

Groton Daily Independent

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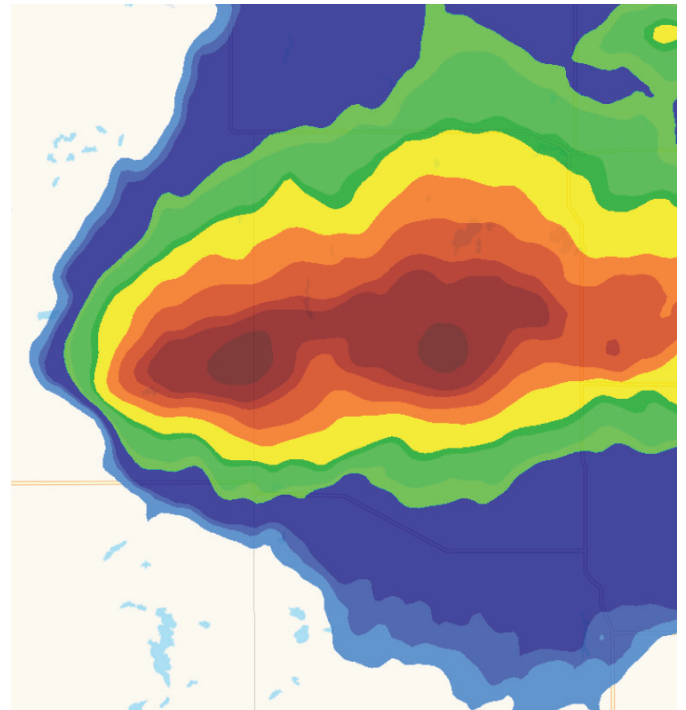


Pool Hours Today 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

- 1- Chicken Soup for the Soul
- 1- Treeline Tree Service Ad
- 1- Recycling Trailer
- 2- Yard of the Week
- 2- Agtegra Ad
- 3- School Board Agenda
- 4- Protect yourself! They're coming for YOU!
- 5- South Dakota WNV Forecasts - High Risk Predicted for 4th of July Week
- 6- Midwest Masonry Ad
- 7- Today in Weather History
- 8- Today's Forecast
- 9- Yesterday's Weather
- 9- National Weather map
- 9- Today's Weather Almanac
- 10- Daily Devotional
- 11- 2018 Groton Community Events
- 12- News from the Associated Press

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

Sperry Stump Removal Tyler: 605/216-8431
Over 30 Years of Combined Experience!
TJ: 605/380-7915 **TreeLine Tree Service**



This was a radar image Monday evening south of Groton. It looks like the storm is watching you with its pair of eyes.

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Yard of the Week

The members of the Groton Garden Club selected William Shuck's home at 306 N. 4th St. as this week's Yard of the Week. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #06-6

School Board Meeting July 9, 2018 – 7:00 PM – GHS Conference Room

AGENDA:

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

POTENTIAL CONFLICTS DISCLOSURE PURSUANT SDCL 23-3

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Approval of minutes of June 11, 2018 and June 25, 2018 school board meetings as drafted or amended.

2. Approval of North Central Special Education Co-Op (NCSEC) agenda items...as fiscal agent.

OLD/CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. Open Forum for Public Participation...in accordance with Board Policy & Guidelines.

2. Approval of June 2018 Financial Report, Agency Accounts, and Investments.

3. Approval of June 2018 School Lunch Report.

4. Approval of June 2018 School Transportation Report.

5. School Board Committee Reports:

a. Building, Grounds, & Transportation: Clint Fjelstad, Merle Harder

b. Personnel, Policy, & Curriculum: Deb Gengerke, Kara Pharis

c. Negotiations: Grant Rix, Steve Smith, Marty Weismantel

6. Administrative Reports: (a) Superintendent's Report; (b) Principal's Reports; (c) Business Manager Report

ADJOURN

ANNUAL REORGANIZATION BUSINESS:

1. Call to Order with members present.

2. Installation of incumbent board members, Kara Pharis and Marty Weismantel followed by election of president and vice president as well as appointments to the various "ad hoc" committees.

POTENTIAL CONFLICTS DISCLOSURE PURSUANT SDCL 23-3

CONSENT AGENDA

1. 7:30 PM – DISTRICT BUDGET HEARING – Revenue & Expenditures – Line Items

2. Approve July 2018 District bills for payment.

3. Designate legal counsel/school attorney...Rodney Freeman of Churchill, Manolis, and Freeman of Huron.

4. Designate Groton Independent as official legal newspaper for FY19.

5. Designate Business Manager as custodian of all district accounts.

6. Authorize Business Manager to continue existing funds and establish new accounts and to invest and reinvest funds in local institutions which serve the greatest advantage to the District.

7. Authorize Business Manager to publish staff salaries.

8. Designate official bank depository...First State Bank.

9. Adopt Groton Area School District Policy Manual with such revisions as previously approved.

10. Adopt Special Education Comprehensive Plan.

11. Authorize office personnel to administer Agency Funds & NSLP (school lunch) funds, with oversight by business office management.

12. Authorize superintendent to administer or direct federal programs, with Consolidated Application (Title programs) and related ESSA compliance issues assigned to building principals.

13. Appoint superintendent to act as Asbestos Compliance Officer.

14. Authorize superintendent or designee to close school in emergency situations or inclement weather.

15. Authorize superintendent or designee to institute NSLP & School Breakfast Agreement.

16. Adopt Food Safety Plan, HACCP-Based Standard Operating Procedures.

17. Authorize superintendent or designee to institute ASBSD school bus mutual assistance pact.

18. Authorize business manager to transfer petty cash and incident payment funds (SDCL 13-18-16/17).

19. Approve transportation request from Webster Area School District for 2018-2019 school year.

20. Approve transportation request from Langford Area School District for 2018-2019 school year.

21. Approve price quotes for 2018-2019 bakery products (Bimbo Bakery).

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22. Approve price quotes for 2018-2019 dairy products (Dean Foods).
23. Approve peripheral sports and other volunteer school workers such as chain gang, line judges, Booster Club/PAC workers, assistant coaches, volunteer coaches, volunteer drivers, school board members etc. to be included in the school's worker's compensation insurance coverage.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Set date and time for regular school board meetings.
2. Appoint board member to serve as voting member of the North Central Special Education Cooperative Governing Board for 2018-2019 school year.
3. Set salaries for board members...presently at \$50/meeting; \$75/meeting for chairman; mileage as applicable
4. Set rate for substitute teachers for 18-19 school year...recommend \$100/day [Currently \$100/day].
5. Set rate for substitute bus drivers for 18-19 school year...recommend \$65/day [Currently \$65/day].
6. Establish activity admission & school lunch prices for 2018-2019. Recommendations
Admission: Adult - \$5; Doubleheader - \$6 No Change
Adult 10-punch ticket - \$45 No Change
Adult All-Activities Pass - \$75 No Change
1st-12th grade - \$4 No Change
1st-5th grade activity ticket - \$25 No Change
6th-12th grade activity ticket - \$30 No Change
Breakfast JrK-5 - \$2.15; 6-12 - \$2.65; Adult - \$2.90 \$0.35 Increase Lunch JrK-5 - \$2.90; 6-12 - \$3.40; Adult \$4.15 \$0.35 Increase
7. Set rate for OST services for 2018-2019 school year [Recommend No Change].
8. Approve Change Order CCO#002 from Grazzini Brothers.
9. Approve hiring Joann Donley as yearbook advisor for 2018-2019 school year at 8% of base salary.
10. Other items, as may be appropriate or as deemed necessary.

ADJOURN

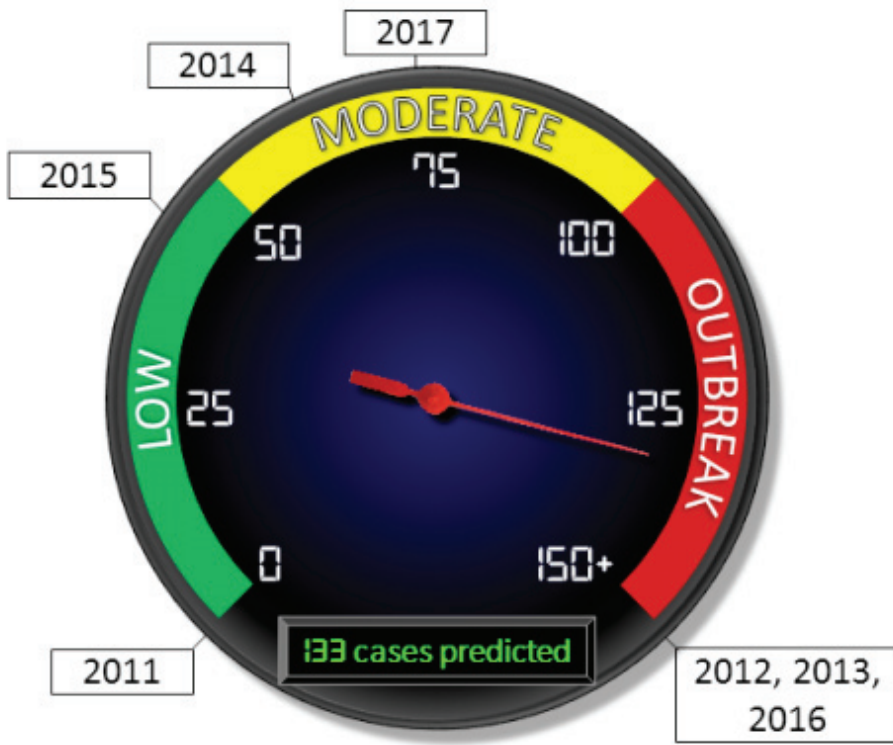
Protect Yourself!

They're coming for YOU!

The are received 2 inches of rain in the last 48 hours and you know what that means. The mosquitoes will be hatching and coming after you. When outside, make sure you put on protection. All it takes is one bit from a culex mosquito and you could get the West Nile Disease. The threat is now real. Even when the city sprays for mosquitoes, not all of the mosquitoes are killed. The best thing you can do for yourself is to put on mosquito repellent with DEET.

The South Dakota Department of Health is predicting a major outbreak of Culex mosquitoes this year. See related article and information on next page.

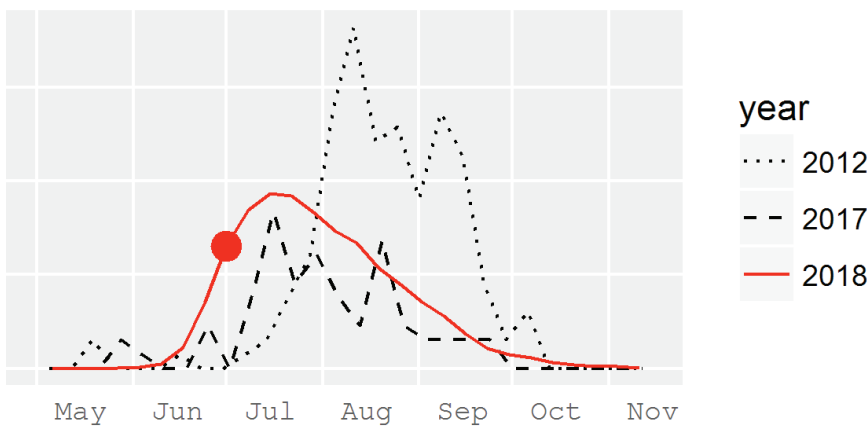
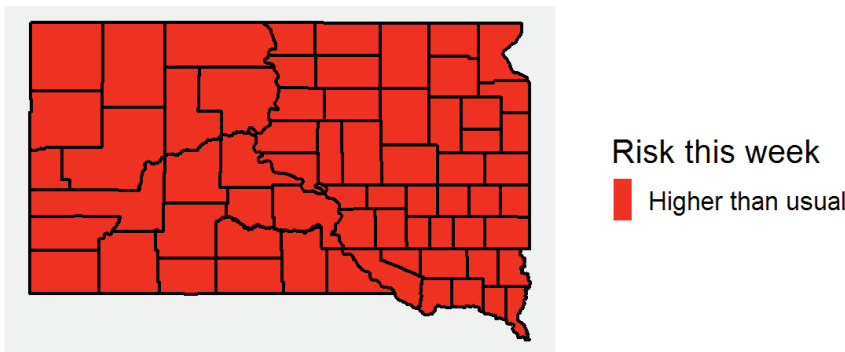




South Dakota WNV Forecasts - High Risk Predicted for 4th of July Week

More positive mosquito pools, wetter weather, and a holiday that brings the state's population out for festivities at night - everything is conspiring this week to raise risk of human infection. We expect that six to nine counties will report cases this week. Targeted spraying and public education are essential responses to risk this week.

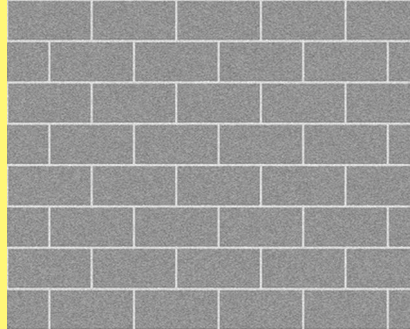
Early 2018 was dry, but a number of storm systems have moved through the state, making the air more humid, and this will increase mosquito activity. At the same time, we have observed rates of infections in mosquitoes that are higher than average for this point in the year. These pieces of evidence suggest we will have an above-average (~133 cases) WNV year in South Dakota in 2018. We will continue to update predictions as more data are received, but currently there is every reason to believe that risk will be substantial and that WNV will most resemble 2016 (~155 cases).



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Today in Weather History

July 4, 1936: Several record highs were seen on this day, including; 113 degrees 4NW of Gann Valley; 111 in Murdo; 107 in Castlewood; 106 in Clark and Highmore; 105 near Onida; 104 in Faulkton and Miller; 103 degrees 6SE of McIntosh; 101 in Pollock.

July 4, 1988: Several record highs were set on this day, including; 103 degrees in Ipswich and Britton; 102 in Webster; 101 in Summit and Artichoke Lake, MN; 99 in Leola; 98 degrees in Clear Lake and Waubay.

1776: Thomas Jefferson purchased a thermometer from a local merchant before signing the Declaration of Independence. According to his weather memorandum book, at 1 PM it was cloudy and 76 degrees.

1911: Record temperatures are set in the northeastern United States as a deadly heat wave hits the area that would go on to kill 380 people. In Nashua, New Hampshire, the mercury peaked at 106 degrees. Other high-temperature records were set all over New England during an 11-day period.

1969: During the afternoon of Friday, July 4, 1969, thunderstorms formed over southeast Lower Michigan (MI), several of which produced tornadoes, large hail, and high winds west and south of Detroit. As these storms moved southeastward during the early evening, they evolved into a strong derecho over extreme southeastern Michigan (MI) and Lake Erie (LE). The derecho then roared southeast across northern and eastern Ohio (OH) and Western Pennsylvania (PA) during the next few hours. The hourly positions of the gust front (associated with multiple bow echoes) are shown in Figure 1 (above). Winds gusted to 104 mph in Toledo ("T"), and reached 100 mph in the Cleveland ("C") area. In towns and cities near Lake Erie, many people were outside, preparing to watch Independence Day fireworks. Also for the occasion, many small boat owners had anchored their craft just off the Lake Erie shore to watch the displays. As the derecho passed, untold thousands of trees were blown down, including 5000 in Toledo alone. Along the south side of Lake Erie, eight people were killed by falling trees, and over 100 boats were overturned, drowning at least three persons. A total of eighteen people were killed as a result of the derecho winds in Ohio. Some of the worst damage occurred in Lakewood, a suburb of Cleveland. The storm system continued to uproot trees, damage roofs and produce power outages as it moved into Pennsylvania, where high winds injured five people in Meadville ("M").

1956 - A world record for the most rain in one minute was set at Unionville, MD, with a downpour of 1.23 inches. (The Weather Channel) (The National Severe Storms Forecast Center)

1987 - Thunderstorms around the country provided extra fireworks for Independence Day. Thunderstorms produced wind gusts to 82 mph at Clearwater, KS, eight inches of rain in four hours at Menno SD, and three inches of rain in just fifteen minutes at Austin, KY. Morning thunderstorms drenched Oneonta AL with 8.6 inches of rain, their greatest 24 hour total in thirty years of records. The heavy rain caused mudslides and serious flooding, claiming two lives. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced heavy rain over the Central Gulf Coast Region for the second day in a row. Monroe, LA, was deluged with 3.75 inches in two hours. Aberdeen and Rapid City, SD, reported record high temperatures for the date, with readings of 105 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Independence Day was hot as a firecracker across parts of the country. Nineteen cities, mostly in the north central U.S., reported record high temperatures for the date, including Williston ND with a reading of 107 degrees. In the southwestern U.S., highs of 93 at Alamosa, CO, 114 at Tucson, AZ, and 118 at Phoenix, AZ, equalled all-time records for those locations. (The National Weather Summary)

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Independence Day



Slight Chance T-storms then Mostly Sunny

Tonight



Mostly Clear

Thursday



Sunny

Thursday Night



Mostly Clear

Friday



Sunny

Friday Night



Mostly Clear

Saturday



Sunny then Sunny and Breezy

High: 85 °F

Low: 60 °F

High: 82 °F

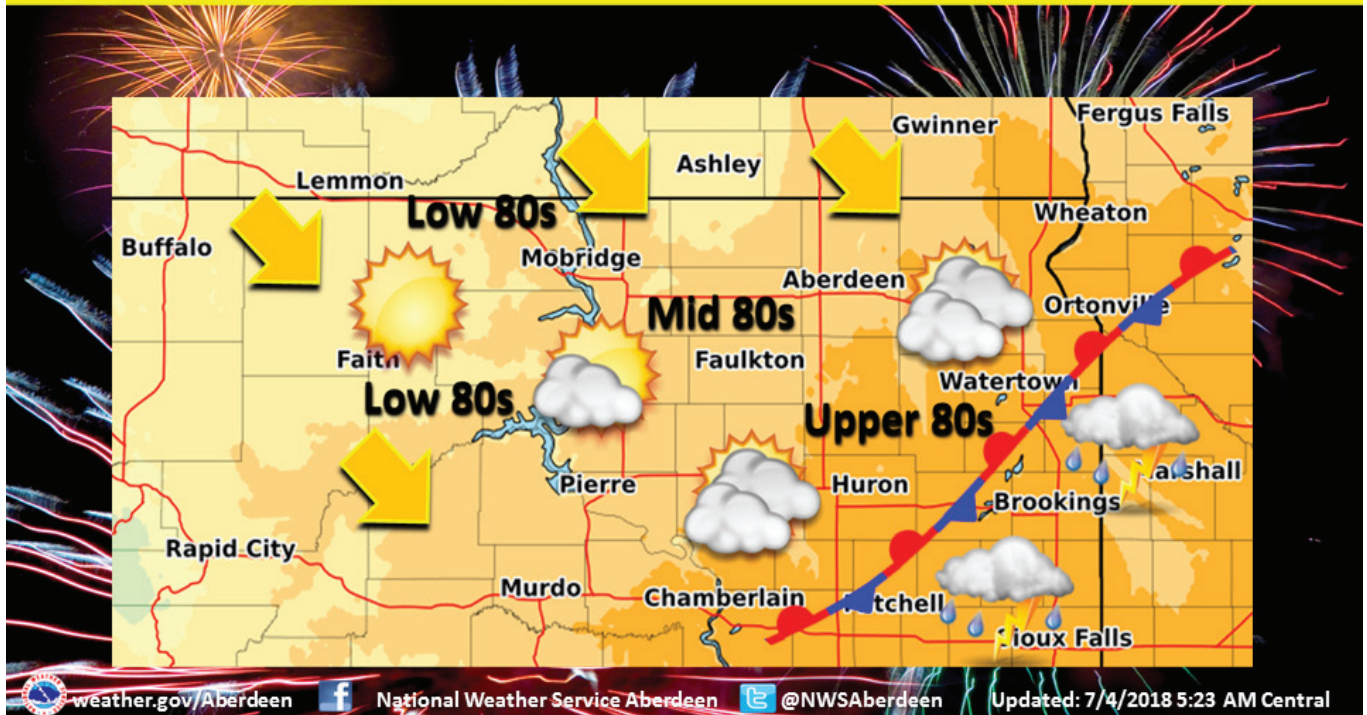
Low: 60 °F

High: 86 °F

Low: 67 °F

High: 91 °F

Drying Out Today – Storm Threat Moves Southeast



Published on: 07/04/2018 at 5:28AM

The morning storms will continue to move east with a front tailing behind. It may stall in eastern South Dakota and provide the focus for more storms, but any that do form are likely to pass quickly out of the forecast area. A light northwest breeze will bring drier air into the region, with near average temperatures.

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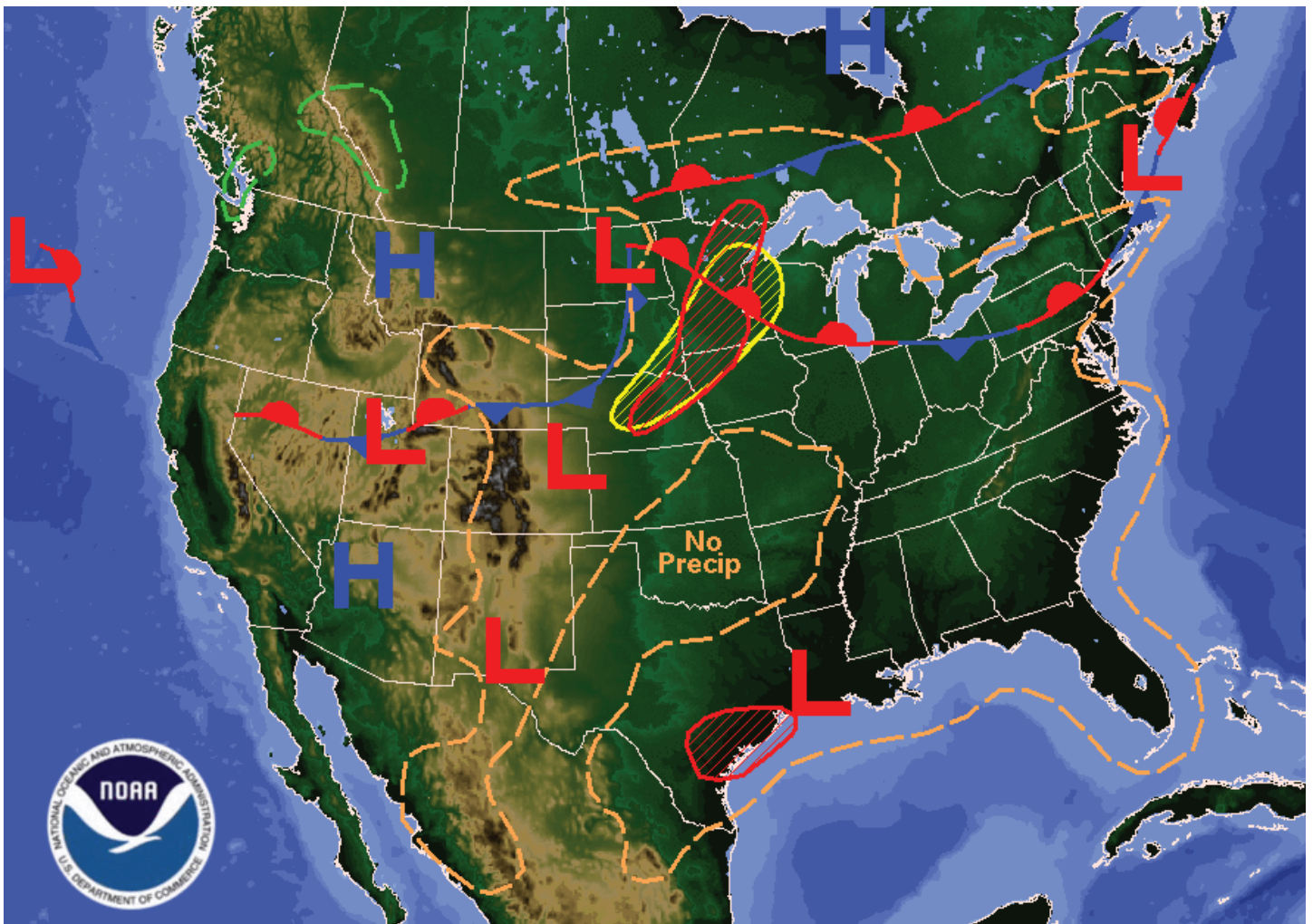
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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 86.1 F at 6:54 PM
Low Outside Temp: 63.8 F at 6:18 AM
High Gust: 26.0 Mph at 8:12 AM
Precip: 1.50 (2 day total: 2 inches)

Today's Info

Record High: 105° in 1988
Record Low: 40° in 1967
Average High: 82°F
Average Low: 58°F
Average Precip in July: 0.32
Precip to date in July: 1.50
Average Precip to date: 11.17
Precip Year to Date: 7.32
Sunset Tonight: 9:25 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:52 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Wed, Jul 04, 2018, issued 4:46 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Mcreynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

Rain
Rain and T'Storms
Rain and Snow
Snow

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



CONTAMINATED CHRISTIANS

My Dad's lack faith was always a problem for me. He was hardworking and honest, thoughtful and compassionate, would do anything for his family. But church? That was an entirely different matter. He refused to go to church or have anything to do with anyone who did. That puzzled me.

Our home was always open to those who served the Lord. Missionaries and evangelists and musicians were frequent guests at our evening meal. And although "Pa" would not talk with them as we ate together, he did not interfere with our guests. He did not oppose them nor treat them unkindly. He was simply indifferent to them.

Once, during a revival, my heart was burdened for his salvation. I wanted to know if he was born again. I came home and found him sitting in his favorite chair listening to the news. Fearful of angering him I asked as politely as I could, "Pa, why don't you come to church with me and Ma?"

Turning the radio off he looked at me and said, "I work with those people you go to church with. They do things I would never do. They lie, they cheat, and they steal. No one trusts them. Why would I want to be with them if I do not have to be with them?" He would have nothing to do with "contaminated Christians" unless work dictated it.

The Psalmist wrote, "May I wholeheartedly follow Your decrees, that I may not be put to shame." We face that same problem today. Christians do not "walk their talk" and as a result shame themselves and their Savior.

Prayer: What a tragedy, God, that many who represent You do not do so "wholeheartedly." Please, revive us now! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 119:80 May I wholeheartedly follow your decrees, that I may not be put to shame.

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2018 Groton SD Community Events

- Groton Lion's Club Bingo- Wednesday Nights 6:30pm at the Groton Legion (Year Round)
- 11/18/2017-3/31/2018 Groton Lion's Club Wheel of Meat- Saturday Nights 7pm at the Groton Legion (Fall/Winter Months)
- 1/27/2019 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm
- 4/13/2019 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 5/4/2019 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)
- 5/27/2019 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

Sioux Falls police investigating drowning

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Sioux Falls police are investigating after a juvenile male drowned in the city. The department says officers were dispatched Tuesday for a possible drowning and arrived while Sioux Falls Fire Rescue and Paramedics Plus were attending to an unconscious juvenile who wasn't breathing. Live-saving efforts weren't successful at a local hospital. Officials say the situation appears to be accidental.

Winning \$25,000-a-year lottery ticket sold in North Dakota

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — North Dakota officials say a winning lottery ticket in the state's Lucky for Life game was sold at a Hettinger store.

State lottery director Randy Miller says the ticket was drawn Monday night. The player with the winning ticket has the option of receiving \$25,000 for 20 years or a lump sum cash payment of \$350,000.

Miller says it is the fourth Lucky for Life winner since the game was launched in 2016. He says winners have 180 days from the date of the drawing to claim the prize.

The ticket was sold at Central Dakota Cooperative in Hettinger, which is located in southwestern North Dakota, 4 miles from the South Dakota border.

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Mega Millions

13-35-45-49-68, Mega Ball: 23, Megaplier: 2

(thirteen, thirty-five, forty-five, forty-nine, sixty-eight; Mega Ball: twenty-three; Megaplier: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$256 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$70 million

Aberdeen man dies for injuries sustained in June 23 crash

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — Authorities say an 86-year-old South Dakota man has died from his injuries sustained in crash last month west of Aberdeen.

The Highway Patrol says Herman Pfeiffer, of Aberdeen, was driving a Chevrolet Blazer on June 23 that collided with a Chevrolet Silverado on U.S. Highway 12.

Both occupants of the Silverado suffered minor injuries.

75-year-old Sioux Falls man sentenced for 1st-degree rape

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A judge says a 75-year-old Sioux Falls convicted of raping a juvenile family member must serve 35 years in prison.

The Sioux Falls Argus Leader reports that Verlyn Julius was arrested in 2017 after the child, now 12, told a school counselor that Julius had touched her inappropriately. Julius pleaded guilty to first-degree rape.

Julius had been on parole following a guilty plea to abuse or cruelty to a minor, a charge that had been reduced from sexual contact with a minor. The minor in that case was also related to Julius.

Judge Jon Sogn said during Tuesday's sentencing that Julius committed a "despicable crime" that was

"an unimaginable violation of a child's trust."

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

Critics concerned about power of initiative's ethics panel

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Opponents of a South Dakota ballot question that would create a new government ethics commission are raising concerns about the amount of power that would be given to an unelected panel if voters approve it in November.

South Dakota Chamber of Commerce and Industry President David Owen said Tuesday that the group would help lead opposition to what's billed as an anti-corruption initiative, which voters will decide in the general election. Constitutional Amendment W would tighten campaign finance and lobbying restrictions, establish the independent ethics board and prevent the Legislature from changing laws approved by voters without returning to the ballot.

Owen said the ethics commission would have a "scope of power that's kind of unbelievable."

"We're wandering into territory that's completely unheard of," he said.

Mitch Richter, a co-sponsor of the amendment, said it's meant to put power back in the hands of the people. The new seven-member state government accountability board with broad powers would serve as a citizen ethics commission.

The members would be appointed by the state Supreme Court, the governor and by the board itself. It would require lawmakers to put \$389,000 annually indexed to inflation into a fund administered by the board.

The panel would investigate allegations of corruption and violations of lobbying, campaign finance and government ethics regulations. It would also have the authority to conduct audits of disclosures including for lobbying and campaign finance and impose sanctions such as fines on public officials.

The amendment would replace a voter-imposed ethics overhaul that state lawmakers repealed just months after it passed in 2016. Richter said supporters came back with a "stronger piece of legislation."

But critics have labeled the measure an out-of-state proposal because it has been funded by Represent. Us, a Massachusetts-based organization working to reduce the influence of money in politics that also supported the 2016 South Dakota ballot measure campaign.

"I think we're going to get outspent," Owen said. "I think they're going to whoop up a false impression that South Dakota is massively corrupt."

Other groups opposing the amendment include the Sioux Falls Area Chamber of Commerce, South Dakota Bankers Association, South Dakota Farm Bureau, South Dakota Municipal League, South Dakota Retailers Association and AGC of South Dakota Highway Heavy Utility Chapter.

Richter said the amendments opponents are "insiders" who are concerned about power going back to the people.

"They like the game that they're playing now, and they don't want the rules changed," he said.

Rapid City Council selects 2 women for top roles

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The Rapid City Council has elected two women to its top leadership positions.

The Rapid City Journal reports that council members on Monday selected Ward 4 Alderwoman Amanda Scott to serve as the council's president and Ward 1 Alderwoman Becky Drury to serve as vice president.

Both women were the sole recipients of the City Council's nominations in a selection process that occurred behind closed doors.

Their one-year terms will begin July 16.

Scott has been a council member since 2012. She currently serves as the chair of the Legal and Finance Committee.

Drury is a newcomer to the council after being elected to her first term last year. She worked in telecom-

munications for more than 20 years before retiring.

This story has been corrected to show that Monday's selection wasn't the first time women have held both leadership positions.

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

Damage survey from South Dakota, Montana tornadoes published

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The National Weather Service says nine tornadoes that ripped through South Dakota and Montana last week snapped trees, destroyed outbuildings and swept up a 5-ton tractor that has yet to be found.

The Rapid City Journal reports the weather service released an initial survey of the damage from the tornadoes Monday. The agency says five tornadoes hit Harding County, South Dakota and another four touched down in Carter County, Montana on Thursday evening.

The first tornado struck at around 8:20 p.m. and the last one about an hour later. The weather service says the first tornadoes caused the most damage.

The agency plans to continue surveying damage on Tuesday.

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

Ex-Malaysia leader Najib charged with breach of trust, graft

By EILEEN NG, Associated Press

KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia (AP) — Former Malaysian Prime Minister Najib Razak was charged Wednesday with criminal breach of trust and corruption, two months after a multibillion-dollar graft scandal at a state investment fund led to his stunning election defeat.

He pleaded not guilty to all charges. "I claim trial," he said in a barely audible voice as he stood in the dock at the High Court in Kuala Lumpur. A judge set bail at 1 million ringgit in cash (\$250,000) and ordered Najib to surrender his two diplomatic passports.

The patrician and luxury-loving Najib, wearing a suit and a red tie, appeared calm and smiled as he was escorted into the court complex. He was arrested Tuesday by anti-graft officials over the suspicious transfer of 42 million ringgit (\$10.4 million) into his bank accounts from SRC International, a former unit of the 1MDB state investment fund that U.S. investigators say was looted of billions by associates of Najib.

Najib was charged with abuse of power leading to gratification under Malaysia's anti-corruption law and three counts of criminal breach of trust. Each charge has a maximum penalty of 20 years in prison. Whipping is also a penalty but Najib would be exempt because of his age.

Anger over the 1MDB saga led to the shocking defeat of Najib's long-ruling coalition in May 9 elections and ushered in the first change of power since independence from Britain in 1957.

Malaysia's new attorney general, Tommy Thomas, who is heading the prosecution, said the 1MDB case has attracted global attention and "brought shame to the country." Najib's lawyer Muhammad Shafee Abdullah protested the comment calling it "nonsense" and "coffeeshop talk."

Najib, 64, has accused Malaysia's new government of seeking "political vengeance."

At a news conference after the hearing, Najib said a trial was "the best chance for me to clear my name after all the slander and accusations." It is set to start Feb. 8, subject to confirmation at a preliminary hearing next month.

Deputy Prime Minister Wan Azizah Wan Ismail said the rule of law must be followed in the prosecution of Najib.

"I don't think it's fair for anyone to be judged on a media trial — this is important," Wan Azizah said Wednesday at a conference in Mongolia. "The other thing is that, however I feel, I want the court to be

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independent and, therefore, give him all the avenue he has under the law to defend himself.”

Wan Azizah is the wife of reformist leader Anwar Ibrahim. Anwar was convicted in 2015 of a sodomy charge that he said was concocted to destroy his political career, and was freed in May after obtaining a royal pardon.

Najib set up 1MDB when he took power in 2009 but the fund amassed billions in debts and is being investigated in the U.S. and several other countries.

New Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad reopened investigations into 1MDB that were stifled under Najib’s rule.

Najib and his wife were questioned last month over the SRC case by the anti-graft agency and were barred from leaving the country.

The attorney general’s case says the \$10 million that Najib allegedly received via SRC was a bribe for approving government guarantees of loans totaling 4 billion ringgit (nearly \$1 billion) in 2011 and 2012 that apparently became part of the ransacking underway at 1MDB.

Police have also seized jewelry and valuables valued at more than 1.1 billion ringgit (\$272 million) from properties linked to Najib.

U.S. investigators say \$4.5 billion was stolen and laundered from 1MDB by Najib’s associates, including some \$700 million that landed in Najib’s bank account. While in power, Najib said the \$700 million was a donation from the Saudi royal family.

Najib’s lawyer Muhammad asked for the case to be expedited.

Najib “is anxious to clear his name,” he told the High Court. “We are pretty confident about this case.”

Bridget Welsh, a Southeast Asia expert at John Cabot University in Rome, said Najib’s arrest was the “inevitable outcome” after he lost power.

“It shows the resolve of the new government to address previous abuses of power. It has been done judiciously so far and speaks to a needed reckoning for Malaysia and a key step toward a cleaner governance,” she said in an email.

\UK police probing 6 assault claims against Kevin Spacey

LONDON (AP) — British police are investigating six claims of sexual assault or assault by Academy Award-winning actor Kevin Spacey, three more than previously disclosed.

British media reported earlier this year that London’s Metropolitan Police force was investigating three allegations against the former “House of Cards” star.

Police in Britain don’t name suspects until they are charged. Asked about Spacey, the force did not identify him by name but said Wednesday that detectives had received a total of five allegations of sexual assault and one of assault against a man.

Five of the alleged offenses took place in London between 1996 and 2008, and the sixth in the western English city of Gloucester in 2013.

Spacey, a two-time Oscar winner, has been accused of sexual assault and inappropriate behavior by numerous men since American actor Anthony Rapp alleged last year that Spacey had climbed on top of him on a bed when Rapp was 14 and Spacey 26.

After Rapp’s allegation, London’s Old Vic theater, where Spacey was artistic director for 11 years until 2015, launched an investigation into its former leader. The theater said in November that it had received 20 allegations of inappropriate behavior by Spacey, and had encouraged 14 of the complainants to go to the police.

Spacey apologized to Rapp in October for “deeply inappropriate drunken behavior” and later released a statement saying he was seeking unspecified treatment. He has not commented on the other allegations.

In the wake of the allegations he was fired from political drama “House of Cards” and erased from Ridley Scott feature “All the Money in the World.” The film “Billionaire Boys Club,” a financial drama Spacey shot in 2015, is due for release this summer.

Warm in blankets, Thai boys smile, joke with rescuer in cave

By TASSANEE VEJPONGSA, Associated Press

MAE SAI, Thailand (AP) — Their skinny faces illuminated by a flashlight, the Thai soccer teammates stranded more than a week in a partly flooded cave said they were healthy on a video released Wednesday, as heavy rains forecast for later this week could complicate plans to safely extract them.

The 12 boys and their coach are seen sitting with Thai navy SEALs in the dark cave. The boys, many wrapped in foil warming blankets, take turns introducing themselves, folding their hands together in a traditional greeting and saying their names and that they are healthy.

The video lasting about a minute was recorded sometime Tuesday and was posted on the navy SEAL Facebook page Wednesday morning. The navy later released two more videos of the boys.

The boys, aged 11-16, and their 25-year-old coach disappeared after they went exploring in the Tham Luang Nang Non cave in northern Chiang Rai province after a soccer game June 23. The teammates, who were trapped inside when heavy rains flooded the cave, were found by rescue divers late Monday night during a desperate search that drew assistance from experts around the globe.

Authorities said the boys, who had also been shown Tuesday in a video shot by the British diver who discovered them, were being looked after by seven members of the Thai navy SEALs, including medics, who were staying with them inside the cave. They were mostly in stable condition and have received high-protein drinks.

In all of the videos the boys have appeared in good spirits. In the most recent videos a navy SEAL is shown treating minor cuts on the feet and legs of the boys with antibiotic ointment. Several of the boys are seen smiling as they interact with the navy SEAL, who cracks jokes.

Seeing the boys has boosted the mood of relatives, and officials are working to install an internet cable to the cave so that parents can talk to their children.

Kian Kamluang, whose 16-year-old son Pornchai is inside, said she had thought it was a 50 percent chance that her son would be found.

"It's like he has been given a new life," she said, adding that she'll never let her son go into a cave or near water again.

SEAL commander Rear Adm. Arpakorn Yookongkaew said Tuesday that there was no rush to bring the group out of the cave, since they're safe where they are. The current flooding situation means the boys would have to dive, which rescue experts have said could be extremely dangerous.

While efforts to pump out floodwaters are continuing, some Thai officials have indicated that heavy rains forecast for this weekend could force them to decide the boys should swim and dive out using the same complicated route of narrow passageways through which their rescuers entered.

Chiang Rai provincial Gov. Narongsak Osatanakorn said Wednesday that the boys have been practicing wearing diving masks and breathing, but he doesn't believe they have attempted any practice dives.

He said it is unknown when an extraction could be attempted, but it is unlikely to be Wednesday.

"If it's risky or not safe, we will not proceed yet," Narongsak said. "It has to be 100 percent safe."

Authorities said they were still exploring other options, such as scouring the mountainside for other ways into the cave and finding faster ways to pump water from the cave.

Cave rescue experts have said it could be safest to simply supply the boys where they are for now, and wait for the water to go down. That could take months, however, given that Thailand's rainy season typically lasts through October.

The British Cave Rescue Council, which has members taking part in the operation, said in a statement that "although water levels have dropped, the diving conditions remain difficult and any attempt to dive the boys and their coach out will not be taken lightly because there are significant technical challenges and risks to consider."

Gary Mitchell, the group's assistant vice chairman, said getting out of the cave requires about a kilometer (half a mile) of diving total, though not all in one stretch, and takes about three hours.

"There's air pockets along the way," he said. "It's confined spaces. It's almost zero visibility. There's cur-

rents to battle against in places as well. So it's a really quite a strenuous environment to be in," he said.

3 more Supreme Court candidates meet with Trump

By CATHERINE LUCEY, KEN THOMAS and LISA MASCARO, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump spoke with three more potential Supreme Court candidates on Tuesday as a key senator privately aired concerns about one of the contenders.

As Trump weighs his options, he has heard from Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., who has expressed reservations about one top potential nominee, Brett Kavanaugh, according to a person familiar with the call but not authorized to publicly disclose details of it. The activity around Kavanaugh was an early glimpse of the frenzied jockeying around the short list of candidates in the run-up to Trump's July 9 announcement.

With a narrow 51-49 GOP majority in the Senate, losing any Republican senator could begin to doom a nominee. Paul's objections echo those made by outside conservative groups over Kavanaugh, who is seen as a top contender for the vacancy but who activists warn is too much of an establishment-aligned choice.

Trump has said he'll choose his nominee from a list of 25 candidates vetted by conservative groups. Top contenders include federal appeals judges Kavanaugh, Raymond Kethledge, Amul Thapar and Amy Coney Barrett — all of whom spoke with Trump on Monday.

"These are very talented people, brilliant people," Trump said Tuesday during an appearance in West Virginia. "We're going to give you a great one."

The White House says Trump has spoken to seven candidates. There were the four interviews Monday, as well as a conversation with Republican Sen. Mike Lee of Utah, who is not regarded as a top contender but who is being pushed by key conservatives.

Trump has also spoken with Thomas Hardiman, who has served with Trump's sister on the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia, according to a person familiar with the conversation who also was not authorized to publicly discuss it.

Another candidate considered a top contender is Joan Larsen, who serves on the federal appeals court in Cincinnati.

Trump's choice to replace Kennedy — a swing vote on the nine-member court — has the potential to remake the court for a generation as part of precedent-shattering decisions on abortion, health care, gay marriage and other issues. Recognizing the stakes, many Democrats have lined up in opposition to any Trump pick, and Republicans lawmakers and activists are seeking to shape the president's decision.

For his part, Trump has sought advice from White House counsel Don McGahn, outside advisers like Leonard Leo, on leave from the Federalist Society, and has been making calls to lawmakers, including Paul.

Paul has told colleagues that he may not vote for Kavanaugh if the judge is nominated, citing Kavanaugh's role during the Bush administration on cases involving executive privilege and the disclosure of documents to Congress, said the person familiar with Paul's conversations who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

The senator has more than once threatened to withhold his vote on key Trump priorities citing ideological disagreements, most recently the nomination of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. But Paul has repeatedly yielded to Trump's personal lobbying to back his nominees and legislation, often citing unspecified concessions from the president.

Paul's office did not respond to requests for comment.

His concerns mirror comments from some conservatives who view Kavanaugh as a more establishment-aligned pick on abortion and issues related to the Fourth Amendment right against unreasonable searches and seizures. Some also raised concern about his approach to the Affordable Care Act.

"Trump's list is full of great nominees, but Kavanaugh raises several concerns among libertarian and pro-life activists at a time when we need to be united," said Wesley Denton, communications director for the Conservative Partnership Institute, an organization that works closely with lawmakers on Capitol Hill.

The president also spoke by phone with Lee on Monday, as first reported by the Deseret News and later confirmed by the senator's office, which characterized it as an interview. Asked about the call, White

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House spokesman Raj Shah said only, "Yesterday, the President spoke on the phone with Sen. Mike Lee." Lee is the only lawmaker on Trump's list of potential justices.

There have also been lobbying efforts around other candidates.

Some conservatives have pointed to Kethledge as a potential justice in the mold of Gorsuch; both once served as law clerks to Kennedy. Kethledge, a Michigan Law graduate who has been a Michigan-based appellate court judge for the past decade, would add academic diversity to a court steeped in the Ivy League.

"The court could use some perspectives that were forged in different kinds of regions of the country and different kinds of academic backgrounds," said former Michigan Sen. Spence Abraham, who hired Kethledge as a young staffer in the 1990s.

Since Trump said his short list includes at least two women, speculation has focused on Barrett, a former law clerk to Justice Antonin Scalia and a longtime Notre Dame Law School professor who serves on the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Conservative groups rallied around Barrett after her confirmation hearing last year featured questioning from Democrats over how her Roman Catholic faith would affect her decisions.

Former House speaker and Trump ally Newt Gingrich tweeted Monday: "Judge Amy Coney Barrett would make an outstanding Supreme Court Justice. Her clarity and intellectual strength in the Senate hearings for her current judgeship showed an intellect and a depth of thought that would be powerful on the Supreme Court."

But her short tenure on the bench may work against her. And Democrats claim that Barrett — like the other picks — would favor overturning *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 case that affirmed a woman's right to abortion, and would weaken President Barack Obama's 2010 health care law.

Since the start of his 2016 campaign, Trump has embraced anti-abortion groups and vowed to appoint federal judges who will favor efforts to roll back abortion rights. But he told reporters Friday that he would not question potential high-court nominees about their views on abortion, saying it was "inappropriate to discuss."

Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, has said she would oppose any nominee she believed would overturn *Roe v. Wade*, stressing she wants to back a judge who would show respect for settled law such as the *Roe* decision.

Associated Press writer Zeke Miller contributed to this report.

Trump pressed aides on Venezuela invasion, US official says

By JOSHUA GOODMAN, Associated Press

BOGOTA, Colombia (AP) — As a meeting last August in the Oval Office to discuss sanctions on Venezuela was concluding, President Donald Trump turned to his top aides and asked an unsettling question: With a fast unraveling Venezuela threatening regional security, why can't the U.S. just simply invade the troubled country?

The suggestion stunned those present at the meeting, including U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson and national security adviser H.R. McMaster, both of whom have since left the administration. This account of the previously undisclosed conversation comes from a senior administration official familiar with what was said.

In an exchange that lasted around five minutes, McMaster and others took turns explaining to Trump how military action could backfire and risk losing hard-won support among Latin American governments to punish President Nicolas Maduro for taking Venezuela down the path of dictatorship, according to the official. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitive nature of the discussions.

But Trump pushed back. Although he gave no indication he was about to order up military plans, he pointed to what he considered past cases of successful gunboat diplomacy in the region, according to the official, like the invasions of Panama and Grenada in the 1980s.

The idea, despite his aides' best attempts to shoot it down, would nonetheless persist in the president's head.

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The next day, Aug. 11, Trump alarmed friends and foes alike with talk of a "military option" to remove Maduro from power. The public remarks were initially dismissed in U.S. policy circles as the sort of martial bluster people have come to expect from the reality TV star turned commander in chief.

But shortly afterward, he raised the issue with Colombian President Juan Manuel Santos, according to the U.S. official. Two high-ranking Colombian officials who spoke on condition of anonymity to avoid antagonizing Trump confirmed the report.

Then in September, on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly, Trump discussed it again, this time at greater length, in a private dinner with leaders from four Latin American allies that included Santos, the same three people said and Politico reported in February.

The U.S. official said Trump was specifically briefed not to raise the issue and told it wouldn't play well, but the first thing the president said at the dinner was, "My staff told me not to say this." Trump then went around asking each leader if they were sure they didn't want a military solution, according to the official, who added that each leader told Trump in clear terms they were sure.

Eventually, McMaster would pull aside the president and walk him through the dangers of an invasion, the official said.

Taken together, the behind-the-scenes talks, the extent and details of which have not been previously reported, highlight how Venezuela's political and economic crisis has received top attention under Trump in a way that was unimaginable in the Obama administration. But critics say it also underscores how his "America First" foreign policy at times can seem outright reckless, providing ammunition to America's adversaries.

The White House declined to comment on the private conversations. But a National Security Council spokesman reiterated that the U.S. will consider all options at its disposal to help restore Venezuela's democracy and bring stability. Under Trump's leadership, the U.S., Canada and European Union have levied sanctions on dozens of top Venezuelan officials, including Maduro himself, over allegations of corruption, drug trafficking and human rights abuses. The U.S. has also distributed more than \$30 million to help Venezuela's neighbors absorb an influx of more than 1 million migrants who have fled the country.

For Maduro, who has long claimed that the U.S. has military designs on Venezuela and its vast oil reserves, Trump's bellicose talk provided the unpopular leader with an immediate if short-lived boost as he was trying to escape blame for widespread food shortages and hyperinflation. Within days of the president's talk of a military option, Maduro filled the streets of Caracas with loyalists to condemn "Emperor" Trump's belligerence, ordered up nationwide military exercises and threatened with arrest opponents he said were plotting his overthrow with the U.S.

"Mind your own business and solve your own problems, Mr. Trump!" thundered Nicolas Maduro, the president's son, at the government-stacked constituent assembly. "If Venezuela were attacked, the rifles will arrive in New York, Mr. Trump," the younger Maduro said. "We will take the White House."

Even some of the staunchest U.S. allies were begrudgingly forced to side with Maduro in condemning Trump's saber rattling. Santos, a big backer of U.S. attempts to isolate Maduro, said an invasion would have zero support in the region. The Mercosur trade bloc, which includes Brazil and Argentina, issued a statement saying "the only acceptable means of promoting democracy are dialogue and diplomacy" and repudiating "any option that implies the use of force."

But among Venezuela's beleaguered opposition movement, hostility to the idea of a military intervention has slowly eased.

A few weeks after Trump's public comments, Harvard economics professor Ricardo Hausmann, a former Venezuelan planning minister, wrote a syndicated column titled "D Day Venezuela," in which he called for a "coalition of the willing" made up of regional powers and the U.S. to step in and support militarily a government appointed by the opposition-led national assembly.

Mark Feierstein, who oversaw Latin America on the National Security Council during the Obama administration, said that strident U.S. action on Venezuela, however commendable, won't loosen Maduro's grip on power if it's not accompanied by pressure from the streets. However, he thinks Venezuelans have largely been demoralized after a crackdown on protests last year triggered dozens of deaths, and the threat of

more repression has forced dozens of opposition leaders into exile.

"People inside and outside the administration know they can ignore plenty of what Trump says," Feierstein, who is now a senior adviser at the Albright Stonebridge Group, said of Trump's talk of military invasion of Venezuela. "The concern is that it raised expectations among Venezuelans, many of whom are waiting for an external actor to save them."

Associated Press writer Jill Colvin in Washington contributed to this report.

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Government blesses omitting race from admissions, enrollment

By ERIC TUCKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration said the government would no longer encourage schools to use race as a factor in the admissions process, rescinding Obama-era guidance meant to promote diversity among students.

The shift announced Tuesday gives colleges the federal government's blessing to leave race out of admissions and enrollment decisions and underscores the contentious politics that for decades have surrounded affirmative action policies, which have repeatedly been challenged before the Supreme Court.

The Obama administration memos encouraging schools to take race into account were among 24 policy documents revoked by the Justice Department for being "unnecessary, outdated, inconsistent with existing law, or otherwise improper." Attorney General Jeff Sessions called the changes an effort to restore the "rule of law," though civil rights groups decried the move and some universities said they intended to continue their diversity efforts as before.

The action comes amid a high-profile court fight over Harvard University admissions that has attracted the government's attention, as well as Supreme Court turnover expected to produce a more critical eye toward schools' race-conscious admissions policies.

The court's most recent significant ruling on the subject bolstered colleges' use of race among many factors in the admission process. But the opinion's author, Anthony Kennedy, announced his retirement last week, giving President Donald Trump a chance to replace him with a justice who may be more reliably skeptical of admissions programs that take race and ethnicity into account.

The new policy dramatically departs from the stance of the Obama administration, which said schools could consider race in admissions decisions. In one 2011 policy document, the administration said courts had recognized schools' "compelling interest" in ensuring racially diverse populations on campuses.

"Institutions are not required to implement race-neutral approaches if, in their judgment, the approaches would be unworkable," the guidance said. "In some cases, race-neutral approaches will be unworkable because they will be ineffective to achieve the diversity the institution seeks."

That guidance has now been rescinded, as have about a half-dozen similar documents, including some that sought to explain court rulings affirming the use of race to make admissions decisions.

In one such document, the Obama administration stated, "As the Supreme Court has recognized, diversity has benefits for all students, and today's students must be prepared to succeed in a diverse society and an increasingly global workforce."

The Trump administration's announcement is more in line with Bush-era policy that discouraged affirmative action and instead encouraged the use of race-neutral alternatives, like percentage plans and economic diversity programs.

Though such guidance doesn't have the force of law, schools could presumably use it to defend themselves against lawsuits over admission policies.

The Trump administration's Justice Department had already signaled concern about the use of race in admissions decisions.

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The department, for instance, sided this year with Asian-American plaintiffs who contend in a lawsuit against Harvard that the school unlawfully limits how many Asian students are admitted.

Students for Fair Admissions, the group suing Harvard, is led by Ed Blum, a legal strategist who also helped white student Abigail Fisher sue the University of Texas for alleged discrimination in a case that reached the Supreme Court.

Blum said Tuesday the organization "welcomes any governmental actions that will eliminate racial classifications and preferences in college admissions." Harvard, meanwhile, said it would continue considering race as an admissions factor to create a "diverse campus community where students from all walks of life have the opportunity to learn with and from each other."

Civil rights groups criticized the Trump administration's announcement, saying it went against decades of court precedent permitting colleges to take race into account.

"We condemn the Department of Education's politically motivated attack on affirmative action and deliberate attempt to discourage colleges and universities from pursuing racial diversity at our nation's colleges and universities," Kristen Clarke, president and executive director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, said in a statement.

Lily Eskelsen García, president of the National Education Association, said "affirmative action has proven to be one of the most effective ways to create diverse and inclusive classrooms." She said the announcement underscored the stakes surrounding the upcoming Supreme Court appointment.

The high court has been generally accepting of considering race in admissions decisions to achieve diversity. In a 2016 opinion written by Kennedy, the court granted affirmative action policies a victory by permitting race to be among the factors considered in the college admission process.

The ruling bitterly disappointed conservatives who thought Kennedy would be part of a Supreme Court majority to outlaw affirmative action in education. Justice Antonin Scalia died after the court heard arguments in the case but before the decision was handed down.

The new affirmative action guidance may add to an already contentious fight over the next justice.

With Trump expected to announce his nominee next week, the issue should be a central part of any confirmation process, said Howard University law school dean Danielle Holley-Walker.

She called the new guidance "highly unfortunate and counterproductive" and said the decision is another indication that the Justice Department under Sessions is likely to be aggressive toward schools that do continue to factor in race in admissions decisions.

"People have been talking about precedent in regard to *Roe v. Wade*" — the landmark 1973 ruling affirming a woman's right to abortion — "but it's important to remember that affirmative action has been a precedent for the past 40 years," she said. "This is a clear attack on precedent. Any Supreme Court nominee needs to be asked if they support precedent related to affirmative action."

Follow Eric Tucker on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/etuckerAP>

Associated Press writers Mark Sherman and Jesse Holland in Washington, Collin Binkley in Boston and National Writer Errin Haines Whack in Philadelphia contributed to this report.

UK anti-terror police join 'unknown substance' probe

By **MATT DUNHAM** and **DANICA KIRKA**, Associated Press

AMESBURY, England (AP) — British counterterrorism police were investigating Wednesday after two people were left in critical condition, exposed to an unknown substance a few miles from where a former Russian spy and his daughter were poisoned with a nerve agent.

The Wiltshire Police force declared a "major incident" after a man and a woman in their 40s were hospitalized after being found unconscious Saturday at a residential building in Amesbury, eight miles (13 kilometers) from Salisbury, where Sergei and Yulia Skripal were poisoned on March 4.

London's Metropolitan Police force said "given the recent events in Salisbury," counterterrorism officers

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were working with local police on the investigation. British media reported that samples of the mystery substance had been sent to the Porton Down defense research laboratory for testing.

Police cordoned off a home and other places the two people visited before falling ill, including a nearby church and a pharmacy, but health officials said there was not believed to be a wider risk to the public.

A major incident is a designation allowing British authorities to mobilize more than one emergency agency.

The emergency services' response echoes that in the case of the Skripals, whose illness initially baffled doctors after they were found unconscious on a park bench in Salisbury. Scientists at Porton Down concluded they had been poisoned with Novichok, a type of nerve agent developed by the Soviet Union during the Cold War.

Britain accuses Russia of poisoning the Skripals, a claim Moscow strongly denies. The poisoning sparked a Cold War-style diplomatic crisis between Russia and the West, including the expulsion of hundreds of diplomats from both sides.

The two Amesbury victims were being treated at Salisbury District Hospital, where the Skripals spent weeks in critical condition.

Police said authorities initially believed the latest victims might have taken a contaminated batch of heroin or crack cocaine.

"However, further testing is now ongoing to establish the substance which led to these patients becoming ill and we are keeping an open mind as to the circumstances surrounding this incident," police said in a statement. "At this stage, it is not yet clear if a crime has been committed."

Sergei Skripal, 67, is a former Russian intelligence officer who was convicted of spying for Britain before coming to the U.K. as part of a 2010 prisoner swap. He had been living quietly in Salisbury, a cathedral city 90 miles (145 kilometers) southwest of London, when he was struck down along with his 33-year-old daughter Yulia, who was visiting him.

Residents of the street at the center of the Amesbury investigation — in a quiet neighborhood of newly built houses and apartments — said they had received little information about the unknown substance from authorities.

"Amesbury's a lovely place — it's very quiet, uneventful," said Rosemary Northing, who lives a couple of hundred yards (meters) away from the cordoned-off building. "So for this to happen, and the media response and the uncertainty, it's unsettling."

Neighbors said police cars and fire engines descended on the home late Saturday. Student Chloe Edwards said she saw people in "green suits" — like those worn by forensics officers — and her family was told to stay inside their home for several hours.

"We wanted to know what happened. And with the Russian attack happening not long ago, we just assumed the worst," said Edwards.

Among the sites cordoned off was a Baptist church where the victims attended a community event on Saturday. Church secretary Roy Collins said about 200 people were at the neighborhood event, but "nobody else has suffered any ill-effects."

Police from 40 departments in England and Wales had just returned home in June after months of working on the Skripals' poisoning. Wiltshire Police spent about 7.5 million pounds (\$10 million) dealing with the aftermath of the Skripals' poisoning and believe that his front door was contaminated with the nerve agent.

Doctors who treated the Skripals say they have made a remarkable recovery but they still don't know what the long-term prognosis is.

The Skripals have been taken to an undisclosed location for their protection.

Kirka reported from London. Jill Lawless in London contributed to this story.

This story corrects the spelling of Amesbury in the dateline.

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On July 4, Americans celebrate their union, rue divisions

NEW YORK (AP) — Americans are marking Independence Day with parades, fireworks and, for some, a renewed sense of pride in their 242-year-old nation. For others, a sense of a United States divided weighs heavy on its quintessential holiday.

From New York to New Mexico, July Fourth events will celebrate what Americans have in common. Festivities are as elaborate as Macy's July Fourth fireworks show, as gulp-worthy as Nathan's Famous hot dog eating contest and as easygoing as backyard barbecues. But in a country roiled with debate over what it means to be an American, there are even competing televised Independence Day events in the nation's capital.

The country's longest-running live national July Fourth TV tradition — PBS' broadcast of music and fireworks from the U.S. Capitol's West Lawn — is facing new counterprogramming from the White House, which is hosting its own concert and view of the National Park Service's fireworks show. Both shows feature different "American Idol" alums.

First lady Melania Trump said in a statement that the White House show would allow Americans to "tune in from their homes and be part of the festivities." PBS declined to comment.

In New York, the Macy's fireworks show over the East River promises 25 minutes of sparkle and "ah-hhh," plus the West Point Band and entertainers including Kelly Clarkson, Ricky Martin and Keith Urban on NBC's broadcast. Earlier, competitive-eating titans will face off at Nathan's Famous July Fourth hot dog eating contest on Coney Island, televised by ESPN.

Meanwhile, some communities in the American West have canceled their planned July Fourth fireworks because of high wildfire danger, and some others are doing drone light displays instead of pyrotechnics. But fireworks shows will go ahead in such places as Denver and Colorado Springs.

In Boston, the Boston Pops Fireworks Spectacular features singer-songwriter Rachel Platten, the Indigo Girls, Rhiannon Giddens and Broadway legend Rita Moreno. It's televised on local station WHDH-TV and streamed on several sites.

In another July Fourth tradition, new U.S. citizens will be sworn in at locales around the country.

They'll pledge allegiance to a country where some people lament that the ability to debate respectfully the toughest issues of the day seems hopelessly lost. For Brad Messier, a chef in Portland, Maine, the holiday "seems to illustrate the glaring divides that we have."

"How much does going and seeing fireworks really bring people together?" he asks.

But in rural Shelby County, Alabama, retired truck driver Floyd Champion views these as the best of times in America.

"I love the holiday because it's our independence," he said.

Trump praises service members during charity dinner in W.Va.

By JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS, W.Va. (AP) — President Donald Trump celebrated active-duty service members and veterans during a military tribute Tuesday on the eve of Independence Day.

Delivering remarks at a "Salute to Service" charity dinner at the Greenbrier resort in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia, Trump praised "Americans of every generation" who have served in the armed forces.

The event was held in conjunction with the PGA Tour's Greenbrier Classic, which has been rechristened as "A Military Tribute at The Greenbrier." The venerable resort is owned by the state's Republican governor, presidential ally Jim Justice.

Highlighting his efforts to boost spending for the military, Trump said, "As the golfers can tell you, the stronger we get, the less likely it is that we will have to use it."

An avid golfer, Trump praised the "incredible athletes" in attendance.

"These are unbelievably talented people," he said. "They're talented in their mind and in their body. Their muscles are strong, but their mind has to be stronger."

The event marked Trump's latest appearance in a state he won by more than 40 percentage points in

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2016. Its Democratic senator, Joe Manchin, is seeking re-election.

Trump has criticized Manchin for voting against tax cuts the president enacted last year. Manchin is among Democrats with whom Trump recently discussed the vacancy on the Supreme Court.

Trump previewed his upcoming nomination to fill the vacancy, saying he "hit a home run" with Justice Neil Gorsuch, whom he picked for the nation's high court last year. "We're going to hit a home run here," he said.

The president also criticized calls from some Democrats to abolish U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, the federal agency charged with detaining and deporting unauthorized immigrants.

"We're not abandoning ICE and we're not abandoning law enforcement," he said.

Social issues roiling US weigh heavy on Independence Day

By PHILIP MARCELO, Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — In these complex times, a simple question about the quintessential American holiday of fireworks, cookouts and parades isn't always so simple.

As Americans prepare to celebrate the nation's 242nd birthday, some feel a deeper sense of patriotism. For others, the social issues roiling the country weigh heavy this Independence Day.

Standing in front of Boston's Faneuil Hall on Tuesday, tour guide Cara McIntyre said she takes special pride this time of the year in recounting the courage of American colonists like Samuel Adams, who called for rebellion against the English crown in fiery speeches at the historic hall.

But she laments that Americans' ability to respectfully debate the toughest issues of the day — to disagree without being disagreeable — seems hopelessly lost.

"This bitter divisiveness of the last decade, I think the Founding Fathers would be really sad about that," said the 57-year-old Massachusetts native as she greeted passers-by in her floral-print, colonial-era dress. "Social media has made bullies of all of us. People say things there that they'd never say to someone's face."

In Chicago, Philip Wiley, a 77-year-old retired public school counselor, is blunt about what's ailing the nation.

"A lot of it has to do with the present administration in Washington," Wiley said as he stopped to admire a massive flag hanging from the city's iconic Wrigley Building Tuesday.

But in Alabama, retired truck driver Floyd Champion is downright upbeat. He views these as the best of times in America.

Champion plans to mark the holiday the way he spends most days — selling watermelons, tomatoes, corn, plums and other produce from the back of his truck along a highway about 30 miles (48 kilometers) south of Birmingham, Alabama.

"I know it's a big holiday and I love the holiday because it's our independence," said Champion, 77, of rural Shelby County. "But I have to sell this stuff, and I make money."

Out in Anchorage, Alaska, Darl Schaaff says July Fourth should be a time for a deeply divided nation to put personal politics aside.

"This is not about politics," he said as took a break from helping set up the city's downtown celebration. "This is about the founding of our country and freedom."

Angela Limb was born and raised in Alaska's largest city, but because of her Mexican heritage, she said she's had strangers come up to her at the supermarket and tell her go back to her own country.

That makes her feel sad for these people, she said Tuesday while relaxing with her 10-year-old twins at Anchorage's Goose Lake beach. She's happy to be an American and plans to observe the July 4th accordingly.

"I celebrate it," she said. "I'm wanting my kids to have pride in their country and to treat everyone the same."

Vietnam War veteran and retired U.S. Air Force Col. Thomas Moe, in Lancaster, Ohio, said the holiday should be a day to appreciate the differences that make the nation great.

"At a time when we seem to be at each other's throats more than ever, I think we need to step back a

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little bit," said the 74-year-old, who spent more than five years as a prisoner of war and later served as director of the Ohio Department of Veterans Services. "We could be like Venezuela, or Russia or China, where everybody on the surface says or thinks the same thing, and we never want to go that way."

In Portland, Maine, chef Brad Messier agreed with the sentiments, but said the country's tribalism is too great to ignore.

"This is a holiday that, in theory, brings us together as a country but, in reality, we're still camped out on our two very separate sides," Messier said as he manned a booth selling strawberries and other produce at a downtown Portland farmers' market. "For me, it seems to illustrate the glaring divides that we have. What we come together for is very superficial. How much does going and seeing fireworks really bring people together?"

But in New York, 32-year-old Baudel Ivan Osorio Herrera could only feel gratitude to his new nation.

The father of two boys, who came to the Bronx from Mexico when he was just seven was one of 200 immigrants taking their citizenship oath at New York City's Public Library on Tuesday.

The timing of the momentous occasion wasn't lost on him.

"I have my kids. I have my home," Herrera said. "You could say we made our dream come true."

Outside the San Francisco Ferry Building, Mary Saunders also expressed gratitude as she looks forward to celebrating.

"As an immigrant and naturalized American Citizen, it's something I have the privilege to participate in," said 53-year-old Saunders, a scientist and Brentwood, California resident. "It's a day of celebration to stop and enjoy togetherness with family."

Lorin Eleni Gill in San Francisco; Jay Reeves in Alabaster, Alabama; Rachel D'Oro in Anchorage, Alaska; Stephen Groves in New York; Teresa Crawford in Chicago; David Sharp in Portland, Maine; Jennifer McDermott in Providence, Rhode Island; Lisa Cornwell in Cincinnati, Ohio and Wilson Ring in Montpelier, Vermont contributed to this story.

Trump conducts more Supreme Court interviews, hears concerns

By CATHERINE LUCEY, KEN THOMAS and LISA MASCARO, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump spoke with three more potential Supreme Court candidates on Tuesday as a key senator privately aired concerns about one of the contenders.

As Trump weighs his options, he has heard from Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., who has expressed reservations about one top potential nominee, Brett Kavanaugh, according to a person familiar with the call but not authorized to publicly disclose details of it. The activity around Kavanaugh was an early glimpse of the frenzied jockeying around the short list of candidates in the run-up to Trump's July 9 announcement.

With a narrow 51-49 GOP majority in the Senate, losing any Republican senator could begin to doom a nominee. Paul's objections echo those made by outside conservative groups over Kavanaugh, who is seen as a top contender for the vacancy but who activists warn is too much of an establishment-aligned choice.

Trump has said he'll choose his nominee from a list of 25 candidates vetted by conservative groups. Top contenders include federal appeals judges Kavanaugh, Raymond Kethledge, Amul Thapar and Amy Coney Barrett — all of whom spoke with Trump on Monday.

"These are very talented people, brilliant people," Trump said Tuesday during an appearance in West Virginia. "We're going to give you a great one."

The White House says Trump has spoken to seven candidates. There were the four interviews Monday, as well as a conversation with Republican Sen. Mike Lee of Utah, who is not regarded as a top contender but who is being pushed by key conservatives.

Trump has also spoken with Thomas Hardiman, who has served with Trump's sister on the 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Philadelphia, according to a person familiar with the conversation who also was not authorized to publicly discuss it.

Another candidate considered a top contender is Joan Larsen, who serves on the federal appeals court

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in Cincinnati.

Trump's choice to replace Kennedy — a swing vote on the nine-member court — has the potential to remake the court for a generation as part of precedent-shattering decisions on abortion, health care, gay marriage and other issues. Recognizing the stakes, many Democrats have lined up in opposition to any Trump pick, and Republicans lawmakers and activists are seeking to shape the president's decision.

For his part, Trump has sought advice from White House counsel Don McGahn, outside advisers like Leonard Leo, on leave from the Federalist Society, and has been making calls to lawmakers, including Paul.

Paul has told colleagues that he may not vote for Kavanaugh if the judge is nominated, citing Kavanaugh's role during the Bush administration on cases involving executive privilege and the disclosure of documents to Congress, said the person familiar with Paul's conversations who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity.

The senator has more than once threatened to withhold his vote on key Trump priorities citing ideological disagreements, most recently the nomination of Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. But Paul has repeatedly yielded to Trump's personal lobbying to back his nominees and legislation, often citing unspecified concessions from the president.

Paul's office did not respond to requests for comment.

His concerns mirror comments from some conservatives who view Kavanaugh as a more establishment-aligned pick on abortion and issues related to the Fourth Amendment right against unreasonable searches and seizures. Some also raised concern about his approach to the Affordable Care Act.

"Trump's list is full of great nominees, but Kavanaugh raises several concerns among libertarian and pro-life activists at a time when we need to be united," said Wesley Denton, communications director for the Conservative Partnership Institute, an organization that works closely with lawmakers on Capitol Hill.

The president also spoke by phone with Lee on Monday, as first reported by the Deseret News and later confirmed by the senator's office, which characterized it as an interview. Asked about the call, White House spokesman Raj Shah said only, "Yesterday, the President spoke on the phone with Sen. Mike Lee." Lee is the only lawmaker on Trump's list of potential justices.

There have also been lobbying efforts around other candidates.

Some conservatives have pointed to Kethledge as a potential justice in the mold of Gorsuch; both once served as law clerks to Kennedy. Kethledge, a Michigan Law graduate who has been a Michigan-based appellate court judge for the past decade, would add academic diversity to a court steeped in the Ivy League.

"The court could use some perspectives that were forged in different kinds of regions of the country and different kinds of academic backgrounds," said former Michigan Sen. Spence Abraham, who hired Kethledge as a young staffer in the 1990s.

Since Trump said his short list includes at least two women, speculation has focused on Barrett, a former law clerk to Justice Antonin Scalia and a longtime Notre Dame Law School professor who serves on the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. Conservative groups rallied around Barrett after her confirmation hearing last year featured questioning from Democrats over how her Roman Catholic faith would affect her decisions.

Former House speaker and Trump ally Newt Gingrich tweeted Monday: "Judge Amy Coney Barrett would make an outstanding Supreme Court Justice. Her clarity and intellectual strength in the Senate hearings for her current judgeship showed an intellect and a depth of thought that would be powerful on the Supreme Court."

But her short tenure on the bench may work against her. And Democrats claim that Barrett — like the other picks — would favor overturning *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 case that affirmed a woman's right to abortion, and would weaken President Barack Obama's 2010 health care law.

Since the start of his 2016 campaign, Trump has embraced anti-abortion groups and vowed to appoint federal judges who will favor efforts to roll back abortion rights. But he told reporters Friday that he would not question potential high-court nominees about their views on abortion, saying it was "inappropriate to discuss."

Sen. Susan Collins, R-Maine, has said she would oppose any nominee she believed would overturn *Roe*

v. Wade, stressing she wants to back a judge who would show respect for settled law such as the Roe decision.

Associated Press writer Zeke Miller contributed to this report.

US to stop encouraging race as factor in school admissions

By ERIC TUCKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration said Tuesday that it would not encourage schools to use race as a factor in the admissions process, rescinding Obama-era guidance meant to promote diversity among students.

The shift gives schools and colleges the federal government's blessing to leave race out of admissions and enrollment decisions and underscores the contentious politics that for decades have surrounded affirmative action policies, which have repeatedly been challenged before the Supreme Court.

The Obama administration memos encouraging schools to take race into account were among 24 policy documents revoked by the Justice Department for being "unnecessary, outdated, inconsistent with existing law, or otherwise improper." Attorney General Jeff Sessions called the changes an effort to restore the "rule of law," though civil rights groups decried the move and some universities said they intended to continue their diversity efforts as before.

The action comes amid a high-profile court fight over Harvard University admissions that has attracted the government's attention, as well as Supreme Court turnover expected to produce a more critical eye toward schools' race-conscious admissions policies.

The court's most recent significant ruling on the subject endorsed colleges' use of race among many factors in the admission process. But the opinion's author, Justice Anthony Kennedy, announced his retirement last week, giving President Donald Trump a chance to replace him with a judge who may be more reliably skeptical of admissions programs that take race and ethnicity into account.

The new policy dramatically departs from the stance of the Obama administration, which on multiple occasions said schools could consider race in admissions decisions and should do so to foster diversity. In one 2011 policy document, for instance, the administration said courts had recognized schools' "compelling interest" in ensuring racially diverse populations on campuses.

"Institutions are not required to implement race-neutral approaches if, in their judgment, the approaches would be unworkable," the document said. "In some cases, race-neutral approaches will be unworkable because they will be ineffective to achieve the diversity the institution seeks."

That guidance has now been rescinded, as have about a half-dozen similar documents, including some that sought to explain court rulings affirming the use of race as a factor in admissions decisions.

"As the Supreme Court has recognized," one of the documents states, "diversity has benefits for all students, and today's students must be prepared to succeed in a diverse society and an increasingly global workforce."

The Trump administration's announcement is more in line with Bush-era policy that discouraged affirmative action and instead encouraged the use of race-neutral alternatives, like percentage plans and economic diversity programs.

Though such guidance doesn't have the force of law, schools could presumably use it to defend themselves against lawsuits over admission policies.

The Trump administration's Justice Department had already signaled concern about the use of race in admissions decisions.

The department, for instance, sided this year with Asian-American plaintiffs who contend in a lawsuit against Harvard that the school unlawfully limits how many Asian students are admitted.

Students for Fair Admissions, the group suing Harvard, is led by Ed Blum, a legal strategist who also helped white student Abigail Fisher sue the University of Texas for alleged discrimination in a case that reached the Supreme Court. Blum said Tuesday the organization "welcomes any governmental actions

that will eliminate racial classifications and preferences in college admissions." Harvard, meanwhile, said it would continue considering race as an admissions factor to create a "diverse campus community where students from all walks of life have the opportunity to learn with and from each other."

Civil rights groups criticized the Trump administration's announcement, saying it went against decades of court precedent permitting colleges to take race into account.

"We condemn the Department of Education's politically motivated attack on affirmative action and deliberate attempt to discourage colleges and universities from pursuing racial diversity at our nation's colleges and universities," Kristen Clarke, president and executive director of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, said in a statement.

Lily Eskelsen García, president of the National Education Association, said "affirmative action has proven to be one of the most effective ways to create diverse and inclusive classrooms." She said the announcement underscored the stakes surrounding the upcoming Supreme Court appointment.

The high court has been generally accepting of considering race in admissions decisions to achieve diversity. In a 2016 opinion written by Kennedy, the court granted affirmative action policies a victory by permitting race to be among the factors considered in the college admission process.

The ruling bitterly disappointed conservatives who thought Kennedy would be part of a Supreme Court majority to outlaw affirmative action in education. Justice Antonin Scalia died after the court heard arguments in the case but before the decision was handed down.

The new affirmative action guidance may add to an already contentious fight over the next justice. With Trump expected to announce his nominee next week, the issue should be a central part of any confirmation process, said Howard University law school dean Danielle Holley-Walker.

She called the new guidance "highly unfortunate and counterproductive" and said the decision is another indication that the Justice Department under Sessions is likely to be aggressive toward schools that do continue to factor in race in admissions decisions.

"People have been talking about precedent in regard to *Roe v. Wade*" — the landmark 1973 ruling affirming a woman's right to abortion — "but it's important to remember that affirmative action has been a precedent for the past 40 years," she said. "This is a clear attack on precedent. Any Supreme Court nominee needs to be asked if they support precedent related to affirmative action."

Follow Eric Tucker on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/etuckerAP>

Associated Press writers Mark Sherman and Jesse Holland in Washington, Collin Binkley in Boston and National Writer Errin Haines Whack in Philadelphia contributed to this report.

Men plead no contest in deadly California warehouse fire

By PAUL ELIAS, Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — Two men charged in a California warehouse fire that killed 36 people agreed to a plea deal Tuesday during an emotional hearing where the judge read the name of each victim aloud, bringing tears from loved ones in the courtroom.

Under the terms of a plea agreement, Derick Almena and Max Harris each pleaded no contest to 36 counts of involuntary manslaughter involving the 2016 blaze at a dilapidated Oakland warehouse known as the "Ghost Ship" during an unlicensed concert.

Almena could be sentenced to nine years in prison and Harris could face a six-year term when a judge sentences them next month.

The men could have faced life in prison if convicted at a trial. Now, with good behavior, they are only expected to serve half their sentences after spending a year in jail.

David Gregory, whose 20-year-old daughter, Michela Gregory, was among the victims, said hearing the defendants say no contest was "some small sense of justice." Still, he was dissatisfied with the outcome.

"That's 36 lives, you know," he said outside court. "We wanted fair justice, and we didn't get it."

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Other family members declined comment.

Authorities say the 48-year-old Almena rented the warehouse and illegally converted it into an entertainment venue and residences before the fire. The 28-year-old Harris helped him collect rent and schedule concerts.

Prosecutors say the men turned the cluttered building into a "death trap" with few exits, rickety stairs and dark and dangerous passageways.

During Tuesday's hearing, Alameda County Judge Morris Jacobson had the men say no contest as the name of each victim was read. The emotional process took 30 minutes, with family members and friends crying quietly when their loved ones were named.

Harris also cried as he pleaded "no contest" to each count. Almena answered "no contest" quietly 36 times.

Gregory said he and other families would have preferred a trial and sentences as long as life in prison. He cut off reporters' questions when they asked how he felt when he heard his daughter's name read in court.

Prosecutor Autrey James said the two men were convicted "because they acted negligently running that building known as the Ghost Ship."

James declined to answer questions outside court, saying the case was still active until the men are formally sentenced.

Almena's attorney Tony Serra said his client agreed to the plea bargain to alleviate "the pain and suffering of all parties."

Serra previously said a plea deal would spare the victims' families from testifying at a trial where photos of burned bodies and other emotionally fraught evidence would be shown.

Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms investigators said they could not determine the cause of the blaze.

A typical manslaughter case often results in shorter sentences, Stanford University law school professor Robert Weisberg said, citing a three-year sentence given to a transit officer in the region who mistook his gun for a stun gun and fatally shot a passenger.

"On the other hand, there were 36 victims," Weisberg said about the warehouse fire. "This was a manslaughter case that felt like a murder case."

Almena lived in the warehouse with his wife and three children. The family was staying in a nearby hotel on the night of the fire. Harris also lived in the warehouse and escaped the fire unharmed.

The city of Oakland and the warehouse owner Chor Ng are being sued by the families for wrongful death. Ng, who has not been charged, didn't return a phone call Tuesday.

Suspect wrote he aimed to kill everyone at Maryland newsroom

By DAVID McFADDEN, Associated Press

BALTIMORE (AP) — A man charged with gunning down five people at a Maryland newspaper sent three letters on the day of the attack, police said, including one that said he was on his way to the Capital Gazette newsroom with the aim "of killing every person present."

Sgt. Jacklyn Davis, a spokeswoman for Anne Arundel County police, said the letters were received Monday. They were mailed to an attorney for The Capital newspaper, a retired judge of the Maryland Court of Special Appeals and a Baltimore judge.

The letter Jarrod Ramos sent to the Annapolis newspaper's Baltimore-based lawyer was written to resemble a legal motion for reconsideration of his unsuccessful 2012 defamation lawsuit against the paper, a columnist and then-publisher Tom Marquardt.

Marquardt shared a copy of the letter with The Associated Press.

"If this is how the Maryland Judiciary operates, the law now means nothing," Ramos wrote. He quoted a description of the purpose of a defamation suit, saying it was intended for a defamed person to "resort to the courts for relief instead of wreaking his own vengeance."

"That' is how your judiciary operates, you were too cowardly to confront those lies, and this is your

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receipt," Ramos wrote.

He signed it under the chilling statement: "I told you so." Below that, he wrote that he was going to the newspaper's office "with the objective of killing every person present."

In a letter attached to what appeared to be the faux court filing, he also directly addressed retired special appeals court Judge Charles Moylan, who ruled against Ramos in his defamation case. Ramos sued the paper after pleading guilty to harassing a high school classmate.

"Welcome, Mr. Moylan, to your unexpected legacy: YOU should have died," he wrote. He signed it: "Friends forever, Jarrod W. Ramos."

Ramos also sent a document to Maryland's highest court, and it has been sealed at the request of prosecutors.

Wes Adams, Anne Arundel County state's attorney, asked the Court of Appeals on Wednesday to seal the pleading that Ramos filed on the day of the shooting.

In his motion to seal, Adams wrote: "the pleading creates direct evidence of petitioner's involvement" in the allegations currently under investigation.

It was unclear whether the sealed document was the same as the one sent to Moylan.

A spokeswoman for Adams did not immediately return a query seeking comment about the sealed document. Moylan could not immediately be reached for comment Wednesday.

Douglas Colbert, a University of Maryland law professor, described the letters as "very powerful" evidence of intent that the state will make full use of at trial. Colbert said as long as it's established in court that Ramos authored the letters, they will be used to show his "planning and deliberate actions" on the day of the attack.

The apparent admissions by the defendant will weaken a defense lawyer's strategy of suggesting that he was "suffering from a mental disease or defect" that would impair his ability to understand the consequences of his actions, Colbert said.

Ramos, 38, has a well-documented history of harassing the paper's journalists. The defamation suit was thrown out as groundless, and he often railed against current and former Capital staff in profanity-laced tweets. Police found him hiding under a desk after Thursday's attack and jailed him on five counts of first-degree murder.

At a memorial service Monday night for one of those killed, editor Rob Hiasen, Marquardt said he once slept with a baseball bat by his bed because he was so worried about Ramos. He also said that they "stepped up security" at the newspaper years ago, and posted Ramos's photo around the office. "But then he went dormant for about two years and we thought the problem has been solved. Apparently, it was just building up steam," he said.

The mourning in Annapolis continued Tuesday, marked by a lowering of U.S. flags to honor the victims. President Donald Trump ordered flags flown at half-staff on federal property through sunset.

Annapolis Mayor Gavin Buckley said Monday that he was told initially that his request to lower the flags had been denied. Trump has repeatedly called journalists the "enemy of the people." According to Buckley, the White House said Tuesday that Trump ordered the flags lowered as soon as he learned of the mayor's request.

Hiasen was remembered in stories, poems, prayers and songs at the "celebration of life" ceremony Monday evening. He was fatally shot last week at the Capital Gazette along with colleagues Gerald Fischman, John McNamara, Rebecca Smith and Wendi Winters.

This story has been corrected by replacing a paraphrase with the verbatim quote from the letter.

Associated Press writer Brian Witte in Annapolis, Maryland, contributed to this report.

Mexico's ruling party seeks way forward after drubbing

By CHRISTOPHER SHERMAN and MARK STEVENSON, Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — The landslide victory by Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador in Mexico's presidential election brought an abrupt end to the monopoly on power enjoyed by the Institutional Revolutionary Party, a nearly century-long dominance that cultivated corruption along with an extensive patronage system.

On Sunday night there were some tears, but no obvious shock or anger among the campaign workers streaming out of PRI headquarters after their candidate conceded the race within minutes of polling stations closing. Their party had finished a distant third.

Lopez Obrador, a populist and self-described leftist, had maintained a double-digit lead in the polls throughout the campaign, while PRI candidate Jose Antonio Meade's message had never gained traction.

So, what happened?

On the wide sidewalk in front of PRI headquarters, Ernesto Garcia Elizalde leaned on his cane considering that question and where the path forward might lie for the party he joined and has ardently supported since 1964.

Meade, a mild-mannered technocrat with Cabinet positions in multiple PRI administrations, had struggled in vain to address the issue of corruption, which Lopez Obrador made the central issue of a campaign that resonated strongly with Mexicans.

"There's no need to invent a hidden reason," said Garcia. "We know why we lost. We didn't lose because we had a bad fighter. We lost because of all the baggage we have."

As Meade campaign workers quietly slipped away after Sunday's loss, taunted by the celebratory honking of passing cars, Garcia lamented the PRI's half-dozen former governors who were either jailed or facing charges of corruption or organized crime ties.

"The people voted against the corruption that was generated and allowed to grow inside the party," he said.

With nearly 94 percent of the ballots counted, Meade had only 16.4 percent of the vote — a third of that won by Lopez Obrador. As recently as 1976, the PRI claimed 100 percent of the vote for its unopposed candidate.

The PRI was also on track to lose all the governorships at stake and even the bulk of the mayoral and congressional races in its last urban bastion, the state of Mexico, which nearly surrounds Mexico City.

A campaign staffer who requested anonymity to discuss the mood inside PRI headquarters said Sunday's result had been "anti-climactic" and compared it to the death of a very ill relative.

Everyone had known for some time what was going to happen, but when it finally did they were still not totally prepared, the staffer said. "That's what the whole campaign was like."

For decades, the PRI functioned as a serial dictatorship, with each all-powerful president serving six years and then choosing his successor, who would win in rigged elections.

When it lost the presidency for the first time in 2000 after a series of gradual democratic reforms, there was shock and visible anger among its members.

They dismissed the victory by the upstart conservative National Action Party and its candidates who had not come up through the ranks of the PRI, the traditional training ground for Mexican politicians, and scoffed at the idea that they could govern effectively.

And just as the PRI predicted, the two National Action presidents floundered, getting their initiatives through Congress only with the help of the PRI, which retook the presidency in 2012.

But the party blew its chance at a comeback with a string of corruption scandals that culminated in Lopez Obrador's victory on Sunday.

Party president Rene Juarez Cisneros seemed to be signaling the steps needed to repair the damage in a speech following Meade's concession. It was peppered with words like "responsibility" and "honesty."

"In the coming hours and subsequent days we must have a great call for deep reflection to find the path forward, to find the reasons and causes of these circumstances that we're facing today," he said.

Political scientist Jesus Silva Herzog said that while Sunday's loss was the most challenging yet for the

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PRI, it would be wrong to consider it a fatal blow.

"We have given the PRI up for dead many times," he said.

Nevertheless, after the 2000 loss, the PRI still had a very strong congressional presence. Now Lopez Obrador could cobble together a two-thirds majority in congress without even consulting the PRI.

"Today I have the impression that the PRI could be dispensable," Silva Herzog said.

Still, the party has rural strongholds. It could hang on for years in sparsely populated states where it still holds governorships, such as Campeche, Coahuila, Sonora and San Luis Potosi.

But even in those states, Lopez Obrador out-poled Meade, and the generous government funding the PRI uses to pay its staff and for advertising is likely to be seriously reduced since it is based on vote share.

People packing the streets Sunday night to celebrate Lopez Obrador's victory were not generous toward the PRI.

Waving a Lopez Obrador banner, 26-year-old law student Hugo Moreno declared: "The PRI is flailing like a drowning man."

Retired teacher Susana Zuniga advised the PRI to "sit down and learn from its errors."

Back at PRI headquarters, Garcia seemed to be doing just that, saying the party had to work harder to choose honest candidates who had not lost touch with its base.

"Its roots are very deep," Garcia said of the party. "It's going to take a lot of work not to reconstruct it, but to reunite it ... to reform a series of things, to get rid of the bad and leave the good."

Associated Press writer Maria Verza contributed to this report.

Why they fight: US and China brawl over high technology

By PAUL WISEMAN, AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — To understand why the United States and China stand on the brink of a trade war, consider the near-death experience of American Superconductor Corp.

The company, known as AMSC and based in Massachusetts, was reeling after a Chinese partner stole its technology — the electronic brains that run wind turbines. The loss was devastating: AMSC's stock shed \$1 billion in value, and the company cut 700 jobs, more than half its workforce.

"Attempted corporate homicide" is what CEO Daniel McGahn called it. In January, its Chinese partner, Sinovel Wind Group, was convicted in a U.S. court of stealing AMSC's trade secrets.

To the Trump administration, Sinovel's predatory practices are hardly isolated. Beijing, it charges, is orchestrating a brass-knuckles campaign to supplant U.S. technological dominance and over the next few decades make Chinese companies global leaders in such fields as robotics and electric vehicles.

According to a report by the Office of the U.S. Trade Representative, Beijing's tactics include coercing American companies to hand over trade secrets in return for access to the Chinese market; forcing U.S. businesses to license technology in China on unfavorable terms; using state funds to buy up American technology; and sometimes outright theft.

Critics have long asserted that China runs roughshod over intellectual property rights. But President Donald Trump, who ran for the White House on a vow to force China to reform its trade policies, is the first U.S. leader to risk a trade war between the world's two biggest economies.

"We've been in a trade war for a long time, but we weren't participating," said Richard Ellings, president of the National Bureau of Asian Research. "We've awakened. ... This is a fundamental change. It's a historic moment."

Critics argue, though, that while Trump has picked the right fight, he has chosen the wrong weapon. They predict China will defy an array of U.S. tariffs set to take effect Friday and will retaliate immediately. And they warn that the escalating trade war will slow global growth and jeopardize the second-longest economic expansion in U.S. history.

Many analysts say the United States should have enlisted key allies like Japan and the European Union — which share U.S. complaints about Chinese trade policies — to impose unified pressure on Beijing.

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Instead, the U.S. is engaging in trade disputes with its friends over imported steel, aluminum and autos. "There is no way to meaningfully influence Chinese behavior on intellectual property without coordination among like-minded advanced nations, and presently there is almost none," said Daniel Rosen of the economic research firm Rhodium Group.

Barring a last-minute breakthrough, the Trump administration will impose tariffs this week on \$34 billion in Chinese products that have benefited from China's strong-arm policies.

Once Beijing responds with retaliatory tariffs, as it has said it will, the combat could escalate. Trump has said he is prepared to slap taxes on up to \$450 billion in Chinese imports, or nearly 90 percent of the goods China shipped to the United States last year.

Peter Navarro, the White House trade adviser, has said the United States needs to protect its high-tech "crown jewels" from predatory Chinese practices.

The stakes go beyond the economy. Many of today's advanced technologies — the ability to collect and analyze vast amounts of data, for instance — have military uses.

"Today, the acquisition of a Silicon Valley startup or even a health care provider may raise just as serious concerns from a national security perspective as the acquisition of a defense or aerospace company," Assistant U.S. Treasury Secretary Heath Tarbert told Congress in April.

That's why the United States in January effectively blocked the acquisition of the money transfer service MoneyGram by China's Ant Financial. Concerns were raised that the deal would give China access to the financial records of millions of Americans, including members of the military.

The U.S. says the Chinese government blurs the lines between state and private companies by bankrolling deals like Geely's 2010 purchase of Volvo Cars and appliance manufacturer Media's 2016 acquisition of German robotics maker Kuka.

In 2017, Trump vetoed the sale of a U.S. semiconductor manufacturer to a Chinese investor as a threat to national security after Washington concluded the financing came from China's government.

U.S. officials see a threat in Beijing's long-range development plan, called Made in China 2025. The plan calls for creating powerful Chinese players in such areas as information technology, robotics, aerospace equipment, electric vehicles and biopharmaceuticals. Foreign business groups argue that Made in China 2025 is unfairly forcing them to the sidelines in those industries.

Whatever the reasons, China has been gaining traction. Stephen Ezell, director of global innovation policy at the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation think tank, said China has raised its share of global output in 18 high-tech manufacturing industries from 8 percent in 2003 to 27 percent now. It is now the world's largest exporter of high-tech products.

Tim Tangredi, CEO of Dais Analytic in Odessa, Florida, supports Trump's aggressive moves, likening the U.S. tariff threat to America's "shock and awe" military campaign against Iraq in 2003.

About four years ago, Dais had lined up a Chinese company to help develop its business in nanotechnology that helps produce clean water. But the partnership imploded. Tangredi said the Chinese company persuaded a long-time Dais employee to defect with trade secrets.

"They just stole it, and they are using it against us," he said.

Tangredi said he hopes the threat of a trade war will force China to rethink its practices: "You've got to do something to get their attention."

AP Business Writer Joe McDonald in Beijing contributed to this report.

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Forecast of heavy rain could complicate Thai cave rescue

By TASSANEE VEJPONGSA, Associated Press

MAE SAI, Thailand (AP) — Heavy rains forecast for northern Thailand could worsen flooding in a cave where 12 boys and their soccer coach are waiting to be extracted by rescuers, possibly forcing authorities

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to have them swim out through a narrow, underwater passage in the cavern, a top official said Tuesday.

The 13, who disappeared when flooding trapped them in the cave they were exploring on June 23 after a soccer game, were found by rescue divers late Monday night in the cavern in northern Chiang Rai province during a desperate search. The effort drew international help and has riveted Thailand.

The boys, aged 11-16, and their 25-year-old coach were described as healthy and being looked after by seven members of the Thai navy SEALs, including medics, who were staying with them inside the cave. They were mostly in stable condition and have received high-protein drinks.

While efforts to pump out floodwaters are continuing, it's clear that some areas of the sprawling cavern cannot be drained, said Interior Minister Anupong Paojinda, a member of Thailand's ruling military junta. In order to get them out ahead of the bad weather forecast for later in the week, they might need to use diving gear while being guided by professional divers, he said.

Anupong said the boys would be brought out via the same complicated route through which their rescuers entered, and he conceded that if something went awry, it could be disastrous.

"Diving is not easy. For people who have never done it, it will be difficult, unlike diving in a swimming pool, because the cave's features have small channels," he said. "If something happens midway, it could be life-threatening."

Video released by the Thai navy showed the boys in their soccer uniforms sitting in a dry area inside the Tham Luang Nang Non cave above the water as a light held by a rescuer was shone on their faces.

Cave rescue experts have said it could be safer to simply supply them where they are for now, rather than trying to have the boys dive out. That could take months, however, given that Thailand's rainy season typically lasts through October.

SEAL commander Rear Adm. Arpakorn Yookongkaew said there was no rush to bring them out, since they're safe where they are.

A doctor and a nurse were with them in the cave.

"We have given the boys food, starting from easily digested and high-powered food with enough minerals," Arpakorn told a news conference.

Having them dive out of the cave was one of several options being considered, "but if we are using this plan, we have to be certain that it will work and have to have a drill to make sure that it's 100 percent safe," he said.

Chiang Rai provincial Gov. Narongsak Osatanakorn said the health of the boys and coach were checked using a field assessment in which red is critical condition, yellow is serious and green is stable.

"We found that most of the boys are in green condition," he said. "Maybe some of the boys have injuries or light injuries and would be categorized as yellow condition. But no one is in red condition."

Relatives keeping vigil at the mouth of the cave since the ordeal began rejoiced at the news that their boys and their coach had been found.

"I want to give him a hug. I miss him very much," said Tham Chanthawong, an aunt of the coach. "In these 10 days, how many million seconds have there been? I've missed him every second."

Rescue divers had spent much of Monday making preparations for a final push to locate them, efforts that had been hampered by flooding that made it difficult to move through the tight passageways of muddy water.

Rick Stanton and John Volanthen, two expert cave divers from Britain, found the group about 300-400 meters (yards) past a section of the cave on higher ground that was believed to be where they might have taken shelter.

In the 5-minute navy video, the boys were seen wearing their soccer uniforms and were calm, curious and polite. They also were keen to get some food.

After an initial exchange in which a rescuer determines that all 13 are present, one of the boys asked what day it was, and a rescuer replied: "Monday. Monday. You have been here — 10 days."

The rescuer told them "you are very strong." The traditional reserve of Thai children toward adults broke slightly after a while, and one boy told another in Thai, "Tell them we are hungry."

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"We haven't eaten," a boy said in Thai, then in English: "We have to eat, eat, eat!"

A rescuer assured them that "navy SEALs will come tomorrow, with food and doctors and everything." At the end of the video, a boy asked in English, "Where do you come from?" The rescue diver replied, "England, UK."

Besides the protein drink, Narongsak said they were given painkillers and antibiotics, which doctors had advised as a precaution.

He said officials had met and agreed on the need to "ensure 100 percent safety for the boys when we bring them out."

"We worked so hard to find them and we will not lose them," he said.

Cave diver Ben Reymanants, part of the team assisting the rescue effort, told NBC's "Today" show that he was "very surprised obviously that they are all alive and actually mentally also healthy."

While they appear responsive, "they are very weak and very skinny," he added.

Reymanants said the easiest option would be to "keep pumping the water out of the cave. They need another 3 or 4 feet so they can literally float them out with life jackets."

"But time is not on their side," he noted, because of the heavy rain forecast.

He added that two Thai navy doctors have volunteered to stay with them for months, if needed.

The British Cave Rescue Council, which has members taking part in the operation, said in a statement that "although water levels have dropped, the diving conditions remain difficult and any attempt to dive the boys and their coach out will not be taken lightly because there are significant technical challenges and risks to consider."

Joining the British are other experts from around the world and teams from the U.S., Australia, China and elsewhere.

Authorities said efforts would continue outside the cave, where teams have been scouring the mountainside for other entrances to the caverns. Several fissures have been found and teams have explored some, although so far, none lead to the trapped boys.

Associated Press journalists Grant Peck, Kawewit Kaewjinda and Jason Corben in Bangkok and Danica Kirka in London contributed.

Watchdog: Syrian group uncovering IS mass graves needs help

By **BASSEM MROUE**, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Syrians working to uncover mass graves in an area once ruled by the Islamic State group need help to preserve evidence, identify human remains and shed more light on the horrors perpetrated by the militants, an international watchdog said Tuesday.

Human Rights Watch said thousands of bodies — of civilians slain by the extremists, residents killed in airstrikes by the U.S.-led coalition and of IS fighters — remain to be recovered in several mass graves in and around the city of Raqqa. The appeal came in a new report released Tuesday by the New York-based group.

Local members of the Raqqa Civil Council, a governing body set up by U.S.-backed and Kurdish-led forces, are "struggling to cope with the logistical challenges of collecting and organizing information" on the bodies uncovered and providing it to families searching for missing or dead relatives, HRW said.

Raqqa was the extremists' de facto capital and the seat of their self-proclaimed caliphate, which at the height of their power in 2014 stretched across a third of both Syria and Iraq. Since then an array of Syrian and Iraqi forces have driven IS from virtually all the territory it once held, but the group is still present in remote areas along the border.

The extremist group, which attracted fighters from around the world, carried out mass killings and other atrocities, including public beheadings. Women and men accused of adultery were stoned to death, while men believed to be gay were thrown from the tops of buildings and then pelted with stones.

Human Rights Watch said identifying missing people and preserving evidence for possible prosecutions

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is critical for Syria's future.

"Raqqa city has at least nine mass graves, each one estimated to have dozens, if not hundreds, of bodies, making exhumations a monumental task," said Priyanka Motaparthy, acting emergencies director at HRW.

"Without the right technical assistance, these exhumations may not provide families with the answers they have been waiting for and could damage or destroy evidence crucial to future justice efforts," she added.

HRW quoted Yasser al-Khamis, head of first responders in Raqqa, as saying that land mines further complicate exhumations.

Recovery and analysis of remains from mass graves is a complex process that requires a high level of expertise. Exhumations carried out without forensic experts can destroy critical evidence and complicate the identification of bodies, the report said.

The team in Raqqa, for instance, didn't take photographs of bodies in accordance with international forensic standards, which is important in documentation, HRW said.

Ibrahim al-Hassan, the head of the U.S.-backed Raqqa Reconstruction Committee, said the enormity of the task only became clear after the team of first responders began its work.

"We didn't expect to have that many graves, and there could be even more," he said by telephone from Raqqa.

The first responders prioritize emergency and rescue work but have expanded their ranks in order to deploy forensics teams to excavate mass graves. Al-Hassan said his committee has asked the U.S. to provide labs and DNA testing facilities but has yet to receive them.

"Our work currently is primitive," he said.

Hammoud Shawakh, who coordinates between the U.S. and the Raqqa Reconstruction Committee, said the U.S.-led coalition has provided \$500,000 to the first responders so far this year. But he said DNA testing facilities are not widely available on the local market and would need to be provided by the U.S.

HRW's report said the first responders uncovered a mass grave at the city's al-Rashid playing field last month containing 553 bodies, and had begun work on a second one. A video released last month by the Raqqa Civil Council showed members of the team removing the bodies of men, women and children, and placing them in blue bags.

In 2016, The Associated Press documented and mapped 72 mass graves in Iraq and Syria, with many more expected to be uncovered. In Syria, the AP obtained locations for 17 mass graves, including one with the bodies of hundreds of members of a single tribe all but exterminated when IS extremists took over their region.

At the time, between 5,200 and more than 15,000 people were believed buried in the graves.

"Families of those killed by ISIS deserve to know the fate of their loved ones and to have access to justice for those crimes," Motaparthy said, using another acronym for IS. "Preserving evidence from these mass graves is a key part of that."

Associated Press writer Sarah El Deeb in Beirut contributed to this report.

Pro-Brexit group chief denies breaching electoral rules

LONDON (AP) — The former head of the official "leave" campaign in Britain's 2016 vote on European Union membership denied breaking spending rules on Wednesday ahead of a report from the country's electoral watchdog.

The Electoral Commission has not yet published its report on Vote Leave.

But Matthew Elliott, who headed the group, said the commission has concluded that Vote Leave broke rules by donating more than 600,000 pounds (\$800,000) to another group then using the money for its own activities.

Elliott denied wrongdoing, saying Vote Leave acted "both within the letter of the law and also the spirit." He told the BBC that Vote Leave planned to challenge the Electoral Commission report in court.

The commission said it was "unusual" for Vote Leave to issue a public reaction to its initial findings. It said it would publish its full report "at the earliest opportunity."

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The watchdog has conducted several investigations into the referendum, which was won by those wanting Britain to leave the EU.

Another pro-Brexit organization, Leave.EU, was fined 70,000 pounds in May for overspending and filing inaccurate records.

The probes have become entangled with inquiries into Facebook's use of users' data because the Brexit campaigns allegedly had contact with the political consultancy Cambridge Analytica, which used data from tens of millions of Facebook accounts to help U.S. President Donald Trump's 2016 election campaign.

Former Cambridge Analytica and Vote Leave staffers have alleged that the group used its undeclared donation to pay a Canadian data firm, Aggregate IQ, for targeted messaging services.

Opponents of Brexit say campaigners' skulduggery may have unfairly influenced the outcome of the June 2016 referendum.

Asian shares track Wall St decline as China-US tariffs loom

By ELAINE KURTENBACH, AP Business Writer

BANGKOK (AP) — Asian shares were moderately lower on Wednesday after U.S. stocks succumbed to a sell-off in the final minutes of trading, snapping a three-day winning streak.

KEEPING SCORE: Japan's Nikkei 225 index fell 0.4 percent to 21,707.11 and the Shanghai Composite index dropped 0.7 percent to 2,767.91. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index fell 1.1 percent to 28,239.11 and the Kospi in South Korea lost 0.4 percent to 2,264.58. Australia's S&P ASX/200 gave up 0.6 percent to 6,176.00. Shares also fell in Southeast Asia and Taiwan.

WALL STREET: Technology companies and banks led the market slide, outweighing gains in health care and energy stocks. The trading session, shortened ahead of the Independence Day holiday, pulled the S&P 500 index down 0.5 percent to 2,713.22. The Dow Jones Industrial Average slid 0.5 percent to 24,174.82 and the Nasdaq lost 0.9 percent to 7,502.67. Smaller-company stocks bucked the broader market decline, with the Russell 2000 index picking up 0.3 percent, to 1,660.42.

CHINA-U.S. TRADE: On Friday the U.S. is set to impose a 25 percent tariff on \$34 billion worth of Chinese imports. And China is expected to strike back with tariffs on a similar amount of U.S. exports. The big question is how far the two countries will go in their dispute over trade. The Trump administration has said it won't target an additional \$16 billion worth of Chinese goods until it gathers further public comments. It's also identifying an additional \$200 billion in Chinese goods for 10 percent tariffs, which could take effect if Beijing retaliates.

CHINESE CURRENCY: Reported comments by the head of China's central bank saying he's closely watching the recent slide in the value of the yuan, also known as the renminbi (RMB), against the U.S. dollar have helped to reassure investors. People's Bank of China Gov. Yi Gang said financial risks were under control and the China's international balance of payments and currency flows were stable.

ANALYST VIEWPOINT: "The statement puts paid to any fears that the PBOC could be engineering a depreciation to cushion the economy, as Yi Gang stakes his credibility on the RMB being stable within the bounds of broad USD volatility," Chang Weiliang of Mizuho Bank said in a commentary. The yuan fell to 6.70 yuan to the U.S. dollar on Tuesday but ended the day at 6.64 yuan in its first trading day gain in two weeks, Chang said.

ENERGY: Benchmark U.S. crude added 44 cents to \$74.58 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It added 20 cents to \$74.14 a barrel on Tuesday, reaching more than \$75 a barrel in early trading. Brent crude, used to price international oils, rose 31 cents to \$78.07 per barrel.

CURRENCIES: The dollar fell to 110.44 yen from 110.59 yen on Tuesday. The euro strengthened to \$1.1664 from \$1.1657.

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Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, July 4, the 185th day of 2018. There are 180 days left in the year. This is Independence Day.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 4, 1776, the Declaration of Independence was adopted by delegates to the Second Continental Congress in Philadelphia.

On this date:

In 1802, the United States Military Academy officially opened at West Point, New York.

In 1817, ground was broken for the Erie Canal in Rome, New York. The middle section of the waterway took three years to complete; the entire canal was finished in 1825.

In 1826, 50 years to the day after the Declaration of Independence was adopted, former presidents John Adams and Thomas Jefferson both died.

In 1831, the fifth president of the United States, James Monroe, died in New York City at age 73.

In 1872, the 30th president of the United States, Calvin Coolidge, was born in Plymouth, Vermont.

In 1917, during a ceremony in Paris honoring the French hero of the American Revolution, U.S. Army Lt. Col. Charles E. Stanton, an aide to Maj. Gen. John J. Pershing, declared: "Lafayette, we are here!"

In 1939, Lou Gehrig of the New York Yankees delivered his famous farewell speech in which he called himself "the luckiest man on the face of the earth."

In 1942, Irving Berlin's musical revue "This Is the Army" opened at the Broadway Theater in New York.

In 1947, the small central California town of Hollister was overrun by thousands of motorcycling enthusiasts, dozens of whom ended up being arrested, most for drunkenness, in what came to be called the "Hollister Riot."

In 1966, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Freedom of Information Act, which went into effect the following year.

In 1987, Klaus Barbie, the former Gestapo chief known as the "Butcher of Lyon (lee-OHN')," was convicted by a French court of crimes against humanity and sentenced to life in prison (he died in September 1991).

In 1997, NASA's Pathfinder spacecraft landed on Mars, inaugurating a new era in the search for life on the red planet. CBS newsman Charles Kuralt died in New York at age 62.

Ten years ago: Former Sen. Jesse Helms, an unyielding champion of the conservative movement who'd spent three combative and sometimes caustic decades in Congress, died in Raleigh, North Carolina, at age 86. Dara Torres completed her improbable Olympic comeback at age 41, making the U.S. team for the fifth time by winning the 100 freestyle at the trials in Omaha, Neb. Actress Evelyn Keyes died in Montecito, California, at age 91.

Five years ago: Egypt's interim president, Adly Mansour, was sworn in following the ouster of Mohammed Morsi, the Islamist leader overthrown by the military after just one year in office. The Statue of Liberty reopened on the Fourth of July, eight months after Superstorm Sandy shuttered the national symbol of freedom. Bernadette Nolan, 52, a member of the singing sister act the Nolans who had a worldwide hit in 1979 with "I'm In The Mood For Dancing," died in Surrey, England.

One year ago: The United States confirmed that North Korea had launched an intercontinental ballistic missile, as the North had boasted and the U.S. and South Korea had feared. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson called it a "new escalation of the threat" to the U.S. Joey Chestnut gulped down 72 dogs and buns in 10 minutes to beat his own record and hoist the Mustard Belt for a 10th time at the annual Nathan's Famous July Fourth hot dog eating contest.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Eva Marie Saint is 94. Actress Gina Lollobrigida is 91. Playwright Neil Simon is 91. Country singer Ray Pillow is 81. Singer Bill Withers is 80. Actor Ed Bernard is 79. Actress Carolyn Grimes is 78. Rhythm and blues singer Annette Beard (Martha and the Vandellas) is 75. Broadcast journalist Geraldo Rivera is 75. Vietnam War veteran and peace activist Ron Kovic is 72. Rhythm and blues

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musician Ralph Johnson (Earth, Wind and Fire) is 67. Rock musician Domingo Ortiz (Widespread Panic) is 66. Singer John Waite is 66. Rock musician Kirk Pengilly (INXS) is 60. Country musician Teddy Carr is 58. Rock DJ Zonka is 56. International Tennis Hall of Famer Pam Shriver is 56. Rock musician Matt Malley is 55. Christian rock singer Michael Sweet is 55. Actor-playwright-screenwriter Tracy Letts is 53. Actor Al Madrigal is 47. Actress Jenica Bergere is 44. Actor-singer John Lloyd Young is 43. Singer Stephen "Ste" McNally (BBMak) is 40. Actress Becki Newton is 40. Actor Mo McRae is 36. TV personality Mike "The Situation" Sorrentino is 36. Rhythm and blues singer Melanie Fiona is 35. Malia Obama is 20.

Thought for Today: "Intellectually, I know that America is no better than any other country; emotionally I know she is better than every other country." — Sinclair Lewis, American author (1885-1951).