

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 1 of 52



JOHNSON AGENCY

Real Estate & Insurance

Jay Johnson, Broker

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

- 1- Johnson Agency Ad
- 1- Lewandowski Bridal Shower
- 1- Chicken Soup for the Soul
- 2- Special School Board Agenda
- 2- Governor Requests Flags At Half-Staff On Memorial Day Morning
- 2- Death Notice: Leon Stange
- 2- Robert Whitmyre for Dist. 1
- 2- Groton Legion Ad
- 3- Motorists to Pay Highest Memorial Day Gas Prices Since 2014
- 4- Thune's Weekly Column
- 5- Golf Awards
- 5- Groton Kiwanis News
- 6- Eisenbeisz completes term as SDFDA president
- 6- Agtegra Ad
- 6- Helmer's 90th Birthday
- 7- South Dakota State University announces dean's list
- 8- Gov. Dugaard's Weekly Column
- 9- Rounds' Weekly Column
- 10- Groton Care and Rehab Help Wanted Ad
- 10- Today in Weather History
- 11- Today's Forecast
- 12- Yesterday's Weather
- 12- National Weather map
- 12- Today's Weather Almanac
- 13- Daily Devotional
- 14- 2018 Groton Community Events
- 15- News from the Associated Press

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.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 2 of 52

GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #06-6

Special School Board Meeting May 29, 2018 – 7:00 PM – GHS Conference Room

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order with members present. Approve agenda as proposed.

POTENTIAL CONFLICTS DISCLOSURE PURSUANT SDCL 23-3

1. Executive session pursuant SDCL 1-25-2(4) for negotiations and SDCL 1-25-2(1) for personnel.

2. Approve 2018-2019 GASA Negotiated Agreement.

3. Issue auxiliary staff work agreements for 2018-2019 school year.

ADJOURN

Governor Requests Flags At Half-Staff On Memorial Day Morning

PIERRE, S.D. – Gov. Dennis Daugaard asks that flags be flown at half-staff on the morning of Memorial Day, Monday, May 28, in observance of fallen military service members.

President Donald Trump has proclaimed Memorial Day as a Day of Prayer for Permanent Peace and has called on governors of the United States to request flags at half-staff until noon and then at full-staff from noon until sunset.

The President has designated the hour beginning at 11 a.m., local time, to unite in prayer. He also urges Americans to observe a National Moment of Remembrance beginning at 3 p.m. local time on Memorial Day.

Death Notice: Leon Stange

Leon Stange, 84, of Stratford passed away Friday, May 25, 2018 at Sanford Medical Center, Aberdeen. Services are pending with Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton.

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

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



**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)**

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 3 of 52

Motorists to Pay Highest Memorial Day Gas Prices Since 2014 Gas prices jump 15-cents in less than three weeks; up 60 cents over last year.

The Week

As local motorists are counting down the days until Memorial Day, they are also counting up the extra dollars they're spending at the pump. Drivers could potentially see prices rise a few cents more as the holiday comes and goes. In South Dakota the gas price average is \$2.87, which is up seven cents from last week and 50 cents higher than last year.

Today's national gas price average is \$2.97, which is up six cents in the last week, up 19 cents in the last month and 60 cents higher than this time last year. Prices are creeping up a little less than a penny a day due in part to the recent decision by the White House to re-impose sanctions on Iran. The big question is whether the price point will hit, or even surpass, the dreaded \$3 per gallon over the Memorial Day holiday weekend. Even if it does, it will not deter 115,000 South Dakotans traveling by automobile to their holiday destinations. Yet this summer, American households and consumers will experience higher motor fuel related expenses, the highest in four years. Low-income households will be adversely and disproportionately impacted by the rising cost of gasoline during summertime.

At the close of NYMEX trading Thursday, West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude oil settled at \$70.71 per barrel, down \$1.13 from Wednesday, the largest loss seen in two weeks. WTI currently sits nearly more than \$20 higher per barrel than the same date last year. In addition to crude oil prices, the announcement of the to-be reinstated Iran sanctions, other geopolitical events, decreased global supply, increased global demand, and record U.S. production have all contributed toward driving up gas prices since January.

The Weekend

"The national gas price average is 60 cents more expensive than last year and the highest for Memorial Day since 2014," said Marilyn Buskohl, Manager of Public and Government Affairs for AAA South Dakota. "However, travelers will not be deterred by higher prices at the pumps, as AAA forecasts almost 37 million travelers will hit the road for the holiday weekend, the highest travel volume for the holiday since 2005."

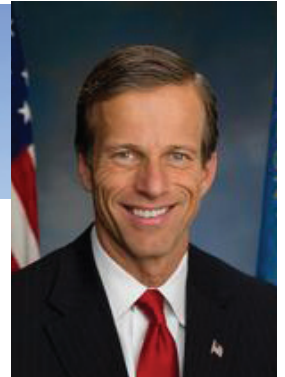
The Week Ahead

Higher gas prices will make for a more expensive summer driving season, which begins with Memorial Day weekend, for most travelers. Trends indicate that this summer is likely to bring the national average to at least \$3.00 per gallon and the average family could pay \$1,318 for gasoline, \$225 to \$250 more than 2017.

AAA has a variety of resources to help motorists save on fuel:

Fuel Price Finder (AAA.com/fuelfinder) locates the lowest fuel price in your area.
AAA Gas Cost Calculator (<http://gasprices.aaa.com/aaa-gas-cost-calculator/>) helps budget travel expenses.
TripTik Mobile (AAA.com/mobile) plots fuel prices along your travel route.
AAA's Member Rewards Visa® Credit Card (AAA.com/financial/AAAvisa.htm) accumulates double points on fuel purchases.

John Thune
U.S. SENATOR - SOUTH DAKOTA



Strengthening the U.S. Drought Monitor

By Sen. John Thune

South Dakota's farmers and ranchers are as smart and hardworking as they come. For many of them, the work they do to help feed the world is part of their identity – it's what makes them tick. Their job isn't exactly a typical nine-to-five gig, though. If you ask them, the work never really ends. Early mornings. Late evenings. Weekends. Holidays. Extreme weather. There are no days off. It's this unique way of life and its never-ending challenges that gives farmers and ranchers such an interesting perspective when it comes to understanding and helping develop the federal policy that affects their industry.

No one knows agriculture policy and what it needs better than they do, which is why with their help, for the last 14 months, I've been introducing multiple legislative proposals that would update and modify several titles of the farm bill. Many of these legislative ideas were directly inspired by the feedback I received from folks in South Dakota's agriculture community. I take their advice seriously and appreciate that they're always willing to engage and provide thoughtful advice to me and my staff.

Throughout this farm bill rollout, I've hosted several events with South Dakota farmers and ranchers to keep this conversation going. In April, at an event in Rapid City, I heard from several ranchers who were concerned by inaccurate and inconsistent precipitation data and drought designations. While not directly related to the farm bill, after learning more about it, their concerns were well-founded.

For example, early this spring, after last year's drought in West River, the U.S. Forest Service determined that its federal grasslands had been too dry, and as a result, the stocking rates needed to be reduced. The U.S. Drought Monitor, a weekly comprehensive assessment of rainfall and soil moisture conditions throughout the country that's used to determine when and where drought-related assistance is needed, classified those same areas as not dry enough for ranchers to be eligible for certain grazing loss disaster and insurance assistance. The two U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) program determinations were at odds with one another and, understandably, led to confusion and frustration.

After hearing these concerns, I returned to Washington and put pen to paper. I knew there had to be a way to make the Drought Monitor a more accurate and effective tool for both members of the agriculture community and policymakers.

As a result, I introduced a pair of bills that I think would help address the issues these ranchers recently raised by ensuring that USDA uses accurate and consistent data in administering programs that are similarly designed to help the agriculture community.

The Improved Soil Moisture and Precipitation Monitoring Act of 2018 would provide tools and direction to USDA to help improve the accuracy of the Drought Monitor. My bill would, among other things, require all of the agencies within USDA that use precipitation data to determine livestock grazing loss assistance and stocking rates to coordinate with one another. This streamlined approach is a pretty common-sense idea, if you ask me.

I also introduced a bill that would strengthen and improve the Cooperative Observer Program (COOP) of the National Weather Service (NWS). The Commerce Committee, which I chair, has jurisdiction over NWS, among many other federal agencies. The bill would support state-coordinated programs that provide data for the Drought Monitor and other weather programs. COOP is a volunteer-run organization and is the nation's largest and oldest weather network. The information they collect can be very helpful in learning more about weather patterns and developing federal policy.

I'm continually thankful for everything South Dakota's farmers and ranchers do for our communities and can say with certainty that these are not the first, nor will they be the last pieces of legislation that move through the halls of Congress thanks to the suggestions, input, and support from folks throughout the state. Not surprisingly, and this is a great example, most of the truly good ideas come from far outside of the Washington Beltway!

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 5 of 52



Golf Awards

The golf team awards for the 2017-2018 year were give out May 22 at the golf course. Hunter Kassube was most improved, Payton Colestock was top medalist, Portia Kettering was most improved and Cade Guthmiller was top medalist. (Courtesy Photo)



Groton Kiwanis

Lee Schinkel was program leader for Groton Kiwnis Club, last Wednesday noon. Lee introduced Randy Kantak, Aberdeen; who gave his magic and inspirational program. Shown in the pic, L-R are Roger Rix, congratulating Randy on his fine program. Lee introduced his two guests, fellow flower planters that day, Dick and Ruby Donovan. A monetary donation will be given to the newly formed GHS trap shoot team. Lee delivered the peanut butter and jelly collections to GHS for their project. Next week's program leader is Sharon Simon.



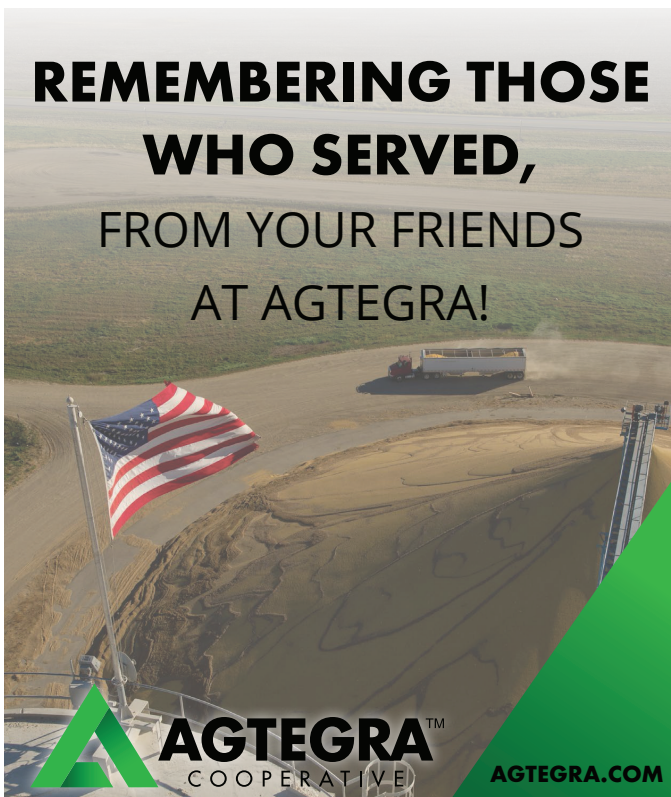
Picture of current SDFDA Board....From left, Robert Ellsworth, Josh Fiedler, Andrea Eisenbeisz, Terry Rietveld, Serena Schlapkohl, Mitch Steinhoff, Kelly Hyke and Justin Nelson. (Courtesy photo)

Eisenbeisz completes term as SDFDA president

Andrea Eisenbeisz of Pateznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton, completed her term as President of the South Dakota Funeral Directors Association (SDFDA) at its annual state convention held May 2-4 in Sioux Falls. This year's convention marked the association's 119th anniversary.

Eisenbeisz, a funer director for 19 years, will now serve on the executive board of the SDFDA as immediate past president for the 2018-19 association year.

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



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.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 7 of 52

South Dakota State University announces dean's list

BROOKINGS, S.D. - The following students have been named to the dean's list for academic excellence after the spring 2018 semester at South Dakota State University. To earn dean's list distinctions in SDSU's colleges, students must have completed a minimum of 12 credits and must have earned at least a 3.5 GPA on a 4.0 scale. Students with an asterisk received a perfect 4.0 GPA.

Students from 33 states and 36 foreign nations are on the list.

Students with F, I, U, RI or RU grades are not eligible regardless of system term GPA attained. Note that this criteria includes courses that were taken at other South Dakota institutions this term. A minimum of 12 credits within the 100-699 course range must be taken. A student who passes pregeneral education courses may still qualify, if the student has 12 other credits that do fall within the 100-699 range.

School Codes:

SAGBS – College of Agriculture and Biological Sciences
SA&S – College of Arts and Sciences
SEHS – College of Education and Human Sciences
SENGR – Jerome J. Lohr College of Engineering
SPAHP – College of Pharmacy and Allied Health Professions
SUC – University College

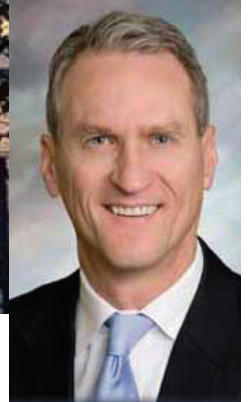
Katherine Ann LaMee, Andover, SEHS
Megan Dianne Malsam, Bath, SUC
Daniel Ward Sharp, Bath, SENGR, SAGBS
Cory Wren Murphy*, Frederick, SA&S
Kyler Harrison Ell, Groton, SA&S
Ashley Elizabeth Gibbs*, Groton, SEHS
Kathleen Jo Groeblichhoff, Groton, SPAHP
Kelby Nathan Hawkins, Groton, SUC
Nicole Grand Lewandowski*, Groton, SA&S
Keri Jo Pappas*, Groton, SAGBS, SPAHP
Maggie Ann Simon*, Groton, SAGBS
Erin Elizabeth Smith, Groton, SA&S
James Lee Thompson, Groton, SAGBS
Kassidy Opal Kann*, Langford, SA&S
Andrew David Planteen, Langford, SAGBS
Logan Christine Ellingson, Stratford, SAGBS
Cole Michael Hinz, Westport, SEHS

Broton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 8 of 52



South Dakota Governor
Dennis Daugaard



In The Spirit Of Dr. Mead

In the late 19th Century, Dr. Leonard Mead served as the superintendent of South Dakota's hospital for the mentally ill. Dr. Mead was known for treating his patients with dignity and he had a kind of compassion that wasn't common enough for the time. When asked, he could recite the medical history and condition of each of his patients, and he designed the facilities and the grounds to be safe and serene.

South Dakota made strides under Dr. Mead's leadership and, fortunately, we have made many, many more since Dr. Mead's time. We've seen progress in diagnoses, in treatments and, more recently, in how people with mental illness are treated when they enter the justice system.

This recent progress is thanks to Chief Justice David Gilbertson's task force on mental health. In 2017, the group brought a proposal that I signed into law which made a number of reforms to improve the identification and treatment of people with mental illness involved with the criminal justice system.

Prior to this reform, counties sent defendants to the state Human Services Center in Yankton to receive competency evaluations, which are necessary to determine whether a person has the mental capacity to stand trial. Those evaluations cost \$3,333 each, and because of the high demand, defendants often waited four months to be evaluated.

The Chief Justice's reform expanded the types of professionals who can conduct evaluations and dedicated \$125,000 to reimburse counties to conduct competency evaluations locally. Now the average wait time is down to 30 days and, based on the claims submitted for reimbursement thus far, the average cost has fallen from \$3,333 to less than \$1,000.

Progress is also being made on other fronts. The Unified Judicial System, the State Bar and multiple state agencies are working together to roll out training for attorneys, law enforcement, first responders and other professionals within the criminal justice system who may encounter persons with mental health issues. Additionally, the Law Enforcement Standards and Training Commission will hire a crisis intervention training coordinator to promote and implement mental health crisis intervention processes within local communities throughout the state. The goal is for the criminal justice system to identify and treat mental health issues earlier. This is better for the person with mental illness, and it can also avoid costs for counties and for the state.

I am encouraged by the successes we are already seeing from these reforms. Though it is still early and the law has yet to be fully implemented, the policies are beginning to work as intended.

Still, more can be done, and I am glad the conversation on mental health continues. It won't be just one law or one administration, legislature, chief justice, or state hospital superintendent that perfects our system. Rather, it will require the sustained effort of many over a long period of time. In the spirit of Dr. Mead, I hope our future leaders will contribute all they can in their times.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 9 of 52



U.S. Economy is Improving Thanks to Pro-Growth Policies

The United States economy is looking up, thanks to the pro-growth policies implemented by the current administration and this congress. Since President Trump took office, 3 million new jobs have been created. Nearly 800,000 jobs have been created just since the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act was enacted in January.

Our economy is growing at a faster rate than previously expected. Prior to the passage of the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office (CBO) projected that the U.S. economy would grow 2.1 percent in 2018. Now that tax reform has been signed into law, CBO changed their outlook and now predicts that it will grow 3.3 percent this year. This is great news for employers wanting to grow their businesses and for employees looking for higher wages or new jobs.

In Congress, we're building on this momentum by advancing legislation that rolls back costly, onerous regulations on small businesses, small-to-medium-sized financial institutions, farms and ranches so they can get back to work for their customers instead of focusing valuable time, energy and money on compliance. The president recently signed into law the bipartisan Economic Growth, Regulatory Relief and Consumer Protection Act, of which I am an original sponsor.

This new law begins to undo the unnecessary regulations placed on smaller, local banks and credit unions under the 2010 Dodd-Frank Act—financial institutions that had nothing to do with the 2008 crisis. Making sure families and businesses have access to credit when they need it is critical as we work to grow a healthy American economy, and relieving smaller financial institutions from costly, burdensome regulations frees them up to do what they do best: serve their customers and support their communities.

The Economic Growth, Regulatory Relief and Consumer Protection Act includes seven provisions that I authored. Some of these include the Home Mortgage Disclosure Adjustment Act, which provides small banks and credit unions with data reporting relief, as well as a measure to provide relief from Dodd-Frank capital rules to banks and local governments that issue debt so banks can count high-quality municipal bonds toward capital requirements. It provides relief from the enhanced supplemental leverage ratio—or eSLR—for custody banks that service mutual funds and state and local pension plans. It also includes my provision to streamline federal rules to help small, local federal savings associations, or thrifts, expand their ability to offer loans to more families and businesses without going through a costly charter conversion process.

The law also includes a provision from my Community Bank Access to Capital Act that would make it easier for banks with less than \$3 billion in assets to raise capital and grow. Another important provision included in the law is the Protecting Veterans Credit Act, which protects the credit of veterans who are awaiting reimbursements from the VA Choice program. Lastly, the law includes rural appraisal relief for instances when borrowers apply for a loan less than \$400,000 and have difficulty finding a qualified appraiser—which is a fairly common occurrence in rural areas in South Dakota.

This new law, in addition to tax reform and the other pro-growth economic policies we're advancing, will continue to boost business in America, and result in more jobs and higher wages. When businesses aren't tied down by heavy-handed federal regulations, they are free to be innovative and reinvest into the economy. And when smaller, local banks and credit unions don't have to spend the majority of their time and money on compliance, they can focus on providing services to their customers. The economy is improving because the era of government-knows-best policy is finally coming to an end.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 10 of 52

Today in Weather History

May 26, 1983: Unofficial rainfall of up to 5 inches caused widespread flooding of basements and streets in and near Aberdeen. Only 1.72 inches of rain was reported at the Aberdeen airport.

May 26, 1985: Hail of unknown diameter was five inches deep, 1 mile north of Rosholt. Some hail remained on the ground until the following morning.

May 26, 1992: A widespread frost and hard freeze hit most of South Dakota except portions of the south-east causing up to \$14 million in potential crop losses to growing corn, soybeans, wheat, and other crops. Some low temperatures include; 23 degrees 12 miles SSW of Harrold; 26 at one mile west of Highmore and 23 north of Highmore; 27 in Kennebec; and 28 degrees 1 NW of Faulkton and at Redfield.

1771: Thomas Jefferson recorded the greatest flood ever known in Virginia. The great Virginia flood occurred as torrential rains in the mountains brought all rivers in the state to record high levels. Click [HERE](#) to read Jefferson's entry in his Garden Book.

1917: A major tornadic thunderstorm took a 293-mile track across parts of central Illinois and Indiana. Once believed to be a single tornado, the later study indicated it was likely at least eight separate tornadoes. The first touchdown was about 50 miles south-southeast of Quincy, Illinois. The tornadic storm tracked due east, before beginning a northeast curve near Charleston; separate tornadic storms then curved southeast from Charleston. The towns of Mattoon and Charleston bore the brunt of the tornado. Damage from this severe tornado in Mattoon was about 2.5 blocks wide and 2.5 miles long, with over 700 houses destroyed, while the Charleston portion was 600 yards wide and 1.5 miles long, with 220 homes damaged. Dozens of farms were hit along the path, and at least three farm homes were swept away between Manhattan and Monee. Another estimated F4 tornado touched down 6 miles south of Crown Point and devastated a dozen farms. A total of 7 people died, and 120 were injured. 53 people were killed in Mattoon, and 38 were killed in Charleston. Overall, 101 people in Illinois were killed during the tornado outbreak, with 638 injured.

2003: A BMI Airbus bound for Cyprus from Manchester, England encountered a violent thunderstorm over Germany. The plane bounced and twisted violently as it ran into severe turbulence with huge hailstones pounding the exterior. A football-sized hole was punched in the aircraft's surface. None of the 213 passengers or eight crew members was seriously hurt.

2009: Northeast of Anchorage, Alaska, two hikers climbed a ridge to see a developing storm better. Lightning knocked the couple unconscious. Regaining consciousness, they called emergency services as the woman was unable to walk. The man's shoes looked as though they had melted.

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

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 11 of 52

Sat May 26	Sun May 27	Mon May 28	Tue May 29	Wed May 30	Thu May 31	Fri Jun 1
						
96°F	97°F	91°F	85°F	83°F	85°F	85°F
65°F	67°F	67°F	63°F	59°F	62°F	72°F
SSW 8 MPH	SSE 21 MPH Precip 20%	ESE 11 MPH Precip 20%	SSE 17 MPH Precip 50%	SW 10 MPH Precip 20%	N 8 MPH	ESE 11 MPH Precip 20%

Record High Temps Possible

Saturday, May 26th

Sunday, May 27th

Location	Forecast High	Record High
Aberdeen	96°	94° in 1900
Watertown	93°	91° in 1911
Pierre	96°	96° in 2006
Mobridge	95°	98° in 2006
Sisseton	95°	94° in 1934
Kennebec	96°	97° in 1914
Wheaton	95°	90° in 1966

HOT!

Location	Forecast High	Record High
Aberdeen	97°	98° in 1934
Watertown	95°	93° in 1900
Pierre	97°	105° in 1969
Mobridge	93°	106° in 1934
Sisseton	96°	98° in 1934
Kennebec	97°	102° in 1969
Wheaton	95°	97° in 1969



NWS Aberdeen, South Dakota

Updated: 5/26/2018 5:18 AM Central

Published on: 05/26/2018 at 5:29AM

The heat will continue right through this weekend, with highs well into the 90s. Record highs are certainly possible for many areas both today, and again on Sunday. Along with the heat today will come mostly sunny skies and fairly light winds. On Sunday, breezy and gusty south winds can be expected. For those planning outdoor activities this weekend, expect heat to persist, with winds possibly impacting certain activities on Sunday. There will be chances for showers and thunderstorms tonight.

Groton Daily Independent

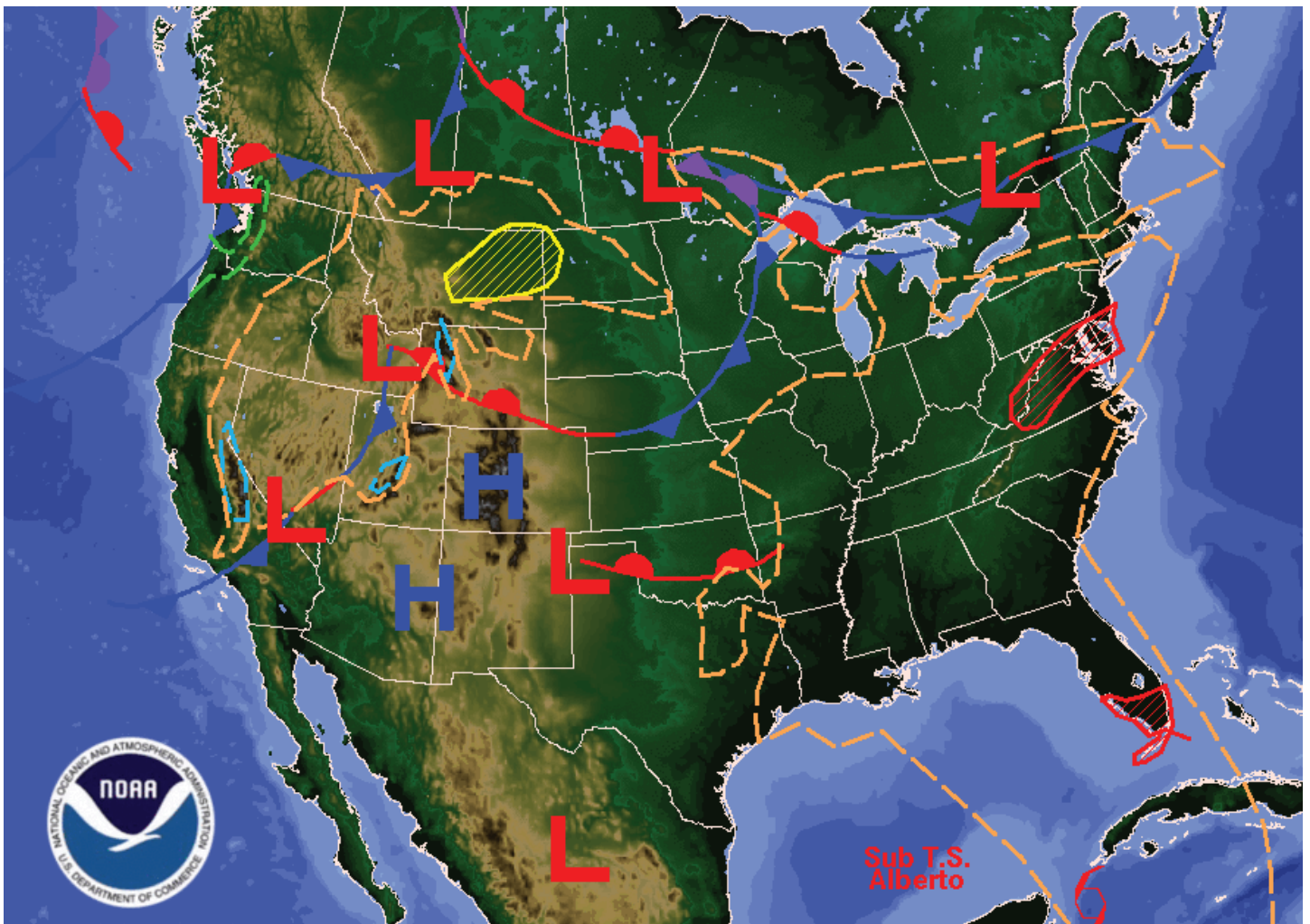
Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 12 of 52

Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 91.8 F at 5:40 PM
Low Outside Temp: 58.8 F at 5:26 AM
Wind Chill:
High Gust: 20.0 Mph at 4:42 PM
Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 94° in 1900
Record Low: 30° in 1992
Average High: 71°F
Average Low: 48°F
Average Precip in May: 2.62
Precip to date in May: 1.55
Average Precip to date: 6.65
Precip Year to Date: 4.23
Sunset Tonight: 9:09 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:51 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Sat, May 26, 2018, issued 4:27 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Roth with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

Rain
Rain and T'Storms
Rain and Snow
Snow

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

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 13 of 52



LIGHTS OUT

Jennifer never met a stranger. No matter where she was or who she met, she always made friends quickly.

Once when traveling on a train, she became bored and decided to walk down the aisle and chat with the folk who were traveling with her. Smilingly she went from seat to seat greeting the passengers. Everyone wanted to know who she was and who she was traveling with. Without any notice, the train entered a tunnel and darkness filled the passenger car before the bright lights came on. Little Jennifer ran down the aisle shouting, "Help, Mom! Where are you? I need you!" Standing in the aisle her mother reached out to her, hugged her and said, "It's O.K. I'm right here with you, Jennifer. Don't be afraid."

When things are going well and we are surrounded by prosperity, it is difficult to admit that we need anyone's help. But when the "lights go out," we all tend to run to someone who we believe can help us.

There author of Psalm 116 was going through a dark and difficult time in his life. Things looked dismal. He was overcome with trouble and sorrow. "Then," he wrote, "I called on the name of the Lord; O Lord, Save me!"

In four simple words he said everything that needed to be said. There was no time for formalities and no need for any particular posture. Problems erupted. Help was needed. God was listening. Problem solved!

"The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective." Length is not part of the equation. Sincerity and righteousness are what makes prayer powerful.

Prayer: Lord, we have ample advice on how to pray. What we need is to live righteous lives and want Your help! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 116:4 Then I called on the name of the Lord: "Lord, save me!"

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 14 of 52

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

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) _ These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Friday:

Mega Millions

11-14-51-64-68, Mega Ball: 25, Megaplier: 4

(eleven, fourteen, fifty-one, sixty-four, sixty-eight; Mega Ball: twenty-five; Megaplier: four)

Estimated jackpot: \$73 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$50 million

South Dakota woman's teddy bears help people cope with grief

By VICTORIA LUSK VLUSK, Aberdeen American News

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — Growing up, Laurie Martin wasn't the crafty one.

That title belonged to her sister, Pam.

But now the craft room in Martin's home tells a different story.

Two bags full of handmade teddy bears line the south wall — one overflowing with bright green bears stitched with the jersey numbers of each player on her granddaughter's baseball team, the other with bears of varying fabrics that will be donated to local hospitals, children and nonprofit organizations.

Teddy bears sewn together from the fabric of late loved ones' clothing are perched on tabletops and shelving.

Martin points out the bears that have the most importance to her.

There's the first one she ever made, with the help of her sister. It's a little larger and sewn from a shirt that belonged to her husband's late father.

There's one made from red handkerchiefs that wears on its chest a transferred photo of her late mother-in-law.

And sitting on their own stand are the bears she made to represent her own late parents.

That's how Laurie's Better Bears started.

"I never thought I'd get over losing my own mother," said Martin, 56.

Evie Hartfiel died four years ago this month. Her death was followed closely by the death of Martin's mother-in-law and that doubled the grief.

"I never realized how hard it is when you lose someone, but losing both my mother and my mother-in-law, that was just the hardest thing. It still is," she said. "I just want to help people through that. If I could make a bear for everyone, I would."

The bears "hug back," Martin said.

The grief process is one reason why Martin prefers to meet everyone she makes a bear for.

While she lives about 10 miles northwest of Aberdeen, she'll meet customers in town with their orders.

"Every bear I've made has a story," Martin said. "Every bear I've put out there, whether I've cried making it or not . it's a good, heartwarming feeling, but some of them are tough."

The bears help both her and others, she said. The business's name, Better Bears, is a reflection of how Martin was feeling when she was dealing with her mom's death.

"Making each bear helps me deal with it, too, deal with grief," she told the Aberdeen American News .

Sometimes, she'll sit and sip coffee with her customers, listening to the stories of their losses and visiting about how to work through grief.

In some cases, the bears represent happiness.

"I'm the 'Bear Lady' to some of the kids (in North Dakota)," she said.

She's donated bears to the Safe Harbor crisis shelter, the Shriners, local hospitals and SPURS.

Martin knows kids value them.

"I'll run into customers in town and here the bear is sitting in the cart with them," she said.

While many of the bears stay local, some go to her grandkids in Alabama, and she has one loftier goal.

"My big dream is to go to the Shriners hospital in Minneapolis and bring a whole boatload of bears up there and meet them," she said.

Martin has always had a giving nature.

For the last three years, she said, she's given gifts to families that need a little help over the Christmas holiday. Last year, the gifts included Better Bears.

Each bear typically sells for \$30, but Martin doesn't pocket any profit.

"That all goes back into material," she said. "What I'd really like to do is set aside funds for day cares in town."

Martin and her husband, Todd, also run a cattle-hauling company.

"I'm scared of cows, and that's what we haul. I just needed something (else)," she said. "This has filled all of my voids."

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

South Dakota resident helps homeless woman start over

By MEGAN RAPOSA, Argus Leader

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Kim Bartling felt a little guilty about the \$60 she spent during her last-minute Christmas shopping, especially when she remembered the toothy grin of the bag lady on Fifth Avenue.

Her excitement at the dollar Bartling handed her on the steps of the New York Public Library that winter day left an impression on the Garretson native, so much so she later walked back to offer more help to the woman.

She declined Bartling's offer to take her to a shelter, asking instead for the gift of a conversation.

"That I can do," said Bartling, a chatty theater professor who was in the city on sabbatical from her job at the University of Sioux Falls.

The two women spoke for an hour before Bartling turned to leave. She started to walk away, but said something she now attributes to the Holy Spirit compelling her to ask one more question:

"If you could wiggle your nose and click your heels, where would you go?"

The answer would change both women's lives in the years to come.

"South Dakota."

It was Dec. 17, 2007, a date Bartling remembers well as the start of a yearslong relationship with the woman she came to know as Velarie Bremer.

Eleven years later, Bremer celebrated her 88th birthday in Redfield, South Dakota, this March alongside Bartling, the woman who helped her get there, the Argus Leader reported.

It's a journey Bartling only understands through her Christian faith. She calls it a "God thing" how two South Dakota women happened upon each other on the streets of New York, how they built a relationship of trust (though more often, distrust) that carried Bremer back to her home state, and how a small, stubborn bag lady became at different times a friend, a grandmother and a child to the people of the Mount Rushmore State.

"Velarie has a way of bringing people into this web," Bartling said.

It took some digging, but after learning Bremer's home state, Bartling set the wheels in motion to bring her home.

She was able to confirm Bremer was born in South Dakota, and in the days leading up to Christmas 2007, she made calls to shelters, government agencies and anyone else she could think of trying to figure

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 17 of 52

out a way to house the homeless Bremer in her home state.

Because Bremer had no social security card or personal identification, she was unable to fly to South Dakota or take a train.

But Bartling wasn't ready to give up just yet.

When she told her mother, Jan Schetnan, about Bremer, Schetnan knew this woman would see her home state again.

"That's something Kim would do," Schetnan said. "I just thought, yeah, this is going to happen because that's just what she does."

On Jan. 17, 2007, Bartling, who had since returned to South Dakota, got the help of a former student living in New York to put Velarie on a bus to Sioux Falls.

She didn't get there, at least not right away.

During the bus ride, Bremer turned on Bartling. The "angel" Bremer had once said rescued her from homelessness now seemed to be part of a plot to control her life, and Bremer, now showing stronger signs of the dementia she'd only just begun to reveal back in New York, began to distrust Bartling.

She didn't show up at the bus station when her bus was set to arrive, and Bartling later received a call from St. Cloud, Minnesota, authorities saying Bremer had gotten off the bus there. They tracked Bartling down through the hospital listed on the plastic bracelet Bremer was still wearing from her time.

It was hard to convince Bremer to trust Bartling to get her the rest of the way to South Dakota, but after a long car ride and a lot of trust-building and roadblocks along the way Bremer landed at the St. Francis House in Sioux Falls.

When Bremer was in Sioux Falls, she didn't want Bartling to be a part of her life.

She settled in at the shelter, and for many there, she played the role of a tough-loving grandmother. When people would come to the house complaining about their lot in life, Bremer was the one to set them straight, said Julie Becker, executive director of the St. Francis House.

"If a guest was talking back to a staff person or was disrespectful in her eyes, oh boy, she let them have it," Becker said.

Because Bremer wouldn't see Bartling, the professor would occasionally ask students to drop by to check up on her or give Bremer a copy of the New York Times, her favorite news source, and though Bremer likely didn't know it, Bartling also helped her get the necessary paperwork to receive social security benefits.

"She never knew I was involved in stuff, but things just happened for her," Bartling said.

Bremer's streak of independence stuck with her through it all, and when she decided she was ready to leave the St. Francis House, she did it in style.

"She took a limo ride all the way from Sioux Falls to Watertown," Becker said.

People who know Bremer tend to give a chuckle when asked about her. There's a strong sense of community around this woman, almost like a secret club of South Dakotans who've been touched — or chided — by the feisty New Yorker.

Bremer was unable to sit for an interview for this story for medical reasons, but conversations with those she's met in her decade back in South Dakota revealed more about her backstory, at least the parts they knew.

In the two women's first conversation back in 2007, Bartling began to learn various facts from Bremer. She said she knew the actor Morgan Freeman and that at one point she worked for the FBI. She also said she wrote a children's book but no longer had a copy.

They sounded like stories contrived by a woman with dementia, but Bartling's research over the years proved many of these stories to be true, including, as she discovered just this year, the Morgan Freeman bit.

But the story that stuck out the most to Bartling was that of the children's book. A writer herself, she was bothered that Bremer didn't have a copy of her manuscript. Around 2014, she began making calls to see if she could track it down.

She remembered Bremer saying how much she loved living by university libraries and that she used to live in Reno, Nevada. So, she called the copy center at the University of Nevada, Reno.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 18 of 52

That's where the "God thing" came back into play, Bartling said.

The man who answered the phone said it wasn't the type of copy center where someone would have a book printed. Their services were primarily to make copies of tests for teachers and maybe bind the occasional thesis paper.

Dejected, Bartling said she was just calling to track down a book written by a "little old homeless woman."

"Do you mean Velarie?" he said.

She was shocked.

Years prior, Bremer had come into the copy center and asked to get a book printed and bound. The workers explained they didn't really do that, but after she insisted they decided to help her out and print three copies of the book.

At the end of the day, when the copy center worker was leaving to head home, she checked a jam in the printer. Once cleared, she realized an entire extra copy of Bremer's book was sitting before her. She bound it, stuck it in her desk, and held onto it for years.

Bartling said there's no way God didn't play a role in that incident. Even years later, she tears up at the memory.

"She told me all these crazy stories," Bartling said. "But the book was real."

She hadn't spoken to Bremer for years when she got her hands on a copy of the book. But Bartling decided to show up at her apartment and deliver it anyway.

"I knocked on the door, and I said, 'Hi Velarie,'" Bartling said. "She took a minute, and she said 'Hi Kim, thank you for everything you've done.' That was the first thing she said to me."

Bartling gave her the book, and the two women's relationship picked back up. Bremer also began spending more time with Schetnan, and the three gathered most recently to celebrate Bremer's birthday.

At 88, her mind isn't all there, but her web of friends is. A Redfield couple has taken Velarie under their wing, checking in on her and making sure she's OK. Bartling and Schetnan don't see her much, but they were impressed by how well-cared for she is in her community.

"She just grows on you," Schetnan said. "You can't help but love her."

For her birthday, Schetnan hand-painted a watch face for Velarie. Becker sent her a laptop that had been donated to the St. Francis House so that she could continue to write, and Bartling gave her a tablet so she can read her New York Times.

Bartling considers Bremer a friend. Most of their relationship has been with Bartling on the periphery, helping from afar, but for all of the things she's done for Bremer, she knows she's gotten much in return.

It's not just the crazy stories. It's the reminder of the way God works in the world, Bartling said. And it's a lesson that, in the end, the things you own are your name and where you're from.

"At the end of the day," she said. "We're just two good ol' girls from South Dakota."

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

Authorities identify Parker man killed in 1-vehicle crash

PARKER, S.D. (AP) — Authorities have released the name of a 56-year-old Parker man who died in a one-vehicle crash in southeastern South Dakota earlier this week.

The South Dakota Department of Public Safety says Scott Jacobs was driving a sport utility vehicle when he went off the road and rolled south of Parker on Monday afternoon.

Jacobs died at the scene. He was wearing a seat belt and was the only person in the SUV.

The Highway Patrol is investigating.

Zinke, Noem announce Trump rollback for outfitters, guides

WALL, S.D. (AP) — U.S. Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke says President Donald Trump has rolled back pay requirements for outfitters and guides who operate on federal lands.

Zinke and U.S. Rep. Kristi Noem made the announcement Friday in South Dakota.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 19 of 52

Zinke says Trump exempted outfitters and guides who operate on federal lands from an executive order by President Barack Obama that raised the minimum wage for contractors. The exemption does not apply to lodging, food service or other businesses that operate on federal lands, such as national parks, monuments and recreation areas.

Zinke says Trump's order "will have a positive effect on rural economies and American families."

Noem, a Republican who is running for governor, says the order also will "help expand the kinds of experiences people can have in South Dakota."

Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorials

By The Associated Press

Rapid City Journal, May 20

Wildlife bill could be boon to state

South Dakota voters hear it often. If elected to Congress, the candidate promises to go to Washington, D.C., and "fight, fight, fight for the home team."

It's what the electorate wants to hear and expects. One way senators and representatives can demonstrate that commitment is to funnel more federal dollars into the state.

The Recovering America's Wildlife Act presents such an opportunity. The bipartisan legislation, which has 53 co-sponsors in the House of Representatives, could pump as much as \$16 million a year into the state to preserve and enhance wildlife habitat, which would benefit pheasants, fish and the other wildlife that are so vital to the state's economy.

The legislation, however, is getting a tepid response from Rep. Noem and Sens. Thune and Rounds, according to South Dakota News Watch.

Noem, who is running for governor, is not among the 21 Republican co-sponsors, despite the fact her campaign platform includes a section called "Preserving Pheasant Hunting" that talks about the need for habitat management "without raising taxes."

The Recovering America's Wildlife Act does not increase taxes at the national level nor require local tax increases. The proposal shifts \$1.3 billion a year in federal royalties on energy and mineral extraction to the states that are required to make a 25 percent match. This means South Dakota would have \$21.5 million to spend annually on one of its most important industries that has the additional benefit of enhancing the quality of life for the many outdoor enthusiasts who live here.

What's not to like about a plan like that?

Matt Morlock, the acting director of the South Dakota branch of Pheasants Forever, said the legislation would benefit the state greatly.

"More funds out there means good things for all wildlife in South Dakota," he said in the News Watch report. "What we do for other wildlife species, ducks, deer or non-game species, it's going to benefit pheasants."

He went on to say that outdoor recreation generates \$1.3 billion a year in spending in the state, which indicates any investment in the outdoors pays big dividends to local businesses.

Sen. Thune, meanwhile, wants to see what other programs might be diminished before he decides if he will support the legislation. This comes after he voted earlier this year for a tax overhaul that the Congressional Budget Office has reported will raise the national debt by \$1.9 trillion over the next 10 years. The federal budget for fiscal year 2019 is \$4.1 trillion with \$1.1 trillion allocated for discretionary spending.

Sen. Rounds makes no mention of the legislation on his official website or in any tweets he has sent recently.

The Recovering America's Wildlife Act still must be approved by the House and be considered by the Senate. So, there's still time for our Congressional delegation to study the legislation and then explain their positions on it.

At this point, however, it clearly seems like a win-win scenario for the home team if it becomes law.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 20 of 52

Madison Daily Leader, Madison, May 17

Regents are smart to include many in search

The South Dakota Board of Regents is launching a search for a new executive director to replace Michael Rush, who is leaving the position later this month.

The Regents have put together a large search committee to conduct the process of sorting through applications and resumes, calling references, interviewing candidates and hiring the new executive.

As you can read in the article, the search committee is very large at 25 members, with representation from a broad range of participants in the higher education system.

For those who criticize the concept of committees doing important work, this looks like it could be Example A. But we disagree with the critics: The broad representation on the committee is its strongest characteristic.

Presidential searches within the Regental system are also large, and we've seen firsthand the value that each of the constituents bring. Faculty, staff, alumni, students, legislators, fellow presidents and others all contribute to the process, and each brings a different perspective.

The two most recent presidential searches at Dakota State University that used the completed search process with full committees were both great successes in choosing Douglas Knowlton and Jose-Marie Griffiths.

We're very confident that the assembled search committee will pick a fully qualified person for the Executive Director position. The diverse nature of the committee will pay off.

American News, Aberdeen, May 24

Enter six-man football with caution

Six-man football is nearing the goal line in a possible return to South Dakota high schools.

The South Dakota High School Activities Association Board of Directors recently approved the first reading of a proposal that would add a six-man classification beginning in the fall of 2019. A vote on final approval of the proposal is scheduled for the board's June 7 meeting.

There are currently three divisions of nine-man football in the state. Six-man football would replace the smallest nine-man division. One division of six-man football would leave state high schools with two divisions of nine-man and its current four classes of 11-man football.

South Dakota has a rich history of six-man football:

- Claremont holds the high school national record of 61 six-man football wins in a row from 1947 to 1953.
- South Dakota was one of the leaders in the nation in its number of six-man teams in the 1950s, including a whopping 110 such teams in the state in 1952.
- The state had six-man football from the 1930s to early 1960s. Eight-man football in South Dakota began to rise in popularity in the mid-1950s through the early 1970s when nine-man took over. Eleven-man football has been around since 1899 when state newspapers declared Spearfish as South Dakota's first state football champion.

The good news about the rebirth of six-man football South Dakota?

It would allow football to continue in some of the state's smallest communities. And some of those towns have a rich tradition in football.

Also, six-man football could be a safer option because it requires less athletes to be on the field at a time. A number of football teams have been battling low numbers in recent years.

Heated debates over the safety of the sport and the rise in popularity of other fall sports such as soccer has cut deeply into football numbers.

Some South Dakota communities have been fielding nine-man and 11-man teams with only a handful of kids. It is pretty tough to field a nine-man team with 12 or less athletes, but fielding a six-man team would provide possibly safer options.

Plus, several states that border South Dakota have six-man teams, which might help with travel costs

and filling out schedules.

Also, some schools in South Dakota are so remote, consolidation is not an option. So it is either six-man football, or no football.

However, we have some major concerns as well.

We are a big believer in consolidation and co-ops. We worry that a return to six-man football might lead to a breakup of some schools already co-oping and on the road to consolidation.

Often, the consolidation of schools is a painstaking process.

We want our smallest of schools to stay together and continue coming together so our children can have more opportunities on the sports fields, in the arts and in the classrooms.

We understand bigger is not always better. And often, neither is a smaller enrollment.

Safety is a major concern as well. The national debate over whether football is a safe sport is a real thing.

We know there are communities out there hanging on to football teams with only a handful of kids. Some are playing physically immature freshman athletes, or younger, who should not be on a varsity field.

Maybe we are debating the wrong issue?

Maybe we should be debating that there be a mandatory number of children before a South Dakota high school can form a football team? Or that there must be 20 or more athletes available in order to form a nine-man team and 30 or more to form an 11-man team?

We understand the SDHSAA's looking for options to get more kids involved in more activities such as football, music and drama.

That is their job. And the value of extracurricular activities is an extremely important part of education. But sometimes, sports overwhelm common sense.

Mother of emaciated toddlers sentenced to federal prison

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The mother of two toddlers found emaciated on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in 2016 has been sentenced to three years in federal prison after violating probation.

Darcel Featherman, 35, recently admitted in court to possessing methamphetamine when Rapid City police arrested her at a local hotel on March 20, the Rapid City Journal reported .

Featherman's arrest came less than two weeks after she had been sentenced to three years of probation for abandoning her daughters to relatives she knew were unfit to take care of them. Featherman had said she gave her 2- and 3-year-old girls to her mother and sister because she was homeless without a means to raise them.

Law enforcement authorities found the toddlers emaciated, weighing one-third of the ideal weight for their age.

Featherman admitted in a written statement that she knew her mother and sister were alcoholics, that her mother had anger issues and that her sister also abused methamphetamine. Her sister was sentenced to 10 years in prison for child abuse and neglect. Her mother has been committed to a mental institution.

In addition to having her federal probation revoked, Featherman also faces drug charges in state court.

A glass pipe and snort tube that tested positive for meth were found on Featherman and a male companion at the time of her arrest, according to police. Featherman's urine sample also tested positive for the drug, police said.

"Ms. Featherman admitted to law enforcement she took a few hits of the methamphetamine from the glass pipe, provided to her from the other individual," her probation officer said in a written petition to a judge to revoke her probation.

Featherman is set to appear in court on the drug charges next month. Her daughters live with a foster family.

Tourism officials target Chinese travelers

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota tourism officials are targeting a foreign country with a big appetite for international travel.

State officials are working with a marketing company in China to try to attract the millions of Chinese tourists who come to the United States each year.

The U.S. Travel Association says the number of Chinese visitors increases each year. In 2016, nearly 3 million Chinese residents visited the U.S., the third largest number of tourists behind Japan and the United Kingdom. The Argus Leader says that number is expected to increase by 7 to 10 percent each year and surpass Japan by 2020.

The goal of the state Department of Tourism's contract with East West Marketing is to make sure Chinese travelers see what South Dakota has to offer before they decide on a U.S. destination.

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

Dusty Johnson leads in Republican House primary fundraising

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota congressional candidate Dusty Johnson has outraised his two Republican primary opponents and has a big banked cash advantage as the June election nears.

Federal campaign finance reports filed this week show Johnson, a former public utilities commissioner, raised about \$70,000 from April 1 through May 16, and he ended the period with more than \$300,000 in the bank. Secretary of State Shantel Krebs followed with about \$224,000 on hand after raising about \$40,000.

State Sen. Neal Tapio raised nearly \$56,000 — almost all from a personal loan — and heads to the election with \$37,000 banked.

The June 5 Republican primary winner is set to face Democrat Tim Bjorkman, a former judge, and Libertarian George Hendrickson and independent Ronald Wieczorek in the November general election.

Florida man pleads guilty in fatal South Dakota crash

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — A Florida man has pleaded guilty in a crash in South Dakota last November that killed a woman.

Authorities say 24-year-old Cedric Beauvil, of Miami, was driving a semitrailer that failed to stop at a highway intersection in Beadle County and crashed into a pickup truck driven by 18-year-old Kennedy Tomsha, of Tulare. Tomsha died at a Huron hospital.

The American News reports that Beauvil pleaded guilty Tuesday to second-degree manslaughter, and prosecutors dismissed several other charges. He faces up to 10 years in prison. A sentencing date wasn't immediately scheduled.

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

Watertown woman sentenced in elder financial abuse case

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A Watertown woman has been ordered to serve about two months in jail and pay nearly \$26,000 in restitution in an elder financial abuse case.

The attorney general's office says 60-year-old Barbara Lingenfelter used her mother's assets for personal gain and failed to provide for her mother's nursing care while having power of attorney.

Lingenfelter pleaded guilty in April to fraud and theft counts and was sentenced earlier this month.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 23 of 52

The highest-paid CEOs by state

By The Associated Press

Here are the top-paid CEOs by state for 2017, as calculated by The Associated Press and Equilar, an executive data firm.

The survey considered only publicly traded companies with more than \$1 billion in revenue that filed their proxy statements with federal regulators between Jan. 1 and April 30. Not every state had a publicly traded company headquartered there that was large enough to be included. The survey includes only CEOs who have been in place for at least two years, but it does not limit the survey to companies in the S&P 500, as the AP's general compensation study does.

To calculate CEO pay, Equilar adds salary, bonus, stock awards, stock option awards, deferred compensation and other components that include benefits and perks. For some companies, big raises can occur when CEOs get a stock grant in one year as part of a multi-year grant.

The typical CEO in the Standard & Poor's 500 index made \$11.7 million last year.

Alabama: O. B. Grayson Hall Jr., Regions Financial, \$9.4 million (Hall is stepping down in July.)
Arkansas: C. Douglas McMillon, Walmart, \$22.8 million
Arizona: Richard C. Adkerson, Freeport-McMoRan, \$16.2 million
California: Michael Rapino, Live Nation Entertainment, \$70.6 million
Colorado: Gregory B. Maffei, Liberty Media & Qurate Retail Group, \$67.6 million
Connecticut: Mark T. Bertolini, Aetna, \$18.7 million
Washington, D.C.: Thomas P. Joyce, Danaher, \$14.8 million
Delaware: Hervé Hoppenot, Incyte, \$16.1 million
Florida: Brian D. Jellison, Roper Technologies, \$29.2 million
Georgia: Frank J. Bisignano, First Data, \$102.2 million
Hawaii: Constance H. Lau, Hawaiian Electric Industries, \$5.4 million
Iowa: Daniel J. Houston, Principal Financial Group, \$9.4 million
Idaho: Thomas K. Corrick, Boise Cascade, \$4.1 million
Illinois: Debra A. Cafaro, Ventas, \$25.3 million
Indiana: N. Thomas Linebarger, Cummins, \$13.2 million
Kansas: Michael J. Brown, Euronet Worldwide, \$3.9 million
Kentucky: Scott L. Thompson, Tempur Sealy International, \$18 million
Louisiana: Glen F. Post III, CenturyLink, \$14.3 million (Post retired at the company's annual meeting, which was on Wednesday.)
Massachusetts: Stephen Kaufer, TripAdvisor, \$43.2 million
Maryland: David M. Zaslav, Discovery Communications, \$42.2 million
Maine: Melissa D. Smith, WEX, \$10.8 million
Michigan: Mary T. Barra, General Motors, \$21.9 million
Minnesota: James M. Cracchiolo, Ameriprise Financial, \$22.4 million
Missouri: Michael F. Neidorff, Centene, \$25.3 million
Mississippi: Joe F. Sanderson Jr., Sanderson Farms, \$6.6 million
North Carolina: Brian T. Moynihan, Bank of America, \$21.4 million
North Dakota: David L. Goodin, MDU Resources Group, \$3.7 million
Nebraska: Lance M. Fritz, Union Pacific, \$11.3 million
New Hampshire: Timothy McGrath, PC Connection, \$1.6 million
New Jersey: Alex Gorsky, Johnson & Johnson, \$23 million
New Mexico: Patricia K. Collawn, PNM Resources, \$4.4 million
Nevada: Stephen A. Wynn, Wynn Resorts, \$34.5 million (Wynn left the CEO position in February.)
New York: Leslie Moonves, CBS, \$68.4 million
Ohio: W. Nicholas Howley, TransDigm Group, \$61 million

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 24 of 52

Oklahoma: Robert D. Lawler, Chesapeake Energy, \$14.9 million
Oregon: Bryan B. DeBoer, Lithia Motors, \$5.9 million
Pennsylvania: Brian L. Roberts, Comcast, \$32.5 million
Rhode Island: Scott C. Donnelly, Textron, \$13.1 million
South Carolina: John D. Williams, Domtar, \$7 million
South Dakota: David R. Emery, Black Hills, \$3.4 million
Tennessee: Mark J. Costa, Eastman Chemical, \$14 million
Texas: Randall L. Stephenson, AT&T, \$25.6 million
Utah: Harris H. Simmons, Zions, \$3.2 million
Virginia: Phebe N. Novakovic, General Dynamics, \$21.2 million
Washington: John J. Legere, T-Mobile US, \$23.6 million
Wisconsin: Jonas Prising, ManpowerGroup Inc., \$12 million

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.

North and South Korean leaders hold surprise 2nd summit

By **KIM TONG-HYUNG, Associated Press**

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un and South Korean President Moon Jae-in met for the second time in a month on Saturday, holding a surprise summit at a border truce village to discuss Kim's potential meeting with President Donald Trump, Moon's office said.

Kim and Moon met hours after South Korea expressed relief over revived talks for a summit between Trump and Kim following a whirlwind 24 hours that saw Trump cancel the highly anticipated meeting before saying it's potentially back on.

The quickly arranged meeting seemed to demonstrate Kim's urgency to secure a summit with Trump, which may provide his best shot at saving his economy from crushing sanctions and win security assurances in a region surrounded by enemies, analysts say.

It remains unclear whether Kim would ever agree to fully abandon his nuclear arsenal in return. Moon has insisted Kim can be persuaded to abandon his nuclear facilities, materials and bombs in a verifiable and irreversible way in exchange for credible security and economic guarantees.

Moon, who brokered the summit between Washington and Pyongyang, likely used Saturday's meeting to confirm Kim's willingness to enter nuclear negotiations with Trump and clarify what steps Kim has in mind in the process of denuclearization, said Hong Min, a senior analyst at Seoul's Korea Institute for National Unification.

"While Washington and Pyongyang have expressed their hopes for a summit through published statements, Moon has to step up as the mediator because the surest way to set the meeting in stone would be an official confirmation of intent between heads of states," Hong said.

South Korean presidential spokesman Yoon Young-chan said Moon will reveal details of his meeting with Kim on Sunday.

Koh Yu-hwan, a North Korea expert at Seoul's Dongguk University and a policy adviser to Moon, said the two leaders likely discussed bridging the gap between Washington and Pyongyang on what a deal on the North's nuclear weapons would look like.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 25 of 52

U.S. officials have talked about a comprehensive one-shot deal in which North Korea fully eliminates its nukes first and receives rewards later. But Kim, through two summits with Chinese President Xi Jinping in March and May, has called for a phased and synchronized process in which every action he takes is met with a reciprocal reward from the United States.

Koh said Moon would try to persuade Kim to accept an alternative approach advocated by Seoul, in which the North's comprehensive commitment and credible actions toward denuclearization are followed by a phased but compressed process of declaration, inspection and verifiable dismantling. Before he canceled the summit, Trump this past week did not rule out an incremental approach that would provide incentives along the way to the North.

Trump tweeted earlier Saturday that a summit with Kim, if it does happen, will likely take place on June 12 in Singapore as originally planned.

Following an unusually provocative 2017 in which his engineers tested a purported thermonuclear warhead and three long-range missiles theoretically capable of striking mainland U.S. cities, Kim has engaged in a flurry of diplomatic activity in recent months. In addition to his summits with Moon and Xi, Kim also has had two meetings with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

It wasn't immediately clear how the rival Koreas organized what appeared to be an emergency summit. Ahead of their first meeting last month, Kim and Moon established a hotline that they said would enable direct communication between the leaders and would be valuable to defuse crises, but it was unclear whether it was used to set up the latest meeting.

Photos released by South Korea's presidential office showed Moon arriving at the North Korean side of the Panmunjom truce village and shaking hands with Kim's sister, Kim Yo Jong, before sitting down with Kim for their summit.

Moon was accompanied by his spy chief, Suh Hoon, while Kim was joined by Kim Yong Chol, a former military intelligence chief who is now a vice chairman of the North Korean ruling party's central committee tasked with inter-Korean relations.

The two leaders embraced as Moon departed.

Moon's office said that during their two-hour meeting, the two leaders also discussed carrying out the peace commitments they agreed to at their first summit, held at the South Korean side of Panmunjom on April 27, but didn't elaborate.

At their first meeting, Kim and Moon announced vague aspirations for a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula and permanent peace, which Seoul has tried to sell as a meaningful breakthrough to set up the summit with Trump.

But relations between the two Koreas chilled in recent weeks, with North Korea canceling a high-level meeting with Seoul over South Korea's participation in regular military exercises with the United States and insisting that it will not return to talks unless its grievances are resolved.

South Korea was caught off guard by Trump's abrupt cancellation of his summit with Kim, with the U.S. president citing hostility in recent North Korean comments. Moon said Trump's decision left him "perplexed" and was "very regrettable." He urged Washington and Pyongyang to resolve their differences through "more direct and closer dialogue between their leaders."

Trump's back-and-forth over his summit plans with Kim has exposed the fragility of Seoul as an intermediary. It fanned fears in South Korea that the country may lose its voice between a rival intent on driving a wedge between Washington and Seoul and an American president who thinks less of the traditional alliance with Seoul than his predecessors did.

Trump's decision to pull out of the summit came just days after he hosted Moon at the White House, where he openly cast doubts on the Singapore meeting but offered no support for continued inter-Korean progress, essentially ignoring the North's recent attempts to coerce the South.

In a letter to Kim announcing the cancellation, Trump objected specifically to a statement from senior North Korean diplomat Choe Son Hui. Choe had referred to Vice President Mike Pence as a "political dummy" for earlier comments he made about North Korea and said it was up to the Americans whether

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 26 of 52

they would "meet us at a meeting room or encounter us (in a) nuclear-to-nuclear showdown."

North Korea issued an unusually restrained and diplomatic response to Trump, saying it was still willing to sit for talks 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," North Korean Vice Foreign Minister Kim Kye Gwan said in a statement carried by the North's official Korean Central News Agency, which mainly targets an external audience.

Notably, the statement did not appear in Saturday's edition of Rodong Sinmun, which is the official mouthpiece of the North's ruling party and is widely read by North Koreans.

Family grateful for Utah man's 'miracle' Venezuela release

By CATHERINE LUCEY and JOSHUA GOODMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A Utah man jailed in Venezuela on weapons charges nearly two years ago was released Saturday after U.S. officials and his family pressed for his freedom from the South American country. "We are grateful to all who participated in this miracle," Joshua Holt's family said in a statement.

President Donald Trump said Holt and his family were expected at the White House on Saturday evening. "Good news about the release of the American hostage from Venezuela. ... The great people of Utah will be very happy!" Trump said in a tweet.

The 26-year-old Holt had gone to Venezuela in June 2016 to marry a woman he met online while he was looking for Spanish-speaking Mormons to help him improve his Spanish. Holt's wife, Thamara, also was freed, said Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, who said Holt soon would be reunited with "his sweet, long-suffering family" in Riverton, Utah.

Their release came after Tennessee GOP Sen. Bob Corker, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, met with Venezuela's president, Nicolas Maduro, on Friday, two days after the embattled socialist leader kicked out the top U.S. diplomat in the country.

Earlier in May, Holt made an emotional plea for Americans' help in getting him out of the Caracas jail, saying in a clandestinely shot video that his life was threatened during a riot in the country's most-notorious prison.

The U.S. government at first avoided ratcheting up public pressure on Venezuela amid already strained relations between the two countries, but eventually raised Holt's case to the highest levels of the Venezuela government. Hatch and Rep. Mia Love, R-Utah, also lobbied on behalf of Holt and decried his poor treatment in prison.

Holt had planned to spend several months in Caracas in the summer of 2016 with his new wife, Thamara Candelo, and her and her two daughters, to secure their visas so they could move with him to the U.S.

Instead, the couple was arrested at her family's government housing complex on the outskirts of Caracas. Authorities arrested him on June 30, 2016 and accused him of using his wife's apartment in Caracas to stockpile weapons and suggesting his case was linked to other unspecified U.S. attempts to undermine President Maduro's rule amid deep economic and political turbulence.

His wife also was jailed on allegations of being Holt's accomplice.

Holt's mother, Laurie Holt, said all along that her son and his wife were wrongly accused. She worked feverishly to bring attention to her son's incarceration, hosting rallies, fundraisers and doing media interviews.

Laurie Holt said her son has suffered numerous health problems in jail, including kidney stones and respiratory problems. He was depressed and at one point lost so much weight that he dropped several pant sizes, she said.

In their statement, the Holt family said, "We thank you for your collaboration during this time of anguish. We ask that you allow us to meet with our son and his wife before giving any interviews and statements. We are grateful to all who participated in this miracle."

Goodman reported from Bogota, Colombia.

Legal hurdles may make Weinstein's prosecution an exception

By **ANDREW DALTON, AP Entertainment Writer**

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Harvey Weinstein's arrest in New York Friday is a landmark moment in the #MeToo movement.

Yet as authorities work through dozens of cases against famous figures in entertainment and other industries brought on by the Weinstein-inspired wave that began in October, legal hurdles may make such prosecutions the exception.

While men including Kevin Spacey and Mario Batali remain under investigation, the next round of charges could well be against Weinstein again, who also is facing scrutiny from authorities in Los Angeles and London.

One expert said prosecutors in those jurisdictions are unlikely to stand down or shift priorities knowing that Weinstein is now charged with rape and another felony sexual assault in New York, where he pleaded not guilty Friday.

"You never know what's going to happen with the case there," said Stacey Honowitz, a longtime prosecutor of sex crimes in Broward County, Florida. "We don't go easy. Nobody's going to drop the ball and let New York do it."

She said it is more likely that authorities in other cities will be energized, and able to build off the charges.

"There's always strength in numbers," Honowitz said.

Stanley Goldman, a professor at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles, said last month's conviction of Bill Cosby's for sexual assault dating to 2004 has likely been propelling prosecutors forward in other places.

"I think perhaps the Bill Cosby conviction really gave them hope that the atmosphere may have changed, in the older cases where this has been hard to prove, that maybe they've got more of a chance now," Goldman said Friday.

Yet finding prosecutable #MeToo cases has proven difficult.

Los Angeles police said in December that they were investigating 27 entertainment figures, but none have yet resulted in arrests. And LA County prosecutors launched a task force in November to evaluate cases, but so far it has brought no charges.

The biggest obstacles by far are statutes of limitations, which have had special prominence amid the #MeToo and Time's Up movements because so many of the incidents involve women working up the courage to come forward after years of silence.

Hundreds of women have alleged varying degrees of sexual misconduct from Oscar-nominated writer and director James Toback, yet prosecutors declined in April to bring criminal charges against him in the five cases they reviewed, citing expired statutes of limitations in every case.

California, joining other states, recently eliminated its statute of limitations for rape, making the law a closer match for the #MeToo era, but most cases from before the changes are unaffected.

Goldman said in the past the principle has been that it's disruptive and unbalancing to society to go back and prosecute older crimes.

"If you're dealing with Kevin Spacey," Goldman said, describing the thinking, "it's disruptive to pull somebody like that out of society after all these many years where people have worked for them, and are supported by them."

That has been the case so far with several high profile cases presented to prosecutors, all of which emerged after Weinstein's downfall.

Prosecutors declined to file charges against Roman Polanski over allegations by a woman who reported in October that the Oscar-winning director molested her when she was 10 years old in 1975. Polanski's attorney has denied the allegations. Los Angeles prosecutors cited the statute of limitations, but still want Polanski to return to the United States to face sentencing in a case in which he sexually assaulted a 13-year-old girl in 1977.

A case against Hollywood agent Adam Venit, who actor Terry Crews alleged groped him at a party in

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 28 of 52

February 2016, was also rejected. Crews did not report the incident until November 2017, and prosecutors said that was too late.

Earlier this week, prosecutors rejected charges in four cases it reviewed against talent agent Tyler Grasham, who has been accused of the sexual assault of men and boys as young as 15 in the film industry. Prosecutors cited the statute of limitation in two of the cases, a lack of evidence in one, and referred the fourth for possible misdemeanor prosecution.

Goldman said however the thinking around sexual crimes appears to be changing, and they are now being grouped with more serious crimes like murder.

In addition to Weinstein, there are several high-profile open cases that could still lead to criminal charges. Authorities are still reviewing sexual assault allegations against Spacey, Los Angeles County district attorney's spokesman Greg Risling said Friday. Sheriff's investigators say the case dates to 1992, which could make prosecution difficult. London police reportedly were investigating two sexual assaults there. His former publicist has said Spacey is seeking unspecified treatment.

New York police are investigating Batali after a woman told "60 Minutes" that he drugged and sexually assaulted her in 2005. The celebrity chef denies assaulting the woman, but he is already facing business ramifications — three of his Las Vegas restaurants will close in July and his business partners have said they are actively negotiating to buy him out.

Steven Seagal also remains under investigation after a woman said the action star sexually assaulted her at a casting session at a Beverly Hills hotel room in 2002, when she was 17 years old. The actor's attorney says he adamantly denies the allegations.

Follow Andrew Dalton on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/andyjamesdalton> .

More LGBT issues loom as justices near wedding cake decision

By MARK SHERMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A flood of lawsuits over LGBT rights is making its way through courts and will continue, no matter the outcome in the Supreme Court's highly anticipated decision in the case of a Colorado baker who would not create a wedding cake for a same-sex couple.

Courts are engaged in two broad types of cases on this issue, weighing whether sex discrimination laws apply to LGBT people and also whether businesses can assert religious objections to avoid complying with anti-discrimination measures in serving customers, hiring and firing employees, providing health care and placing children with foster or adoptive parents.

The outcome of baker Jack Phillips' fight at the Supreme Court could indicate how willing the justices are to carve out exceptions to anti-discrimination laws; that's something the court has refused to do in the areas of race and sex.

The result was hard to predict based on arguments in December. But however the justices rule, it won't be their last word on the topic.

Religious conservatives have gotten a big boost from the Trump administration, which has taken a more restrictive view of LGBT rights and intervened on their side in several cases, including Phillips'.

"There is a constellation of hugely significant cases that are likely to be heard by the court in the near future and those are going to significantly shape the legal landscape going forward," said Shannon Minter, legal director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights.

Several legal disputes are pending over wedding services, similar to the Phillips case. Video producers, graphic artists and florists are among business owners who say they oppose same-sex marriage on religious grounds and don't want to participate in same-sex weddings. They live in the 21 states that have anti-discrimination laws that specifically include gay and lesbian people.

In California and Texas, courts are dealing with lawsuits over the refusal of hospitals, citing religious beliefs, to perform hysterectomies on people transitioning from female to male. In Michigan, the American Civil Liberties Union filed suit against the state's practice of allowing faith-based child placement agencies

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 29 of 52

to reject same-sex couples.

Advocates of both sides see the essence of these cases in starkly different terms.

"What the religious right is asking for is a new rule specific to same-sex couples that would not only affect same-sex couples but also carve a hole in nondiscrimination laws that could affect all communities," said Camilla Taylor, director of constitutional litigation at Lambda Legal, which supports civil rights for LGBT people.

Jim Campbell of the Christian public interest law firm Alliance Defending Freedom said the cases will determine whether "people like Jack Phillips who believe marriage is the union of a man and a woman, that they too have a legitimate place in public life. Or does he have to hide or ignore those beliefs when he's participating in the public square?" ADF represents Phillips at the Supreme Court.

The other category of cases concerns protections for LGBT people under civil rights law. One case expected to reach the court this summer involves a Michigan funeral home that fired an employee who disclosed that she was transitioning from male to female and dressed as a woman.

The 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the firing constituted sex discrimination under federal civil rights law. That court is one of several that have applied anti-sex discrimination provisions to transgender people, but the Supreme Court has yet to take up a case.

The funeral home argues in part that Congress was not thinking about transgender people when it included sex discrimination in Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. A trial judge had ruled for the funeral home, saying it was entitled to a religious exemption from the civil rights law.

"Congress has not weighed in to say sex includes gender identity. We should certainly make sure that's a conscious choice of Congress and not just the overexpansion of the law by courts," Campbell said. ADF also represents the funeral home.

In just the past week, two federal courts ruled in favor of transgender students who want to use school facilities that correspond to their sexual identity. Those cases turn on whether the prohibition on sex discrimination in education applies to transgender people. Appeals in both cases are possible.

In the past 13 months, federal appeals courts in Chicago and New York also have ruled that gay and lesbian employees are entitled to protection from discrimination under Title VII. Those courts overruled earlier decisions. Title VII does not specifically mention sexual orientation, but the courts said it was covered under the ban on sex bias.

The Obama administration had supported treating LGBT discrimination claims as sex discrimination, but the Trump administration has changed course. In the New York case, for instance, the Trump administration filed a legal brief arguing that Title VII was not intended to provide protections to gay workers. It also withdrew Obama-era guidance to educators to treat claims of transgender students as sex discrimination.

There is no appeal pending or expected on the sexual orientation issue, and there is no guarantee that the court will take up the funeral home's appeal over transgender discrimination.

The trend in the lower courts has been in favor of extending civil rights protections to LGBT employees and students. Their prospects at the Supreme Court may be harder to discern, not least because it's unclear whether the court's composition will change soon.

Justice Anthony Kennedy, 81, has been the subject of retirement speculation, though he has not indicated he is planning to retire. When Justice Stephen Breyer turns 80 in August, he will join Kennedy and Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, 85, as octogenarians on the bench.

If President Donald Trump were to replace any of those justices, the court probably would be much less receptive to LGBT rights. Even the landmark gay marriage ruling in 2015 that Kennedy wrote was a 5-4 decision.

"We're very concerned about the composition of the federal bench. Under the Trump administration, we've seen a number of federal nominees who have been ideologues, who have taken positions about the very right to exist of LGBT people that is simply inconsistent with fitness to serve as a federal judge," Taylor said.

The ADF's Campbell said that even with the current justices, he holds out some hope that the court

would not extend anti-discrimination protections. "Justice Kennedy has undoubtedly been the person who has decided the major LGBT cases, but to my knowledge he hasn't weighed in some of these other issues," he said.

Emails show cooperation among EPA, climate-change deniers

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Newly released emails show senior Environmental Protection Agency officials working closely with a conservative group that dismisses climate change to rally like-minded people for public hearings on science and global warming, counter negative news coverage and promote Administrator Scott Pruitt's stewardship of the agency.

John Konkus, EPA's deputy associate administrator for public affairs, repeatedly reached out to senior staffers at the Heartland Institute, according to the emails.

"If you send a list, we will make sure an invitation is sent," Konkus wrote to then-Heartland president Joseph Bast in May 2017, seeking suggestions on scientists and economists the EPA could invite to an annual EPA public hearing on the agency's science standards.

Follow-up emails show Konkus and the Heartland Institute mustering scores of potential invitees known for rejecting scientific warnings of man-made climate-change, including from groups like Plants Need CO₂, The Right Climate Stuff, and Junk Science.

The emails underscore how Pruitt and senior agency officials have sought to surround themselves with people who share their vision of curbing environmental regulation and enforcement, leading to complaints from environmentalists that he is ignoring the conclusions of the majority of scientists in and out of his agency especially when it comes to climate-changing carbon emissions.

They were obtained by the Environmental Defense Fund and the Southern Environmental Law Center, which sued to enforce a Freedom of Information request and provided them to The Associated Press.

The EPA maintains close working relationships with a broad range of public and private groups, and Heartland is just one of many the agency engages with "to ensure the public is informed," said EPA spokesman Lincoln Ferguson.

"It demonstrates the agency's dedication to advancing President Trump's agenda of environmental stewardship and regulatory certainty," he said.

The public hearing referred to in the May 2017 email ultimately was canceled when the EPA official who runs it fell ill, the EPA said.

But Bast contended in an email sent to EPA staffers and others that the official called off the hearing after learning that climate-change "skeptics planned to attend."

The Heartland Institute calls itself a leading free-market think-tank. It rejects decades of science saying fossil-fuel emissions are altering the climate and says on its website that curbing use of petroleum and coal to fight climate change would "squander one of America's greatest comparative advantages among the world's nations."

"Of course The Heartland Institute has been working with EPA on policy and personnel decisions," Tim Huelskamp, a former Republican congressman from Kansas who now leads the group, said in a statement to the AP.

"They recognized us as the pre-eminent organization opposing the radical climate alarmism agenda and instead promoting sound science and policy," Huelskamp wrote.

He said Heartland would continue to help Pruitt and his staff.

Ferguson said Pruitt and his top officials have also met with groups known for their campaigns against climate-changing emissions and pollutants from fossil fuels, including the Moms Clean Air Force, the American Lung Association, and others.

But Ben Levitan of the Environmental Defense Fund said mainstream climate-change groups have received nothing like the outreach and invitations that Heartland and other hard-right groups have been getting.

Certainly, "in some ways this is normal and in the course of business that ebbs and flows with the ideol-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 31 of 52

ogy of the administration in power," said Meredith McGehee, executive director of Issue One, a non-profit promoting ethical government and bipartisan political reform.

Heartland is not registered as a lobbying group. Spokesman Jim Lakely said the group has logged its contacts with EPA and that they fall below the level required for disclosing as lobbying.

An email last February shows Bast forwarded to followers an email with the line "From the White House," rallying activists to public hearings the EPA was then holding around the country on repealing an Obama-era power plan meant to curb fossil-fuel emissions.

The email is signed by a Pruitt political appointee and gives the name of another EPA official for activists to call. It's not clear from the email, however, who initiated the attempt to rally conservatives for the public hearing.

Konkus was a Republican political consultant when Pruitt named him to the agency. His duties include reviewing awards of hundreds of millions of dollars in federal grants. The Washington Post reported in September that Konkus had been scrutinizing grant applications for mentions of climate change, which he reportedly calls "the double C-word."

Emails show he and former EPA spokeswoman, Liz Bowman, repeatedly reached out to Heartland to talk over critical coverage by the Post.

Lakely, the Heartland spokesman, responds he's shared the article with colleagues, "asking them to jump to your aide (sic) and defend this position."

Konkus also contacted Heartland and other conservative groups asking for what he calls "echo" amplifying word of Pruitt's regulation-cutting efforts, according to the emails.

And an email from Bast, shared with EPA staffers and others, shows the then-Heartland president celebrating news that a reporter, Justin Gillis, was leaving The New York Times.

"Ding Dong, the Witch is Dead. Still waiting for Chris Mooney and Juliet Eilperin at the WaPo and Seth Borenstein at AP to flame out," Bast writes.

Spokespeople for the AP, The Washington Post and The New York Times declined comment.

No rain in sight: Fire fears force land closures in Arizona

By FELICIA FONSECA, Associated Press

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. (AP) — Dry pine needles and dead wood snapped under fire prevention officer Matt Engbring's boots as he hiked a half-mile into the woods in search of a makeshift campsite that had served as one man's home until this week when the area was closed because of the escalating threat of massive wildfires.

Engbring walked past small ravines where wind quickly could carry embers and by the charred remains of a campfire, finally reaching the spot where John Dobson had been living among ponderosa pines in Arizona's Coconino National Forest.

He spotted Dobson earlier as he was leaving the forest with his bicycle and issued a warning that he'll likely repeat over the busy Memorial Day weekend as tourists flock to Arizona's cooler mountainous areas to hike, bike, camp and fish.

"The area is closed now, and I can't allow you to go back in," he said.

Many parts of the West are dealing with drought, but nowhere else has more state and federal land been closed to recreation than in Arizona where conditions are ripe for large-scale wildfires. Portions of the Apache-Sitgreaves, Coconino, Kaibab and Tonto national forests are closed because the dry vegetation quickly can go up in flames, firefighters would have a hard time stopping it, and homes and water resources are at risk.

In neighboring New Mexico, fire restrictions are in place, but no forests have closed. Forest officials in the western part of that state have suspended woodcutting permits, including ceremonial wood gathering by Native American tribes. They've also warned the public to look out for hungry bears.

Forests in southern Colorado and southern Utah are open but officials are limiting campfires to developed areas.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 32 of 52

"A lot of our rural, small communities depend on recreation and access to public land, so it's on the table but really an option of last resort," said Holly Krake, a spokeswoman for the U.S. Forest Service region that includes Colorado.

Weather over the next six weeks is expected to be in line with the typical onset of fire season: increasingly hot, breezy and dry. Then the monsoonal system that carries heavy rain should kick in.

"The bottom line is it's going to get worse before it gets better," said Rich Naden, fire weather meteorologist with the Southwest Coordination Center. "But this time of year is always like that. It's almost like clockwork."

Widespread forest closures in Arizona are rare. The 1.8 million-acre Coconino National Forest shut down completely because of fire danger in 2006 for nine days. A 2002 shutdown lasted nine weeks, encompassing the Memorial Day and July 4 holidays. Other national forests had closures in 2002 as well.

The current closures are affecting a small percentage of national forests in Arizona, and the general guidance for tourists is to check ahead of time to see what's open and whether campfires are allowed.

In Flagstaff, Los Angeles residents Pauline and John Barba had hoped to barbeque this week while staying at a commercial campground, but charcoal grills were wrapped in yellow caution tape.

Nearby, a bright yellow sign on the barbed wire fence warned that no one is allowed in the forest.

"We love the outdoors and the pine trees and everything," she said. "It's just a shame people are destructive and not careful."

Beyond inconveniencing campers and hikers, the drought's effects and forest closures are being felt by ranchers who can't graze cattle in the forest and researchers who can't conduct studies. Forest thinning projects also are delayed.

At a ski resort outside of Flagstaff, 50 people are out of work, and hundreds of tickets for pre-booked activities have been canceled. The Arizona Snowbowl, which operates under a special permit in a closed forest area, had hoped to run its scenic chair lift and debut family activities this weekend.

Those who left camping trailers in now-closed areas of the Coconino National Forest to stake out a spot for the busy holiday weekend will have to call forest officials to unlock the gate to let them out. Others have tried avoiding officials patrolling the forest or sneaking in when no one is looking.

The biggest fear is that a campfire sparks a wildfire. The Coconino National Forest recorded 700 abandoned campfires last year, and 121 built illegally during fire restrictions, setting a record. Target shooting, drones, cigarettes and sparks from vehicle exhausts also are concerns.

At his campsite, Dobson said he used a butane stove to cook rather than light campfires. He heard about the closure a few days earlier at a local food bank, saying he was in a tough spot with nowhere to take his dishes, books and clothing.

Engbring called for help from his colleagues to haul Dobson's belongings out of the forest. After loading up Dobson's bike in the back of a pickup truck, they headed for the food bank.

Associated Press writer Susan Montoya Bryan in Albuquerque, New Mexico, contributed to this report.

Giuliani says White House wants briefing on classified info

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and ERIC TUCKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's legal team wants a briefing on the classified information shared with lawmakers about the origins of the FBI investigation into Russia's meddling in the 2016 presidential election. And they may take it to the Justice Department as part of an effort to scuttle the ongoing special counsel probe.

Rudy Giuliani, one of Trump's attorneys, told The Associated Press on Friday that the White House hopes to get a readout of the information next week, particularly about the use of a longtime government informant who approached members of Trump's campaign in a possible bid to glean intelligence on Russian efforts to sway the election.

Trump has made unproven claims of FBI misconduct and political bias and has denounced the asset as

"a spy."

Boston bound: LeBron pushes Cavs to Game 7 vs. Celtics

By TOM WITHERS, AP Sports Writer

CLEVELAND (AP) — LeBron James chose Boston as the place he'll play next.

Game 7 is on. And any talk about James' future is on hold.

Delivering another performance for the ages, James scored 46 points and preserved his reign atop the Eastern Conference for at least one more game as the Cleveland Cavaliers shook off losing All-Star Kevin Love with a head injury and beat the Celtics 109-99 on Friday night to force a decisive climax to this back-and-forth series.

James, playing in perhaps his final game for the Cavs in Cleveland, added 11 rebounds and nine assists while playing all but two minutes — to avoid elimination and delay any decisions about where he'll continue his remarkable career next season.

"Greatness," Cavs coach Tyronn Lue said. "Championship pedigree. Giving it his all. We needed that, especially when Kevin went down. We had to play 'Bron as many minutes as he had to. He delivered. He was up for the challenge. He carried us home as usual."

The king is not dead, and he still has a chance to make his eighth straight NBA Finals.

This series, in which home court has meant everything, will have a fitting conclusion Sunday at TD Garden, where the Celtics are 10-0 this postseason.

"It's a Game 7," James said. "It's something that you wish you had when you're done playing, but more than that, it's just basketball for me. I know what I'm capable of doing, and I'm going to trust everything I put into it."

George Hill added 20 points, and Jeff Green 14 for the Cavs, who lost Love in the first quarter after he banged heads with Boston rookie Jayson Tatum.

Terry Rozier paced the Celtics — now 1-6 on the road — with 28 points, and Jaylen Brown had 27.

The Celtics were still within seven in the final three minutes before James made consecutive 3-pointers, punctuating the second by pounding his chest with both fists and screaming along with 20,562 others.

"The love of the game," James said, explaining his reaction. "It's a feeling you can't explain."

Just for good measure, he added a three-point play and then was taken out of the game to a rousing ovation and chants of "Cavs in 7!"

Boston's improbable run through the postseason without injured stars Kyrie Irving and Gordon Hayward will now take the Celtics back home, where they play with more intensity, togetherness and before fans hungry to see an 18th title banner raised to their arena's rafters.

"It's not going to be pretty," Celtics guard Marcus Smart said. "We've got to come out ready to get our nose bloody and our mouth bloody. We've got to come out ready to fight. You've got to find a way, whatever it takes."

Love went out with a head injury in the first quarter, forcing Lue to juggle his rotations and keep James on the floor longer than he wanted to. The three-time champion played the first 35 minutes without a break and then endured the final eight while nursing a right leg.

James didn't know until after the game that teammate Larry Nance Jr. had banged into him.

"I felt some pain throughout my entire right side of my ankle into my leg," he said. "I was just hoping for the best, obviously, because I've seen so many different injuries, and watching basketball with that type of injury, someone fall into one's leg standing straight up. Luckily, I was able to finish the game."

Hill, who came over in a deadline trade, has been awed by what James has done in this postseason.

"I've been in the league for some years and ran across him on the other side and really hated his guts," said Hill, who was on Indiana teams eliminated by James. "But to have him on our side, it kind of lets me take a deep breath of fresh air. It's just something that you really can't explain what he's doing night in, night out. It's just something special."

"I thought the best was when he always put us out. But to actually see it when he's on your team, I

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 34 of 52

can't even put it into words."

The real possibility that James was playing his last game in Cleveland hung over the game — and this city — in the hours leading to tip-off. Everyone had an opinion on what James will do next and that discussion filled the sports talk radio airwaves, bars and barber shops.

The 33-year-old has said several times since coming home in 2014 that he wants to retire with the Cavaliers, but fans are uneasy because he can opt out of his \$35.6 million contract this summer and test free agency.

And, of course, he left in 2010.

James has said he'll sit down after the season ends to decide next move, and he's already being courted in Philadelphia, Los Angeles and New York where fans can only dream of him joining their rosters.

For now, he's only going to Boston.

NO LOVE

The game began ominously for the Cavs as Love was forced to leave following his violent collision with Tatum.

Love and Tatum were away from the ball and didn't see each other until it was too late. They banged heads and both immediately dropped to the floor with Love raising his left arm as if to signal he needed help.

As Love stayed down, the Cavs huddled around him. He was helped off and walked to the bench unsteadily before heading to the locker room for further treatment and evaluation.

His status for Game 7 is uncertain.

THE OTHER SIDE

Tatum stayed in following his nasty collision with Love. The rookie passed the concussion testing that he was given on the bench.

"I didn't see him coming, it was bad," Tatum said. "I have a knot on the back of my head and he didn't return. I wish the best for Kevin Love because he's a great player and it's been a long season."

PREGAME MEAL

Hill said he's played well after eating his tacos with barbacoa and guacamole before games.

"I'm for sure going to find a Chipotle in Boston, I'll tell you that," he said.

TIP-INS

Celtics: Own a 37-0 record when leading a series 2-0. ... Dropped to 1-4 in Game 6s over the last four postseasons. ... Coach Brad Stevens praised James for his consistency, and ability to exceed expectations. "Nobody else has what he has on his shoulders playing the game," he said. "I think that the way in which he's done that and all of the years now that he's made The Finals and gone deep into the playoffs, it's unbelievable."

Cavaliers: Improved to 6-2 in elimination game since 2015. James has scored at least 40 in five of those wins. ... James' teams are 5-2 in Game 7s. ... This was the seventh 40-point game for James this postseason. Michael Jordan also had seven, one off Jerry West's record set in 1965. ... James passed Karl Malone (2,062) for sixth place on the career postseason rebounds list.

Alberto it is: First named tropical system chugs toward Gulf

Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — A storm moving slowly through the Caribbean Sea is threatening to bring heavy rainfall, mudslides, and flash floods to parts of Mexico, Cuba, Florida and the U.S. Gulf Coast this weekend.

Subtropical Storm Alberto — the first named storm of the 2018 hurricane season — was roiling parts of coastal Mexico and Cuba with rip currents and dangerous surf on Friday. Both countries issued tropical storm watches for portions of their coastlines, with rain totals in some isolated areas of up to 25 inches.

U.S. forecasters followed suit by issuing a tropical storm watch for parts of the Gulf Coast from the Florida Panhandle southwest of Tallahassee to the New Orleans metropolitan area.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 35 of 52

At 11 p.m. EDT, the National Hurricane Center in Miami said Alberto was centered about 110 miles (177 kilometers) southeast of Cozumel, Mexico. Its top sustained winds were 40 mph (65 kph). A gradual strengthening was expected through the weekend as it moves north.

The U.S. was expected to start feeling Alberto's effects Saturday. The hurricane center said up to 12 inches of rain was possible across the Florida Keys and southern and southwestern Florida. Residents in the storm's expected path were advised to monitor the storm's progress.

"Flooding potential will increase across this region early next week as Alberto is forecast to slow down after it moves inland," the hurricane center said.

The National Weather Service said a flash flood watch would be in effect from Saturday evening through Tuesday evening for southeastern Mississippi, southwestern Alabama, and the western Florida Panhandle. A storm surge watch was also issued for parts of Florida, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana.

A subtropical storm has a less defined and cooler center than a tropical storm, and its strongest winds are found farther from its center. Subtropical storms can develop into tropical storms, which in turn can strengthen into hurricanes. Alberto comes ahead of schedule: the six-month hurricane season doesn't begin until June 1.

Parts of Florida, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi and Louisiana have already seen heavy rain this week, and further deluges could leave those areas vulnerable to flash flooding and river flooding. Some beachfront and riverfront communities are already handing out sandbags.

The downpours could dampen Memorial Day, the unofficial start of the summer tourist season along Gulf beaches. Along with heavy rains and high winds come rough seas and a threat of rip currents from Florida to Louisiana that can sweep swimmers out to sea.

Red flags warning of dangerous surf conditions are already flying along some beaches. Jordan Sawmiller of Ohio tells WALA-TV that he was approaching the water with caution in Gulf Shores, Alabama.

"It will hit you pretty hard . and it sucks you right back out. So, I don't like getting in there very far," Sawmiller said.

A hotel owner in Panama City Beach, Florida, tells the Panama City News Herald that her family's five hotels are normally full on Memorial Day weekend. But Julie Hilton said people are cancelling because of the weather and room reservations are down about 20 percent.

Heavy rain could also be bad news for farmers. Georgia Peanut Commission Chairman and farmer Armond Morris and Tyron Spearman with the National Peanut Buying Points Association inspected a south Georgia peanut field Thursday. They told WALB-TV that farmers are worried about already-soaked young plants.

"Just hopeful that all the peanut stands will be OK, but we may have to replant some peanuts," said Morris.

Only 65 percent of the 2018 Georgia peanut crop has been planted.

"The crop is not growing as well as it should be," said University of Georgia Tifton peanut agronomist Scott Monfort. "So we are getting some cases of yellow peanuts just not growing."

USC president agrees to step down amid gynecologist scandal

By MICHAEL BALSAMO, Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The president of the University of Southern California has agreed to step down amid a raging sex scandal involving a university gynecologist who is accused of conducting inappropriate exams for decades, the chairman of the school's board of trustees said Friday.

The university's board has "agreed to begin an orderly transition and commence the process of selecting a new president," Rick J. Caruso, the board's chairman, said in a letter to students and faculty members.

The letter did not say when C.L. Max Nikias would leave his post.

"We have heard the message that something is broken and that urgent and profound actions are needed," Caruso said.

The announcement came days after hundreds of students, professors and alumni demanded Nikias' ouster, alleging that USC failed to respond to complaints of misconduct involving Dr. George Tyndall, a gynecologist who worked at a university clinic for 30 years.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 36 of 52

Tyndall routinely made crude comments, took inappropriate photographs and forced plaintiffs to strip naked and groped them under the guise of medical treatment for his "sexual gratification," according to civil lawsuits filed this week.

At least a dozen lawsuits have been filed so far and police are interviewing alleged victims to see if any crime was committed.

The Los Angeles Times reported earlier this month that complaints about Tyndall weren't properly addressed by USC for years and university officials never reported him to the medical board, even after he was quietly forced into retirement.

Tyndall, 71, denied wrongdoing in interviews with the Times and hasn't responded to phone calls and emails requesting comment from The Associated Press.

USC has said Tyndall was placed on administrative leave in 2016 and never returned to treating students after officials received a complaint from a staff member at the health clinic. The staff member alleged that Tyndall made inappropriate comments to a patient in front of medical assistants.

The university said it has previously reviewed complaints that Tyndall made racially inappropriate comments.

Nikias, 65, who became the university's president in 2010, had recently come under fire amid a string of scandals, including a report from the Los Angeles Times in July about how a USC medical school dean used drugs and partied with prostitutes.

A spokesman for USC said the university had no further comment.

Associated Press writer Brian Melley contributed to this report.

Emails show cooperation among EPA, climate-change deniers

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Newly released emails show senior Environmental Protection Agency officials working closely with a conservative group that dismisses climate change to rally like-minded people for public hearings on science and global warming, counter negative news coverage and tout Administrator Scott Pruitt's stewardship of the agency.

John Konkus, EPA's deputy associate administrator for public affairs, repeatedly reached out to senior staffers at the Heartland Institute, according to the emails.

"If you send a list, we will make sure an invitation is sent," Konkus wrote to then-Heartland president Joseph Bast in May 2017, seeking suggestions on scientists and economists the EPA could invite to an annual EPA public hearing on the agency's science standards.

Follow-up emails show Konkus and the Heartland Institute mustering scores of potential invitees known for rejecting scientific warnings of man-made climate-change, including from groups like Plants Need CO₂, The Right Climate Stuff, and Junk Science.

The emails underscore how Pruitt and senior agency officials have sought to surround themselves with people who share their vision of curbing environmental regulation and enforcement, leading to complaints from environmentalists that he is ignoring the conclusions of the majority of scientists in and out of his agency especially when it comes to climate-changing carbon emissions.

They were obtained by the Environmental Defense Fund and the Southern Environmental Law Center, which sued to enforce a Freedom of Information request and provided them to The Associated Press.

The EPA maintains close working relationships with a broad range of public and private groups, and Heartland is just one of many the agency engages with "to ensure the public is informed," said EPA spokesman Lincoln Ferguson.

"It demonstrates the agency's dedication to advancing President Trump's agenda of environmental stewardship and regulatory certainty," he said.

The public hearing referred to in the May 2017 email ultimately was canceled when the EPA official who runs it fell ill, the EPA said.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 37 of 52

But Bast contended in an email sent to EPA staffers and others that the official called off the hearing after learning that climate-change "skeptics planned to attend."

The Heartland Institute calls itself a leading free-market think-tank. It rejects decades of science saying fossil-fuel emissions are altering the climate and says on its website that curbing use of petroleum and coal to fight climate change would "squander one of America's greatest comparative advantages among the world's nations."

"Of course The Heartland Institute has been working with EPA on policy and personnel decisions," Tim Huelskamp, a former Kansas Republican congressman who now leads the group, said in a statement to the AP.

"They recognized us as the pre-eminent organization opposing the radical climate alarmism agenda and instead promoting sound science and policy," Huelskamp wrote.

He said Heartland would continue to help Pruitt and his staff.

Ferguson said Pruitt and his top officials have also met with groups known for their campaigns against climate-changing emissions and pollutants from fossil fuels, including the Moms Clean Air Force, the American Lung Association, and others.

But Ben Levitan of the Environmental Defense Fund said mainstream climate-change groups have received nothing like the outreach and invitations that Heartland and other hard-right groups have been getting.

Certainly, "in some ways this is normal and in the course of business that ebbs and flows with the ideology of the administration in power," said Meredith McGehee, executive director of Issue One, a non-profit promoting ethical government and bipartisan political reform.

Heartland is not registered as a lobbying group. Spokesman Jim Lakely said the group has logged its contacts with EPA and that they fall below the level required for disclosing as lobbying.

An email last February shows Bast forwarded to followers an email with the line "From the White House," rallying activists to public hearings the EPA was then holding around the country on repealing an Obama-era power plan meant to curb fossil-fuel emissions.

The email is signed by a Pruitt political appointee and gives the name of another EPA official for activists to call. It's not clear from the email, however, who initiated the attempt to rally conservatives for the public hearing.

Konkus was a Republican political consultant when Pruitt named him to the agency. His duties include reviewing awards of hundreds of millions of dollars in federal grants. The Washington Post reported in September that Konkus had been scrutinizing grant applications for mentions of climate change, which he reportedly calls "the double C-word."

Emails show he and former EPA spokeswoman, Liz Bowman, repeatedly reached out to Heartland to talk over critical coverage by the Post.

Lakely, the Heartland spokesman, responds he's shared the article with colleagues, "asking them to jump to your aide (sic) and defend this position."

Konkus also contacted Heartland and other conservative groups asking for what he calls "echo" amplifying word of Pruitt's regulation-cutting efforts, according to the emails.

And an email from Bast, shared with EPA staffers and others, shows the then-Heartland president celebrating news that a reporter, Justin Gillis, was leaving The New York Times.

"Ding Dong, the Witch is Dead . Still waiting for Chris Mooney and Juliet Eilperin at the WaPo and Seth Borenstein at AP to flame out," Bast writes.

Spokespeople for the AP, The Washington Post and The New York Times declined comment.

Korea summit after all? Trump says 'everybody plays games'

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

WASHINGTON (AP) — "Everybody plays games," President Donald Trump declared Friday as he suggested the potentially historic North Korean summit he had suddenly called off might be getting back on track.

His sights set on a meeting that has raised hopes for a halt in North Korea's nuclear weapons develop-

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 38 of 52

ment, Trump welcomed the North's conciliatory response to his Thursday letter withdrawing from the Singapore summit with Kim Jong Un. Rekindling hopes as quickly as he had doused them, Trump said it was even possible the meeting could take place on the originally planned June 12 date.

"They very much want to do it; we'd like to do it," he said.

Later Friday, Trump tweeted that the two countries were "having very productive talks." He wrote that the summit, "if it does happen, will likely remain in Singapore on the same date."

The sweetening tone was just the latest change in a roller-coaster game of brinkmanship — talks about talks with two unpredictable world leaders trading threats and blandishments. On Thursday, White House officials had noted that Trump had left the door open with a letter to Kim that blamed "tremendous anger and open hostility" by Pyongyang but also urged Kim to call him.

By Friday, North Korea issued a statement saying it was still "willing to give the U.S. time and opportunities" to reconsider talks "at any time, at any format." Trump rapidly tweeted that the statement was "very good news" and told reporters that "we're talking to them now."

Confident in his negotiating skills, Trump views the meeting as a legacy-defining opportunity and has relished the press attention and the speculation about a possible Nobel Peace Prize. He made a quick decision to accept the sit-down in March, over the concerns of many top aides, and has remained committed, even amid rising concerns about the challenges he faces in scoring a positive agreement.

Asked Friday if the North Koreans were playing games with their communications, Trump responded: "Everybody plays games. You know that better than anybody."

While the president did not detail the nature of the new U.S. communication with the North on Friday, Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said at the Pentagon, "The diplomats are still at work on the summit, possibility of a summit, so that is very good news." He characterized the recent back-and-forth as the "usual give and take."

A previously planned trip by White House aides to Singapore this weekend to work on logistics for the trip remained on schedule, said two White House officials, who were not authorized to speak publicly.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo spoke Friday with a top official from South Korea, whose leaders had appeared to be taken aback when Trump withdrew from the summit. Spokeswoman Heather Nauert said Pompeo and South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha reaffirmed their "shared commitment to the denuclearization of the Korean peninsula" and pledged to coordinate "in all of their efforts to create conditions for dialogue with North Korea."

South Korea's government said in a statement released Saturday that it was relieved about the revived talks for a summit.

The U.S. and North Korea do not have formal diplomatic relations, complicating the task of communicating between the two governments. Under the Trump administration, the CIA, where Pompeo served as director before becoming secretary of state, has taken an unusually prominent role in back-channel negotiations.

Pompeo last year assembled a working group at the CIA called the Korea Mission Center, which gradually assumed the lead role in talks with the North Koreans, and the group's director, a retired senior CIA official with deep experience in the region, became the main U.S. interlocutor with Pyongyang.

The group did not supplant the State Department's traditional mode of communication with the North, which is known as the "New York Channel" and involves U.S. diplomats and their North Korean counterparts posted to the United Nations. But it did play the major role in organizing Pompeo's two trips to Pyongyang, once as CIA director and once as secretary of state.

Trump's comments Friday came after days of mixed messages on the summit.

Trump, in his letter to Kim on Thursday, 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."

Trump then 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 — though he added that it was possible the summit could still take place at some point.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 39 of 52

A senior White House official said the North had reneged on its promises ahead of the summit, including a pledge to allow international inspectors to monitor its explosive destruction of its nuclear test site. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity to avoid overshadowing Trump's comments Thursday.

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, he 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.

Russian President Vladimir Putin chimed in from St. Petersburg, saying that "if you don't behave aggressively and if you don't corner North Korea, the result that we need will be achieved faster than many would think, and at less cost."

Trump, speaking Friday to graduates at the U.S. Naval Academy, did not mention North Korea directly, but he stressed the United States' military might.

He said, "The best way to prevent war is to be fully prepared for war."

Associated Press writers Matthew Lee and Robert Burns contributed to this report.

Trump steering clear of messy House immigration fight

By JILL COLVIN and LISA MASCARO, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump has spent recent weeks publicly hammering Congress to crack down on "legal loopholes" he says allow criminals to enter the country illegally. But behind the scenes, Trump has shown little interest in jumping into an intensifying Capitol Hill debate over immigration legislation that many believe is unlikely to ever reach his desk.

Trump is largely sitting out the biggest immigration showdown of his presidency to date as renegade House Republicans — from both the right and the center — drive an effort to force votes on immigration proposals. That includes legislation that would provide young "Dreamer" immigrants a path to legal status and beef up border security, but may fall short of funding Trump's promised wall along the southern border.

The president isn't calling House members into the Oval Office for private chats. He's not dialing them up to gauge their votes or lobby. His Twitter feed — the clearest window into his personal priorities — is nearly mum on the subject. Instead, he's waiting for Republicans to try to hammer out a deal that both moderates and conservatives can support.

"There are bills going through, I'm watching one or two of them. We'll see what happens," Trump told Fox News in an interview this week, underscoring his hands-off approach.

One senior White House official said the issue is seen inside the building as a House affair, and Trump would be happy to engage if asked to by House leaders once a compromise is reached. The person said the White House intends to hammer immigration and border security issues as a key part of its midterm election strategy. Even if legislation fails to pass both houses, the White House believes Republicans will reap political gains, said the person — who, like others, spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss private conversations.

But one senior GOP Capitol Hill aide familiar with the discussions said the White House has signaled to congressional leaders through quieter channels — including a meeting at the White House last week — that the president sees little benefit in expending too much political capital before the midterm elections on building support for legislation that is thought to have little chance of becoming law.

While White House aides are working with GOP leaders on an alternative bill that might win over enough Republicans to pass, the president has held back, letting House leadership take the lead in developing a legislative strategy, according to White House and congressional aides.

Such restraint may seem unexpected for a president who has made immigration his signature issue. But his reluctance to engage highlights the clear limits of the election-year gambit. Without Trump, the

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 40 of 52

effort is more likely to sputter in Congress as factions collide. The arm's-length approach may also reflect a concern — already being felt among some conservatives — that passing any legislation that extends protection to immigrants will anger Trump's base as "amnesty" and could depress turnout in November, when Republicans need to counter a wave of Democratic enthusiasm.

This latest effort comes as congressional leaders had all but abandoned the immigration issue after failed Senate attempts to resolve the standoff earlier this year. But now a rebellious group of GOP moderates — led by those in Florida and California, states with large immigrant populations — is pushing it to the fore.

They're collecting signatures to force a series of immigration votes in June, including on a bipartisan bill to address the "Dreamers" and the border wall. Trump is not likely to support that bill because it doesn't fully fund the wall.

The moderate Republicans are employing an unusual procedural maneuver to essentially take over the chamber, with the help of Democrats, and force the vote. As lawmakers left town for the weeklong Memorial Day recess, they were just a couple of signatures shy of the 25 Republicans needed to push it forward.

One leader of the effort, Rep. Carlos Curbelo, R-Fla., said he was convinced after talking with Trump during a recent visit to Key West that Trump "wants an immigration solution."

Curbelo believes the White House "is as impatient with congressional inaction as we are" and he sees the administration's hands-off approach as a tactic to force the issue forward.

"If they wanted to kill this process they could have done so easily by now," Curbelo said. "The silence is extremely powerful — and helpful."

House GOP leaders, though, are desperately trying to stop the effort, hoping to regain control by convening moderate and conservative lawmakers to draft a bill that wouldn't need to rely on Democrats for support.

House Speaker Paul Ryan, Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy and other leaders held meetings this past week to negotiate a Republican alternative that could win the president's support.

Republicans, said Ryan, are seeking to find the "sweet spot" of a bill that could win enough support from Republicans to pass, and that the president would sign.

White House press aides did not respond to repeated requests for comment. But Marc Short, the White House's legislative director, said Friday the administration was waiting to "see what comes out of the House in the next couple weeks" to determine its next steps.

He said the president is "anxious" to work with Democrats and on a solution for the Dreamers, immigrants were brought to the U.S. as children illegally and previously protected from deportation by the Obama-era Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. Trump canceled the program, but courts have acted to keep it in place.

"I think it's clear that we want to have a permanent solution — legislative — to the DACA population. And we want to make sure that there is border security funding and resources available," said Short.

But finding a workable compromise between the moderates and the conservative Freedom Caucus remains a longshot. Behind the scenes, Republicans acknowledge the coming votes are likely to be more for show than results — especially since Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has been cool to revisiting the issue after a series of bills failed to win passage in February.

Rep. Patrick McHenry, R-N.C., the deputy whip, said a GOP bill that could unite the factions is "in complete flux."

"There is enough good will for a compromise," McHenry said. "The question is, can anyone close?"

Associated Press writers Catherine Lucey and Darlene Superville contributed to this report.

Teacher who confronted Indiana school shooter lauded as hero

By RICK CALLAHAN, Associated Press

NOBLESVILLE, Ind. (AP) — An Indiana middle school student armed with two handguns opened fire inside his science classroom Friday, authorities said, wounding a classmate and a teacher whose swift

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 41 of 52

intervention was credited with saving lives.

The shooter, who had asked to be dismissed from the class before returning with the guns, was arrested "extremely quickly" after the incident around 9 a.m. at Noblesville West Middle School, police Chief Kevin Jowitt said. Authorities didn't release his name or say whether he had been in trouble before but indicated he likely acted alone.

Seventh-grader Ethan Stonebraker said the student was acting suspiciously when he walked into the room while the class was taking a test. He said science teacher Jason Seaman likely averted a catastrophe.

"Our science teacher immediately ran at him, swatted a gun out of his hand and tackled him to the ground," Stonebraker said. "If it weren't for him, more of us would have been injured for sure."

Stonebraker told ABC News that Seaman threw a basketball at the shooter and ran toward the bullets as screaming students sought cover behind a table.

He said he also knew the suspected gunman, whom he described as "a nice kid most of the times" and said he often joked with the classmates.

"It's just a shock he would do something like that," Stonebraker said.

The attack comes a week after an attack at a high school in Santa Fe, Texas, that killed eight students and two teachers, and months after the school attack that killed 17 people in Parkland, Florida. The Florida attack inspired students from that school and others throughout the country to call for more restrictions on access to guns.

Seaman's brother, Jeremy Seaman, told The Indianapolis Star that his brother was shot three times and was undergoing surgery. He said he was conscious after the shooting and talked with his wife, telling her he was OK.

Jason Seaman, 29, of Noblesville was in good condition Friday night, police spokesman Lt. Bruce Barnes said. The injured student, a girl, was in critical condition, Barnes said. Her name has not been released.

"There were no apparent injuries to the alleged shooter," Barnes said in a news release.

Jeremy Seaman, who now lives in Arizona, said his brother was a defensive end for Southern Illinois University's football team and has never been a person to run away.

Hours after the shooting, law enforcement agents sealed off part of an upscale neighborhood in Noblesville but weren't commenting on whether the suspect lived there. Sandy McWilliams, a member of a landscaping crew working nearby, said six officers toting assault rifles entered a home.

Students were bused to the Noblesville High School gym, where hundreds of parents and other family members arrived to retrieve them.

Authorities referred to a prompt and heroic response at the school but didn't confirm accounts of the teacher tackling the student or describe the role of the resource officer who was stationed at the school.

When asked to elaborate on his praise of the response, Indiana State Police Superintendent Doug Carter said: "Wait 'til one day we can tell you that story. You'll be proud of them, too."

Eighth-grader Chris Navarro said he was inside an auditorium when he heard several gunshots about a minute before the bell rang for the change in classes.

"The speaker came on and said we were on lockdown and people rushed in and we went to the back of the room. I went into this little room in the back with three other people," he said calmly standing between his parents as they picked him up.

Jennifer Morris, who was among the worried parents who rushed to get their kids, appeared slightly dazed and said she was at work when her 14-year-old son sent a text message about the shooting, stunning her.

"He said, 'I'm OK, please come get me.' That was probably 20 minutes after it happened," Morris said. "It's like a bad dream. I don't know how you get the kids through this. This isn't something you're trained for as a parent."

Gov. Eric Holcomb, who was returning from a trip to Europe on Friday, issued a statement saying he and other state leaders were getting updates about the situation and that 100 state police officers had been made available to work with local law enforcement.

"Our thoughts are with all those affected by this horrible situation," Holcomb said.

Noblesville, which is about 20 miles (32 kilometers) northeast of Indianapolis, is home to about 50,000 people. The middle school has about 1,300 students from grades 6-8. The school's academic year was scheduled to end next Friday.

Indiana's Senate Democrats issued a statement in response to Friday's school shooting expressing their condolences to the victims and calling for steps to prevent such shootings, including restrictions on guns.

Follow Rick Callahan on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/Callahanwrick>

Exit polls suggest Irish voters have repealed abortion ban

By GREGORY KATZ and RENATA BRITO, Associated Press

DUBLIN (AP) — Ireland appeared to move away from its conservative Roman Catholic roots and embrace a more liberal viewpoint Friday as two major exit polls predicted voters had repealed a constitutional ban on abortion.

The RTE television and Irish Times exit polls are only predictions, with official tallies due Saturday afternoon, but both exit polls suggested an overwhelming victory for abortion rights activists seeking a "yes" vote to change the constitution.

Catherine Murphy, co-leader of the small Social Democrats party, said the polls strongly indicate "voters have taken on board the clear message that the constitutional ban harms women" and must be removed from the constitution.

If the exit poll numbers hold up, the victory will be of a larger magnitude than "yes" activists had believed possible. It would then fall to Parliament to establish new laws governing abortions.

Ireland's referendum represented a battle for the very soul of a traditionally conservative nation that has seen a wave of liberalization in recent years.

The country's leaders supported a "yes," an outcome that would repeal a 1983 constitutional amendment requiring authorities to treat a fetus and its mother as equals under the law. They called it a once-in-a-generation opportunity to liberalize some of Europe's strictest abortion rules.

Voters went to the polls after a campaign that aroused deep emotions on both sides. For advocates of repeal, a "yes" vote would be a landmark in Irish women's fight for equality and the right to control their own bodies. For opponents, it would be a betrayal of Ireland's commitment to protect the unborn.

The vote also is a key indicator of Ireland's trajectory, three years after the country voted to allow same-sex marriages and a year after its first openly gay prime minister took office.

The newspaper exit poll indicated overwhelming support for change. The survey by pollster Ipsos-MRBI says 68 percent of voters backed repeal of the ban and 32 percent opposed it. The pollster says it interviewed some 4,000 people and the survey had a margin of error of plus or minus 1.5 percentage points. The RTE poll used similar methods and projected the "yes" vote to be nearly 70 percent.

The voting took place on a day that was sunny throughout much of Ireland, which may have bolstered turnout.

Theresa Sweeney, a repeal supporter, was one of the first to arrive at a church polling station in Dublin. "I feel like I've waited all of my adult life to have a say on this," she said.

Emma Leahy said her "yes" vote comes from her firm belief that everyone should be able to make their own choice when it comes to abortion.

"For Ireland, it's hope for the future," she said of the referendum. "Whether you agree or disagree, it shouldn't be the government or anyone else making that decision."

Vera Rooney voted against repeal.

"It is a hard decision but I just feel I don't have the right to take life," she said. "I think life is sacred and for that reason I had to vote no."

The contested amendment requires authorities to equally protect the right to life of a mother and that of a fetus, from the moment of conception. That effectively bans all abortions in Ireland, except in cases when the woman's life is at risk. Having an illegal abortion is punishable by up to 14 years in prison, and

several thousand Irish women travel each year to get abortions in neighboring Britain.

If the amendment is removed and the issue moves to parliament, the government proposes that terminations be allowed during the first 12 weeks of pregnancy. Later abortions would be allowed in special cases.

Thousands of Irish people abroad travelled home to take part in the historic referendum, and supporters of repeal gathered at Dublin Airport to give arrivals an ecstatic welcome.

Some activists held a placard reading "Thank you for making the journey so other women don't have to" — a reference to the way Irish women seeking abortions have had to leave the country to obtain them.

Tara Flynn, who 11 years ago flew to the Netherlands for an abortion, said she planned to vote "yes" to make sure future generations of women don't endure what she did, with feelings of isolation and shame.

She said her vote would be one for solidarity and compassion, "a vote to say, I don't send you away anymore."

Campaigning was not allowed Friday, but Dublin was still filled with signs and banners urging citizens to vote "yes" or "no." Many of the anti-abortion signs showed photographs of fetuses.

Voting has already taken place on Ireland's remote islands so that paper ballots can be taken to the mainland and counted in time.

Letters to the editor published Friday in the Irish Independent newspaper contained several emotional arguments urging voters to reject the repeal movement.

"If we vote 'yes' every unborn, wanted and unwanted, will have zero rights," wrote Frances Kelleher, from Killarney. "I do not believe the smart people of Ireland want this unrestricted, abortion-on-demand bill.

Leo Enright contributed.

Resentment over Trump election helped fuel Weinstein case

By DAVID CRARY and JOCELYN NOVECK, AP National Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — Throughout much of last year, millions of American women resented that a man who'd bragged about sexually assaulting women had been elected president. Then came an electrifying moment — detailed allegations that another powerful man had sexually assaulted or harassed dozens of women as one of Hollywood's leading producers.

"It just explodes. It was like throwing a match into a bucket of kerosene," said Kathy Spillar, executive director of the Feminist Majority Foundation, describing the reaction to accusations against Harvey Weinstein that helped launch the #MeToo movement.

Donald Trump's victory in 2016 hardened the resolve of many women who, when confronted with the Weinstein case in October, saw a rare chance that a serial predator with immense prestige and clout might be held accountable.

The infamous "Access Hollywood" tape that revealed Trump's boasts helped fuel their outrage.

"We, as victims of that kind of behavior, we had all heard that kind of talk before," said Weinstein accuser Louise Geiss. "And then you felt like, oh my gosh, now someone can treat women like that and become president! It was just, 'Enough is enough.'"

Spillar suggested that the intense response to Weinstein arose directly from Trump's election.

"The backlash to him and his election was so massive among women that that was the setup," Spillar said. "I don't think the Weinstein Effect could have happened without the Trump Effect first, and the massive women's marches and the protests."

For some women, Weinstein's arrest Friday on rape and criminal sex act charges was a relief. It was bittersweet for Danielle Campoamor, a New York-based writer and editor who says she was sexually assaulted by a co-worker five years ago.

"I watched Harvey Weinstein walk out of the police station in handcuffs and closed my eyes and thought about what it would be like to see my rapist walk out in handcuffs," she said. "It's something I will never see. But so many women today did, and that's something."

Campoamor agreed the Weinstein case should be viewed in the context of Trump's rise to the White

House.

"We heard these stories (about Weinstein) after a man accused of sexual assault and harassment from multiple women ascended to the highest office in the country," she said. "Victims of sexual assault want to believe that justice will be served regardless of who the abuser is. Weinstein has shown us that it's possible."

Geiss, 44, says she had an encounter with him in a hotel room in 2008, when he undressed and tried to force her to watch him masturbate. She says she managed to elude his grasp and run out, but the incident convinced her to leave the movie business.

Though the Weinstein allegations, as initially reported by The New York Times and The New Yorker, were a catalyst for #MeToo, the movement did not emerge out of thin air. Activists involved in combating sexual assault on campus and in the military had laid groundwork over the previous years, and were poised to help expand #MeToo once it emerged.

"It was activists on the ground who really primed our culture to be ready for this," said Jess Davidson, a sexual-assault survivor who is now interim executive director of End Rape on Campus.

For Toni Van Pelt, president of the National Organization for Women, news of Weinstein's arrest brought "a tremendous sense of relief."

"Law enforcement and prosecutors are no longer protecting men," she said. "They are believing the victim and diligently prosecuting, and that gives other women the courage to come forward."

Reflecting back to October, she said the initial revelations about Weinstein were so powerful "because credible newspapers finally published the story from a women's point of view."

And it helped, she said, that some of the initial accusers were celebrities who found news outlets eager to provide coverage.

The Weinstein allegations "demonstrated that men who prey on women have handlers and enablers that allow them to assault and harass with impunity — silencing victims and ruining lives," said Debra Katz, a sex-harassment lawyer based in Washington, D.C. "Exposing not only the harassers ... but the systems that allowed them to get away with this for decades jump-started the #MeToo movement."

Gayle Goldin, a state legislator in Rhode Island who's been campaigning against sexual misconduct, said multiple factors — aside from the Trump Effect — distinguished the Weinstein case from previous cases involving high-profile men.

"The story is a combination of excellent journalism, high-profile women willing to speak out publicly ... the sheer number of women who then spoke out about their own experiences with him," Goldin said in an email.

"Given that most women never report sexual assault or sexual harassment to authorities, hearing these famous women tell their stories resonates deeply with women," she added.

Goldin says she's been heartened that many high-profile women with Hollywood ties have now joined in helping create the TIMES UP Legal Defense Fund so that women without wealth and privilege can also seek justice.

That fund, administered by the National Women's Law Center, is already connecting low-wage women with attorneys who can help them pursue complaints of sexual assault and harassment.

"I think this is just the beginning," said the center's CEO, Fatima Goss Graves. "It's not going to end with seeing Harvey Weinstein in handcuffs. It's bigger than one man."

Handcuffed Weinstein faces rape charge in #MeToo reckoning

By COLLEEN LONG, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — It was the moment the #MeToo movement had been waiting for: Harvey Weinstein in handcuffs.

His face pulled in a strained smile and his hands locked behind his back, the once-powerful Hollywood figure emerged from a police station Friday facing rape and criminal sex act charges, a searing reckoning for the man who became a symbol of a worldwide outcry over sexual misconduct.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 45 of 52

"This defendant used his position, money and power to lure young women into situations where he was able to violate them sexually," Manhattan Assistant Attorney Joan Illuzzi-Orbon said later, in words that brought raised eyebrows from the otherwise stony-faced Weinstein.

The charges stem from encounters with two of the dozens of women — some famous, some not — who have accused him of sexual misdeeds. The rape charge involves a woman who has not come forward publicly; the other is a onetime aspiring actress who was among his first accusers.

Weinstein has consistently denied any allegations of nonconsensual sex.

His lawyer, Benjamin Brafman, said Friday that he would fight to get the charges dismissed.

And he began to take aim at the accusations and accusers, noting that the alleged attacks weren't reported to police when they happened and suggesting potential jurors wouldn't believe the women.

"Assuming," he added, "we get 12 fair people who are not consumed by the movement that seems to have overtaken this case."

Asked about the raft of other allegations against Weinstein, Brafman said the case was a question of crime, not bad behavior.

"Mr. Weinstein did not invent the casting couch in Hollywood," the attorney said.

Weinstein was released on \$1 million bail, with constant electronic monitoring and a ban on traveling beyond New York and Connecticut.

As he surrendered, the 66-year-old Weinstein found himself surrounded by lights and cameras in a spectacle he couldn't control.

"You sorry, Harvey?" came a shout from a throng of media as the once powerful movie mogul was led into a lower Manhattan courthouse.

Asked "what can you say?" Weinstein mildly shook his head and softly said "no."

Earlier, he lumbered into a police station carrying books that harkened to his show-business roots: one on the Broadway songwriting team of Rodgers and Hammerstein, and another about famed film director Elia Kazan.

During a half-hour in a cell, officials said, he sat on the floor and flipped through the Kazan biography. Later, in a courthouse booking area, he complained he felt faint and his handcuffs were too tight. Officers used three, linked sets to put his hands behind his back — a common procedure for heavysset prisoners. Other suspects who recognized him yelled out, "Yo, Harvey!"

The top charges against him carry the potential for up to 25 years in prison.

He's accused of confining a woman in a Manhattan hotel room and raping her in 2013, according to a court complaint.

The criminal sex act charge stems from a 2004 encounter between Weinstein and Lucia Evans, a then-aspiring actress who told The New Yorker magazine he forced her to perform oral sex during a daytime meeting in his office.

"We are relieved and grateful that justice is coming, but we also mourn the cases where it didn't," her lawyer, Carrie Goldberg, said in a statement to The Associated Press.

More than 75 women have accused Weinstein of wrongdoing, and authorities in California and London are also investigating assault allegations. Brafman also has said that Weinstein was a "principal target" of an investigation being conducted by the U.S. attorney's office in Manhattan.

New York City police have also been investigating allegations by "Boardwalk Empire" actress Paz de la Huerta, who told police last fall that Weinstein raped her twice in 2010.

Other women who have publicly accused Weinstein of criminal sexual assaults include actress Rose McGowan, who said Weinstein raped her in 1997 in Utah; "Sopranos" actress Annabella Sciorra, who said he raped her in her New York apartment in 1992, and Norwegian actress Natassia Malthe, who said he attacked her in a London hotel room in 2008.

Until the scandal, Weinstein was among the most influential forces in American film. Companies he co-founded, Miramax and the Weinstein Co., were behind such hits as "Pulp Fiction," "Shakespeare in Love" and "The King's Speech."

But there were rumors in Hollywood for years about Weinstein's pursuit of young actresses. And in 2015, an Italian model went to New York City police and accused him of groping her during a meeting.

Police set up a sting in which the woman recorded herself confronting Weinstein. But Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr. decided not to bring charges, citing a lack of evidence.

Vance — a Democrat who faced public pressure from women's groups to prosecute Weinstein this time — said Friday's charges "reflect significant progress in this active, ongoing investigation."

The public allegations against Weinstein helped prompt a broad public furor about sexual misconduct.

Major figures in media and politics have lost their jobs or had their reputations tarnished by allegations that they subjected women to unwanted advances or outright assaults. They include TV hosts Matt Lauer and Charlie Rose, comedian Louis C.K., Democratic U.S. Sen. Al Franken, chef Mario Batali, casino magnate Steve Wynn and, most recently, Democratic New York Attorney General Eric Schneiderman.

But on Friday, it was Weinstein in the spotlight.

"We got you, Harvey Weinstein," McGowan tweeted. "We got you."

Associated Press writers Jennifer Peltz, Jake Pearson and Jocelyn Noveck contributed to this report.

AP Source: Trump lawyer met Russian oligarch at Trump Tower

By STEPHEN BRAUN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump's personal lawyer, Michael Cohen, met with a Russian oligarch and discussed U.S.-Russia relations just 11 days before Trump was inaugurated as president, according to a person familiar with the meeting.

A firm connected to the oligarch, billionaire Viktor Vekselberg, later paid Cohen \$500,000 for consulting work.

Vekselberg met with Cohen for about 20 minutes in Cohen's 26th-floor office in Trump Tower in New York, said the person, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the meeting publicly. The two men were joined by Andrew Intrater, Vekselberg's American cousin, who heads a New York private equity firm that manages financial assets for the Russian.

The person who confirmed the January 2017 meeting said the discussions dealt with business and cultural relations between the two nations, but he would not characterize Vekselberg's point of view. Vekselberg has worked in recent years to improve U.S. tech and trade relations with Moscow.

Intrater's firm, Columbus Nova, later paid Cohen \$500,000 for consulting work. A lawyer for adult-film star Stormy Daniels has claimed that the money was routed by Vekselberg and Intrater to a Cohen shell company. That company, Essential Consultants LLC, was used by Cohen to pay off Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford, for her silence about an affair she claims she had with Trump, according to the lawyer, Michael Avenatti. Trump denies the affair.

Cohen's finances are now under investigation by federal investigators in New York, following a referral from special counsel Robert Mueller, who is investigating contacts between the Trump presidential campaign and Russian intermediaries.

Columbus Nova has said Vekselberg was not involved in the money transfer.

Vekselberg was targeted in April with U.S. Treasury Department sanctions, which cited his ties to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The Trump Tower meeting between the three men was first reported by The New York Times, citing video footage and an interview with Intrater.

Dems alarmed when WH lawyer shows up at classified briefing

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and ERIC TUCKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republican and Democratic lawmakers have gotten 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.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 47 of 52

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."

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 state-

ment 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 provided 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.

After Amazon Echo misfire, ways to protect your own privacy

By BARBARA ORTUTAY and ANICK JESDANUN, AP Technology Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — Revelations that an Amazon Echo smart speaker inadvertently sent a family’s private conversation to an acquaintance highlights some unexpected risks of new voice-enabled technologies.

According to Amazon, the fault was an “unlikely” series of inadvertent vocal cues that triggered the speaker, caused it to begin recording and then led it to interpret subsequent conversation as a “send message” request.

There’s no way to eliminate these sorts of privacy risks short of unplugging entirely. But you can minimize the odds of unpleasant privacy surprises with these tips:

— **KILL THE MIC:** Most smart speakers have a physical button to disable the microphone, so a private conversation can’t be recorded to begin with. You can hit that when you’re having sensitive conversations. The button on the Echo will turn red; other devices have similar cues. It doesn’t make sense to keep the mic disabled throughout the day, though. If the Echo can’t hear you, it won’t be able to order you more toilet paper or play smooth jazz.

— **LIMIT THE MIC:** Disabling the microphone isn’t practical on a smartphone, but you can limit what apps have access to it. Go to the settings and turn off mic access to all but essential apps such as voice recorders or video conferencing. Netflix doesn’t really need voice access; you can simply type the name of the show you’re searching for.

— **ABOUT THAT CAMERA:** Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg famously puts a piece of tape over his laptop’s camera to prevent spying if anyone were to hack his device. Buy yourself a roll. Or use bandages. If you have a home-security camera that’s connected to the internet, turn the camera to the wall when you’re home. Just remember to turn it back before you leave, or you defeat the point of having a security camera.

— **BLOCK THE SIGNALS:** For smartphones and other gadgets you carry with you, a “Faraday bag” that blocks electromagnetic waves can help prevent unwanted spying. The good ones will block cellular and

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 49 of 52

other signals, meaning privacy-compromising information such as your location won't leak out either. Just remember, your phone won't get any calls while it's in the bag — that's the whole point.

— BE INFORMED: Apple, Samsung and other tech companies have worked over the years to ensure that their products work "out of the box," without users having to pore through lengthy manuals and operating instructions. The downside is that users are often unaware of all the things their gadgets can do, good or bad. Checking reputable online reviews, how-to guides and even instructional videos will help you get the most out of new technologies. They'll also tell you about any known glitches and risks.

Of course, the safest approach is not to buy a new gadget in the first place. That might not be practical for smartphones these days, but do you really need a smart speaker or a television set that's connected to the internet? (As it turns out, it's actually difficult to buy a TV without "smart" capabilities these days, but nothing says you have to connect it at home.)

From toothbrushes to slow cookers to toys, if companies can dream it up, it's out there. Companies often release smart gadgets without thinking through the risks and ensuring their security. This makes them easy targets for malicious hackers. This is especially true with manufacturers that aren't well known or that specialize in toys and other non-tech businesses.

Tiny California cottage on market for just under \$1 million

LAGUNA BEACH, Calif. (AP) — A 595-square-foot (55-square meter) Southern California cottage with one bedroom and one bathroom is on the market for just under \$1 million.

The Orange County Register reports the price of the tiny abode in tony Laguna Beach dropped to \$998,900 this month after being listed for as much as \$1.15 million last year.

The Lombardy Lane lodging was built in 1941 and is about five blocks from the Pacific Ocean.

Listing agent Gary Boisen of Surterre Properties tells the newspaper it has been in the same family for nearly 50 years.

He says most buyers would probably modernize it to a degree, but even if the city allowed it to be torn down it probably couldn't be rebuilt with the current footprint due to many code changes.

Information from: The Orange County Register, <http://www.ocregister.com>

Stocks dip as oil prices and energy companies fall sharply

By MARLEY JAY, AP Markets Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Energy companies and oil prices took their worst losses in months Friday on reports OPEC countries plan to produce more oil soon. Stock indexes finished an indecisive week with small losses.

U.S. crude oil sank 4 percent after multiple reports indicated that Russia and OPEC could start producing more oil soon. They cut production at the start of 2017 following a big buildup in supplies that had pushed prices lower.

In November they extended that cut through the end of 2018, but according to reports this week, they might agree to start raising production in June. U.S. crude finished at a three-year high Monday and has fallen 6 percent since then.

The drop in the price of oil has meant sharp losses for energy companies, but it gave airlines a boost as investors anticipated lower fuel costs. Bond yields declined again, which hurt banks but helped dividend-payers like household goods makers.

Wall Street also focused on quarterly results from retailers. Gap plunged after it said its namesake brand is still struggling, but Foot Locker soared after it said sales of premium shoes improved.

Terry Sandven, chief equity strategist at U.S. Bank Wealth Management, said energy companies and oil prices had made big gains lately and were due to slow down. He said the growing global economy is going to help the industry in the longer term.

"If you look at the sectors that are outperforming, it's those that tend to be pro-growth," he said, especially

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 50 of 52

technology and consumer-focused companies. Over the last month that growth, and the strong company profits that come with it, have not translated into gains for stocks. Sandven said that could change when companies start reporting their second-quarter results in July.

The S&P 500 index slid 6.43 points, or 0.2 percent, to 2,721.33. The Dow Jones industrial average fell 58.67 points, or 0.2 percent, to 24,753.09. The Nasdaq composite climbed 9.42 points, or 0.1 percent, to 7,433.85 as consumer-focused companies moved higher. The Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks lost 1.29 points, or 0.1 percent, to 1,626.93.

U.S. markets will be closed Monday for the Memorial Day holiday.

U.S. crude dropped to \$67.88 a barrel in New York. Brent crude, used to price international oils, fell 3 percent to \$76.44 a barrel in London. Increased oil production and lower prices could reduce profits for energy companies. Exxon Mobil fell 1.9 percent to \$78.71 and Chevron gave up 3.5 percent to \$122.19.

Among airlines, Delta gained 2.7 percent to \$55.87 and American rose 3.1 percent to \$44.91. The stocks have skidded over the last few months as the rising price of oil increased their fuel costs and cut into their profits. Delta stock is flat in 2018 and American Airlines has fallen 14 percent.

Bond prices kept rising. The yield on the 10-year Treasury note fell to 2.93 percent from 2.98 percent.

The falling yields helped household goods makers break out of their recent struggles. Toothpaste maker Colgate-Palmolive added 2 percent to \$63.75 and cereal maker Kellogg rose 2.7 percent to \$65.23. The stocks, and others that pay large dividends, have lagged behind the rest of the market as investors found technology firms and consumer-focused companies more attractive thanks to signs of strong growth in the U.S. economy.

Gap dropped 14.6 percent to \$28.15 following a drop in sales for Gap brand stores. Gap has been shifting focus away from the namesake brand because it's not connecting with shoppers and has struggled to separate itself from rivals. Its Old Navy and Banana Republic brands fared better. Elsewhere, discount retailer Ross Stores gave up 6.8 percent to \$77.34 after it gave disappointing forecasts for the current quarter and the full year.

Foot Locker blew past estimates and said sales of premium shoes continue to improve, which has been a major concern for it and other sporting goods companies. The stock jumped 20.2 percent to \$54.74. Shoe Carnival leaped 20.7 percent to \$31.80 after it beat expectation in the first quarter. It, too, said athletic shoe sales improved.

Fiat Chrysler fell 2 percent to \$21.82 after saying it's recalling 4.8 million vehicles in the U.S. because in rare circumstances drivers may not be able to turn off the cruise control. The company warned owners not to use cruise control until the vehicles can be fixed with a software update. Drivers can still stop the cars using the brakes.

Wholesale gasoline slid 2.3 percent to \$2.18 a gallon. Heating oil lost 2.5 percent to \$2.21 a gallon. Natural gas remained at \$2.94 per 1,000 cubic feet.

Gold slipped 0.1 percent to \$1,303.70 an ounce. Silver lost 0.8 percent to \$16.55 an ounce. Copper fell 0.6 percent to \$3.08 a pound.

The dollar rose to 109.37 yen from 109.28 yen. The euro fell to \$1.1669 from \$1.1727.

Germany's DAX rose 0.6 percent and the CAC 40 in France fell 0.1 percent. Britain's FTSE 100 rose 0.2 percent. Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 index rose 0.1 percent and South Korea's Kospi lost 0.2 percent. Hong Kong's Hang Seng shed 0.6 percent.

AP Markets Writer Marley Jay can be reached at <http://twitter.com/MarleyJayAP> . His work can be found at <https://apnews.com/search/marley%20jay>

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 51 of 52

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Saturday, May 26, the 146th day of 2018. There are 219 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On May 26, 1868, the impeachment trial of President Andrew Johnson ended with his acquittal on the remaining charges.

On this date:

In 1647, Else (Alice) Young was hanged in Hartford, Connecticut, in the first recorded execution of a "witch" in the American colonies.

In 1805, Napoleon Bonaparte was crowned king of Italy in Milan.

In 1897, the Gothic horror novel "Dracula" by Bram Stoker was first published in London.

In 1918, the Democratic Republic of Georgia declared its independence. (Georgia was invaded by the Soviet Union in 1921, and did not reclaim its independence until 1991.)

In 1938, the House Un-American Activities Committee was established by Congress.

In 1940, Operation Dynamo, the evacuation of some 338,000 Allied troops from Dunkirk, France, began during World War II.

In 1954, explosions rocked the aircraft carrier USS Bennington off Rhode Island, killing 103 sailors. (The initial blast was blamed on leaking catapult fluid ignited by the flames of a jet.)

In 1960, U.N. Ambassador Henry Cabot Lodge accused the Soviets during a meeting of the Security Council of hiding a microphone inside a wood carving of the Great Seal of the United States that had been presented to the U.S. Embassy in Moscow.

In 1972, President Richard M. Nixon and Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev signed the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in Moscow. (The U.S. withdrew from the treaty in 2002.)

In 1978, Resorts Casino Hotel, the first legal U.S. casino outside Nevada, opened in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

In 1981, 14 people were killed when a Marine jet crashed onto the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz off Florida.

In 1998, the U.S. Supreme Court made it far more difficult for police to be sued by people hurt during high-speed chases. The Supreme Court ruled that Ellis Island, historic gateway for millions of immigrants, was mainly in New Jersey, not New York.

Ten years ago: President George W. Bush paid a Memorial Day tribute to America's fighting men and women who died in battle, saying national leaders must have "the courage and character to follow their lead" in preserving peace and freedom. Chinese officials said they would waive their one-child policy for families with a child who was killed, severely injured or disabled in the country's devastating earthquake. Oscar-winning movie director Sydney Pollack died in Los Angeles at age 73. Composer Earle H. Hagen, who wrote the themes for "The Andy Griffith Show," "I Spy," "The Mod Squad" and other TV shows, died in Rancho Mirage, California, at age 88.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama visited tornado-devastated Moore, Oklahoma, consoling people staggered by the loss of life and property and promising that the government will be behind them "every step of the way." A Nigerian tugboat carrying 12 crew members capsized and sank in about 100 feet of water; a sole survivor (Harrison Odjegba Okene) was miraculously rescued three days later. Tony Kanaan won the Indianapolis 500. Ten fans were injured during the Coca-Cola 600 at Charlotte Motor Speedway won by Kevin Harvick when a nylon rope supporting a FOX Sports overhead television camera fell from the grandstands onto the track surface. The lesbian romance "Blue is the Warmest Color: The Life of Adele" won the Palme d'Or at the 66th Cannes Film Festival.

One year ago: President Donald Trump, attending a G-7 meeting in Sicily, vowed to crush "evil organizations of terror" following an attack on Coptic Christians that killed at least 28 people near Cairo, Egypt. Two men were stabbed to death aboard a light-rail train in Portland, Oregon; police said the victims were

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 25 - No. 316 ~ 52 of 52

trying to protect two women who were the target of a man's anti-Muslim rant. (A suspect faces trial.) President Jimmy Carter's national security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski (ZBIG'-nyef breh-ZHIN'-skee), died in Falls Church, Virginia, at age 89. Hall of Fame pitcher and former U.S. senator Jim Bunning, 85, died in Fort Thomas, Kentucky.

Today's Birthdays: Sportscaster Brent Musberger is 79. Rock musician Garry Peterson (Guess Who) is 73. Singer Stevie Nicks is 70. Actress Pam Grier is 69. Actor Philip Michael Thomas is 69. Country singer Hank Williams Jr. is 69. British Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn is 69. Actress Margaret Colin is 60. Country singer-songwriter Dave Robbins is 59. Actor Doug Hutchison is 58. Actress Genie Francis is 56. Comedian Bobcat Goldthwait is 56. Singer-actor Lenny Kravitz is 54. Actress Helena Bonham Carter is 52. Distance runner Zola Budd is 52. Rock musician Phillip Rhodes is 50. Actor Joseph Fiennes (FYNZ) is 48. Singer Joey Kibble (Take 6) is 47. Actor-producer-writer Matt Stone is 47. Contemporary Christian musician Nathan Cochran is 40. Actress Elisabeth Harnois is 39. Actor Hrach Titizian is 39.

Thought for Today: "The moment we begin to fear the opinions of others and hesitate to tell the truth that is in us, and from motives of policy are silent when we should speak, the divine floods of light and life no longer flow into our souls." — Elizabeth Cady Stanton, American feminist (1815-1902).