producing seeds. Then in the summer, the annual cheatgrass dries out, catching fire and destroying native perennial plants.

The second priority involves restoring sagebrush ecosystems following a wildfire. Experts say restoration efforts are key because cheatgrass uses fire to kill the competition, then take over.

“We’re getting close to wildfire season on the rangelands already,” Freemuth said. “If we can’t get ahead of it, it will just be covered with cheatgrass.”

The third priority is having native plant seeds available to restore burned areas. In 2013, no such program existed. But federal agencies in 2015 established the National Seed Strategy for Rehabilitation and Restoration with the goal of having a warehouse system with native plant seeds.

Officials also want a better understanding of how livestock grazing affects the landscape. The Bureau of Land Management has formed a “Targeted Grazing Team” to develop guidelines for using cattle to reduce wildfire threats in some instances.

“It will certainly take a broad-based coalition of agencies, and public and private groups working together to ensure a healthy Sagebrush biome (habitat) is available for generations to come,” Virgil Moore, director of the Idaho Department of Fish and Game, said in the report.

Company to resume search for gold in western South Dakota

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A Canadian company plans to resume its search for gold in western South Dakota, but a project manager says Mineral Mountain Resources is still arranging a water source.

The Rapid City Journal reports the company said Thursday it intends to drill nine remaining holes of a 12-hole exploratory project in the next week.

The company earlier this year drilled three holes while searching for gold near Rochford, roughly 35 miles west of Rapid City. Workers drew water from Rapid Creek to lubricate its drill under a temporary water permit from the state that expired May 1.

The company applied for another permit, but withdrew the application to seek other water arrangements. Project manager Kevin Leonard says they’re still pending.

A court challenge to the validity of the project’s exploratory drilling permit is also pending.

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

Officials look for driver who struck, killed woman

CANTON, S.D. (AP) — Lincoln County sheriff’s officials say the woman whose body was found in a ditch near Worthing is the apparent victim of a hit-and-run crash.

Authorities began a search for 34-year-old Tessa Jacobs Wednesday evening after she failed to return from a walk. Officers used tracking dogs throughout the night to find her. Jacobs was found in the ditch along a gravel road at dawn Thursday.

The sheriff’s department says Jacobs was struck by a southbound vehicle Wednesday night. Based on evidence at the scene, the vehicle is believed to be a Chevy Silverado pickup truck from 1999 to 2006 with damage to the right front. The passenger side rear view mirror was recovered at the scene.

Daugaard to name circuit judge to SD Supreme Court

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Gov. Dennis Daugaard says he will appoint circuit court Judge Mark Salter to the South Dakota Supreme Court.

The governor said Thursday he will name Salter, of Sioux Falls, to replace Justice Glen Severson, who will retire in June after nine years as a member of the high court.

Salter has been a judge in the 2nd Judicial Circuit since 2013. He is the presiding judge for the Minnehaha County Veteran's Treatment Court.

Salter will be the 51st member of the South Dakota Supreme Court. Daugaard says Salter is a "brilliant legal mind."

The 49-year-old Salter was born in Huron and got his law degree from the University of South Dakota School of Law in 1993.

POET Biorefining making \$5M in upgrades at Mitchell plant

MITCHELL, S.D. (AP) — POET Biorefining is making roughly \$5 million in upgrades at its Mitchell-area site to expand equipment including for its business forming distillers grains produced while making ethanol into pellets that animals can easily eat.

The Daily Republic reports the company ceremonially broke ground on the improvements Wednesday. POET Vice President of Business Development Matt Reiners says the upgrades are the first of their kind for the company and should be completed around Labor Day.

The construction at the facility near Loomis is set to include a building for the pellet mill, four bins to hold the pellets and adding a fermentor. POET representatives say the pellets can be more easily transported into a pasture than the dry, loose meal option the company has sold previously.

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

Medical problem cited in pickup-restaurant crash in Viborg

VIBORG, S.D. (AP) — The Turner County sheriff's office says a driver who crashed a pickup truck into a restaurant in Viborg apparently suffered a medical problem before the incident.

KELO-AM reports the entire vehicle ended up inside the Daneville Inn on Wednesday. Sheriff Steven Luke says the business owner was in the back getting to ready to open for the day.

Luke says the driver will be OK. The person wasn't identified.

Information from: KELO-AM, <http://www.keloam.com>

Man gets 10-year sentence in fatal reservation shooting

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A man who admitted helping the suspects in a fatal shooting on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation a year ago has been sentenced to 10 years in prison, along with another eight years in an unrelated drug case.

Thirty-one-year-old Scott Benson earlier this year pleaded guilty to being an accessory after the killing of 42-year-old Christopher Janis, which authorities say happened during a drug deal in May 2017. Prosecutors in return dropped weapons charges.

The Rapid City Journal reports that Benson was sentenced Wednesday.

Twenty-eight-year-old Clarence Yellow Hawk and 26-year-old Jamie Shoulders are accused of shooting Janis. Their cases are ongoing.

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

Troopers in 3 states to enforce safety on Interstate 90

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Highway Patrol troopers in South Dakota, Wyoming and Minnesota are joining forces for an annual traffic safety operation on Interstate 90.

The effort covers 23 hours, from 5 a.m. Central time Friday to 4 a.m. Central on Saturday. Troopers in each state will crack down on speeding, hazardous moving violations, seatbelt use and impaired driving.

The operation includes use of police dogs, drug recognition experts and motor carrier personnel.

The effort coincides with the start of the long Memorial Day holiday weekend.

Harvey Weinstein arrives to surrender in sex assault probe

By COLLEEN LONG, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Harvey Weinstein turned himself in to police Friday morning to face the first criminal charges to be filed against him after months of sexual abuse allegations from scores of women that destroyed his career and set off a national reckoning known as the #MeToo movement.

Weinstein, 66, stepped from a black SUV and walked slowly into a Manhattan police station before a crowd of news cameras. He didn't answer respond to shouts of his name.

The exact charges against Weinstein still had not been made public early Friday. Two law enforcement officials told The Associated Press the case will include allegations by Lucia Evans, an aspiring actress who has said the Hollywood mogul forced her to perform oral sex on him in his office. She was among the first women to speak out about the producer.

One official said it's likely the case also will include at least one other victim who has not come forward publicly.

The officials spoke Thursday to the AP on condition of anonymity because they weren't authorized to discuss the investigation.

Weinstein was expected to be charged at least with criminal sexual act, a crime that carries up to 25 years in prison, the officials said.

Weinstein's attorney, Benjamin Brafman, declined to comment when first contacted about the charges late Friday, but previously said in court paperwork that the allegations that Weinstein forced himself on women were "entirely without merit" and that he never knowingly broke the law.

Evans confirmed to The New Yorker that she was pressing charges.

"At a certain point, you have to think about the greater good of humanity, of womankind," she told the magazine.

Evans told The New Yorker in a story published in October that Weinstein forced her to perform oral sex during a daytime meeting at his New York office in 2004, the summer before her senior year at Middlebury College.

"I said, over and over, 'I don't want to do this, stop, don't,'" she told the magazine. "I tried to get away, but maybe I didn't try hard enough. I didn't want to kick him or fight him."

Evans, who is now a marketing consultant, didn't report the encounter to police at the time, telling The New Yorker that she blamed herself for not fighting back.

"It was always my fault for not stopping him," she said.

Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance had been under enormous public pressure to bring a criminal case against Weinstein. Some women's groups, including the Hollywood activist group Time's Up, accused the Democrat of being too deferential to Weinstein and too dismissive of his accusers.

A grand jury has been hearing evidence in the case for weeks.

In March, New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo took the extraordinary step of ordering the state's attorney general to investigate whether Vance acted properly in 2015 when he decided not to prosecute Weinstein over a previous allegation of unwanted groping, made by an Italian model. That investigation is in its preliminary stages.

More than 75 women have accused Weinstein of wrongdoing around the globe. Several actresses and models accused him of criminal sexual assaults, but many of the encounters happened too long ago for

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any prosecution. Film actress Rose McGowan said Weinstein raped her in 1997 in Utah, "Sopranos" actress Annabella Sciorra said he raped her in her New York apartment in 1992 and Norwegian actress Natassia Malthe said he attacked her in a London hotel room in 2008.

McGowan told the AP on Thursday that she is gratified but "still in shock" that Weinstein was expected to surrender.

"The justice system has been something very elusive," McGowan said. "I hope in this case it works. Because it's all true. None of this was consensual."

The statute of limitations for rape and certain other sex crimes in New York was eliminated in 2006, but not for attacks that happened prior to 2001.

New York City police detectives said in early November that they were investigating allegations by another accuser, "Boardwalk Empire" actress Paz de la Huerta, who told police in October that Weinstein raped her twice in 2010. She is not one of the victims in the case on Friday; hers was still pending, officials said.

Authorities in California and London also are investigating assault allegations. Britain has no statute of limits on rape cases; some of the allegations under investigation there date to the 1980s.

Harvey and his brother Bob Weinstein started his now-bankrupt company after leaving Miramax, the company they founded in 1979 and which became a powerhouse in '90s indie film with hits like "Pulp Fiction" and "Shakespeare in Love." The Weinstein Co. found success with Oscar winners "The Artist" and "The King's Speech."

Associated Press writer Jocelyn Noveck contributed to this report.

Trump balks at North Korea's rhetoric but it has used worse

By HYUNG-JIN KIM, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — When North Korea slammed U.S. Vice President Mike Pence and national security adviser John Bolton, its language was very blunt and impolite. But it was milder than its typical crude and inflammatory insults unleashed on other top U.S. and South Korean officials.

The North likely had just tried to strengthen its position in negotiations on the amount of concessions it could wrest from the United States in return for giving up its nuclear program.

But its calling Pence a "political dummy" was still strong enough for President Donald Trump to cite North Korea's hostility in scrapping his planned June 12 summit with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, at a time when the president faced mounting pessimism at home about Kim's commitment to disarming.

Apparently startled at Trump's abrupt move, a senior North Korean official who touched off his country's recent rhetorical attacks on Washington issued an unusually conciliatory statement Friday saying the North still wants to engage with the United States.

A look at how North Korea's statements have evolved over the past nine days, from harsh criticism of U.S. officials and threats to cancel the summit to a near apology:

BOLTON CRITICISM

After canceling a high-level dialogue with South Korea, North Korean Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye Gwan on May 16 issued a statement threatening to do the same with the Kim-Trump talks if the United States continues to "drive us into a corner to force our unilateral nuclear abandonment."

Kim Kye Gwan categorically took issue with the remarks by Bolton that North Korea should follow the "Libyan model," which many experts say meant the North must take complete nuclear disarmament steps before getting major sanctions relief or other outside benefits.

"We shed light on the quality of Bolton already in the past, and we do not hide our feeling of repugnance toward him," Kim Kye Gwan was quoted as saying in the statement carried by the Korean Central News Agency.

Kim Kye Gwan's wording was weaker than a previous salvo North Korea fired off about the hawkish U.S. official.

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In 2003, North Korea's state media called Bolton "human scum" after he described then North Korean leader Kim Jong Il, the late father of Kim Jong Un, as a "tyrannical dictator." In 2007, when Bolton raised strong skepticism about North Korea's previous disarmament pledges, state media said he "talked trash" and that he is "ill-famed for speaking ill of the countries standing for progress and peace."

PENCE CRITICISM

This directly prompted Trump to say that it is "inappropriate" to go ahead with the summit because of the "tremendous anger and open hostility" displayed in the North's "most recent statement."

In remarks carried by state media on Thursday, Choe Son Hui, another North Korean vice foreign minister, called Pence a "political dummy" over his comments during a Fox News interview that again compared North Korea with Libya.

"As a person involved in the U.S. affairs, I cannot suppress my surprise at such ignorant and stupid remarks gushing out from the mouth of the U.S. vice president," Choe said. "In case the U.S. offends against our goodwill and clings to unlawful and outrageous acts, I will put forward a suggestion to our supreme leadership for reconsidering the (North)-U.S. summit."

Choe's "political dummy" comment was certain to anger the United States. But again, in the past, North Korea attacked others including Trump using worse language.

At the height of nuclear tensions between the countries last year, Kim Jong Un personally called Trump "the mentally deranged U.S. dotard" after Trump portrayed him as "the Rocket Man" on a "suicide mission." His propaganda machine called Trump a "war maniac" and "mad man."

North Korea's state media called former President Barack Obama a "monkey," and his secretary of state, John Kerry, a wolf with a "hideous lantern jaw." They called South Korea's former conservative presidents Park Geun-hye a "prostitute" and Lee Myung-bak a "rat."

LETTER OF APOLOGY

About eight hours after Trump publicly called off the summit, Kim Kye Gwan issued a lengthy statement saying North Korea is still willing to sit down with the United States "at any time, in any format."

"The first meeting would not solve all, but solving even one at a time in a phased way would make the relations get better rather than making them get worse. The U.S. should ponder over it," Kim Kye Gwan said.

Kim Kye Gwan called Trump's decision "very regrettable" but his statement still apparently focused on stressing that Trump misunderstood the North's true intentions. Experts say it was obvious the North had no plans to walk away from the U.S. summit from the beginning.

It was also highly unusual for the North to make such a quick response to any major policy announcements by Washington and Seoul, and especially one that is so conciliatory in tone.

"What appears to be close to an apology letter was contained in Kim Kye Gwan's statement," said Koh Yu-hwan, a professor at Seoul's Dongguk University.

Choi Kang, vice president of Seoul's Asan Institute for Policy Studies, said he believes Trump used the Pence criticism as a way to pull out of the summit because his government wasn't sure if North Korea would disarm in a manner that he wants.

Lava from Hawaii volcano enters ocean from 3 flows

By JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER, Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — Lava entered the ocean from a third flow, marking the third week of a Hawaii volcano eruption that has opened up nearly two dozen vents in rural communities, destroyed dozens of buildings and shot miles-high plumes of ash into the sky.

Low lava fountains were erupting from a nearly continuous 2-mile-long (3.22-kilometer) portion of the series of fissures that have opened up in the ground, scientists said Thursday. The fountains were feeding channelized lava flows down to the coast. The eastern-most channel split, creating three ocean entries

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Wednesday.

Since the eruption began on May 3, Hawaii County has ordered about 2,000 people to evacuate from Leilani Estates and surrounding neighborhoods.

Hawaii officials have said they may need to evacuate a thousand more people if lava crosses key highways and isolates communities in the mostly rural part of the island where the Kilauea volcano is erupting.

A blocked highway would cut people off from the only route to grocery stores, schools and hospitals.

The U.S. Marine Corps said Thursday that it has sent two CH-53E Super Stallion helicopters from a base near Honolulu to help if more evacuations become necessary. Each helicopter can carry 50 passengers.

The volcano has opened more than 20 vents in the ground that have released lava, sulfur dioxide and steam. The lava has been pouring down the flank of the volcano and into the ocean miles away.

Lava has destroyed 50 buildings, including about two dozen homes. One person was seriously injured after being hit by a flying piece of lava.

There continues to be intermittent explosions at the summit that have been sending plumes of ash into the sky. On Wednesday, the volcano belched a plume that reached about 7,000 feet (2,133 meters), scientists said. Right before the explosion, there was a 3.9 magnitude earthquake at the summit.

"We are kind of in this steady state," said Wendy Stovall, a scientist at the U.S. Geographical Survey. There's no indication about whether lava volume will increase or decrease, she said. The continued explosions are expected to "last a little while longer."

This story has been corrected to reflect the third lava flow began entering the ocean on Wednesday, not Thursday, based on new information from officials.

AP journalist Audrey McAvoy contributed to this story.

Follow AP's complete coverage of the Hawaii volcano here: <https://apnews.com/tag/Kilauea>

NFL's policy could mean a new playbook on protests this fall

By ERRIN HAINES WHACK and JESSE J. HOLLAND, Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Now that the NFL is drawing the line against players kneeling during the national anthem, athletes protesting police brutality and racial inequality may need to find a new playbook.

The question is whether they intend to escalate their protests in some way.

"The owners can try to prevent kneeling, but they open another can of worms," said Randal Maurice Jelks, professor of African and African-American studies and history at the University of Kansas. "Imagine if players decide as a team to not come out for the national anthem. Or if one-third of the team decides not to come out."

Hoping to quell the furor started by quarterback Colin Kaepernick two years ago, the NFL announced Wednesday that players can stay in the locker room during "The Star-Spangled Banner" but must stand if they venture onto the field. Not doing so will result in a fine against the team.

The decision was lauded by President Donald Trump, who suggested Thursday in a Fox interview that "maybe you shouldn't be in the country" if you don't stand for the anthem.

While NFL players who have supported kneeling in the past have not revealed their plans for this season, it is unlikely the new policy brought an end to the controversy.

"There were a lot of players who thought they could work with the league," said Rashad Robinson, executive director of Color of Change, a social justice organization that mobilized members to boycott the NFL and its corporate sponsors last season. "Players will have to make a decision about whether they speak out. These owners are not just trying to keep the league without controversy — they've picked a side."

Like protesters before them in past social movements, the players face a familiar dilemma: What to do when their public platform is taken away?

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From the American Revolution through the civil rights era and, more recently, the Black Lives Matter movement, history has shown that when one avenue of protest is taken away, activists often move on to other — sometimes more disruptive — methods of protest.

Denver Broncos linebacker Brandon Marshall, who attended the University of Nevada with Kaepernick and was among the first NFL players to join in the national anthem protests two seasons ago, said players don't care about teams being fined.

But as for what he intends to do this season, "I guess we'll cross that road when it comes."

He called the president's remarks "disgusting" and said that while he doesn't like the league's new policy, he understands it.

"We've got freedom of speech, right? Freedom to protest? Just because somebody disagrees or has an issue with something that's going on in this country, that doesn't mean that they should pack up and leave," Marshall said in response to Trump's comments.

Detroit Lions wide receiver Golden Tate said he expects the team will discuss "a solution to stand for justice in America."

"We've got time to kind of brainstorm some ideas on how we could stand for justice and what we can do," Tate said.

During the Black Lives Movement, activists held protests that disrupted major thoroughfares and other public spaces across the country, then expanded their focus to local elections and working with the Obama Justice Department to bring about police reforms.

DeRay Mckesson, who began protesting as part of the Black Lives Matter movement in 2014 and has continued to push for police reforms, said NFL players now find themselves in a similar position, and he hopes they fight the new policy.

"The attempt is always to silence and erase," he said. "The point of protest is to bring public awareness to things people want to keep private."

Holland reported from Washington. AP sports writers Arnie Stapleton in Denver, Noah Trister in Detroit and John Wawrow in Buffalo, N.Y., contributed to this report.

N. Korea keeps hopes of talks alive after Trump cancellation

By FOSTER KLUG and HYUNG-JIN KIM, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea said Friday that it's still willing to sit for talks with the United States "at any time, (in) any format," a remarkably restrained and diplomatic response, from a nation noted for its proud belligerence, to U.S. President Donald Trump's abrupt cancellation of a summit with the North's autocratic leader, Kim Jong Un.

The statement by Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye Gwan, a longtime nuclear negotiator and senior diplomat, which said the North is "willing to give the U.S. time and opportunities" to reconsider talks that had been set for June 12 in Singapore, could be driven by a need to use the summit to ease crushing international sanctions, or by a determination that a summit with the mercurial Trump is the best opportunity the North will ever have to elevate itself, and its nuclear program, to equality with its archrival. One analyst marveled that the North Korean response was "close to an apology letter."

Regardless of the motivation, Kim Kye Gwan's statement is the latest whiplash development in efforts to diplomatically address what might be the world's most dangerous standoff. Focus will now swing back to how Trump will respond to the North's seemingly conciliatory gesture.

The stakes are high. A scrapping of diplomacy could see a return to the torrent of weapons tests — and the fears of war they created — that North Korea unleashed last year as it sought to put the finishing touches on a nuclear-armed missile program meant to target the entire U.S. mainland. Since January, Kim has taken a radically softer approach to foreign affairs, sending his sister to the Olympics in South Korea, meeting with his South Korean counterpart on their shared border and exploding parts of his nuclear testing site Thursday in an apparent sign of good faith. The Singapore summit would have been the culmination

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of this outreach.

Earlier comments by South Korean President Moon Jae-in, seen as a driving force behind the summit and just returned to Seoul from a meeting with Trump in Washington, suggested that the South, a top U.S. ally and host to 28,500 U.S. troops, was blindsided by Trump's statement. Moon said he was "perplexed" at Trump's announcement that he was canceling the summit because of what the U.S. president said was North Korea's "tremendous anger and open hostility." Moon urged direct talks between Trump and Kim to get things back on track.

Many observers had expected a belligerent North Korean response to Trump's cancellation, but the comments by Kim, the North's vice foreign minister, seemed, at times, almost meek, and in stark contrast to the bellicose declarations last year of the North's willingness to pursue nuclear war.

Kim said Pyongyang's "objective and resolve to do our best for the sake of peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula and all humankind remain unchanged." Kim said the cancellation of the talks shows "how grave the status of historically deep-rooted hostile North Korea-U.S. relations is and how urgently a summit should be realized to improve ties."

"As far as the historic (North Korea)-U.S. summit is concerned, we have inwardly highly appreciated President Trump for having made the bold decision, which any other U.S. presidents dared not, and made efforts for such a crucial event as the summit," Kim said. "His sudden and unilateral announcement to cancel the summit is something unexpected to us and we cannot but feel great regret for it."

Kim speculated that Trump may have "lacked the will for the summit or he might not have felt confident," but that the North has "exerted sincere efforts" for talks that "would mark a meaningful starting point for peace and security in the region and the world."

Kim Dong-yub, a North Korea expert at Seoul's Institute for Far Eastern Studies, said the North Korean response was notably "courteous, reserved and diplomatically refined," which he said shows that Pyongyang is eager to talk with Washington and believes that the United States needs more time to prepare for the summit.

Trump's cancellation of the summit came amid mounting skepticism about the North's sincerity after the country's earlier threats to scrap the Kim-Trump summit. That may have been aimed at bolstering its negotiating position, rather than killing the meeting.

"They wanted to face the United States in a more confident position. Obama or (Bill) Clinton could have accepted (these kinds of North Korean statements). But it's Trump. He's decided not to enter talks while being pushed (by North Korea) like this," said Choi Kang, vice president of Seoul's Asan Institute for Policy Studies.

Koh Yu-hwan, a professor at Seoul's Dongguk University, said Kim's statement was "close to an apology letter."

The North might have also sensed an opening in Trump's seemingly mixed messages.

"I really believe Kim Jong Un wants to do what's right," the U.S. president said at one point. Trump also said from the White House that a "maximum pressure campaign" of economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation would continue against North Korea — with which the U.S. is technically still at war — but he added that it was possible the summit could still take place at some point.

In his statement to the North, Trump said: "If you change your mind having to do with this most important summit, please do not hesitate to call me or write."

It was unclear whether Trump was engaged in what he saw as a negotiating ploy or if his moves were a manifestation of mounting internal concerns over ensuring a successful outcome for the summit.

While the statement may keep the possibility of a summit alive, there were also hints in North Korea's response to Trump that Pyongyang was willing to walk away.

Kim said the United States is at fault for what Trump described as North Korea's "hostility," saying that Pyongyang was responding to "excessive" U.S. comments pressuring the country to "unilaterally discard" its nuclear weapons ahead of the summit. Trump's move to cancel the summit has forced the North to "rethink whether the efforts we have so far put in and the new path we have taken is the right choice."

AP writer Kim Tong-hyung contributed to this report.

Trump cancels summit with Kim; North Korea still wants talks

By CATHERINE LUCEY, ZEKE MILLER and MATTHEW LEE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Thursday abruptly canceled his summit with North Korea's Kim Jong Un, blaming "tremendous anger and open hostility" by Pyongyang — a decision North Korea called "regrettable" while still holding out hope for "peace and stability."

In a letter to Kim announcing his decision to back away from the June 12 summit, Trump pointed to America's vast military might and warned the rising nuclear power against any "foolish or reckless acts."

The letter kicked off a day of mixed messages by the president, who declared hours later, "I really believe Kim Jong Un wants to do what's right." After that, a senior White House official said the North lacked judgment and had reneged on its promises ahead of the summit. Trump said from the White House that a "maximum pressure campaign" of economic sanctions and diplomatic isolation would continue against North Korea — with which the U.S. is technically still at war — but he added that it was possible the summit could still take place at some point.

North Korea issued a statement Friday saying it is still "willing to give the U.S. time and opportunities" to reconsider talks "at any time, at any format."

Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye Gwan called Trump's decision "unexpected" and "very regrettable," and said the cancellation of the talks shows "how grave the status of historically deep-rooted hostile North Korea-U.S. relations is and how urgently a summit should be realized to improve ties."

Kim insisted North Korea's "objective and resolve to do our best for the sake of peace and stability of the Korean Peninsula and all humankind remain unchanged."

Trump's surprise exit capped weeks of high-stakes brinkmanship between the two unpredictable leaders over nuclear negotiating terms for their unprecedented sit-down. The U.S. announcement came not long after Kim appeared to make good on his promise to demolish his country's nuclear test site. But it also followed escalating frustration — and newly antagonistic rhetoric — from North Korea over comments from Trump aides about U.S. expectations for the North's "denuclearization."

The senior U.S. official said the North violated a pledge to allow international inspectors to monitor the supposed implosion of the site Thursday. International journalists were present, but the U.S. government can't verify the site's destruction. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity to avoid overshadowing Trump's comments Thursday.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, a staunch Kim ally, said the North Korean leader had in fact done "everything that he had promised in advance, even blowing up the tunnels and shafts" of his country's nuclear testing site. Putin said of Trump's announcement, "In Russia we took this news with regret."

Japan says it understands President Donald Trump's cancellation of the summit with the North Korean leader. Top officials there say talks should be held when progress on the North's denuclearization is achieved.

Trump, in his letter to Kim, objected specifically to a statement from a top North Korean Foreign Ministry official. That statement referred to Vice President Mike Pence as a "political dummy" for his comments on the North and said it was up to the Americans whether they would "meet us at a meeting room or encounter us at nuclear-to-nuclear showdown."

Underscoring the high stakes, Trump said he had spoken with military leaders, as well as Japan and South Korea, and stressed that the United States was prepared for any threat.

Still, Trump's announcement appeared to surprise South Korea, which had pushed to keep the summit on track as recently as Tuesday, when President Moon Jae-in met with Trump in the Oval Office and said the "fate and the future" of the Korean Peninsula hinged on the talks. The Blue House said Thursday that it was trying to figure out Trump's intentions in canceling the summit.

Trump, who considers himself a master dealmaker, has confounded aides and allies at every turn of the fateful flirtation with the North. He looked past the warnings of senior aides when he accepted Kim's

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invitation to meet back in March. He unveiled the date and the time with characteristic showmanship. And after initially projecting calm in the face of North Korea's escalating rhetoric, he made a sudden about face, though his letter also waxed poetic about the "wonderful dialogue" emerging between the two leaders.

Wrote Trump: "If you change your mind having to do with this most important summit, please do not hesitate to call me or write."

It was unclear whether Trump's move marked a negotiating ploy or a manifestation of mounting internal concerns over ensuring a successful outcome for the summit.

Trump was briefed Wednesday night and made the decision to exit Thursday morning after consulting with top advisers, including Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and National Security Adviser John Bolton, to whom he dictated the letter, said the senior official.

The question now is how Trump's maneuvering will be received. His letter could make the situation worse in a society where saving face can be pivotal. Kim might well take offense at the hardnosed U.S. approach after he released American detainees and destroyed a nuclear site.

Trump's aides had warned that merely agreeing to the summit had provided Kim with long-sought international legitimacy and, if Trump ultimately backed out, risked fostering the perception that the president was insufficiently committed to diplomatic solutions to the nuclear question.

U.S. defense and intelligence officials have repeatedly assessed the North to be on the threshold of having the capability to strike anywhere in the continental U.S. with a nuclear-tipped missile — a capacity that Trump and other U.S. officials have said they would not tolerate.

Pompeo, testifying on Capitol Hill, said North Korea had not responded to repeated requests from U.S. officials to discuss logistics for the summit. He told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee the lack of response was an additional reason for Trump's decision.

"We got a lot of dial tones, Senator," he told committee chairman Bob Corker.

A White House team was set to fly to Singapore this weekend to continue logistical planning for the meeting.

Pompeo said the North's posture had changed markedly since he returned from Pyongyang earlier this month, a trip during which he met with Kim and oversaw the release of three Americans being held. Trump suggested this week that China was to blame for "a little change" in Kim's attitude. Kim paid a secret visit to his primary ally just before Pompeo's visit, and China is wary of any shift in the balance of power on the Korean peninsula.

Trump's allies in Congress applauded the president, saying he was justified in pulling out of the meeting.

"North Korea has a long history of demanding concessions merely to negotiate. While past administrations of both parties have fallen for this ruse, I commend the president for seeing through Kim Jong Un's fraud," said Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark.

Critics were less impressed.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said it was clear Trump "didn't know what he was getting into and now he's walking away" in a "very chummy, palsy-walsy letter" that's "kind of like a valentine to Kim Jong Un."

White House officials have privately predicted for weeks that the summit could be canceled once or twice before actually taking place. Trump has seemed to welcome chatter of a Nobel Peace Prize, but that has yielded in recent weeks to the sobering prospect of ensuring a successful outcome with the Kim.

Associated Press writers Deb Riechmann, Lisa Mascaró, Ken Thomas and Darlene Superville in Washington, Ted Anthony and Jonathan Lemire in New York and Hyung-jin Kim in Seoul contributed to this report.

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'It's about time': Trump pardons late boxer Jack Johnson

By JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Thursday granted a rare posthumous pardon to boxing's first black heavyweight champion, clearing Jack Johnson's name more than 100 years after what many see as his racially-charged conviction.

"I am taking this very righteous step, I believe, to correct a wrong that occurred in our history and to honor a truly legendary boxing champion," Trump said during an Oval Office ceremony. He was joined by WBC heavyweight champion Deontay Wilder, retired heavyweight titleholder Lennox Lewis and actor Sylvester Stallone, whom Trump credited with championing the pardon.

Trump said Johnson had served 10 months in prison "for what many view as a racially-motivated injustice."

"It's my honor to do it. It's about time," the president said.

Johnson, a prominent athlete who crossed over into popular culture decades ago with biographies, dramas and documentaries, was convicted in 1913 by an all-white jury for violating the Mann Act for traveling with his white girlfriend. That law made it illegal to transport women across state lines for "immoral" purposes.

Trump had tweeted in late April that Stallone, a longtime friend, had brought Johnson's story to his attention in a phone call.

"His trials and tribulations were great, his life complex and controversial. Others have looked at this over the years, most thought it would be done, but yes, I am considering a Full Pardon!" Trump wrote then.

The Oval Office ceremony was a celebratory scene, bringing together boxing greats past, present and fictional. The guests brought with them a colorful boxing championship belt, which sat front and center on the president's Resolute Desk as he spoke. At one point, Trump jokingly asked Lewis whether he could "take Deontay in a fight" if he really started working out.

Lewis said Johnson had been an inspiration to him personally, while Stallone said Johnson had served as the basis of the character Apollo Creed in his "Rocky" films.

"This has been a long time coming," he said.

Trump has a personal history with the sport, and hosted matches in the 1990s at his hotels.

After Johnson's conviction, he spent seven years as a fugitive, but eventually returned to the U.S. and turned himself in. He served about a year in federal prison and was released in 1921. He died in 1946 in an auto crash.

His great-great niece, Linda E. Haywood, had pressed Trump for a posthumous pardon, and Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., and former Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, D-Nev., had promoted Johnson's case for years.

The son of former slaves, Johnson defeated Tommy Burns for the heavyweight title in 1908 at a time when blacks and whites rarely entered the same ring. He then beat a series of "great white hopes," culminating in 1910 with the undefeated former champion, James J. Jeffries.

McCain previously told The Associated Press that Johnson "was a boxing legend and pioneer whose career and reputation were ruined by a racially charged conviction more than a century ago."

McCain, who is often at odds with Trump, praised him late Thursday for the pardon.

"I applaud President Trump for issuing a posthumous pardon of boxing legend Jack Johnson, whose reputation was ruined by a racially charged conviction over a century ago," he said in a statement that he also tweeted.

"For years, Congress has overwhelmingly supported legislation calling on multiple U.S. presidents to right this historical wrong and restore this great athlete's legacy. President Trump's action today finally closes a shameful chapter in our nation's history and marks a milestone that the American people can and should be proud of."

Johnson's imprisonment forced him into the shadows of bigotry and prejudice, and continues to stand as a stain on our national honor," McCain has said.

Haywood, who joined Trump in the Oval Office, said her great-great uncle's conviction had led her family members to live in shame of his legacy.

"For so long my family was deeply ashamed that my uncle went to prison," she told Trump, adding that

said she didn't find they were related until she was 12 years old.

"By this pardon being issued, that would help to rewrite history and erase the shame and the humiliation that my family felt for my uncle, a great hero," she said.

Posthumous pardons are rare, but not unprecedented.

President Bill Clinton pardoned Henry O. Flipper, the first African-American officer to lead the Buffalo Soldiers of the 10th Cavalry Regiment during the Civil War. President George W. Bush pardoned Charles Winters, an American volunteer in the Arab-Israeli War convicted of violating the U.S. Neutrality Acts in 1949.

Haywood had wanted Barack Obama, the nation's first black president, to pardon Johnson, but Justice Department policy says "processing posthumous pardon petitions is grounded in the belief that the time of the officials involved in the clemency process is better spent on the pardon and commutation requests of living persons."

The Justice Department makes decisions on potential pardons through an application process and typically makes recommendations to the president. The Justice Department's general policy is to not accept applications for posthumous pardons for federal convictions, according to the department's website. But Trump has shown a willingness to work around the DOJ process in the past.

Associated Press writer Zeke Miller contributed to this report.

N. Korea demolishes nuclear test site as journalists watch

PUNGGYE-RI, North Korea (AP) — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un made good on his promise to demolish his country's nuclear test site, which was formally closed in a series of huge explosions Thursday as a small group of foreign journalists watched.

The explosions at the test site deep in the mountains of the North's sparsely populated northeast were supposed to build confidence ahead of a planned summit next month between Kim and President Donald Trump. But Trump canceled the meeting on Thursday, citing "tremendous anger and open hostility" in a North Korean statement released earlier in the day.

The blasts were centered on three tunnels at the underground site and a number of buildings in the surrounding area. North Korea held a closing ceremony afterward with officials from its nuclear arms program in attendance.

The group of journalists that witnessed the demolition, which touched off landslides near the tunnel entrances and sent up clouds of smoke and dust, included an Associated Press Television crew.

North Korea's state media called the closure of the site part of a process to build "a nuclear-free, peaceful world" and "global nuclear disarmament."

"The dismantling of the nuclear test ground conducted with high-level transparency has clearly attested once again to the proactive and peace-loving efforts of the DPRK government being made for assuring peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and over the world," the North's official news agency reported late Thursday.

North Korea's formal name is the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Kim announced his plan to close the site, where North Korea has conducted all six of its underground nuclear tests, ahead of a summit with South Korea's President Moon Jae-in in April and the planned summit with Trump next month.

But even as North Korea made good on its gesture of detente, it lobbed a verbal salvo at Washington, calling Vice President Mike Pence a "political dummy" and saying it is just as ready to meet in a nuclear confrontation as at the negotiating table.

Trump responded by canceling the summit, saying in a letter to Kim, "Sadly, based on the tremendous anger and open hostility displayed in your most recent statement, I feel it is inappropriate, at this time, to have this long-planned meeting."

North Korea's decision to close the Punggye-ri nuclear test site had generally been seen as a welcome

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gesture by Kim to set a positive tone ahead of the summit. In a statement earlier Thursday, South Korea's National Security Council called the closing the North's "first measure toward complete denuclearization."

Not everyone was as optimistic, however.

The closing of the site is not an irreversible move and would need to be followed by many more significant measures to meet Trump's demand for real denuclearization.

North Korea also did not invite international nuclear weapons inspectors, opting instead for the impact of the television footage to impress the world.

The event was, indeed, impressive.

The first blast the visiting journalists witnessed came at around 11 a.m. after they made a 12-hour plus trip by train and convoy through the night and over bumpy dirt roads. That explosion collapsed the complex's north tunnel, which was used for five nuclear tests between 2009 and last year.

Two other explosions, at around 2:20 p.m. and 4 p.m., collapsed the west and south tunnels, according to officials. North Korea's state media stressed that those two tunnels could have been used to conduct future tests, countering reports the Punggye-ri site had been rendered largely unusable by its earlier tests.

Also blown up were observation posts and barracks used by guards and other workers at the facility. A tunnel on the eastern side had already been shut down after an initial nuclear test in 2006.

North Korea said the demolition did not cause any leakage of radioactive materials or have any "adverse impact on the surrounding ecological environment."

The journalists were allowed to stay at the site for about nine hours.

Getting to the remote site required an overnight train ride from Wonsan, a port city east of the capital, Pyongyang. In typically secretive fashion, officials instructed the media not to open the blinds that covered the windows of their train cars. They also were not allowed to shoot photos from the vehicles they took to the site from the nearest train station, about 20 kilometers (12 miles) away.

Back in Pyongyang, the outburst directed at Pence, issued in the name of a top Foreign Ministry official, came on the heels of another sharp rebuke of Trump's newly appointed national security adviser, John Bolton, and raised concerns that a major gap had opened between the two sides.

Choe Son Hui, a vice minister of foreign affairs, was quoted by the state-run news agency as slamming "ignorant" and "stupid" comments Pence made in an interview with Fox News that compared nuclear-capable North Korea to Libya. Libya gave up its nuclear program at an early stage only to see its longtime dictator overthrown and brutally killed years later.

The summit plan had hit a number of speed bumps recently as both sides began trading barbs and taking tougher positions.

Trump met with South Korean President Moon at the White House on Tuesday for consultations, and suggested then the summit could be delayed or called off entirely.

AP Pyongyang bureau chief Eric Talmadge contributed to this report from Tokyo. Follow him on Instagram and Twitter: @EricTalmadge

NFL teams under no time pressure to form own anthem policies

By BARRY WILNER, AP Pro Football Writer

With no deadlines to meet and a monthlong summer break coming up, NFL teams are in no hurry to formulate a policy on demonstrations during the national anthem.

One day after league owners mandated that players must stand for the "Star-Spangled Banner" — they now have the option of remaining in the locker room for the playing of the anthem — few of the 32 teams had done more than preliminary work on the issue.

The NFL gave teams the option of developing their own workplace rules, which many players interpreted as a backhanded way of subjecting them to fines, suspensions or loss of jobs should they carry on with the protests.

For now, other than New York Jets owner Christopher Johnson's decision to pay any fines doled out by

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the league without passing punishment to the players, each franchise's approach is uncertain.

After all, once mandatory minicamps end in mid-June, teams don't get together again until training camps open in late July. The opening preseason game — the first time the anthem would be played before an NFL match — is Aug. 2 when Baltimore and Chicago face off in the Hall of Fame game.

"I'm sure it's something that will be addressed, by the players and by the coaches, collectively," Lions receiver Golden Tate said Thursday. "But right now, we don't play a game until August, and that's when it's going to be applicable in football stadiums. So we've got time to kind of brainstorm some ideas on how we could stand for justice and what we can do."

What some teams have done in the past likely indicates how they will handle disciplining players for demonstrations during the anthem — regardless of the intent. Owners Jerry Jones of the Cowboys and Robert McNair of the Texans have been among the staunchest advocates of no exceptions to standing during the anthem.

Others have taken a less stringent stance, emphasizing working together with the players in their communities rather than focusing on how the message about social injustice is being delivered.

"I have always believed it is the responsibility of sports teams to be very proactive in our communities," says Jeffrey Lurie, owner of the Super Bowl champion Philadelphia Eagles.

"In this great country of ours, there are so many people who are hurting and marginalized, which is why I am proud of our players for continuously working to influence positive change. Their words and actions have demonstrated not only that they have a great deal of respect for our country, but also that they are committed to finding productive ways to fight social injustice, poverty and other societal issues that are important to all of us.

"We must continue to work together in creative and dynamic ways to make our communities stronger and better, with equal opportunities for all."

One certain thing: The uncertainty about how each team will deal with players who defy the NFL's mandate will last for weeks.

Not so for any league personnel such as game officials, sideline crews, et al. They will be disciplined for any violations of the anthem policy, though the exact punishments have not yet been determined by the NFL.

One organization, the National Action Network, will march on league headquarters Friday to "advocate for players' right to kneel and call on NFL owners to reverse (the) dangerous decision violating players' First Amendment rights by imposing fines for not standing during the national anthem."

Such protests could become more prevalent if teams decide to strongly discipline players who demonstrate during the anthem. But some franchises aren't sure they need their own policy. Or if that is even the proper description.

The Falcons' position is any players on the field will stand, so no need to make plans for any other outcome.

Team spokesman Brian Cearnis suggested it's too strong to say they have a team policy: "The word policy sounds like it was mandated. It was discussed as a team and agreed upon as a team," Cearnis said in an email to The Associated Press.

Defensive linemen Dontari Poe and Grady Jarrett knelt during an early season game at Detroit last year.

Coach Dan Quinn said that was a "one-off" and, sure enough, after that game all players stood together on the sideline, with arms interlocked, the remainder of the season.

"Was every player who stood last year against social justice?" Lions guard T.J. Lang tweeted "Or just the guys who do it this year because there is now a rule? Asking for a friend."

Buffalo linebacker Lorenzo Alexander doesn't expect his team "to do anything."

"I understand where they're at. And it's hard," Alexander said. "And I understand that from a business perspective trying to be socially responsible. And people can act like it's in a vacuum and say you have to pick a side. But it's not that simple. It's a very complex situation.

"And so I respect them, because I was a business owner and I understand it. It makes a big impact. I'm in this to grow the business, grow their brand, and us doing this does have an impact, whether we say it or not. That's what we want, because we're trying to bring attention to it. But they have to have a foot

over here, a foot over here. It's hard."

AP Pro Football Writer Arnie Stapleton and Sports Writers Charles Odum, Paul Newberry, John Wawrow and Noah Trister contributed.

For more NFL coverage: <http://www.pro32.ap.org> and http://www.twitter.com/AP_NFL

Dem, GOP leaders get classified briefings on Russia probe

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and ERIC TUCKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican and Democratic lawmakers huddled Thursday in classified briefings about the origins of the FBI investigation into Russia's meddling in the 2016 presidential election, a highly unusual series of meetings prompted by partisan allegations that the bureau spied on Donald Trump's campaign.

Democrats emerged from the meetings saying they saw no evidence to support Republican allegations that the FBI acted inappropriately, although they did express grave concern about the presence of a White House lawyer at Thursday's briefings. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell told Fox News he had learned "nothing particularly surprising," but declined to go into detail.

Still, the extraordinary briefings drew attention to the unproved claims of FBI misconduct and political bias. The meetings were sought by Trump's GOP allies and arranged by the White House, as the president has tried to sow suspicions about the legitimacy of the FBI investigation that spawned a special counsel probe. Initially offered only to Republicans, the briefings were the latest piece of stagecraft meant to publicize and bolster the allegations. But they also highlighted the degree to which the president and his allies have used the levers of the federal government — in this case, intelligence agencies — to aide in Trump's personal and political defense.

Under direct pressure from the president, Justice Department officials agreed to grant Republicans a briefing, and only later opened it up to Democrats. The invite list evolved up until hours before the meeting — a reflection of the partisan distrust and the political wrangling. A White House lawyer, Emmet Flood, and White House Chief of Staff John Kelly showed up for both briefings, although the White House had earlier said it would keep a distance, drawing criticism from Democrats.

"For the record, the president's chief of staff and his attorney in an ongoing criminal investigation into the president's campaign have no business showing up to a classified intelligence briefing," Sen. Mark Warner tweeted after the briefing.

The White House said the officials didn't attend the full briefings, but instead delivered brief remarks communicating the "president's desire for as much openness as possible under the law" and relaying "the president's understanding of the need to protect human intelligence services and the importance of communication between the branches of government," according to a statement.

Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, FBI Director Christopher Wray and National Intelligence Director Dan Coats attended both meetings — the first at the Department of Justice and the second on Capitol Hill.

Trump has zeroed in on, and at times embellished, reports that a longtime U.S. government informant approached members of his campaign in a possible bid to glean intelligence on Russian efforts to sway the election. The president intensified his attacks this week, calling it "spygate" and tweeting Thursday that it was "Starting to look like one of the biggest political scandals in U.S. history."

It was unclear how much information was given to lawmakers. According to a U.S. official familiar with the meeting, the briefers did not reveal the name of an informant. They brought documents but did not share them, and made several remarks about the importance of protecting intelligence sources and methods. The person declined to be identified because the briefing was classified.

In a statement, House Speaker Paul Ryan wouldn't say what he learned, but said he looked forward to the "prompt completion" of the House Intelligence Committee's work now that they are "getting the cooperation necessary."

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House Intelligence Committee Chairman Devin Nunes, an ardent Trump supporter, had originally requested the information on an FBI source in the Russia investigation. The original meeting was scheduled for just Nunes and Republican Rep. Trey Gowdy, the chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, but the Justice Department relented and allowed additional lawmakers to come after Democrats strongly objected.

Nunes and other Republicans already eager to discredit special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation used Trump's complaints to obtain the briefing from the Justice Department, whose leaders have tried for months to balance demands from congressional overseers against their stated obligation to protect Mueller's ongoing investigation into ties between the Kremlin and the Trump campaign.

Nunes attended both briefings Thursday. According to the U.S. official and another person briefed on the Capitol Hill meeting, Nunes did not speak at all during the briefing. The second person also declined to be named because the meeting was classified.

Democratic lawmakers declined to comment on the substance of the briefing, but gave a joint statement afterward saying their view had not changed that "there is no evidence to support any allegation that the FBI or any intelligence agency placed a 'spy' in the Trump Campaign, or otherwise failed to follow appropriate procedures and protocols."

The statement was issued by Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer, House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi, and the top Democrats on the Senate and House intelligence panels, Warner and Rep. Adam Schiff.

Senate Intelligence Committee Chairman Richard Burr also attended the briefing but did not comment afterward.

The back and forth between Congress and the Justice Department has simmered for weeks.

The Justice Department had rejected Nunes' original request, writing in a letter in April that his request for information could put lives in danger.

Negotiations over release of the information stalled but restarted when Trump demanded, via tweet, on Sunday that the Justice Department investigate.

In response to the tweet, the Justice Department immediately asked its inspector general to expand its ongoing investigation to look into whether there was any politically motivated surveillance of the campaign and agreed to hold the classified briefings.

It remained unclear what, if any, spying was done. The White House gave no evidence to support Trump's claim that President Barack Obama's administration was trying to spy on his 2016 campaign for political reasons.

It's long been known that the FBI was looking into Russian meddling during the campaign and that part of that inquiry touched on the Trump campaign's contacts with Russian figures. Mueller took over the investigation when he was appointed special counsel in May 2017.

Associated Press writers Laurie Kellman, Jonathan Lemire, Lisa Mascaro, Chad Day and Jill Colvin contributed to this report.

Seahawks' Baldwin says NFL "really missed it" with policy

By TIM BOOTH, AP Sports Writer

RENTON, Wash. (AP) — Seattle Seahawks wide receiver Doug Baldwin had harsh words for the comments made by President Donald Trump regarding the NFL's new national anthem policy on Thursday, as players began to process the new mandate from the league's owners.

Baldwin has been a leading voice from the players' perspective for why there were protests last season even though Baldwin never participated in kneeling or sitting on the sidelines during "The Star-Spangled Banner."

He spoke passionately after the Seahawks concluded their offseason workout and sounded offended by the president's comments to "Fox & Friends" in an interview that aired Thursday saying, "maybe you shouldn't be in the country" if you don't stand for the anthem.

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"He's an idiot. Plain and simple," Baldwin said. "I respect the man because he's a human being first and foremost, but he's just being divisive, which is not surprising. It is what it is. But for him to say anybody who doesn't follow his viewpoints or his constituents viewpoints should be kicked out of the country is not very empathetic. It's not very American like, actually, to me. It's not very patriotic. It's not what this country was founded upon. It's kind of ironic to me the President of the United States is contradicting what our country is really built on."

Baldwin was among a handful of players that have expressed frustration and disappointment with the NFL mandating players must stand for the national anthem if they're on the field, though they now have the option of remaining in the locker room for the playing of the anthem and carry on the campaigns against social injustice.

Even normally reserved Seattle quarterback Russell Wilson agreed with the sentiment that the owners' decision was a message to players to essentially be quiet.

"Pretty much. I think that's part of it. It seems that way," Wilson said. "But I think a policy right or wrong is not going to fix our problems."

The new policy allows teams to adopt their own workplace rules, which many players interpreted as a backhanded way of subjecting them to fines, suspensions or loss of jobs should they carry on with the protests.

For Baldwin, who is among the players to have worked with the league on addressing social concerns and community programs, the anthem decision felt like a step back.

"If you're asking my opinion, I think that in conjunction with the NFL, the way that things were going, I felt on the Players Coalition side of things we were coming to an amicable agreement and relationship and working toward initiatives and causes that we wanted to see as players addressed, I thought that you would see the demonstrations and the issues within the NFL dissipate," Baldwin said.

"But again, when you stoke the fire and inflame a gap that was really dissipating at the time, diffusing, you cause more problems. That's why I say I think the NFL missed it."

Others around the league didn't see the policy as a potential issue.

"I'm really not too worried about it. I would expect that everybody's gonna be out there with their hand over their heart, showing respect to the flag and to the country," New Orleans quarterback Drew Brees said.

But teammate Demario Davis had mixed emotions about the policy. His father served in the military, but he also understands why players have been protesting.

"I just think that when you love something — you care about it — you want to work to get it right. I love my children. When they do wrong things, I'm going to let them know they're doing wrong things. I'm not just going to sweep it under the rug because I love them," Davis said.

"I think that's the difference between patriotism and nationalism. Nationalism is loving your country just to love it, you know, even when it's right or wrong, you're going to take the side of your country. Patriotism is loving it enough to sacrifice for it, but also to call it (out) when it's wrong.

"The people who are speaking up for the people who are hurting have a deep love and devotion for our country. That's kind of gotten misconstrued at times. But it's important for people to understand that."

The decision by the owners was an attempt to quell a firestorm by moving protests away from the public eye and potentially lure back disgruntled fans. But in the process they may have disgruntled their employees and rekindled what appeared to be an issue that was dying down.

"I feel like it might want to make people just want to rebel, just like when Trump said what he said last year," Denver linebacker Brandon Marshall said.

"People rebelled. And let's be clear. I know they say they'll fine the team, but players don't care about that. Players don't care about the teams get fined."

AP Pro Football Writer Arnie Stapleton and AP Sports Writer Brett Martel contributed to this report.

For more NFL coverage: <http://www.pro32.ap.org> and http://www.twitter.com/AP_NFL

Body camera video is latest setback for Milwaukee police

By IVAN MORENO, Associated Press

MILWAUKEE (AP) — Body camera video showing police using a stun gun on an NBA player over a parking violation is just the latest setback for efforts to improve relations between Milwaukee officers and the city's black population.

The confrontation involving Sterling Brown of the Milwaukee Bucks also represents the first major challenge for new Police Chief Alfonso Morales, who took the job in February promising to restore public trust in a department besieged in recent years by excessive-force lawsuits.

"Milwaukee has all the ingredients to be a great city, but each time an incident like this occurs, we are reminded of how much work we still have to do," the city's Common Council said in a statement Thursday.

Morales, a lifelong Milwaukee resident born to Mexican immigrants, pledged to be more transparent with cases of police misconduct, and he's already faced TV cameras twice this month to apologize for his officers' actions. The other case involved four officers caught on video kicking and punching an African-American man while he was restrained on the ground.

The Jan. 26 video of Brown showed how a simple interaction quickly escalated after an officer approached him about parking in a handicap spot around 2 a.m. at a Walgreens drug store. When their conversation became tenser, the officer called more squad cars for help. As Brown is surrounded by four officers, he's asked to take his hands out of his pockets and a scuffle ensues. Within seconds, one officer yelled "Taser! Taser! Taser!"

The video became public after the department finished its internal investigation.

The officers were disciplined because they "acted inappropriately," Morales said. Brown was not charged with anything.

The chief did not name the officers or say how they were disciplined. The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel, citing unidentified sources, said three officers received suspensions ranging from two to 15 days.

"I am sorry this incident escalated to this level," said Morales, who left a news conference Wednesday without taking questions.

The police department did not identify the races of the officers, but most of them in the video appeared to be white. Brown is black.

A 2017 analysis by the Journal Sentinel found that black officers made up about 18 percent of the department, in a city that is roughly 39 percent black.

Morales' predecessor, Edward Flynn, had a combative relationship with some city officials during his decade on the job. The Common Council became so frustrated with him that members passed a resolution asking the state to empower the council to fire him. On Thursday, a council member repeated that request, saying change in the department can only happen if the chief is accountable to city leaders instead of a civilian commission appointed by the mayor.

"We can have all sorts of community meetings and groups and say all these wonderful things. But "at the end of the day, the police chief can do whatever he wants without any consequences," Alderman Tony Zielinski said.

Morales' spokeswoman said he was not available for an interview.

Brown has indicated he will file a lawsuit against the police. If he does, the complaint will add to a long list of litigation the city has faced over officer misconduct.

Last year, Milwaukee paid \$2.3 million to settle a lawsuit over the death of Dontre Hamilton, a mentally ill black man fatally shot by a police officer after the officer roused him from a park bench downtown.

In 2016, the city paid \$5 million to settle a lawsuit by 74 black residents who said police illegally strip-searched them between 2008 and 2012. The American Civil Liberties Union in Wisconsin also has a pending lawsuit alleging the department has for years targeted black and Latino residents by stopping and questioning them without cause.

"It's just another black eye for the city of Milwaukee on a national level," Alderman Khalif Rainey said.

A day before the Brown video was released, Morales posted a short video on YouTube that showed him

walking through neighborhoods, talking to residents and emphasizing his desire to restore trust in the department.

Rainey bashed the video, saying it's not enough.

"First and foremost, it's going to require something more than a video, a nice fluffy PR effort," he said. "So it's really going to require the police to get out here in the community and really get integrated in neighborhoods and build a rapport with actual people on a first-name basis."

Jonathan Safran, a Milwaukee attorney who worked on the Dontre Hamilton case and lawsuit over illegal strip searches, said he's optimistic that settlement discussions in the ACLU lawsuit could lead to changes in how officers behave during traffic and pedestrian stops.

"The issue in my mind going forward, and this is a good example," he said, referring to Brown's case, "is should officers act as warriors or should they should they act as guardians?"

APNewsBreak: Ethics complaint filed over Gianforte assault

By MATT VOLZ, Associated Press

HELENA, Mont. (AP) — The head of the Montana Democratic Party on Thursday asked for a congressional ethics investigation into whether Republican U.S. Rep. Greg Gianforte lied to the police and the public when he assaulted a reporter last year.

The request by the party's executive director, Nancy Keenan, comes exactly one year after Guardian reporter Ben Jacobs said Gianforte "body slammed" him for asking a question the day before Gianforte won a special election for Montana's only U.S. House seat. The former technology entrepreneur is running for re-election in November.

Gianforte eventually pleaded guilty to misdemeanor assault and said Jacobs did nothing wrong. But Gianforte initially told police that Jacobs instigated the attack, and his campaign spokesman at the time, Shane Scanlon, released a statement saying the same thing.

Keenan's complaints filed with the House Committee on Ethics and the independent Office of Congressional Ethics said those were false statements made in violation of House ethics rules that require Gianforte to "conduct himself at all times in a manner that shall reflect creditably on the House."

The ethics committee and the independent ethics office, which refers matters to the committee, will review the request but are not required to launch a probe simply because the request was made.

Keenan said Thursday that Gianforte has never owned up to lying to the police or the public, and he has never been held accountable for those statements.

"It's a matter of character for me," Keenan said in an interview with The Associated Press. "If we can't trust him in telling the truth to the cops, then how do we trust him on health care policy, how do we trust him on public lands?"

It does not matter that the assault and the statements were made before Gianforte was elected or sworn in, Keenan said.

"A lot of things happened before people were members of Congress and they were still called to the carpet for it," Keenan said. "This case is no different."

In one case, a Senate ethics investigation was launched last year against U.S. Sen. Al Franken, D-Minn., over sexual misconduct allegations from before he was a senator.

Gianforte has perpetuated the lie since he's been in office, including having his communications director, Travis Hall, give a statement to the AP last fall stating that "no one was misled" about the attack, Keenan said.

Hall declined to comment on Keenan's complaint. He cited as the reason a cease-and-desist letter sent to Gianforte by Jacobs' attorney last fall in response to Hall's "no one was misled" comment.

In the letter, attorney Geoffrey Genth told the congressman and his staff that Gianforte repeatedly misled law enforcement and the public and warned them to stop making "false and defamatory statements" about Jacobs.

National Republican Congressional Committee spokeswoman Erin Collins said in a statement that Keenan's

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complaint is a desperate attempt by Democrats to divert attention from their "lackluster lineup" of candidates in this year's elections.

"While the Democratic Party attempts to waste taxpayers' money on this wild goose chase, Congressman Gianforte will continue to work tirelessly in Montanans' best interest," Collins said.

Five Democrats are competing for the party's nomination to challenge Gianforte in November's election. Keenan shrugged off any suggestion that the complaints are a campaign stunt.

"He continues to not tell the truth. It's fundamentally about honesty," she said.

Witnesses told investigators that Gianforte threw Jacobs to the ground and punched him after complaining earlier in the day about "duplicitous" campaign coverage by the Guardian and BuzzFeed News, according to police documents.

Gianforte told investigators that Jacobs grabbed his wrist and spun, pulling Gianforte on the ground on top of him. Scanlon's statement also said Jacobs grabbed Gianforte by the wrist.

Gallatin County Attorney Marty Lambert declined to file any additional state criminal charges related to Gianforte's initial statements.

Gianforte paid a fine, completed 40 hours of community service and 20 hours of counseling for anger of management.

He also apologized to Jacobs and donated \$50,000 to the Committee to Protect Journalists under a settlement with the reporter to avoid a civil lawsuit.

Sign up for "Politics in Focus," a weekly newsletter showcasing the AP's best political reporting from around the country leading up to the midterm elections: <http://apne.ws/3Gzcraw>

Morgan Freeman apologizes in wake of harassment accusations

By JOCELYN NOVECK, AP National Writer

Oscar-winning actor Morgan Freeman apologized on Thursday to anyone who may have felt "uncomfortable or disrespected" by his behavior, after CNN reported that multiple women have accused the A-list actor of sexual harassment and inappropriate behavior on movie sets and in other professional settings.

"Anyone who knows me or has worked with me knows I am not someone who would intentionally offend or knowingly make anyone feel uneasy," the actor, now 80, said in a statement sent to The Associated Press by his publicist, Stan Rosenfield. "I apologize to anyone who felt uncomfortable or disrespected — that was never my intent."

Freeman won the 2005 Oscar for best supporting actor for "Million Dollar Baby." He was nominated four other times, including for "Driving Miss Daisy" and "The Shawshank Redemption," and is renowned for his prolific voiceover work.

Earlier this year, he was honored by SAG-AFTRA with a lifetime achievement award. In a statement to The Associated Press, the organization, which represents actors, journalists and others, called the allegations "compelling and devastating" and contrary to its attempts to make sure working environments are safe in the industry.

"Any accused person has the right to due process, but it is our starting point to believe the courageous voices who come forward to report incidents of harassment," the statement read. "Given Mr. Freeman recently received one of our union's most prestigious honors recognizing his body of work, we are therefore reviewing what corrective actions may be warranted at this time."

The CNN report includes the account of a production assistant on the 2017 heist film "Going In Style," who detailed an incident in which the actor repeatedly tried to lift up her skirt, and asked if she was wearing underwear. She alleged that Freeman subjected her to unwanted touching and comments on a near-daily basis on the film.

Several women alleged that he made frequent comments about their bodies, or would stare at them in ways that made them feel uncomfortable. CNN spoke to 16 people about Freeman; eight said they had experienced harassment or inappropriate behavior, and eight said they had witnessed such conduct.

Seven of them described harassment or inappropriate behavior at Revelations Entertainment, a company he co-founded with Lori McCreary.

The CNN report also cited accounts by three entertainment reporters of inappropriate remarks they allege Freeman made at press junkets, including the report's co-author, Chloe Melas, who describes Freeman shaking her hand, "not letting go while repeatedly looking her up and down and saying more than once a variation of, 'I wish I was there'" — and also "You are ripe."

Gut check: Swallowed capsule could spot trouble, send alert

By CARLA K. JOHNSON, AP Medical Writer

Scientists have developed a swallowed capsule packed with tiny electronics and millions of genetically engineered living cells that might someday be used to spot health problems from inside the gut.

The capsule was tested in pigs and correctly detected signs of bleeding, researchers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology reported Thursday in the journal *Science*. At more than an inch long, it will have to be made smaller for testing in people. But the results suggest the capsule could eventually be used in people to find signs of ulcers, inflammatory bowel disease or even colon cancer, the researchers said.

It's the latest advance in a growing field of sensors that can be swallowed or worn to monitor our health. Pills equipped with cameras, thermometers and acidity gauges already look for disease and track digestion. Last year, a psychiatric medication that alerts doctors when it's taken won U.S. approval. Stick-on skin monitors for recovering stroke patients are in the works.

The MIT device is the first to use engineered cells as sensors in swallowed capsules, said Kourosh Kalantar-zadeh, who is developing a gas-sensing, all-electronic pill at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology in Australia.

"The work is yet another step toward showing the great promises of smart, ingestible capsules," said Kalantar-zadeh.

The researchers tested the capsules using a harmless strain of *E. coli* bacteria. The cells were modified with DNA from other bacteria to make them detect blood and then light up. Electronics then take over, relaying signals to a smartphone.

Shrinking the capsule to a normal pill size could be achieved by combining its three electronic chips, said co-author Phillip Nadeau. Data encryption will be needed to protect patient privacy. And it's meant to be used once, so they'll need to make it flushable, co-author Mark Mimee said.

All that, plus human testing, means a commercial product is years off.

As labs discover DNA with new sensing powers, the capsule could be customized to diagnose multiple conditions. Co-author Tim Lu speculated that future patients could swallow a capsule "once a week or once a month" to screen for early signs of cancer instead of getting a colonoscopy.

The capsule could help doctors monitor tricky-to-reach parts of the small intestine for people with Crohn's disease or to study the normal balance of microbes in the gut, said Dr. Stephanie Hansel of Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, who wasn't involved in the research.

"We're excited about it," said Hansel, while noting that it probably won't replace the need for procedures using flexible scopes.

Texas Instruments and the National Science Foundation helped pay for the research, and the researchers are seeking patents for the capsule. Mimee received a fellowship from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, which also supports The Associated Press Health & Science Department.

Follow AP Medical Writer Carla K. Johnson on Twitter: @CarlaKJohnson

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

MLB panel says baseballs getting extra lift, cause unknown

By RONALD BLUM, AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Baseballs really have been getting extra lift since 2015, and it's not from the exaggerated uppercuts batters are taking, according to a 10-person committee of researchers hired by the commissioner's office.

"The aerodynamic properties of the ball have changed, allowing it to carry farther," said committee chairman Alan Nathan, professor emeritus of physics at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

But the panel, which includes professors specializing in physics, mechanical engineering, statistics and mathematics, struck out trying to pinpoint the cause.

The committee's 84-page report was released Thursday by Major League Baseball. There was no evidence of meaningful change in the bounciness of the balls, formally called coefficient of restitution (COR), or alteration in batters' swings, such as uppercutting.

As for what caused of the change in aerodynamic properties, it remains baseball's great mystery, the sport's equivalent of the search for the Loch Ness Monster.

"We have to admit and we do admit that we do not understand it. We know the primary cause is the change in the drag but we just simply cannot pinpoint what feature of the ball would lead to it," Nathan said during a conference call Wednesday ahead of the report's release. "Therefore it was probably is something very, very subtle in the manufacturing process but again it has to be pretty subtle, because if it weren't, we would have found it."

Physicist Leonard Mlodinow, in an executive summary accompanying the report, speculated "manufacturing advances that result in a more spherically symmetric ball could have the unintended side effect of reducing the ball's drag."

The major league average of home runs per game for both teams combined climbed from 1.90 before the 2015 All-Star break to 2.17 in the second half, then rose to 2.31 in 2016 and a record 2.51 last season. The percentage of batted balls resulting in home runs rose from 3.2 percent in 2014 to 3.8 percent in 2015 to 4.4 percent in 2016 and 4.8 percent in 2017.

"We found a consistent picture that the drag coefficient is a little bit smaller as we progressed through 2015 into '16 into '17," Nathan said. "Finally, we used our physics expertise to conclude that the small change we found in the average drag coefficient going throughout the period 2015 to 2017 was completely consistent with the change in the number of home runs per batted ball.

"So you're using partly pure physics, partly a model, partly statistical data about home run distances and things like that, but it all hung together very, very well. So all four of those things point to the fact that it's the aerodynamic properties of the ball that have changed. So that much we know. What we do we not know? Well, what we do not know is what specific measurable property of the ball has led to this change," he said.

The committee inspected the Rawlings factory that manufactures the balls in Turrialba, Costa Rica, analyzed test data from 2010-17 compiled by Rawlings and the University of Massachusetts Lowell, which has analyzed balls for MLB. The group tested 15 dozen unused balls from 2013-17 and 22 dozen game-used balls from 2012-17. The committee devised new tests conducted at Washington State and examined MLB StatCast data from 2015-17 that included pitch type, exit velocity, launch angle, spray angle, spin rate, spin axis and distance.

MLB announced five steps in response to the report:

- Monitor temperature and humidity of ball storage areas at all 30 ballparks this year and will work with the committee to determine whether to mandate humidors throughout the major leagues in 2019;
- Update production specifications with Rawlings and add specs for aerodynamic properties;
- Develop aerodynamic tests;
- Create standards for mud rubbing, to be enforced by the umpires;
- Form a scientific advisory council.

Balls have been stored in a temperature and humidity controlled environment at Denver's mile-high Coors Field since 2002 and in the desert at Phoenix's Chase Field starting this season.

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The Official Baseball Rules state balls must be 5-5¼ ounces and 9-9¼ inches in circumference. Major league balls have rubber pills at the center, wound over by three layers of yarn that is 85 percent wool and 15 percent synthetic, and then a thin layer of cotton. The cover of hide from Tennessee dairy cows is hand-sewn with 108 stitches.

"Rawlings makes baseballs with a much, much, much tighter spec than they are required to do by the actual spec itself," Nathan said. "So we recommended altering that and tightening up the spec, and so that when you say the ball is within spec, it has some meaning to it, and they followed that recommendation."

Application of the Lena Blackburne Original Baseball Rubbing Mud, which comes from the New Jersey side of the Delaware River, was not examined. The mud is used by clubhouse attendants to make the balls less slippery.

"There could be some non-uniformity there," Nathan said. "One of the things that is known to affect the flight of the ball, the carry of the ball, is the roughness of the surface of the ball. That's why the seams matter, but also the leather part, the white part matters, too, and differences in how that mud is applied could possibly provide a clue to it."

Nathan would like additional tests on surface roughness and whether pills are off-center.

"There are some smart people who are looking into this drag business, and the hope is that it will be uncovered and we will understand things better," he said.

In addition to Nathan the committee included Bowling Green statistics professor Jim Albert, Southern California mathematics professors Jay Bartro and Larry Goldstein, Stanford school of Humanities professor Roger Blandford, MIT mechanical engineering and mathematics professor Anette (Peko) Hosoi, CalTech mathematics professor emeritus Gary Lorden, Washington State mechanical and materials engineering professor Lloyd Smith, Dan Brooks of the Brooks Baseball website and Southern Cal Ph.D. student Josh Derenski.

More AP baseball: <https://apnews.com/tag/MLBbaseball>

Cyclone Mekunu pounds Yemen island on its path to Oman

By JON GAMBRELL, Associated Press

SALALAH, Oman (AP) — Cyclone Mekunu roared over the Yemeni island of Socotra in the Arabian Sea on its way to Oman on Thursday, sending torrents of water rushing down streets and sinking at least two ships. At least 17 people were reported missing in the powerful storm.

Indian meteorologists expected the "very severe" cyclone to strike Oman on Saturday near Salalah, the sultanate's third-largest city and home to some 200,000 people near the country's border with Yemen.

Mekunu's sustained winds reached 155 kph (96 mph), with gusts reaching 175 kph (109 mph), India said.

Yemen's pro-government SABA news agency reported that 17 people were missing after two ships capsized in the storm and three vehicles washed away. It said Yemen's government, exiled in Saudi Arabia, had declared Socotra a "disaster" zone after the storm.

Soaking wet residents attempted to find shelter from the storm, which brought heavy rain, flooding and mudslides.

Mohammed al-Arqabi, a resident of the island who works as a local journalist, described the situation as "very bad," saying "the water level has greatly increased, and floods are everywhere ... washing away cars."

"More than 200 families have been displaced from their homes in the suburbs of Hadibu and areas close to the northern coast," he said. "Two Indian cargo ships have gone missing, losing five of their crew members."

Rajeh Bady, a spokesman for Yemen's exiled government, said the island was in need of "urgent" aid, according to SABA.

The island, listed by UNESCO as a world natural heritage site, has been the focus of a dispute between the United Arab Emirates and Yemen's internationally recognized government amid that country's war after Shiite rebels, known as Houthis, seized the Yemeni capital, Sanaa.

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Saudi troops recently deployed on Socotra as a confidence-building measure over complaints by Yemen's government that the UAE deployed troops there without its permission.

Socotra has a unique ecosystem and is home to rare species of plants, land snail and reptile species that can be found nowhere else around the planet. It is known for its flower-and-fruit-bearing dragon blood tree, which resembles an umbrella and gets its name from the dark red sap it secretes.

A cyclone is the same as a hurricane or a typhoon; their names only change because of their location. Hurricanes are spawned east of the international date line. Typhoons develop west of the line. They are known as cyclones in the Indian Ocean and Australia.

Seasonal rains are nothing unusual for southern Oman this time of year. While the rest of the Arabian Peninsula bakes in areas where temperatures near 50 degrees Celsius (122 degrees Fahrenheit), those in the sleepy port city of Salalah enjoy rainy weather that sees fog and cool air wrap around its lush mountainsides. Temperatures drop down around 25 degrees Celsius (77 degrees Fahrenheit) during its annual monsoon festival.

Powerful cyclones, however, are rare. Over a roughly 100-year period ending in 1996, only 17 recorded cyclones struck Oman. In 2007, Cyclone Gonu tore through the sultanate and later even reached Iran, causing \$4 billion in damage in Oman alone and killing over 70 people across the Mideast.

The last hurricane-strength storm to strike within 100 miles (160 kilometers) of Salalah came in May 1959, according to the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's archives. However, that cyclone was categorized as a Category 1 hurricane, meaning it only had winds of up to 95 mph (152 kph).

Mekunu, which means "mullet" in Dhivehi, the language spoken in the Maldives, is on track to potentially be a Category 2 hurricane. It also comes just days after Cyclone Sagar struck Somalia.

Late on Thursday night, all was quiet in Salalah, the hometown of Oman's longtime ruler, Sultan Qaboos bin Said. The Royal Oman Police earlier urged citizens to seek safety and warned that floods were likely in valleys. It also said it planned to deploy more ambulances and police officers to areas likely to be affected by the cyclone.

Also, the Health Ministry said it evacuated critically ill patients at locations of the Sultan Qaboos Hospital in Salalah, flying them by air north to Muscat, the country's capital. State television aired images of others being evacuated from remote villages in the path of the cyclone.

The port of Salalah, crucial to Qatar amid a boycott by four Arab nations over a diplomatic spat with Doha, said it also had taken precautions and secured cranes ahead of the cyclone.

Tourists rushed to catch the last flights out before Salalah International Airport closed at midnight Thursday for the storm, where sandbags already stacked against some doors. However, other tourists ignored the warnings and came in anyway.

Among them were Sarah White, 29, of Nelson, New Zealand, and John Stones, 27, of Liverpool, England. They said they travel as much as they can no matter the obstacle, noting a trip to Bali that included an erupting volcano.

"I definitely don't let me let anything stop me," White said. "You never know what's going to happen."

Associated Press writers Menna Zaki and Maggie Michael in Cairo contributed to this report.

Follow Jon Gambrell on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/jongambrellAP> . His work can be found at <http://apne.ws/2galNpz> .

London couple convicted of murdering nanny, burning her body

By JILL LAWLESS, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — A London couple delusionally obsessed with a former boy-band star were found guilty Thursday of murdering their French nanny and burning her body on a bonfire in their backyard.

A jury at the Central Criminal Court convicted 35-year-old Sabrina Kouider and 40-year-old Ouissem Medouni after six days of deliberation.

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The French couple, who had a turbulent on-off relationship, denied killing Sophie Lionnet, though they admitted disposing of the body. Each defendant blamed the other for the death of the 21-year-old Frenchwoman.

Prosecutors say the pair killed Lionnet after becoming obsessed with the belief she was in league with Kouider's ex-boyfriend Mark Walton, a founding member of Irish boy band Boyzone.

Kouider was said to be fixated on Walton and believed Lionnet was having an affair with him and helping him carry out a sex-abuse plot — though in fact the two had never met. Kouider and Medouni, a banker, repeatedly interrogated Lionnet in an attempt to make her confess.

Prosecutors said the couple starved the nanny, beat her with an electrical cable and tortured her by dunking her head under water. After killing her in a bathtub in September, they threw her body on a bonfire in their yard in an affluent area of southwest London near the home of the Wimbledon tennis tournament.

When neighbors called firefighters because of the pungent-smelling smoke, Medouni claimed the charred remains belonged to a sheep.

Walton, a music producer who lives in Los Angeles, said his two-year relationship with Kouidar was "the most turbulent relationship I had ever been in."

He described in court how she would sometimes "flip, get very angry, very loud and just not care where we were. She would just go crazy over something trivial."

He continued to pay Kouidar's rent for a time after they split up in 2013. After he stopped, she began a campaign of harassment, reporting him to police more than 30 times for allegedly sexually abusing a cat, using black magic and hiring a helicopter to spy on her. Frustrated that police were not taking her seriously, she accused Walton on Facebook of being a pedophile.

Prosecutor Richard Horwell told jurors that the couple's "unhealthy, myopic, all-consuming and groundless" obsession with Walton had deprived them of reason.

Kouider collapsed in tears as the jury foreman delivered the verdicts, while Medouni hung his head. The pair will be sentenced June 26.

The victim's father, Patrick Lionnet, said in court that his daughter was a "kind, quiet and reserved" young woman who loved children and animals.

Her mother, Catherine Devallone, wept in court and called her daughter's killers "monsters."

"These monsters repeatedly beat Sophie," she said in a statement. "They starved, tortured and broke her. They took away her dignity and finally her life."

"Our Sophie will soon be laid to rest. No god will ever forgive you both for what you have done to our daughter."

Aisling Hosein of the Crown Prosecution Service said "only Kouider and Medouni know exactly how they killed Sophie but the prosecution was able to prove that she died as a result of purposeful and sustained violence, and not by accident."

Detective Inspector Domenica Catino, who led the investigation, called it an "extremely harrowing and tragic case."

"I believe that we are Sophie's voice telling of the torment, abuse and torture she suffered, and today she has finally been heard," Catino said.

Probe: Missile that downed MH17 came from Russia-based unit

By MIKE CORDER, Associated Press

BUNNIK, Netherlands (AP) — The missile used to shoot down a Malaysia Airlines passenger jet over eastern Ukraine in 2014, killing all 298 aboard, belonged to a Russia-based military unit, an international team of investigators said Thursday after painstakingly studying video and photos of a military convoy.

The criminal investigation team "has concluded that the Buk Telar with which Flight MH17 was shot down is from the 53rd anti-aircraft missile brigade from Kursk in the Russian Federation," said Wilbert Paulissen, head of the Netherlands' National Crime Squad, referring to the missile system used.

It was the clearest link yet published by the investigators to the involvement of Russian military in the

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deadly surface-to-air missile strike on the Boeing 777, and it echoed findings published in 2016 by the Bellingcat investigative group.

Russia has always denied involvement in the downing of Flight 17, which was en route from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, when it was blown out of the sky at 33,000 feet (about 10,000 meters) over war-ravaged eastern Ukraine on July 17, 2014.

Bodies, debris and burning wreckage were strewn over a field of sunflowers near the rebel-held village of Hrabove in the Donetsk region of eastern Ukraine, about 40 kilometers (25 miles) from the Russian border, where fighting had been raging for months.

On Thursday, Russia criticized the Joint Investigation Team, or JIT, for relying on claims by Bellingcat.

"If the international investigative team is indeed interested in tracking down the real culprits of the MH17 catastrophe, its members would better rely on facts and witness testimony and not fakes produced by Bellingcat and Ukraine's Security Service," the Russian Defense Ministry said in a statement.

The Russian Foreign Ministry also criticized the investigators for allegedly ignoring evidence provided by Russia, including radar surveillance of the airspace at the time of the flight.

"In these circumstances, we have legitimate questions about the true underlying cause of the decision of the JIT to disclose the preliminary conclusion," the Foreign Ministry statement said.

Prosecutors said they have presented their findings to Moscow and are seeking answers, but so far have not received a response. The international team running the criminal investigation appealed for help from witnesses who can testify about the involvement of the Russian military's 53rd anti-aircraft missile brigade.

Prosecutor Fred Westerbeke said the new conclusion raised new questions, "such as the question about how actively involved the brigade itself was in bringing down Flight MH17."

Westerbeke said the JIT is not yet ready to identify suspects, but added: "I can say that we are now entering the ... last phase of the investigation."

Prosecutors said in 2016 that the plane was shot down by a Buk 9M38 missile fired from territory controlled by Russia-backed rebels, using a mobile launcher trucked in from Russia and hastily returned there.

Thursday's presentation went a step further by identifying the exact unit allegedly involved in the transport. It showed a compilation of video and photos from social media tracing the missile brigade convoy's journey in the weeks before the incident.

"All findings from this forensic investigation confirm the earlier conclusion of the JIT that Flight MH17 was shot down by 9M38 series missile," said Jennifer Hurst of the Australian Federal Police.

Investigators displayed parts of the engine casing and exhaust system of a Buk 9M38 series missile recovered from eastern Ukraine and showed photos of its serial number, which they said demonstrated it was made in Moscow.

However, investigators said they could not yet say with certainty that it was the exact missile used to down MH17. They appealed for witnesses to come forward with more information about the missile and the role of the Russian military in transporting it.

In a statement, Australian Foreign Minister Julie Bishop said: "That a sophisticated weapon belonging to the Russian Army was dispatched and used to shoot down a civilian aircraft should be of grave international concern. We are discussing these findings with our partners and considering our options."

Ultimately, any suspects identified and charged will be prosecuted in Dutch courts — if they can be arrested and brought to trial.

Of the 298 people killed, 196 were Dutch, 42 were Malaysian and 27 were Australian.

Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko said in a Facebook post that he would "do everything possible to ensure that the actions of the Russian Federation as a state which supports terrorism get an appropriate assessment" in the International Court of Justice.

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte cut short a visit to India so he could chair a Cabinet meeting to discuss the findings.

Piet Ploeg, a member of a foundation for victims' relatives, said the Dutch government should not consider legal steps against Russia.

Belgian Foreign Minister Didier Reynders urged all countries to cooperate fully with the investigation "so that those responsible can be brought to justice."

Associated Press writer Vladimir Isachenkov in Moscow contributed.

Chaos of Las Vegas shooting promoted fears of wider attack

By KEN RITTER, Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Gunshots came so rapidly during the deadliest mass shooting in the nation's modern history that one Las Vegas police officer feared he was facing a fully stocked assault team with tactical gear.

Other officers raced casino-to-casino, debunking reports of multiple shooters and false bomb threats on the Las Vegas Strip while colleagues put themselves in harm's way to protect wounded and fleeing concertgoers in the Oct. 1 shooting that left 58 people dead, hundreds injured and uncounted others traumatized.

"As I was lying on top of them people were trampling over top of us trying to escape the area," wrote one officer, identified only as M. Amburgey.

About 2,100 pages of police reports, witness statements and dispatch logs released by police Wednesday under court order paint another partial picture of horror and heroism, chaos and confusion — and shed new detail on how officers and hotel security responded to the worst massacre in modern U.S. history.

It was the third release this month of what Clark County Sheriff Joe Lombardo has said could become weekly disbursements of public records sought by media including The Associated Press.

"We saw people get trampled and saw many bleeding people," wrote a woman who had been working in the VIP area of the Route 91 Harvest Festival, an open-air concert venue with 22,000 people. Witness names were blacked out, so their accounts could not be verified.

More than seven months after the attack, the documents did not answer the question of motive. Police and the FBI said they would not comment on the newly released information and that the shooting is still under investigation.

Authorities have said Stephen Paddock acted alone when he opened fire from his high-rise hotel room into the concert grounds below, and that the attack had no link to international terrorism.

One account raised more questions about when police reached Paddock's room at the Mandalay Bay resort and why they waited more than an hour to enter it.

"When we got off on the 32nd floor, we heard active shooting still going on," said a hotel employee who said he accompanied a Las Vegas police officer.

Authorities have said gunfire stopped before police reached the 32nd floor, and that Paddock killed himself before officers reached his door.

In another report, a hairstylist told police that a client with the last name Paddock spoke in the months before the shooting about an open-air concert venue being susceptible to attack. The stylist said she asked a woman she believed to be Paddock's girlfriend, Marilou Danley, if she knew what the client was talking about.

"She's like, 'Oh, what, about somebody shooting into a crowd and, you know, wanting to hurt a lot of people?'" the stylist told police.

Authorities said Danley was in the Philippines during the shooting. While Danley had been called the only person of interest in the case, Lombardo, the elected head of the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department, said earlier this year that he did not expect criminal charges against her.

Among the tales were officers' accounts of preparing to face a large-scale attack by multiple shooters.

A patrol officer identified as A. Mitre prayed as he and his partner raced to the scene. Mitre he wanted to run away but reminded himself, "You have to stop the threat, you have to save them."

"I would've bet my paycheck there was an assault team on the ground," Officer M. Bordoni wrote in his report.

Officers described crouching behind patrol vehicles on the Las Vegas Strip, unable to determine where gunfire was coming from while a vehicle window shattered and bullets hit the ground. A rookie officer,

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Brady Cook, was wounded in the arm. Detective Casey Clarkson was struck in the neck.

Authorities were so on edge that a woman was detained after presenting a Stratosphere security guard with a box she said was for police. Officers had a drug-sniffing dog check the package to determine it was indeed doughnuts. The woman said she was just trying to perform a "random act of kindness."

A list of dispatch calls offered a minute-by-minute account of witnesses' initial reports, with 911 calls beginning at 10:08 p.m. One operator reports being told that people were being trampled and that as many as 20 people had been shot.

Authorities say Paddock, 64, a real estate investor and high-stakes gambler, had amassed an arsenal of nearly two dozen assault-style rifles and numerous high-capacity ammunition magazines in his room where he broke the windows and fired into the crowd.

Police have not yet released 911 calls, and have said they have hundreds of hours more of witness cell-phone recordings and footage from officers' body-worn cameras.

Contributing to this report were Associated Press journalists Michelle L. Price in Las Vegas; Scott Sonner in Reno, Nevada; Courtney Bonnell in Phoenix; Brian Eason in Denver; Amanda Lee Myers in Los Angeles; Martha Bellisle in Seattle; Lindsay Whitehurst in Salt Lake City; Terry Tang, Jacques Billeaud and Anita Snow in Phoenix; Mary Hudetz in Albuquerque, New Mexico; Becky Bohrer in Juneau, Alaska; Felicia Fonseca in Flagstaff, Arizona.

Asian shares lower as NKorea cancellation adds uncertainty

By KELVIN CHAN, AP Business Writer

HONG KONG (AP) — Asian stock indexes were mostly lower Friday as investors factored in fresh geopolitical uncertainty following the abrupt cancellation of a meeting between the U.S. and North Korean leaders.

KEEPING SCORE: Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 index rose 0.1 percent to 22,457.20 but South Korea's Kospi lost 0.2 percent to 2,461.77. Hong Kong's Hang Seng shed 0.5 percent to 30,603.56 and the Shanghai Composite in mainland China slipped 0.2 percent to 3,147.62. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 dipped 0.1 percent to 6,031.30. Taiwan's benchmark rose but Southeast Asian indexes were mostly lower.

SUMMIT SCRUBBED: President Donald Trump cancelled a June meeting with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, blaming it on "tremendous anger and open hostility" in a recent statement by a North Korean official. Trump later said the meeting could still happen. North Korea said it's still willing to sit down for talks with the U.S. "at any time, at any format" while South Korea's President Moon Jae-in said he was "very perplexed" that the meeting was off.

QUOTE WORTHY: "The reality of the situation is starting to dawn on markets that this is political theater engineered for domestic consumption. The reality is it doesn't change the economic outlook at all," said Michael McCarthy, chief strategist at CMC Markets in Sydney. He added that the more likely explanation is that investors are using it as an excuse to pull back after a strong run in the markets.

WEEK AHEAD: Investors are anticipating the latest batch of economic data for U.S. and China due out next week, including private payroll report and GDP numbers for the U.S. on Wednesday and China's official monthly manufacturing index for Thursday. The numbers will give fresh insight into the state of the world's two largest economies.

WALL STREET: Major U.S. benchmarks finished lower. The S&P 500 index dropped 0.2 percent to 2,727.76 and the Dow Jones industrial average lost 0.3 percent to 24,811.76. The Nasdaq composite dipped less than 0.1 percent to 7,424.43.

ENERGY: Oil futures extended losses after sliding the previous day on news reports that said member nations of the OPEC cartel might pump more oil in response to reduced exports from Venezuela and Iran. Benchmark U.S. crude fell 12 cents to \$70.59 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract lost 1.6 percent to settle at \$70.71 per barrel on Thursday. Brent crude, used to price international oils, fell 13 cents to \$78.66 in London.

CURRENCIES: The dollar rose to 109.56 yen from 109.25 yen in late trading Thursday. The euro weak-

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ened to \$1.1711 from \$1.1720.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Friday, May 25, the 145th day of 2018. There are 220 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On May 25, 1968, the Gateway Arch in St. Louis was dedicated by Vice President Hubert Humphrey and Interior Secretary Stewart Udall.

On this date:

In 1521, Martin Luther was branded a heretic and had his writings banned by the Edict of Worms (vohrms) because of his religious beliefs.

In 1787, the Constitutional Convention began at the Pennsylvania State House (Independence Hall) in Philadelphia after enough delegates had shown up for a quorum.

In 1793, Father Stephen Theodore Badin became the first Roman Catholic priest to be ordained in the United States during a ceremony in Baltimore.

In 1810, Argentina began its revolt against Spanish rule with the forming of the Primera Junta in Buenos Aires.

In 1916, the Chicago Tribune published an interview with Henry Ford in which the automobile industrialist was quoted as saying, "History is more or less bunk."

In 1935, Babe Ruth hit his last three career home runs — nos. 712, 713 and 714 — for the Boston Braves in a game against the Pittsburgh Pirates. (The Pirates won, 11-7.)

In 1942, U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Joseph Stilwell, frustrated over being driven out of Burma by Japanese forces during World War II, told reporters in Delhi, India: "I claim we got a hell of a beating."

In 1957, the third tube of the Lincoln Tunnel connecting New York and New Jersey was opened to traffic.

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy told Congress: "I believe that this nation should commit itself to achieving the goal, before this decade is out, of landing a man on the moon and returning him safely to the earth."

In 1979, 273 people died when an American Airlines DC-10 crashed just after takeoff from Chicago's O'Hare Airport. Six-year-old Etan Patz (AY'-tahn payts) disappeared while on his way to a school bus stop in lower Manhattan. (In April 2017, former store clerk Pedro Hernandez, convicted of killing Etan, was sentenced to at least 25 years in prison.)

In 1986, an estimated 7 million Americans participated in "Hands Across America" to raise money for the nation's hungry and homeless.

In 1992, Jay Leno made his debut as host of NBC's "Tonight Show," succeeding Johnny Carson.

Ten years ago: A tornado tore through the Parkersburg, Iowa, area, killing nine people. NASA's Phoenix Mars Lander arrived on the Red Planet to begin searching for evidence of water; the spacecraft confirmed the presence of water ice at its landing site. Seven crashes and spinouts marred the first Indianapolis 500 since the two warring open-wheel series (CART and IRL) came together under the IndyCar banner; Scott Dixon stayed ahead of the trouble to win the race. The French film "The Class" won top honors at the Cannes Film Festival. J.R. Simplot, Idaho's billionaire potato king, died in Boise at age 99.

Five years ago: Making his first official trip to sub-Saharan Africa, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry demanded that Nigeria respect human rights as it cracked down on Islamist extremists and pledged to work hard in the coming months to ease tensions between Sudan and South Sudan. A French soldier, Cedric Cordier, was wounded in the throat in a busy commercial district outside Paris; a suspect was later arrested. Marshall Lytle, 79, the original bass player for Bill Haley & His Comets, died in New Port Richey, Florida.

One year ago: Surrounded by stone-faced allies, President Donald Trump rebuked fellow NATO members for failing to meet the military alliance's financial benchmarks. Republican Greg Gianforte won a special election for Montana's sole U.S. House seat a day after being charged with assaulting a reporter.

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Today's Birthdays: Actress Ann Robinson is 89. Former White House news secretary Ron Nessen is 84. Country singer-songwriter Tom T. Hall is 82. Actor Sir Ian McKellen is 79. Country singer Jessi Colter is 75. Actress-singer Leslie Uggams is 75. Movie director and Muppeteer Frank Oz is 74. Actress Karen Valentine is 71. Actress Jacki Weaver is 71. Rock singer Klaus Meine (The Scorpions) is 70. Actress Patti D'Arbanville is 67. Playwright Eve Ensler is 65. Musician Cindy Cashdollar is 63. Actress Connie Sellecca is 63. Rock singer-musician Paul Weller is 60. Sen. Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., is 58. Actor-comedian Mike Myers is 55. Actor Matt Borlenghi is 51. Actor Joseph Reitman is 50. Rock musician Glen Drover is 49. Actress Anne Heche (haych) is 49. Actresses Lindsay and Sidney Greenbush (TV: "Little House on the Prairie") are 48. Actor-comedian Jamie Kennedy is 48. Actress Octavia Spencer is 48. Actor Justin Henry is 47. Rapper Daz Dillinger is 45. Actress Molly Sims is 45. Singer Lauryn Hill is 43. Actress Erinn Hayes is 42. Actor Cillian Murphy is 42. Actor Ethan Suplee (soo-PLÉE') is 42. Rock musician Todd Whitener is 40. Actor Corbin Allred is 39. Actress-singer Lauren Frost is 33. Actress Ebonee (cq) Noel is 28. Musician Guy Lawrence (Disclosure) is 27. Olympic gold medal gymnast Aly Raisman is 24.

Thought for Today: "There is nothing final about a mistake, except its being taken as final." — Phyllis Bottome (buh-TOHM'), English author (1884-1963).