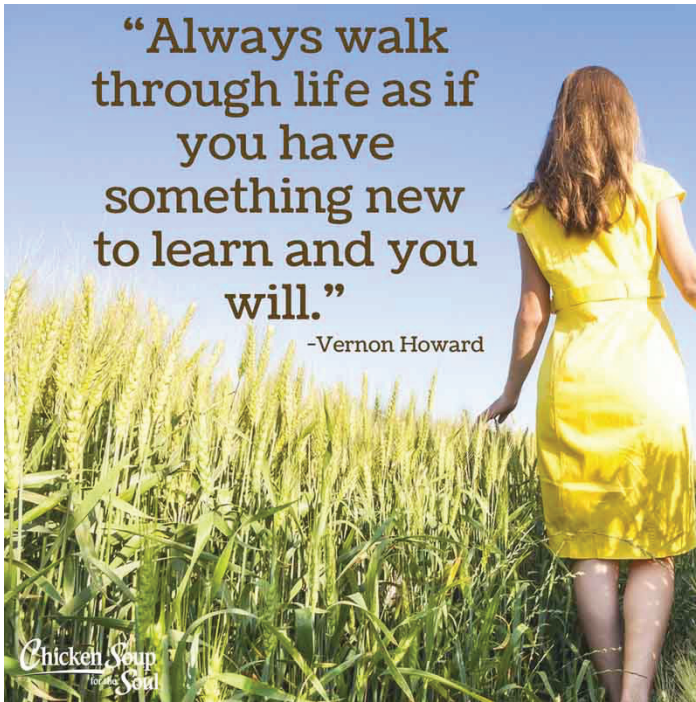


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Open: Recycling Trailer in Groton
The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

- 1- Chicken Soup for the Soul
- 1- Kristi Peterson Bookkeeping Ad
- 1- Service Notice: Doug Bahr
- 1- Recycling Trailer
- 2- City Council Agenda
- 3- Wolves Women Lead the Nation in Attendance for the 11th Straight Season, Averaging 3,056 Fans per Game
- 4- Lt. Gov. Michels Column
- 4- SunDial Manor ad
- 5- Groton's Blood Drive Brings in 43 Volunteers
- 5- Groton Care & Rehab Ad
- 6- Granary Ice Cream Social to Feature Miss "V" the Gypsy Cowbelle
- 7- The Bible Verse That Helped Her Lose Weight
- 9- Midwest Masonry ad
- 10 - Men's Basketball Sits Atop National Attendance Board for 11th Consecutive Year
- 11- Today in Weather History
- 12- Today's Forecast
- 13- Yesterday's Weather
- 13- National Weather map
- 13- Today's Weather Almanac
- 14- Daily Devotional
- 15- 2018 Groton Community Events
- 16- News from the Associated Press

Service Notice: Doug Bahr

Services for Douglas Bahr, 68, of Groton will be 2:00 p.m., Monday, July 9th at the United Methodist Church, Groton. Pastor Brandon Dunham will officiate. Burial will follow in Union Cemetery, Groton under the direction of Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton.

Visitation will be held Sunday at the chapel from 5-7 p.m. with a prayer service at 7:00 p.m.

Doug passed away July 5, 2018 at Avera St. Lukes Hospital, Aberdeen.

Kristi Peterson Bookkeeping
Simple Solutions for YOU
605/216-4474 ~ peterson4@nvc.net

Groton City Council Meeting Agenda

July 9, 2018 – 7:00pm
Groton Community Center

1. Minutes
2. Bills
3. Vote to fill vacant council seat
4. Department reports
5. First reading of Ordinance #719 Trimming Trees
6. Revise Resolution #99-45; former Resolution filed April 16, 1999; Approved June 4th 2018
7. Appoint Newspapers and banks
8. 2018 budget and expense comparison
 - Move contingency
9. Pool paint
10. FEMA Training July 17th – Aberdeen
11. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
12. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
13. Adjournment

Wolves Women Lead the Nation in Attendance for the 11th Straight Season, Averaging 3,056 Fans per Game

Indianapolis – For the 11th consecutive year, the Northern State University women’s basketball team finished the 2017-18 season as the NCAA Division II National Attendance Leader. The Wolves averaged 3,056 fans per game, over 1,000 fan more than the runner-up Fort Hays State.

“A huge thank you to our loyal fans for their continued support,” noted NSU Director of Athletics, Josh Moon. “To average over 1,000 fans more than the next closest Division II team and to average more fans than the majority of Division I schools says a lot about how special NSU women’s basketball is to this region. We look forward to continuing this amazing tradition in 2018-19.”

In total, 42,788 fans watched the Wolves from Wachs Arena and the Barnett Center. That total also ranked them in the top-40 across all divisions, sitting 39th on that list of over 1,200 institutions. In addition to the total and average attendance numbers, Northern tallied the three highly attended games in the nation this past season. They tallied 4,677 fans versus MSU Moorhead on December 15, 4,639 fans versus Southwest Minnesota State on January 27, and 4,395 fans versus Augustana on January 13.

“There is truly nothing like the support we receive from Aberdeen and the surrounding communities,” added Paula Krueger, head women’s basketball coach. “It is unparalleled. NSU is a special place for many reasons, but none greater than this!”

2017-18 was a very exciting year for the Wolves women’s basketball program. Northern finished as the NSIC Conference Champions for the first time since 1998. The advanced to their fifth straight NCAA regional appearance and recorded their first regional victory in those years. Curt Fredrickson finished the season with 846 career wins in 39 total years with the Wolves.

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SD National Guard Leading The Nation

A column by Lt. Gov. Matt Michels

One of the greatest honors of serving as lieutenant governor is getting to work with the South Dakota National Guard. Our Guard members are some of the most dedicated, capable and reliable men and women I know. Under Adjutant General Tim Reisch's leadership, we have an exceptional group of soldiers and airmen serving our nation and state.

The latest example of the SDNG's reputation of excellence came last month, when we heard that South Dakota continues to lead the nation in unit readiness. The SD Army National Guard received 30 of the 31 Superior Unit Awards from the National Guard Bureau. Though we make up only 9/10 of a percent of the nation's National Guard, we earned almost all of the awards for 2017. That's pretty impressive!

The Superior Unit Award is presented to units who meet highly-enforced military standards in the areas of personnel, training and readiness. Units must achieve 95 percent in unit strength, monthly drill attendance, annual training attendance and weapons qualification, as well as 90 percent in physical fitness tests and duty-qualified soldiers. Unit administration and maintenance inspections are also a factor. We can be proud that so many of South Dakota's units met this rigorous set of standards.

A number of units have received this distinction in previous years. Six units received the award for the second time in a row, four units for a third straight year, four units for four consecutive years, four more for five consecutive years, and the 211th Engineer Company of Madison and De Smet has earned the designation six years in a row now. Additionally, the 114th Fighter Wing has been one of the top five flying units in the nation for the past four years in a row.

This past week we celebrated the anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Our forefathers declared that every individual is born free with inalienable rights, and that government must respect those God-given rights and allow people to live freely. But ideas do not deserve the sole credit for our way of life here in America. Rather, it is those ideas coupled with the sacrifices made by Americans who wear the uniform. We can be grateful the SD National Guard is so well prepared to answer the call to defend our freedoms.



**Sun Dial Manor in Bristol
is accepting applications for
full time and part time CNA's.
12 hr. shifts - days and nights
(SIGN ON BONUS OFFERED)**

**DIETARY OPENINGS
Full time cook, 8 hr. shifts
(WITH SIGN ON BONUS)**

**For more information,
Call 605/492-3615**

Groton's Blood Drive Brings in 43 Volunteers

Groton, SD hosted a blood drive with United Blood Services on June 28 at the Community Center which helped collect a total of 44 units of blood for patients in need.

A total of 43 individuals volunteered to donate blood and 37 individuals were able to donate at the United Blood Services blood drive on June 28. A total of seven donors also came forward to donate Power Red Cells (2RBC) which collects two units of red blood cells while returning platelets, plasma and a saline solution back to the donor.

United Blood Services expressed their gratitude to Stacy Oliver, who coordinated the drive.

UBS strives to keep a 5-day supply of every blood type on the shelf at all times to be able to meet the needs of patients across the region. Donations from O-negative donors, the universal blood type, are especially important this time of year due to increased accidents and trauma cases.

United Blood Services is the only blood provider to nearly 70 hospitals across the region. The blood supply is dependent on selfless donations from volunteer donors to ensure the lifesaving needs of the region are met.

About 30 percent of UBS's blood supply goes to cancer patients across the region and one in seven people entering the hospital will need blood. Those relying on blood in the region receive that lifesaving blood from UBS.

Donors can make a convenient appointment to give blood at www.bloodhero.com or by calling (877)827-4376. With each donation, donors receive a free total cholesterol test and earn points in United Blood Services' Hero in Me rewards program.

Blood donation takes about an hour from check-in to refreshments. Donors can save about 20 minutes by completing their Fast Track Health History the day they donate on www.unitedbloodservices.org

Thank You

Groton Care and Rehab would like to sincerely thank the community for your unending support! We remain to be a strong and caring facility, focusing on quality of life. We will continue to be an integral part of the Groton Community.

Our staff continues to provide the greatest care to our residents.

Come visit us to learn about the new opportunities!!

We Are Hiring!



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We are an equal employment opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability status, protected veteran status or any other characteristic protected by law.

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Granary Ice Cream Social to Feature Miss "V" the Gypsy Cowbelle

On Sunday, July 15, 2018 from 1 to 4 p.m., The Gypsy Cowbelle (aka Miss "V") will appear at the Granary Rural Cultural Center's Annual Music and Ice Cream Social with musical entertainment and interactive fun for all ages and generations.

Miss "V" has been sharing her 'Genuine Cowbilly' music with audiences nationwide for the past two decades. A bona fide troubadour, she offers glimpses into American culture, history and lore with performances that pair original ballads with cowboy, country and folk classics. Compelling lyrics and lively rhythms played on guitar and homemade banjo define her signature sound. Her performance at the Granary will feature solo musical numbers with elements of her "Homespun Instruments Workshop" incorporated into the show, for which the audience is invited to play along! Providing a diverse selection of rhythm and "household" instruments, from washtubs, scrub boards, spoons, saws, and every shaker, bell and drum in between, Miss "V" will encourage members of the audience to discover and/or enhance the music within themselves, by "joining the band"!



Drawing from her rural background of caretaking a homestead ranch for 14 years, where she honed skills in driving teams, making tack, running pack strings, building banjos and cowboying, she has developed a penchant for seeking out the road less traveled. Her exploration of rural America and her own backcountry have afforded a rich understanding of the land and its people. With an entertaining medley of toe-tapping ditties, her performance explores simpler times and a seldom-seen America.

Homemade ice cream and watermelon will be served at the annual event, organized by Dacotah Prairie Museum and the Granary, which celebrates old fashioned entertainment and social traditions of the past. Admission is free. The show will take place outdoors. Those attending are encouraged to bring their own lawn chairs. In case of rain, the show will move into the Putney Hall building on the Granary grounds.

This program is made possible by the South Dakota Humanities Council, an affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities; and the South Dakota Arts Council, with support provided with funds from the State of South Dakota, through the Department of Tourism, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Bible Verse That Helped Her Lose Weight

Losing weight is hard. This Scripture gave her an idea...

by Gail BindewaldFrom

I strode down the bike path along the Mississippi. Stormed down, to be more accurate. Being by the water wasn't going to relieve my stress. Not today.

"What am I supposed to do now?" I yelled.

I was so frustrated, I was actually yelling at God. Good thing my friends from Bible study weren't around to hear me. Good thing no one was.

I would have shaken my fist at God too if it weren't for the nasty gash on my right wrist. I'd tripped and fallen outside my office building a few days earlier and cut myself on a landscaping rock, badly enough that I ended up in the ER.

The ER doctor closed the wound with a line of butterfly bandages. Then he fitted an unwieldy brace on my wrist.

"How am I going to swim with this thing on?" I asked. He shook his head. "You aren't." I tried to flex my wrist and winced. "Can I still use the machines at the gym?" The doctor didn't even look up from writing his notes. "Nope."

"I can ride my bike, though, right?"

"Nope. No pressure on your wrist for four to six weeks."

Clearly, the doctor didn't understand. But I expected more of God. "Don't you understand?" I demanded now. "I have to exercise! How else am I going to keep the weight off?"

I'd lost 100 pounds in the past year. No pills, juice cleanses or support groups. I'd done it on my own the old-fashioned way—dieting and exercise.

Hard work was behind all my accomplishments, from raising my family to advancing in my career at the Rock Island Arsenal. I'd started in the purchasing department fresh out of high school and worked my way up to a job in management.

The long hours and stress took a toll on me. Eating became my stress buster. My weight went up. So did my blood pressure, and I had to go on medication. I could no longer handle the stairs to my third-floor office. Everywhere I went, I parked in the spot closest to the door—I couldn't walk far without getting totally winded. I had to buy clothes at specialty stores for plus-sized women.

I needed to tackle my weight problem. But there was always something that seemed more pressing. Or maybe I just thought I couldn't do it.

A year earlier my doctor had freaked at my blood work. "Gail, you're borderline diabetic and your cholesterol numbers are through the roof. You've got to lose weight and get in shape now."

"I don't have time," I said. "Dieting and exercise take planning, and I already have enough to plan with my daughter getting married next year."

"You'd better make time," she said. "It's not a matter of if, it's a matter of when you're going to have a heart attack." A heart

attack? I was only 55! Now I was freaking out. I had to live to see Erin walk down the aisle. To see my six-year-old granddaughter grow up.

I took a deep breath. "Okay. Just tell me what to do." My doctor recommended a fitness app that would count calories and track the food I ate and the exercise I did every day. I downloaded the app to my phone as soon as I got home. I entered my height, current weight and goal weight, and it gave me the number of calories I could consume each day to meet my goal of losing 100 pounds.



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Its database had the nutritional information for all kinds of foods. There was even a pie chart (no pun intended!) breaking down the calories I ate by category—fat, protein, carbohydrates—so I could catch myself if I was overindulging.

I set about dieting the same way I'd furthered my career, with discipline and determination. I logged all my meals in the app. Keeping track made me aware of every single bite I took. I ate less and enjoyed it more. The weight came off.

Next, exercise. I'd joined the YMCA, but after three months I still hadn't gone. All those machines and equipment! The other people—fit people—were even more intimidating. I couldn't stand the thought of them staring at me while I flailed around.

Then I got an e-mail from the Y offering five free sessions with a personal trainer. What did I have to lose, except some more weight? I met with a trainer named Jake. At first, our sessions were torture. My body hadn't moved like that in years. Every muscle ached.

Jake's positive attitude was like a magnet. I kept going back. And I began to see results. We came up with a schedule: three days of weight training a week, three days of swimming, one day of biking. Now I could enter my exercise numbers into my trusty app along with my nutritional data.

I hit my goal. As hard as losing the weight was, though, keeping it off was even harder. The less you weigh, the fewer calories you're allowed. I found that I had to be even more determined and disciplined.

But taking charge of my body was worth it. My doctor was thrilled with my blood work. I could no longer be considered diabetic. My cholesterol was normal.

The day of my daughter's wedding came. Erin was the most beautiful bride you ever saw. She shone with happiness. She wasn't the only one. For the first time in years, I wasn't self-conscious about getting my picture taken. It felt incredible to wear a sequined outfit in a regular size, not to have to suck my stomach in, to stand proudly beside my husband instead of behind him.

Now I stood by the river, having words with God. At Bible study, we prayed for people facing cancer, job loss, grief. My weight problem seemed trivial by comparison. But to have a whole year of hard work erased in one freak fall...I felt betrayed.

"Why aren't you looking out for me, Lord?" I asked. I gazed off across the river, waiting for a sign. Or maybe for lightning to strike, considering the tone I'd used.

An enormous brown bird swooped into view. I'd heard that ospreys nested along the Mississippi but I'd never seen one on the hunt. With a gracefulness that belied its size, it skimmed the surface of the river. Then it struck, snatching a fish up in its outstretched talons and streaking into the sky.

It reminded me of something. A verse we'd discussed recently in Bible study, Matthew 6:26: "Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet our heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"

If God saw to the needs of birds, surely I could trust him to take care of me, to provide what I needed when I needed it.

With a spring in my step, I headed for my car. That's when it hit me. I couldn't swim, bike or lift weights, but I could walk.

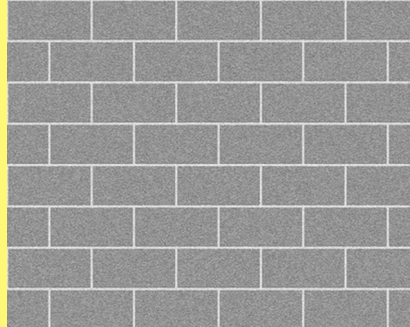
And I did, every day until my wrist healed. In fact, two years later, walking is a key part of my workout regimen, and part of the reason I've been able to maintain my weight. So is realizing that I'm not doing it all on my own.

Did you enjoy this story? Subscribe to [Guideposts magazine](#).

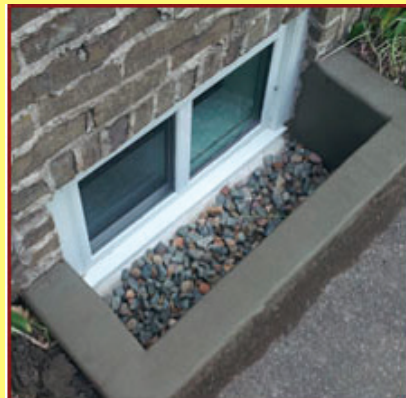
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Men's Basketball Sits Atop National Attendance Board for 11th Consecutive Year

Indianapolis – The Northern State men completed the NCAA Attendance Leader sweep, as released by the organization earlier today following the women's announcement. The Wolves tally their 11th straight year at the top, averaging 3,732 fans per game, which was over 1,100 more fans than the runner-up Dixie State.

NSU Director of Athletics, Josh Moon explained, "We are so fortunate to have the best fan base in NCAA Division II, and we are glad that the entire country got to see the passion we see every night in Wachs Arena on display in CBS in late March! Thank you to our fans for making this such a special year and we are very excited to continue this great tradition in 2018-19."

A total of 55,980 fans attended the Wolves home contests this season. Northern also tallied the third, fourth, and fifth highly attended single games this past season with two coming over the annual I Hate Winter weekend. The third highly attend game was versus Southwest Minnesota State on January 27 with 5,844 fans. A total of 5,523 fans were in the house the previous evening versus Sioux Falls, while 5,390 fans watched the Wolves against MSU Moorhead on December 15.

"The support our community, both Aberdeen and the northeast region of South Dakota has given Northern State over the decades has been amazing," added head coach Paul Sather. "Eleven years in a row, and 12 of the last 13 years we've led the country in attendance. We have the best fans in the country, and they continue to back that up every year. We're so fortunate to be at a place where the community and the university work so well together."

This past season, the Wolves finished as the NCAA National Finalist after just the second trip to the NCAA Elite Eight in school history. The runner-up finish is the highest for any NSU team to date at the NCAA Division II level. Northern broke the single season school record for wins going 36-6 on the year, while tying the school record with 18 consecutive victories in the opening months of the season. Sather was named both the NSIC and NABC Central Region Coach of the year.

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Today in Weather History

July 6, 1963: A farmer was fatally injured near Waubay, in Day County, when the barn was destroyed while he was inside. Winds of 110 mph were recorded at FAA in Watertown before the roof and wind instruments were blown away.

July 6, 1982: A severe thunderstorm produced a series of five microbursts over Sioux Falls. The microbursts caused extensive damage. Winds were estimated to have reached 125 mph, and the Airport recorded a peak gust of 82 mph. Damage, which was heaviest in the south central and northeast sections of the city, included thousands of trees uprooted or damaged. Several semi-trailers were blown over, critically injuring one man and slightly injuring two others. Several other minor injuries occurred mainly from flying glass. Five cars were rolled over by the high winds, and several others damaged flying debris. Damage at the airport included a portion of a hangar roof blown off and three light aircraft flipped over.

July 6, 1994: Widespread rainfall of over 6 inches fell in Dewey, Potter, and Faulk Counties, causing damage to roads and flooded basements and fields. A teenage girl escaped injury when her car was washed away by the waters of a swollen creek about 5 miles east of Gettysburg. Some total storm amounts include; 6.80 inches in Orient; 6.70 at Faulkton; 5.80 in Milbank; 5.48 in Big Stone City; 5.02 in Ipswich; 4.50 in Gettysburg; 4.17 in Webster; 4.12 near Onaka; 4.02 in Leola; and 3.97 in Britton.

1893: A violent tornado killed 71 persons on its forty-mile track across northwestern Iowa. Forty-nine persons were killed around Pomeroy, where eighty percent of the buildings were destroyed, with most leveled to the ground.

1905 - The mercury soared to 127 degrees at Parker, AZ, to tie the state record established at Fort Mohave on the 15th of June in 1896. (The Weather Channel)

1915 - A severe wind and thunderstorm caused heavy damage and 38 deaths in and near Cincinnati, OH. Many older buildings were demolished. The steamship Dick Fulton was overturned. (The Weather Channel)

1928: A seven-inch hailstone weighing 1.5 pounds fell in Potter Nebraska. With a circumference of 17 inches, this appeared to be the largest hailstone in the world at that time.

1981 - Montana was in the midst of a snowstorm that dumped ten inches at Glacier National Park, and produced winds to 90 mph. Meanwhile, Denver, CO, set a record high with a reading of 101 degrees. (The Weather Channel)

1986: Thunderstorms during the mid-morning hours, and again during the evening, produced major flash flooding at Leavenworth, Kansas. The official rainfall total was 10.37 inches, but unofficial totals exceeded twelve inches. At nearby Kansas City, the rainfall total of 5.08 inches was a daily record for July.

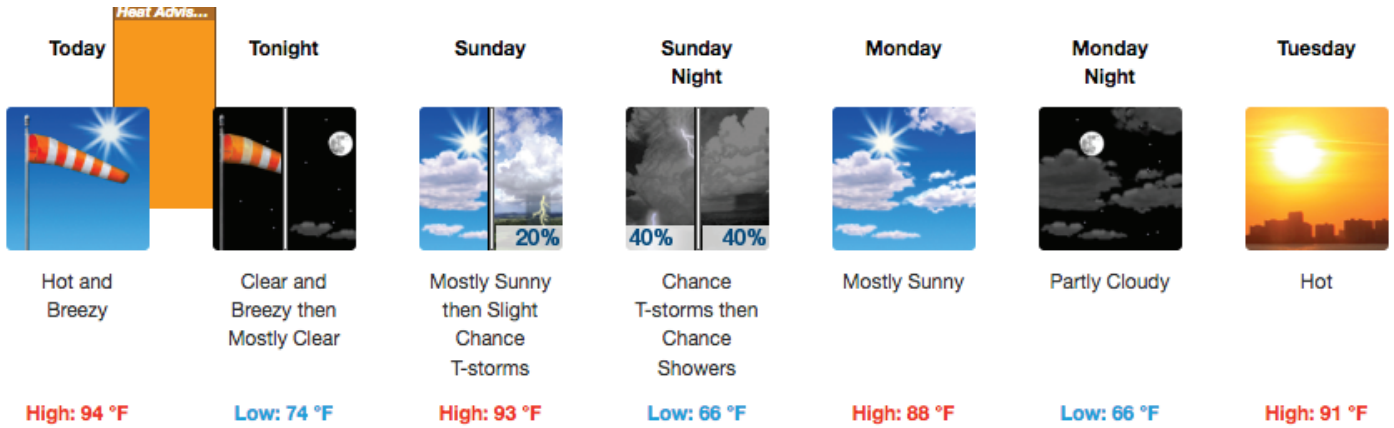
1987 - Thunderstorms spawned eight tornadoes in Colorado, and three in West Texas. Thunderstorms also produced softball size hail at Bula, TX. In the midst of a record thirty-nine day string of 100 degree days, the temperature at Tucson, AZ, dipped to 66 degrees, marking their third straight record low for the date. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thirty-eight cities in the north central and northeastern U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date. Youngstown, OH, hit 100 degrees, and for the second day in a row, Flint, MI, reached 101 degrees, equalling all-time records for those two cities. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather during the day, with more than 100 reports of large hail and damaging winds from Ohio to Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Thunderstorm winds reached 90 mph in Sullivan County, NH, and golf ball size hail was reported in Pennsylvania. Twenty-four cities, mostly in the southwestern U.S., reported record high temperatures for the date. Afternoon highs of 105 degrees at Cedar City, UT, and 114 degrees at Moab, UT, were all-time records for those locations. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

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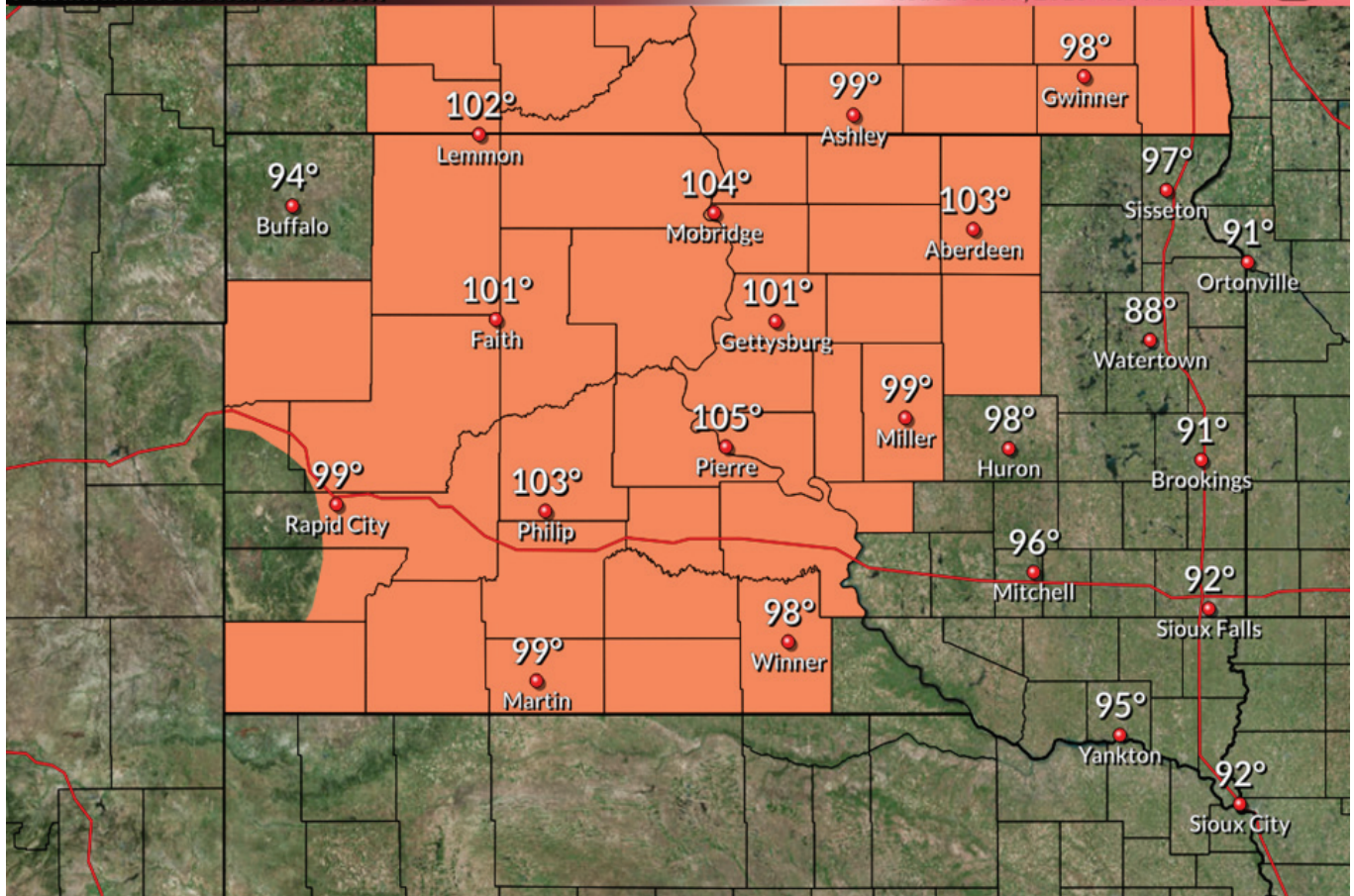
Heat Advisory this Afternoon

Weather Forecast Office
Aberdeen, SD



Maximum Heat Indices Shown

Issued Jul 07, 2018 4:30 AM CDT



NWSAberdeen

weather.gov/abr

Published on: 07/07/2018 at 5:20AM

Warm and humid conditions are expected today, with heat index values rising into the 100 to 105 degree range over much of western and central South Dakota.

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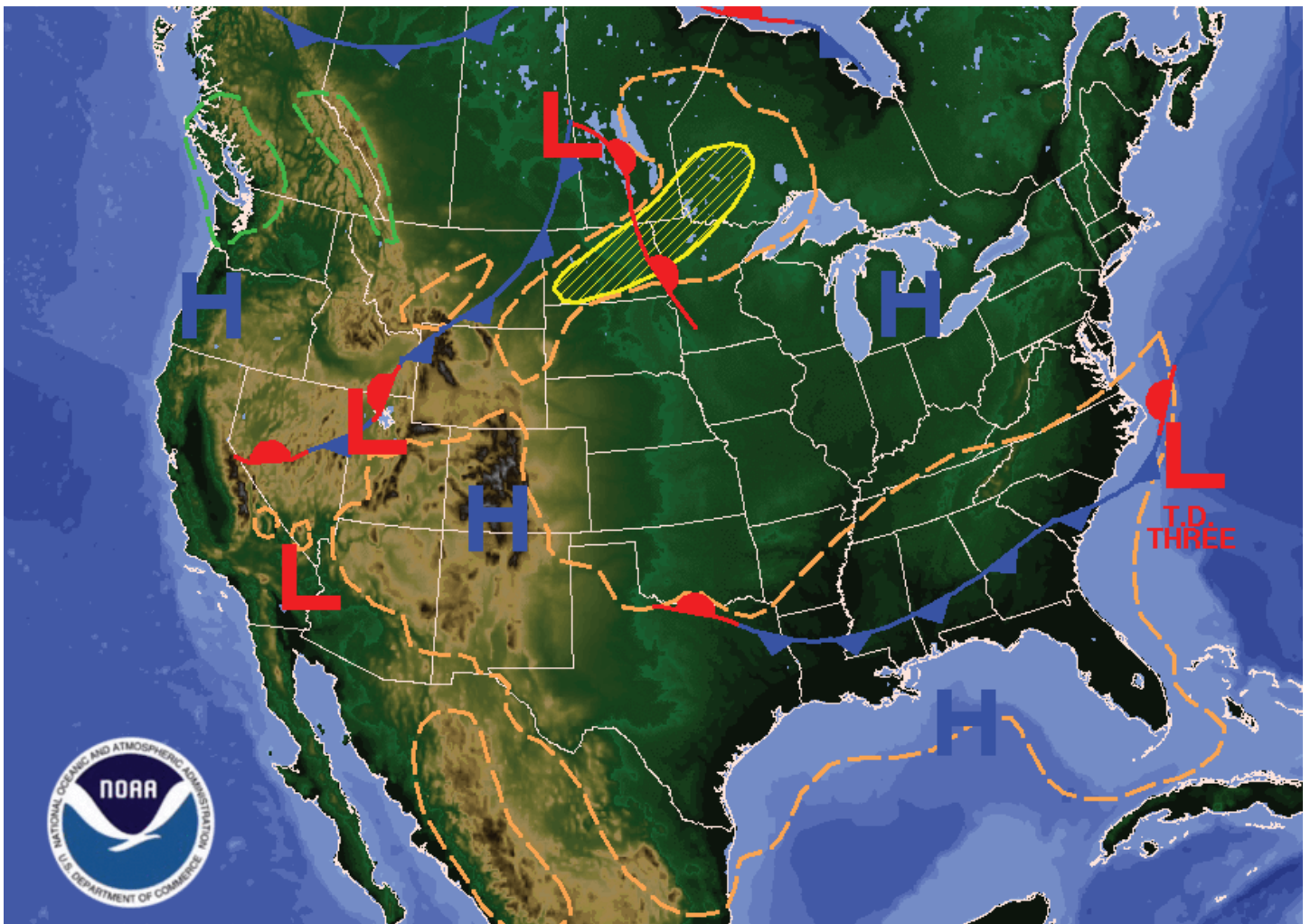
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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 80.6 F at 6:29 PM
Low Outside Temp: 64.6 F at 1:27 AM
High Gust: 29.0 Mph at 6:26 PM
Precip: 0.32

Today's Info

Record High: 106° in 1936
Record Low: 43° in 1922, 1904
Average High: 83°F
Average Low: 59°F
Average Precip in July: 0.64
Precip to date in July: 1.82
Average Precip to date: 11.48
Precip Year to Date: 7.64
Sunset Tonight: 9:24 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:53 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Sat, Jul 07, 2018, issued 4:40 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Kong with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

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

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WHO'S RIGHT?

If we want to be blest by God we must live lives that are blameless and walk according to His laws. Those of us who keep His statutes as well as those who seek God with all their heart will also be blest. The first two verses of Psalm 119 are very clear about whom God will bless.

The question then becomes: Where do we find God's laws and statutes? And how do we know if we are truly seeking God with all of our heart? If we can know His laws and statutes, that is a beginning. But the questions that follow are, "Will they ever change? Is God one way today and another way tomorrow? Where's our assurance? What do we need to know and do to please Him?"

With all of the power God has at His disposal He can change anything and everything any time He chooses to. It's His universe. He created it. It serves His purpose.

But near the middle of Psalm 119 the author gives us all the assurance we need: "God's Word is established in heaven and His faithfulness can be seen in the way He treats every generation." To further explain God's dependability, the author encourages us to consider the "earth." God created it and established the laws that govern it. Furthermore, the laws that God put into place have been constant since creation. Everything we know anything about depends on this fact. The seasons and stars, the oceans and tides validate this law consistently.

In verse 96 we find an amazing statement: When we look at the laws that men write, there is a limit to their longevity. God's laws, however, are "boundless!"

Prayer: We thank You, Lord, that we can depend on Your Word. And if we accept it and live it we will be blest! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 119:96 To all perfection I see a limit, but your commands are boundless.

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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

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Mega Millions

02-10-46-50-56, Mega Ball: 16, Megaplier: 3

(two, ten, forty-six, fifty, fifty-six; Mega Ball: sixteen; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$283 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$80 million

South Dakota truck stop helps workers become homeowners

By VICTORIA LUSK, Aberdeen American News

SUMMIT, S.D. (AP) — A truck stop 30 miles north of Watertown, wedged between Interstate 29 and the town of Summit, has for decades provided convenience for travelers on long trips or in rough weather.

But in the last few years, the Coffee Cup Travel Plaza has also started providing a convenience for some of its 50-plus employees.

The business offers workers the chance to be homeowners through what is essentially a rent-to-own program.

One person taking advantage of the benefit is Joshua Simpson, who found himself traveling up the interstate several years ago when he moved from Rock Hill, South Carolina.

He began working for the Coffee Cup in 2012. And for the last four years, he's lived in nearby housing built by truck stop owner Tom Heinz.

"After I finished up all my training, Tom talked to me about this vision he had for keeping workers. And that was to give housing," Simpson told the Aberdeen American News .

Being able to rent a house affordably was a perk Simpson could easily get on board with. At the time, he was living in a one-bedroom apartment in Summit with his wife and son.

Now the 26-year-old is proud to own the three-bedroom, two-bathroom house.

"That's the first step to building a legacy for me. Having a place to plant my roots. And (Heinz is) giving me that," Simpson said.

The houses for Coffee Cup workers are a block or two east of the truck stop, said manager Val Nelson.

Nearby Summit has roughly 385 residents, according to statistics from the U.S. Census Bureau. Housing is limited, Simpson said.

A May listing of available housing revealed only one-bedroom apartments and two larger homes available. That's why the homes have helped draw the right people for Coffee Cup leadership and management positions, Nelson said.

"When you live in a small community, it's kind of hard to fish that out," she said.

Keeping staff is hard, she said. And caring for employees is a priority for Heinz, according to Nelson.

Heinz first built two houses off-site and had them moved in, she said. Now there are six with more to come. And all are occupied by employees, 10 in all, Nelson said.

"It's worked to our benefit because we don't have turnover," she said.

It also helps in the winter, when the weather in the area can be anywhere from mysterious to miserable.

"We all know what Summit is like in the winter, and in the fog as well," Nelson said.

In those cases, the housing proximity ensures staff will be able to get to work safely.

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Being from the South, Simpson had very little experience with winter weather until he moved to South Dakota.

"That's how I learned to drive in the winter — taking that little track (between the houses and the Coffee Cup) back and forth," he said.

The employees rent the homes. However, for every year that they live in them and work for the Coffee Cup they get a discount off the purchase price. At the end of the lease, they can decide whether they want to buy the house, Simpson said.

The leases help guarantee that employees stay with the business as well, Nelson said. She said she couldn't disclose the monthly rent, but noted that it's affordable — in the neighborhood of what Simpson was paying for his one-bedroom apartment.

And that's a big draw. Simpson was the first employee to move into a house, he and Nelson both said. And he has no plans of leaving any time soon.

Many of the other residents are friends he's recruited from near and far. Most aren't from the region, but all of the people living in the houses work at the Coffee Cup. That includes husband-and-wife teams, siblings and others.

"(I'll work here) until I buy my house completely," Simpson said. "I told my wife that will be the last house I live in. And it's not all your eggs in one basket if you don't want it to be. (Having the option to rent then buy) made it seem better, like you had more freedom in your choices.

"Tom has a big heart for someone to be in a position that he is. He knows my wife. He knows my kids. His personal interest is to get involved and actually care about the people he has working for him."

The Coffee Cup underwent a major upgrade a few years ago to add the Caribou Coffee, Subway and Pizza Hut. It will add Cinnabon and more gas pumps come fall, Nelson said.

"Because if you've been here, you know you have to wait," she said.

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

South Dakota school district starts healthy food truck

By CHRISTOPHER VONDRACEK, Rapid City Journal

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Two girls wait near the lime green food truck — carrots and apples superimposed to the sides — before the lunch ladies notice them.

"It'll be another two minutes, girls," said Deb Baumgarten.

They ran off back toward the adjacent swimming pool.

"When we pulled up," said Jamie Saviong, "the kids on the water slide started jumping, 'Food truck! Food truck! Food truck!'"

The Rapid City Area Schools recently launched its food truck. Kids of all ages eat free at three sites across town: Jefferson Academy, North Middle School and Horace Mann Pool. A recent meal included a taco bowl, with a side of turkey stick and a carton of milk.

Tiffany Traversie and four children showed up early.

"It's my day off," Traversie told the Rapid City Journal. She works at a nursing home and usually sends her kids to day care. "But today, I thought we'd grab lunch here and then go to the pool. My sister shared the news on Facebook."

Healthy lunches in the summer are a stretch for many students, especially those living in food deserts of north Rapid City. Just blocks from the pool and North Middle, a stretch of chain restaurants serve greasy, fried food for cheap. A grocery store is hard to find. And many children aren't accustomed to preparing vegetables.

"These school-sponsored food trucks are really popular in Texas," said Michelle Budet, who recently moved from Texas and works for SDSU Extension Rapid City Regional Center.

On Thursdays through July, Budet, a colleague and two volunteers with Teen Up, a local youth development program, accompany the food truck with a box of recreational toys and books (this week it's "Pete

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the Cat"). Organized by the United Way of the Black Hills Reads initiative, the team gets active play and learning for the kids after they're done with their lunches.

Earlier at North Middle, school librarian Jen Backhaus sat on a blanket with her daughter Billi, who will enter kindergarten in the fall. She was opening up the turkey stick.

"It's just such a balanced meal," said Backhaus. "If we were at home, we'd probably just make peanut butter and jelly sandwiches or macaroni and cheese. But all of this? It's great."

Janelle Peterson, food service supervisor with RCAS, said the idea for a food truck started four or five years ago when districts nationwide began refurbishing school buses to deliver meals to isolated areas.

There "are areas of Rapid City where children face challenges to getting nutritious food," Peterson said in an email.

Food service funds and a grant from the Midwest Dairy Council helped purchase the truck for \$142,000. It's outfitted with hot and cold storage and even a stereo system. Peterson said word has spread already around North Rapid City.

"We had about 50 today," said Baumgarten. "It's been steadily increasing."

Children stand in line and come up to the window, where Baumgarten hands them a plate. "Do you want pico?" she asks, handing them a plastic cup.

The service is much faster than a food truck, and the kids carry their trays into the grass to sit under a shady tree, much like mid-day workers on lunch break.

"I want real food," said one child to her friends, as they debated whether to walk over.

After her children went through, a mother of four asked if she could also receive a meal.

"I'm sorry," said Baumgarten, "We can't serve adults at this station." The woman nods and then walks into her van. Later, Baumgarten said the truck is not carrying cash and can sell meals for \$4 at Horace Mann. "That's the first time that's happened," she said. "We're still just finding out what the need is."

Peterson said during the school year many students rely on school lunches for their only shot at fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and low fat dairy options. "The grocery bill during the summer months goes up, and sometimes makes it difficult to buy all those summertime fruits and vegetables that children love."

During these at-risk summer months, the school district has decided to step in and take the burden off families.

The food truck appears throughout the summer at Jefferson from 10:50 to 11:20 a.m., at North Middle from 11:55 a.m. to 12:25 p.m., and at the pool from 12:55 to 1:25 p.m.

After serving at North Middle, as The Jackson 5's "I Want You Back" plays out the speaker, the three lunch ladies took a moment to drink water and come out of the hot truck. One starts to bob up and down on the sidewalk.

"It's just so nice to get out and go meet the need," Saviong said.

"I'm enjoying seeing a lot of students from our schools," said Laura Winckler.

The lunch ladies — mobile heroes for another day — start packing up the van to move on to the next site.

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

3rd person dies following dump truck-SUV crash near Milbank

MILBANK, S.D. (AP) — A third person has died following a crash between a dump truck and SUV last month near Milbank in northeastern South Dakota.

The South Dakota Department of Public Safety says the dump truck driver, 82-year-old Gerald Boerger, of Milbank, died Tuesday at a Sioux Falls hospital.

Both people in the SUV died at the scene June 18. They were the driver, 79-year-old Arlo Hurley, and his wife, 71-year-old Kathleen Hurley, of Big Stone City.

The department said in a statement Friday that Boerger failed to stop at a stop sign and his truck collided with the SUV on South Dakota Highway 15, about four miles north of Milbank.

The Hurleys' obituary says they were retired educators who taught in the Mankato, Minnesota, area. They had recently celebrated their 50th anniversary.

Economic development group seeks \$2M from Rapid City

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — An economic development group is asking Rapid City for \$2 million over the next five years to create nearly 5,000 jobs and draw \$300 million in business investment.

The Elevate Rapid City group pitched the plan to city officials Monday, the Rapid City Journal reported. Elevate aims to create high-paying jobs by helping local startups grow, supporting the growth of the Ellsworth Air Force Base, improving the current workforce's skills and enhancing the city's business reputation.

The group hopes to achieve those goals by supporting the city's new innovation center, increasing the business community's engagement with universities and improving programs for childcare, housing and licensure reciprocity for military families. The organization also hopes to create a STEM-based pipeline for high school students and attracting high-paying industries in the financial, health care, research, manufacturing and energy sectors.

"It's a collective effort to improve our economic wellbeing in this community," said David Lust, a co-chairman of Elevate.

Per capita income, job growth and new business investments will serve as benchmarks and be tracked monthly, according to group leaders.

City officials have yet to make a decision about the funding request, said city spokesman Darrell Shoemaker.

Elevate plans to draft and adopt bylaws this month, and officers will also be recommended. The group's first board meeting will be held next month and the first quarterly investors meeting will be held in September, where details will be given about a longer-term strategy.

The group includes the Rapid City Chamber of Commerce, Rapid City Economic Development Partnership, Ellsworth Development Authority and Economic Development Foundation. The group has raised \$4 million in private-sector funding.

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

Sioux Falls man accused of keeping woman captive for days

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Authorities say a 59-year-old Sioux Falls man has been arrested for kidnapping after he allegedly kept a woman captive in his apartment for several days.

Kermit Lewis is accused of second-degree kidnapping. Police spokesman Sam Clemens says Lewis punched the woman and hit her with objects including a type of wooden club while she was a captive.

The victim also told police she had been sexually assaulted. Clemens says she was bruised, but had no life-threatening injuries.

The woman told police she met Lewis at a bar on June 29, but said he wouldn't let her leave his residence until Thursday morning. Clemens says Lewis was arrested Thursday evening without issue.

He was to appear in court Friday afternoon.

Minnehaha, Pennington counties make tweaks after Marsy's fix

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Minnehaha County Sheriff Mike Milstead says his office can provide more information to the public about crimes after a voter-approved fix to the "Marsy's Law" victims' bill of rights took effect this week.

Some South Dakota law enforcement agencies are still reviewing their responses, while others have made policy changes based on the new amendment. Voters in June overwhelmingly approved the changes, which were aimed at fixing bureaucratic problems Marsy's Law created for police and prosecutors.

The original Marsy's Law amendment voters passed in 2016 guaranteed crime victims and their family members the right to privacy, protection from harassment or abuse and timely notice of trial, sentencing and post-judgment proceedings. The privacy provisions curtailed the information that some law enforcement agencies released to the public to help solve crimes, and officials said prosecutors' offices had to

track down and notify a broader swath of victims about their cases.

The new changes require victims to opt in to many of their rights and specifically allow authorities to share information to help solve crimes. Milstead said the sheriff's office will now in most cases be able to release the names of businesses where crimes occur, which had generally stopped after the original Marsy's Law took effect.

"I think it's a big deal," Milstead said. "The eyes and the ears of the public are so valuable to us that hindering us being able to use them in an effective way has been a burden."

In Pennington County, State's Attorney Mark Vargo's office will have a telephone line for victims to call, but staff will no longer try to contact each one. Vargo said he thinks fewer people will opt in to their rights, and he hopes some of those resources can be repurposed.

"We will no longer be hunting down victims in the morning. We will no longer be reaching out and attempting to find them," he said. "The constitutional amendment does place the requirement on them of opting in."

Some agencies haven't taken immediate action since voters approved the amendment. Sioux Falls police spokesman Sam Clemens said attorneys are reviewing the changes, while state Department of Public Safety spokesman Tony Mangan said agency officials haven't yet made any decisions.

Five states — California, Ohio, Illinois, North Dakota and South Dakota — have a Marsy's Law on their books. South Dakota was the first to alter its law, though Montana voters passed a Marsy's Law in 2016 that the state Supreme Court later overturned, citing flaws in how it was written.

They're named after Marsalee "Marsy" Nicholas, a California college student who was stalked and killed in 1983 by an ex-boyfriend. Her brother, billionaire Henry Nicholas, has bankrolled the ballot measures.

South Dakota woman pleads not guilty to pepper spraying son

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota woman has pleaded not guilty to pepper spraying her 11-year-old son for misbehaving.

The Rapid City Journal reports 32-year-old Ashley Ellis has been charged with child abuse, simple assault (domestic abuse) and nonsupport of child by parent. Rapid City authorities say Ellis admitted to pepper spraying the boy three times on April 1.

She's accused of spraying her son after he talked back to her when she scolded him. Ellis then allegedly drove to a parking lot and attempted to leave him.

A police officer says in court documents that Ellis said she "sprayed him again on the face to stop him from damaging her vehicle." Police say people saw the boy coughing and spitting after Ellis left.

He and his sister were turned over to the Department of Social Services.

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

Senate's McConnell on mission to reshape the courts

By LISA MASCARO, AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell was upbeat the night after Justice Anthony Kennedy announced he was retiring from the Supreme Court.

The Kentucky Republican had already led the Senate in confirming more circuit court judges in the first year of Donald Trump's presidency than in that of any other president in history. Now McConnell had the chance to confirm a second Supreme Court justice, a thrilling prospect for his party.

More than any other accomplishment, including the passage of the GOP's tax cuts, the remaking of the judiciary is fast becoming the cornerstone of the Republican leader's legacy. It's something he's been working on for a long time.

"Well, I think it's a little too early to be talking about legacy," McConnell said with a smile as he left the Senate chamber.

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"A year and a half ago, I said it was a top priority," he said about confirming judges, "and it remains so."

With McConnell leading the way in the Republican-controlled Senate, Trump is seeking to put his imprint on the federal judiciary for generations to come. While the latest opening on the Supreme Court is commanding all the attention, with Trump set to announce his pick on Monday night, the nominees to the lower courts are also consequential. More than 40 federal district and circuit court judges have been confirmed to lifetime appointments so far during Trump's term, and those judges will have enormous sway in shaping legal arguments nationwide.

Nearly 100 other judicial nominees are awaiting Senate confirmation. In all, there are more than 150 vacancies on the courts.

The GOP's focus on the judiciary has been sharpened by their narrow 51-49 Senate majority, which has made passing legislation difficult. Sixty votes are normally required to advance a bill, while judges can be confirmed with a simple majority.

The newcomers to the bench follow a type. An Associated Press analysis found that roughly two-thirds of the judges who have been confirmed under Trump are white men. Of the 42 confirmed nominees, including Supreme Court Justice Neil Gorsuch, none are black. Ten are women, nine of them white. Three of the judges are Asian-American men and one is a Hispanic man.

In contrast, during President Barack Obama's two terms, only 37 percent of judges confirmed were white men. Nearly 42 percent were women — the highest share of female judicial appointments of any president.

"What the administration is seeking is to transform the face of the entire federal judiciary," said Nan Aron, president of Alliance for Justice, a liberal group that tracks court issues.

"The nominees share one basic characteristic — their hostility to progress that's been made in women, workers and civil rights as well as health and safety over the past several decades," she said. "This probably is the most extremist slate of judges we've ever seen."

Conservative judicial advocates say the judicial appointments are correcting the leftward tilt of the bench. They see Trump and McConnell's revamping of the courts — in the face of Democratic filibusters that stall even popular nominees — as more important than even legislative victories.

Carrie Severino, the chief counsel and policy director at the conservative Judicial Crisis Network, says, "It's something that's viewed across the Republican and libertarian base as a huge accomplishment."

Republicans have often been seen as taking greater interest in the judiciary than Democrats. McConnell works closely with the Federalist Society, which is at the forefront of conservative judicial thinking, and he helped the group draft Trump's list of 25 potential Supreme Court nominees. He well understands the power of the judicial branch to shape policy and mobilize voters.

McConnell laid the groundwork for this moment with a startling move just hours after Justice Antonin Scalia's sudden death in February 2016. He announced the Senate wouldn't consider Obama's nominee because it was a presidential election year. He followed through on that vow, holding the seat open until after Trump took office. Democrats remain livid over the move to this day, calling it a stolen seat.

But the Republican blockade helped solidify conservative and evangelical support for Trump during the election, as many rallied to the cause of having a Republican president fill the seat. McConnell has characterized the gambit as his single greatest achievement.

Douglas Johnson, the senior policy director for National Right to Life, says the federal judges being confirmed are "extraordinarily qualified." He praised McConnell for recognizing "this is important."

"We saw Sen. McConnell's extraordinary leadership at the time of Scalia's death — this is a continuation of that," he said.

Those familiar with McConnell's thinking on the judiciary saw him beginning to play the long game — the title of his autobiography — years earlier.

It began when Democrat Harry Reid of Nevada, then the Senate majority leader, changed the rules of the Senate. Frustrated with GOP roadblocks in the Obama era, the Democrats eliminated the filibuster for nominees for the administration and judiciary, other than for the Supreme Court. In practice, that means that 51 votes, rather than 60, are needed to confirm nominees.

Reid's move was so inflammatory — it is known as the nuclear option — that it came with a warning

from McConnell on the Senate floor: "I say to my friends on the other side of the aisle, you will regret this, and you may regret it a lot sooner than you think."

After Republicans won control of the Senate in 2014, McConnell became leader — and the confirmation of Obama's nominees started grinding to halt. As Trump was about to take office, there was what some call an emerging vacancy crisis, with some 100 openings in the judiciary.

Scott Jennings, a former George W. Bush administration official and longtime McConnell strategist, said the Senate leader saw in the judicial openings the opportunity to "restore some balance."

Jennings said, "It became clear to him that one of the things he could do is set up the next president to remake the judiciary."

In early 2017, when Gorsuch's nomination was headed toward a Democratic-led filibuster — which McConnell's office notes would have been the first ever of a Supreme Court nominee — the Republicans changed the rules again to allow the confirmation of justices with 51 votes.

"I think it's paid off," Jennings said. "Laws can be changed, regulations can be wiped away, but these federal judicial appointments are lifetime."

He added, "For 30 years we'll be talking about the Trump-McConnell courts and their impact."

Associated Press Data Editor Meghan Hoyer in Washington contributed to this report.

Online:

An interactive on judicial diversity is available at <https://interactives.ap.org/nominee-diversity>

Follow Mascaro on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/LisaMascaro>

Thai coach apologizes to parents as boys write they're OK

By TASSANEE VEJPONGSA and KAWEEWIT KAEWJINDA, Associated Press

MAE SAI, Thailand (AP) — The youth soccer coach trapped in a partially flooded cave in northern Thailand with 12 members of his team apologized to their parents in the first letters they have sent out through divers, with the boys saying they're doing well and missing their families.

The local governor in charge of the mission to rescue them said Saturday that cooperating weather and falling water levels over the last few days had created appropriate conditions for evacuation, but that they won't last if it rains again.

Thai officials have repeatedly said that a quick underwater evacuation of the boys, aged 11-16, and their 25-year-old coach was needed because of the possibility that access to the cave could soon close again due to flooding from seasonal monsoon rains.

Earlier efforts to pump out water from the cave have been set back every time there has been a heavy rain.

Chiang Rai acting Gov. Narongsak Osatanakorn said rescuers are "at war with water," and that experts told him flooding from new rain could shrink the unflooded space where the boys are sheltering to just 10 square meters (108 square feet).

There are also concerns about the percentage of oxygen in the air at the boys' safe space falling, and carbon dioxide content increasing, posing a serious health hazard. The boys and their coach are accompanied by several Thai navy SEAL divers.

Rescuers were unable to extend a hose pumping oxygen all the way to where the boys are, but have brought them some oxygen tanks.

Divers Friday night brought out poignant letters written by those trapped inside.

Ekapol Chanthawong, the coach of the Wild Boars soccer team, wrote: "To the parents of all the kids, right now the kids are all fine, the crew are taking good care. I promise I will care for the kids as best as possible. I want to say thanks for all the support and I want to apologize to the parents."

One boy wrote: "I'm doing fine, but the air is a little cold, but don't worry. Although, don't forget to set

up my birthday party.”

Another, identified as Tun, wrote: “Mom and Dad, please don’t worry, I am fine. I’ve told Yod to get ready to take me out for fried chicken. With love.” The name reference could be of a waiting relative.

The rest of the scribbled letters on pages from a notebook struck a similar message of love for parents and telling them not to worry.

A boy named Mick wrote: “Don’t be worried, I miss everyone. Grandpa, Uncle, Mom, Dad and siblings, I love you all. I’m happy being here inside, the navy SEALS have taken good care. Love you all.”

The boys and their coach have been trapped since June 23, when they went exploring in the cave after a soccer game. Monsoon flooding cut off their escape and prevented rescuers from finding them for almost 10 days. The only way to reach them was by navigating dark and tight passageways filled with muddy water and strong currents, as well as oxygen-depleted air.

Rescuers are also pursuing other options to extract the boys, hoping that finding a shaft or drilling into the mountain in which the cave is located will lead them to a sort of backdoor entrance.

Authorities were waiting for two big groups of volunteer foreign divers to arrive later Saturday and Sunday, after which they will be ready to act quickly to bring the team members out when the conditions are right, said Gov. Narongsak.

“The plan that I’ve held on to from the beginning is that we have to bring the kids out and the determining factor of this plan is to have as little water as possible,” he said, adding that floodwaters have been drained as much as possible.

Narongsak said the boys were still healthy and have practiced wearing diving masks and breathing in preparation for the diving possibility.

The death on Friday of a former Thai navy SEAL, Saman Gunan, underscored the risks of making the underwater journey. The diver, the first fatality of the rescue effort, was working in a volunteer capacity and died on a mission to place oxygen canisters along the route to where the boys and others are sheltered.

The strategically placed canisters allow divers to stay underwater longer during the five-hour trip to reach the stranded team.

Late Friday, Narongsak ruled out any immediate rescue attempt, saying the boys “cannot dive at this time.” He said the boys were still healthy and have practiced wearing diving masks and breathing in preparation for the diving possibility.

Cave rescue specialists have cautioned against an underwater evacuation except as a last resort, because of the dangers posed by inexperienced people using diving gear. The path out is considered especially complicated because of twists and turns in narrow flooded passages.

Tech billionaire Elon Musk has sent a team of engineers to Thailand to see if they can help in the rescue effort. Musk’s Boring Company digs tunnels for advanced transport systems and has advanced ground-penetrating radar.

A spokeswoman for the Boring Company who declined to be named said it is in talks with the Thai government and people on the ground to determine how they could best assist their efforts.

Judge rejects blanket delay to reunite children at border

By ELLIOT SPAGAT and JULIE WATSON, Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — A judge on Friday refused to grant the Trump administration a blanket extension of the deadline to reunite children separated from their parents at the border, instead acknowledging that more time may be justified only in specific cases.

The administration said it needed more time to reunite 101 children under 5 years old to ensure the children’s safety and to confirm their parental relationships.

“There’s always going to be tension between a fast release and a safe release,” said Sarah Fabian, a Justice Department attorney.

U.S. District Judge Dana Sabraw ordered the administration to share a list of the 101 children with the American Civil Liberties Union, which successfully sued to force the reunions, by Saturday afternoon. The

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two sides will try to determine over the weekend which cases merit a delay in an effort to present a unified front in court on Monday morning.

"The government must reunite them," the judge said. "It must comply with the time frame unless there is an articulable reason."

The administration has matched 86 parents to 83 children and 16 are not yet matched, Fabian said.

The deadline is July 10 for parents with children under 5 and July 26 for everyone else.

More than 2,000 children were separated from their parents after Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced in May that the zero tolerance policy was in full effect, even if it meant splitting families. While parents were criminally prosecuted, children were placed in custody of the Health and Human Services Department.

Trump reversed course on June 20 amid an international outcry from opponents who said families should remain together.

On Thursday, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar said fewer than 3,000 children are believed to have been separated, but that includes kids who may have lost parents along the journey, not just parents who were detained at the border.

If DNA testing is inconclusive, officials said in a court filing, they won't be able to confirm a child's parentage by the deadline. They will need more time to collect DNA samples or other evidence from parents who have been released from government custody.

About half of the parents of the 101 children are in the custody of Immigration and Customs Enforcement. Others have left the country or were released, Fabian said. She said it has been more difficult to reunite children when parents are outside government custody.

The judge, who was appointed by President George W. Bush, set the deadline last week, writing that the "situation has reached a crisis level" and that the "chaotic circumstances" were of the government's own making.

Jonathan White, a Health and Human Services official, filed a declaration with the court that gives perhaps the most detailed account yet of what the government is doing and the hurdles it faces. Its database has some information about the children's parents but was not designed to reunify families by the court's deadline.

The department has manually reviewed the cases of all 11,800 children in its custody by working nights and weekends, White said. The results of that review are being validated.

DNA cheek swab tests on parent and child take nearly a week to complete, said White, who called the risk of placing children with adults who aren't their parents "a real and significant child welfare concern."

"The Government does not wish to unnecessarily delay reunifications or burden class members," the Justice Department filing reads. "At the same time, however, the Government has a strong interest in ensuring that any release of a child from Government custody occurs in a manner that ensures the safety of that child."

The ACLU sued in March on behalf of a Congolese woman who was separated from her daughter for five months after seeking asylum at a San Diego border crossing and a Brazilian asylum-seeker who has been separated from her son since an arrest for illegal entry in August near the Texas-New Mexico border.

Pompeo wraps up talks in N. Korea without seeing Kim Jong Un

By ANDREW HARNIK and MATTHEW LEE, Associated Press

PYONGYANG, North Korea (AP) — Secretary of State Mike Pompeo wrapped up two days of talks with senior North Korean officials on Saturday without meeting Kim Jong Un but with commitments for new discussions on denuclearization and the repatriation of the remains of American soldiers killed during the Korean War.

Before departing Pyongyang, Pompeo told reporters that his conversations with senior North Korean official Kim Yong Chol had been "productive," conducted "in good faith" and that "a great deal of progress"

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had been made in some areas. But he stressed that "there's still more work to be done" in other areas, much of which would be done by working groups that the two sides have set up to deal with specific issues.

Pompeo said that a Pentagon team would be meeting with North Korean officials on or about July 12 at the border between North and South Korea to discuss the repatriation of remains and that working level talks would be held soon on the destruction of North Korea's missile engine testing facility.

In the days following his historic June 12 summit with Kim Jong Un in Singapore, President Donald Trump had announced that the return of the remains and the destruction of the missile facility had been completed or were in progress.

Pompeo, however, said that more talks were needed on both.

"We now have a meeting set up for July 12 — it could move by one day or two — where there will be discussions between the folks responsible for the repatriation of remains. (It) will take place at the border and that process will begin to develop over the days that follow," he said as he boarded his plane for Tokyo.

On the destruction of the missile engine plant, Pompeo said, "We talked about what the modalities would look like for the destruction of that facility as well, and some progress there as well, and then we have laid out a path for further negotiation at the working level so the two teams can get together and continue these discussions."

Earlier, Pompeo and Kim Yong Chol both said they needed clarity on the parameters of an agreement to denuclearize the Korean Peninsula that Trump and Kim Jong Un agreed to in Singapore. The trip was Pompeo's third to Pyongyang since April and his first since the summit.

Unlike his previous visits, which have been one-day affairs during which he has met with Kim Jong Un, Pompeo spent the night at a government guesthouse in Pyongyang and did not see the North Korean leader, although U.S. officials had suggested such a meeting was expected. State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said no meeting with Kim Jong Un had been planned.

As they began their talks on Saturday, Kim Yong Chol alluded to the fact that Pompeo and his delegation had stayed overnight in Pyongyang.

"We did have very serious discussions on very important matters yesterday," Kim said. "So, thinking about those discussions you might have not slept well last night."

Pompeo, who spoke with Trump, national security adviser John Bolton and White House chief of staff John Kelly by secure phone before starting Saturday's session, replied that he "slept just fine." He added that the Trump administration was committed to reaching a deal under which North Korea would denuclearize and realize economic benefits in return.

Kim later said that "there are things that I have to clarify" to which Pompeo responded that "there are things that I have to clarify as well."

There was no immediate explanation of what needed to be clarified, but the two sides have been struggling to specify what exactly "denuclearization" would entail and how it could be verified to the satisfaction of the United States.

Pompeo and Kim met for nearly three hours Friday and then had dinner amid growing skepticism over how serious Kim Jong Un is about giving up his nuclear arsenal and translating the upbeat rhetoric following his summit with Trump into concrete action.

On his flight to Pyongyang, Pompeo said both sides made commitments at the Singapore summit on the complete denuclearization of North Korea and on what a transformed relationship between their two countries might look like.

One hoped-for breakthrough on this trip would have been the return of the remains of U.S. troops killed during the 1950-53 Korean War. North Korea committed at last month's summit to the "immediate repatriation" of remains already identified, but that hasn't happened yet.

Lee reported from Tokyo.

Immigrant PhD candidate rocked by sudden US Army discharge

By **MARTHA MENDOZA AND GARANCE BURKE, Associated Press**

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Growing up in eastern China, Panshu Zhao fell in love with America. He read the Bible his parents gave him, watched Hollywood movies and studied the ideals of democracy. He jumped at the chance to attend graduate school at Texas A&M University.

In 2016, Zhao enlisted in the U.S. Army as part of a special recruitment program offering immigrants in the country legally a path to citizenship.

The future, he said, was bright.

Now, he is one of the dozens of immigrant recruits and reservists struggling with abrupt, often unexplained military discharges and canceled contracts. They traded being willing to risk their lives for the prospect of U.S. citizenship, a timeworn exchange that's drawn linguists, medical specialists and thousands of other immigrants to the military since the Revolutionary War.

"It's just like you're dropped from heaven to hell," Zhao told The Associated Press on Friday.

It is unclear how many men and women who enlisted through the special recruitment program have been ousted from the Army, but immigration attorneys told the AP that they know of more than 40 recruits who recently have been discharged or whose status has become questionable.

Some recruits say they were given no reason for their discharge. Others said the Army informed them they'd been labeled as security risks because they have relatives abroad or because the Defense Department had not completed background checks on them.

The Pentagon said Friday that there has been no policy change since last year, when Defense Secretary Jim Mattis said no one could enter basic training without completion of a background investigation.

And Army spokeswoman Cynthia O. Smith said that any enlistee entering the military undergoes security screenings.

"Each recruit undergoes an individualized suitability review and the length of time for the review is dependent upon each individual's unique background," Smith said.

Zhao, 31, said his "ship out" date to basic training was delayed for two years as he underwent background checks, counterintelligence interviews and rigorous reviews added as requirements for immigrant enlistees.

He continued to pursue his PhD in geography at Texas A&M but also hit the gym, prepping for boot camp. And he trained — in uniform — with his unit. He had military identification and health care, he said.

In April, Zhao visited Washington, D.C., for the first time, touring the White House and visiting the Republican National Committee.

That same month, he got word from his unit commander: He was being discharged. He was told simply that his discharge was "uncharacterized," he said.

"I'm not a national threat," Zhao said. "On the contrast, I'm a national merit because people like me with higher education and critical skills, we want to serve this great U.S. Army. I'm a good scientist no matter what."

The Pentagon announced last October that in order to apply for citizenship, immigrant recruits were required to have gone through basic training and served honorably for either 180 days or a year, depending on their Army classification. But that requirement has been challenged in court.

Some discharged service members whose basic training was delayed cannot start the naturalization process. Others who started the process have had their applications put on hold.

Immigration attorneys told the AP that many immigrants let go in recent weeks received an "uncharacterized discharge," which is neither dishonorable nor honorable.

A Brazilian reservist, Lucas Calixto, filed a lawsuit in Washington, D.C., last week contending that he was booted without the Defense Department giving him a chance to defend himself or appeal.

President George W. Bush ordered "expedited naturalization" for immigrant soldiers in 2002 in an effort to swell military ranks. Seven years later, the Military Accessions Vital to the National Interest program, known as MAVNI, became an official recruiting program.

The program came under fire from conservatives when President Barack Obama added DACA recipients

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— young immigrants brought to the U.S. illegally — to the list of eligible enlistees. In response, the military layered on additional security clearances for recruits to pass before heading to boot camp.

Donald Trump's administration added even more hurdles, creating a backlog within the Defense Department. Last fall, hundreds of recruits still in the enlistment process had their contracts canceled. A few months later, the military suspended MAVNI.

Republican Congressman Andy Harris of Maryland, who has supported legislation to limit the program, told the AP that MAVNI was established by executive order.

"Our military must prioritize enlisting American citizens, and restore the MAVNI program to its specialized, limited scope," he said.

According to Air Force Maj. Carla Gleason, a Pentagon spokeswoman, the "overwhelming majority" of MAVNI candidates are from Asia and Africa because those are the critical language skills needed in the military.

As of April, 1,100 immigrant recruits were awaiting basic training while undergoing security reviews, the Pentagon said.

Eligible recruits are required to have legal status in the U.S., such as a student visa, before enlisting. More than 5,000 immigrants were recruited into the program in 2016, and an estimated 10,000 are currently serving. Most go the Army, but some also go to the other military branches.

Zhao is now rethinking his future, but said he wishes he had a chance to appeal.

"I need justice," he said. "This is America. This is not China. This is not the Middle East. This is not a dictatorship. And that's why I love America."

Associated Press Writer Lolita C. Baldor in Washington, D.C., contributed to this report.

US-China trade war elevates the risks to the global economy

By **PAUL WISEMAN** and **JOSH BOAK**, AP Economics Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — The trade war that erupted Friday between the U.S. and China carries a major risk of escalation that could weaken investment, depress spending, unsettle financial markets and slow the global economy.

The opening shots were fired just after midnight, when the Trump administration imposed a 25 percent tariff on \$34 billion of imports from China, and Beijing promptly retaliated with duties on an equal amount of American products. It accused the U.S. of igniting "the biggest trade war in economic history."

Because of this first round of hostilities, American businesses and, ultimately, consumers could end up paying more for such Chinese-made products as construction equipment and other machinery. And American suppliers of soybeans, pork and whiskey could lose their competitive edge in China.

These initial tariffs are unlikely to inflict serious harm to the world's two biggest economies. Gregory Daco, head of U.S. economics at Oxford Economics, has calculated that they would pare growth in both countries by no more than 0.2 percent through 2020.

But the conflict could soon escalate. President Donald Trump, who has boasted that winning a trade war is easy, has said he is prepared to impose tariffs on up to \$550 billion in Chinese imports — a figure that exceeds the \$506 billion in goods that China shipped to the U.S. last year.

Escalating tariffs are likely to slow business investment as companies wait to see whether the administration can reach a truce with Beijing. Some employers will probably put hiring on hold until the picture becomes clearer. The damage could risk undoing some of the economic benefits of last year's tax cuts.

"Trade disruption is the greatest threat to global growth," said Dec Mullarkey, managing director of investment strategies at Sun Life Investment Management. "The direct effects will be amplified as business confidence drops and investment decisions are delayed. Markets are still hoping that the key players return to the negotiation table."

The root of the conflict is the Trump administration's assertion that China has long used predatory tactics in a drive to supplant America's technological supremacy. Those tactics include cyber-theft as well as

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forcing companies to hand over technology in exchange for access to China's market. Trump's tariffs are meant to press Beijing to change its ways.

The rift with China is the most consequential trade conflict the administration has provoked. But it's hardly the only one.

Trump is also sparring with the European Union over his threat to tax auto imports and with Canada and Mexico over his push to rewrite the North American trade pact. And he has subjected most of America's trading partners to tariffs on steel and aluminum.

Many caught in the initial line of fire — U.S. farmers absorbing tariffs on their exports to China, for instance — are fearful. The price of soybeans has plunged 13 percent over the past month on fears that Chinese tariffs will cut off American farmers from China, which buys about 60 percent of their soybean exports.

"For soybean producers like me, this is a direct financial hit," said Brent Bible, a soy and corn producer in Romney, Indiana. "These tariffs could mean the difference between a profit and a loss for an entire year's worth of work out in the field, and that's only in the near term."

Christine LoCascio, an executive at the Distilled Spirits Council, said she fears China's tariffs on U.S. whiskey will "put the brakes on an American success story" of rising exports of U.S. spirits.

Even before the first shots, the prospect of a trade war was worrying investors. The Dow Jones industrial average has shed hundreds of points since June 11. But the risks are now priced into the market, and the Dow actually rose nearly 100 points Friday to 24,456.48.

China's currency, the yuan, has dropped 3.5 percent against the dollar over the past month, giving Chinese companies a price edge over their U.S. competition. The drop might reflect a deliberate devaluation by Beijing to signal its "displeasure over the state of trade negotiations," according to a report from the Institute of International Finance, a banking trade group.

The Trump administration sought to limit the impact of the tariffs on U.S. households by targeting Chinese industrial goods, not consumer products, for the first round of tariffs.

But that step raises costs for U.S. companies that rely on Chinese-made machinery or components. And it could force them to pass those higher costs on to their business customers and, eventually, to consumers.

If you like Chick-fil-A sandwiches, for instance, you may feel the effects. Charlie Souhrada of the North American Food Equipment Manufacturers said the tariffs could raise the cost of a kind of pressure cooker Chick-fil-A uses.

The administration has placed "these import taxes squarely on the shoulders of manufacturers and, by extension, consumers," Souhrada said.

One way the tariffs will squeeze farmers, landscapers and construction firms is by raising the price of excavators and loaders made by Bobcat, which uses attachments imported from China. U.S. suppliers rarely make these attachments, so the company must import them.

Jason Mayberry, Bobcat's assistant general counsel, said in a filing submitted to the U.S. Trade Representative's office that the company would have to raise prices to offset the tariff. Bobcat's raw material costs have also risen because of the administration's steel and aluminum tariffs.

The Federal Reserve is picking up signs that the trade war is causing businesses to rethink investment plans. In the minutes from its June meeting, the Fed noted that some companies have delayed or reduced plans to buy or upgrade equipment.

And if Trump extends the tariffs to up to \$550 billion in Chinese imports, consumers won't be able to avoid getting caught in the crossfire: The taxes would hit products like televisions and cellphones.

That's what happened to imported washing machines, which were hit by separate Trump tariffs in January. Over the past year, their price has surged more than 8 percent.

American trade groups are urging the two countries to resume talks.

"Tariffs will bring retaliation and possibly more tariffs," said Jay Timmons, president of the National Association of Manufacturers. "No one wins in a trade war."

AP Economics Writer Martin Crutsinger contributed to this report.

Animated explainer on trade disputes:
https://youtu.be/qWF5DF_XQYk

Thai rescuers say trapped boys not yet ready to dive out

By TASSANEE VEJPONGSA and KAWEEWIT KAEWJINDA, Associated Press

MAE SAI, Thailand (AP) — Thai rescuers said they will not immediately attempt an underwater evacuation of 12 schoolboys and their soccer coach who have been trapped in a cave for almost two weeks because they have not learned adequate diving skills in the short time since they were found.

However, the official in immediate charge of the operation, Gov. Narongsak Osatanakorn, indicated at a news conference Friday that if heavy rains started and appeared to be causing flooded areas in the cave to rise again, divers would try to take the boys out right away.

Thai officials had been suggesting in public statements that a quick underwater evacuation of the boys and their coach was needed because of the possibility that access to the cave could soon close again due to seasonal monsoon rains expected this weekend.

Earlier efforts to pump out water from the cave have been set back every time there has been a heavy rain.

Cave rescue specialists have cautioned against that approach except as a last resort, because of the dangers posed by inexperienced people using diving gear. The path out is considered especially complicated because of twists and turns in narrow flooded passages.

The suggestion that the trapped team might have to wait months inside until a safe way out is available — as was the case in 2010 with Chilean miners trapped underground — has met with little enthusiasm.

Authorities continue to pursue a third option, which is finding a shaft or drilling into the mountain in which the cave is located to find a sort of back door entrance.

The boys, 11 to 16, and their 25-year-old coach went exploring in the cave after a soccer game June 23. Monsoon flooding cut off their escape and prevented rescuers from finding them for almost 10 days. The only way to reach them was by navigating dark and tight passageways filled with muddy water and strong currents.

Asked at his midnight news conference about bringing the boys out underwater, the governor replied, "Not today because they cannot dive at this time."

Narongsak said the boys were still healthy and have practiced wearing diving masks and breathing in preparation for the diving possibility.

The rescue effort suffered a disheartening setback Friday with the death of a former Thai navy SEAL diving in the flooded passageways to deliver supplies, as authorities raced against worsening weather and lessening oxygen.

Professional cave divers from Europe are making the dangerous dives with a contingent of Thai navy SEALs. Two divers from the U.K. were the first to make it, on Monday, to the area where the boys and their coach took shelter. The divers are making frequent swims in and out.

The death of former Thai navy SEAL Saman Gunan underscored the risks of making the underwater journey. The diver, the first fatality of the rescue effort, was working in a volunteer capacity and died on a mission to place oxygen canisters along the route to where the boys and others are sheltered, Thai SEAL commander Rear Adm. Arpakorn Yookongkaew said.

The strategically placed canisters allow divers to stay underwater longer during the five-hour trip to reach the stranded team.

While underwater, Saman passed out and efforts to resuscitate him failed, Arpakorn said. Some officials said his collapse was due to his oxygen supply running out, but the cause of his collapse was not confirmed.

"Despite this, we will continue until we accomplish our mission," Arpakorn vowed.

Narongsak acknowledged that the air supply inside the cave is "a big problem." Workers have been trying to run an oxygen line into the cave's chambers.

"We are carrying oxygen canisters to where the boys are," Narongsak said.

The dramatic rescue efforts and the boys' plight have garnered international attention, perhaps most notably at soccer's most widely watched event, the World Cup.

A diver who spent time with the boys said earlier the youngsters wanted to know the results of the matches. Players from teams including England and Sweden have recorded good luck video messages for the trapped boys, and FIFA has invited the 13 to the World Cup final should they be rescued in time and are healthy enough to travel.

Elon Musk, the entrepreneur behind the Tesla automobile and the SpaceX rocket company, has said he would send engineers to help. One of his enterprises is Boring Co., which digs tunnels for advanced transport systems and has advanced ground-penetrating radar.

Musk also brainstormed on Twitter about possible technology for a safe evacuation, suggesting that an air tunnel constructed with soft tubing like a Bouncy Castle could provide flexible passage out.

2 women publicly accuse Indiana attorney general of groping

By BRIAN SLODYSKO, Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Two women came forward Friday to publicly accuse Attorney General Curtis Hill of groping them during a party earlier this year, increasing pressure on the embattled Republican to resign.

Democratic state Rep. Mara Candelaria Reardon published her account of the March 15 incident, which occurred at an Indianapolis bar, in The (Northwest Indiana) Times newspaper.

Gabrielle McLemore, the Indiana Senate Democrats' communications director, told The Associated Press that she decided to go public partly out of frustration that Hill issued a defiant statement Friday calling the allegations false.

The two women also said they acted because they wanted to give other women the courage to confront inappropriate conduct.

Candelaria Reardon described Hill's behavior as "deviant" when she encountered him in the early morning hours after the legislative session ended for the year. She says he leaned toward her, put his hand on her back, slid it down and grabbed her buttocks. The Munster lawmaker says she told Hill to "back off," but he approached again later in the night, put his hand on her back and said: "That skin. That back."

Hill said he has no intention of stepping down despite calls to do so.

"I am not resigning. The allegations against me are vicious and false," he said in a statement Friday. "At no time did I ever grab or touch anyone inappropriately."

That's at odds with the accounts of both Candelaria Reardon and McLemore.

McLemore said Hill cornered her at the party and asked, "Do you know who I am?" and proceeded to massage her back, while she worried what others who noticed Hill's unwanted advances would think.

Eventually her intern intervened by asking if she wanted to go to the bathroom.

McLemore said she never wanted to come forward, but changed her mind after seeing that earlier on Friday Candelaria Reardon had come forward, and that Hill continued to deny he did anything wrong.

"Women go through this stuff all the time," McLemore told The Associated Press. For Hill "to deny it again and again is so frustrating. If my story can help other women feel like they don't have to hide, that they don't have to feel like they did something wrong — that's my goal."

Several other women shared similar stories with investigators who looked into the matter, according to a confidential memo that was leaked this week.

The AP does not identify alleged victims of sexual misconduct or assault unless they come forward publicly, as the two women did.

Indiana's sexual battery statute says it's a felony to touch "another person's genitals, pubic area, buttocks, or female breast when that person is unaware."

That's what Candelaria Reardon has accused Hill of doing.

"I am not anonymous. I am a wife, mother, business owner and a state representative. I am also a victim of sexual battery, perpetrated by Indiana Attorney General Curtis Hill," she wrote in the piece.

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Hill is a staunch social conservative who is married and had been viewed as a rising star in the Republican Party since his election in 2016. The former Elkhart County prosecutor is an Elvis impersonator who has relished punditry appearances on Fox News. In May, he warmed up the crowd during a rally held in his hometown by President Donald Trump, who gave Hill a shoutout for being a "good man" who's "done a great job."

But he has also had a fraught relationship with fellow Indiana Republicans, including Gov. Eric Holcomb, whose policies he has criticized for not being tough enough on drug users.

On Thursday night, Hill found himself without allies as Holcomb and other top GOP leaders called for him to step down.

"The findings of the recent legislative report are disturbing and, at a minimum, show a violation of the state's zero tolerance sexual harassment policy," Holcomb said.

While Republican legislative leaders tried to stay mum about the claims against Hill earlier in the week, they voiced outrage over the leak of the memo calling it an "egregious breach of confidentiality" that they pledged to investigate.

That led some Democrats to charge that they cared more about the allegations against a fellow Republican being aired out than the well-being of the employees and lawmaker involved.

If Hill doesn't resign, majority Republicans could take action to remove him.

Indiana's constitution allows for a public official to be removed from office, "for crime, incapacity or negligence" either by "impeachment by the House of Representatives, to be tried by the Senate," or by a "joint resolution of the General Assembly" with two thirds voting in favor.

For the latest developments on this story: <https://www.apnews.com/1fa777e91d774ac6b513e5cfc886764d>

Man who challenged black family's use of pool loses job

By JONATHAN DREW, Associated Press

RALEIGH, N.C. (AP) — A white man who challenged a black family's use of a gated pool in a North Carolina neighborhood has not only resigned from the homeowner's association board — he's also lost his job.

Sonoco announced Friday that Adam Bloom is no longer employed by the packaging and industrial products company, saying it doesn't condone discrimination of any kind, even if it happens outside its workplace.

A video posted by Jasmine Abhulimen on Facebook on July 4, seen more than 4 million times, shows what happened after Bloom questioned whether she was allowed to bring her son to the pool in the Winston-Salem neighborhood.

Bloom also called the police. In a police recording released Friday, Bloom is heard calmly telling a dispatcher he's dealing with a "nonresident that's at the pool who refuses to leave. ... We're just asking for a form of identification."

But Bloom was wrong about his neighbor: Abhulimen owns a house with her husband a few blocks away in the development, according to county property records.

In the video, Bloom, Abhulimen and the responding officers all speak in measured tones. She accuses him of singling out her and her young son as African-Americans by asking to see her ID. Bloom, who served as chairman of the Glenridge community's private pool, responds that he asks pool users to see their identification "a couple times" each week.

Officers then determined that Abhulimen did in fact have keycard access to the gated pool. An officer apologized to her. When Abhulimen asked Bloom for an apology, he walked away.

On Facebook, Abhulimen accused Bloom of racial profiling: "This is a classic case of racial profiling in my half a million \$\$ neighborhood pool. This happened to me and my baby today. What a shame!!" A police news release noted that the postings were on the page of Jasmine Edwards, which is Abhulimen's Facebook screen name.

The social media backlash was fierce, and soon targeted Bloom's employer. In a Twitter post, South Carolina-based Sonoco apologized to Abhulimen and said the situation doesn't reflect company values.

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"We are aware of a terrible incident involving the actions of one of our employees outside the workplace," the statement said, adding that the "employee is no longer employed by the company in any respect."

Company spokesman Brian Risinger confirmed that Bloom's separation was "effective immediately." Risinger said Bloom was a business development manager who had been with Sonoco for about five years.

An attorney for Bloom said his client has taken his wife and children away from their home in the city, about 100 miles (160 kilometers) west of Raleigh, to a safe location after receiving death threats. Lawyer John Vermitsky issued a statement Friday saying his client feels terrible and didn't intend to discriminate.

Bloom was performing his duties as pool chairman after another woman approached Bloom questioning whether Abhulimen had the right to be poolside, Vermitsky said.

The lawyer said there was some confusion about the address Abhulimen gave the other woman, so Bloom asked to see her ID. Then Bloom, "not wanting a confrontation to escalate," called police to resolve the situation, according to the statement.

In seven years as chairman of the pool, Bloom occasionally has had to ask people of all ages and races to leave for violating rules, according to the statement.

"No one deserves to be judged solely based on an isolated incident, taken out of context," Vermitsky said.

Winston-Salem Police Chief Catrina Thompson said Friday that the altercation ended without any charges and that her officers "consistently attempt to resolve incidents while maintaining respect for all persons involved."

The Glenridge Homeowners Association said in an email that Bloom resigned as pool chairman and board member.

Association officials regret the situation "at our community pool that left neighbors feeling racially profiled," the email said. "In confronting and calling the police on one of our neighbors, the pool chair escalated a situation in a way that does not reflect the inclusive values Glenridge seeks to uphold."

Follow Drew at <https://twitter.com/JonathanLDrew>

Worry and relief at EPA after scandal-plagued chief's exit

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Taking over from an ambitious predecessor known for seeking out the rich, powerful and conservative, the Environmental Protection Agency's newly named acting chief has promised to reach out to anxious staffers throughout the demoralized agency and to lawmakers of both political parties.

By late afternoon Friday, there had been no public comment from either Scott Pruitt, whose resignation President Donald Trump announced Thursday after months of Pruitt's ethics scandals, or Andrew Wheeler, the Washington veteran and former coal lobbyist who Trump announced as the agency's acting head.

In an email sent out to EPA staffers Thursday night and obtained by the Associated Press, Wheeler said he was honored to take temporary leadership of the agency where he started his Washington career in the early 1990s, as an EPA employee dealing with toxic substances and other matters. "I look forward to working hard alongside all of you," Wheeler wrote agency employees.

Pruitt, Oklahoma's attorney general at the time of his EPA appointment, had embraced the perks of office in Washington. He instituted unusual and costly round-the-clock protection for himself, flew premium class to Europe and North Africa, and directed agency staffers to help seek housing for his family, high-dollar employment for his wife, and pleasures such as luxury lotion and tickets to top sporting events.

Trump had praised Pruitt for his regulation-trimming ways at EPA. On Thursday, however, Trump said Pruitt himself had concluded the EPA chief's ethics scandals were too much of a distraction and was stepping down.

Some EPA staffers linked to Pruitt's tumultuous 17-month tenure feared for their jobs Friday, former top staffers under Pruitt said. That included the roughly 20 members of a security detail Pruitt's EPA had created to guard him around the clock.

The guards were originally trained for investigating environmental crimes. The agency's security officials

are expected to decide what level of protection Wheeler needs.

"There's definitely that fear" of a shake-up among Pruitt's remaining political appointees, said Kevin Chmielewski, the former deputy chief of staff who fell out of favor with Pruitt after questioning spending. "This is the follow-up stories, the people's lives he's affected, going down to the agents and everyone else."

Some scientists and other career staffers, who learned of Pruitt's departure through news and social media on Thursday, quietly expressed relief, Elizabeth Southerland, who quit last year as the science director at the agency's Office of Water, said after hearing Thursday and Friday from many still at the agency.

Wheeler's public statements show him to be a skeptic, like Pruitt, about the extent to which coal, oil and gas emissions drive climate change, something that mainstream science says is indisputable fact.

After leaving his four-year stint at the EPA in the 1990s, Wheeler became the top staffer for the Senate's most ardent challenger of manmade climate-change, Republican Sen. James Inhofe of Oklahoma. Wheeler then went to work as a lobbyist for top coal companies and other businesses and interests.

In a hearing on his appointment as the agency's deputy administrator last November, Wheeler described himself as someone who "always tried to find common ground and work across the aisle" in Washington.

Where Pruitt openly criticized the work of EPA employees under the Obama administration, Wheeler at the Senate committee hearing made a point of praising the agency's career staffers as "some of the most dedicated and hard-working employees" in federal government.

Wheeler told the Washington Examiner earlier this year he was focusing on repairing relationships with EPA career staff who bristled at Pruitt's leadership.

At the EPA, staffers expect Wheeler to stick to the agenda set by Pruitt and Trump: Cutting environmental regulations that the Trump administration and industries see as unnecessarily burdensome to business, Southerland, the former water official, said.

"There's not a single person who doesn't think that will happen," Southerland said of the current EPA staffers she has talked to.

However, "they think at least the contemptuous behavior will stop," she said. She was referring to allegations that Pruitt ignored all but his own political appointees at the agency, and used his office for personal gain.

EPA's press office sent out biographical information on Wheeler late Friday, but did not respond to interview requests for him.

AP Exclusive: Washington psychiatric hospital called 'hell'

By MARTHA BELLISLE, Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — Behind tall brick walls and secure windows, hundreds of patients at Washington state's largest psychiatric hospital live in conditions that fail U.S. health and safety standards, while overworked nurses and psychiatrists say they are navigating a system that punishes employees who speak out despite critical staffing shortages.

"They don't have enough staff to protect patients, or provide them with the bare minimum of care," said Lisa Bowser, whose mother spent two years at Western State Hospital and suffered dozens of falls and assaults.

"Going there was like going into hell," said Bowser, who has sued the state-run facility. "I honestly thought they would kill her before I could get her out."

U.S. and state regulators for years have found health and safety violations at the 800-bed hospital, ranging from assaults on staff to escapes of dangerous patients, including a man accused of torturing a woman to death. Even after that 2016 escape, a nursing supervisor told The Associated Press that a patient who had been charged with murder and found not guilty by reason of insanity was placed in a less secure ward and the nurse faced retaliation after reporting the danger to non-violent patients.

Despite a shakeup in leadership and vows to correct problems, the hospital continually puts patients at risk, according to a recent surprise federal inspection. Some didn't get oxygen and blood-sugar checks; injuries weren't properly treated; they were held in restraints too long; and the building remained a fire

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hazard. Some violations were cited in inspections going back to 2015.

After years of chances, the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services last week stripped the hospital in Lakewood of its certification and federal funding, totaling \$53 million a year and about 20 percent of its budget.

Gov. Jay Inslee said he wants the state to change how it handles the mentally ill but that it's making inroads.

"We have been on a course correction to turn this ship around and we are continuing on that course of improvement," the Democrat told AP.

'TREATED LIKE AN ANIMAL'

Sharon Struthers was committed to the hospital for depression in 2014 and stayed through 2015, when it failed four federal inspections. During visits, Bowser said she began to see bruising all over her mother's body, which was rarely washed, and found fungus covering her feet.

"They wouldn't bathe her," Bowser said. "She would tell me that another patient hit her. They would put her in a jumpsuit so she couldn't go to the bathroom, and the staff made fun of her for wetting herself. She was treated like an animal."

Bowser said her mother's room was covered with garbage, and she began to suffer falls that broke her arm and hip. Her mother also was sexually assaulted on several occasions, Bowser said, and staffers appeared to condone sexual interactions between patients.

Employees thought a registered sex offender placed on Struthers' ward was safe around older patients because he was a "child molester, not adult rapist," according to an email that licensed mental health counselor Mark Allen sent to hospital officials and that Bowser's lawyer acquired.

Allen said the encounter appeared to be between two consenting adults.

Just because the patient is a registered sex offender "doesn't mean he can't develop and have consensual physical/sexual behaviors, as long as the peer is psychiatrically stable, has the ability to make decisions for herself and is not considered 'vulnerable,'" the email said.

The problem is Struthers was committed to the hospital because she could not take care of herself, said Bowser's attorney, James Beck.

Struthers died at a different facility in 2016. Bowser sued Western State Hospital and the state Department of Social and Health Services, which oversees the facility, claiming abuse and neglect.

"Our position is that the treatment she received at WSH was a cause in the timing of her death," Beck said. "For someone her age, a fractured hip is a death sentence."

The agency declined to comment on Bowser's case or the counselor's email, referring questions to the state attorney general's office, which didn't respond to multiple emails and calls.

CLAIMS OF RETALIATION

Management punishes those who challenge decisions, workers say, putting additional strain on the short-staffed facility.

Nursing supervisor Paul Vilja filed a complaint last December after a man who was found not guilty by reason of insanity in the deaths of multiple people was moved from a secure ward into one with limited security that houses patients committed to the hospital because they cannot care for themselves.

"I said you are endangering my patients and he's a risk for escape," Vilja told the AP.

The health department agreed with his concerns, and the patient was moved. Within a week, Vilja was moved to the medical records department. He was unable to work with patients for six months but was recently told he can move back to the limited-security ward.

Vilja has filed a whistleblower complaint, claiming retaliation for speaking out.

Psychiatrists say they faced similar treatment. Three said they were reprimanded for objecting to management decisions that put patients and staff at risk. Two were fired, and the other was removed from patient care.

Dr. Michael Quayle said he faced a hostile work environment after reporting expired and improperly stored meat where food was prepared for patients. He sued, and a jury awarded him about \$550,000 in December 2016. The next month, he asked a judge to order the hospital to stop retaliating against staff-

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ers who file complaints.

Dr. Joseph Wainer provided a statement supporting a court order.

"Western State Hospital has suffered and continues to suffer from a systemic culture of retaliation, discrimination and bullying," he told the court.

He also wrote an editorial in a newspaper, saying he saw "people who've been told that their perspective is ignorant, who have been ignored, shamed and intimidated into silence by an authoritarian leadership."

About a week later, Wainer was placed under investigation and the hospital ordered him to leave.

Another staff psychiatrist learned in April 2017 that management planned to discharge his patients. Dr. Jay Jawad objected, saying they weren't ready and could harm themselves or others.

"A haunting example of this came to light in the recent case against Western State Hospital where an unstable patient was released to the community, contrary to clinical wisdom, and later murdered his father with a hatchet," Jawad said.

The hospital started investigating after he reported his concerns and took away his clinical responsibilities.

Jawad and Wainer were later told that the investigations were closed with no findings. They have sued the hospital and the health agency claiming they faced retaliation.

When told about hospital workers' retaliation claims, the governor said "you'll always hear disenchantment" in large facilities.

Health officials declined to comment on the lawsuits, and the state attorney general's office hasn't responded.

DANGERS OF A NURSE SHORTAGE

Bowser said nurses conceded that they couldn't properly care for her mother because they didn't have enough staffers.

Instead of hiring nurses, the hospital hired "nurse educators" who don't see patients, said a hospital worker who didn't want to be named for fear of being fired. The hospital has lost 15 psychiatrists in three years with no new psychiatrists being hired, the worker said.

Selena Bertino, mother of 32-year-old Reid Bertino, a patient at the hospital for years, said the high-security ward is still dangerous because there are not enough workers.

"The unstable patients are supposed to have two staff with them at all times because they can just go off and attack people, but often there's only one staff with them," Bertino said. "Reid was severely beaten when a patient went off while he was eating dinner."

The governor acknowledged that the hospital has staffing problems but said it's started a recruitment system to attract more workers. He declined to comment on how difficult it will be to hire nurses and psychiatrists at a hospital that's not accredited or certified.

The gaps leave nurses to work an exorbitant amount of overtime, which can lead to mistakes and burnout.

Lawmakers have pressed the hospital to create a staffing model that will allow adequate funding for nurses, but the facility keeps asking for overtime funds that are "unaccountable," said state Rep. Laurie Jinkins, a Democrat on the Select Committee on Quality in State Hospitals.

"That's been a huge frustration," Jinkins said.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Kelly Stowe, a DSHS spokeswoman, said the agency is working with the governor's office on funding options after the recent inspection cost the hospital federal dollars.

"As for the latest survey, we are still in the midst of reviewing the findings and will continue our work improving quality of care and safety at the hospital," Stowe said.

Sen. Steve O'Ban, a Republican, has said the Legislature should hold a special session to address the crisis, but the governor said that wasn't necessary.

Inslee wants the state to move to a "community-based system" over the next five years that allows some patients to live in smaller facilities, including some state-run programs and private hospitals.

After marathon meeting, UK leaders endorse Brexit trade plan

By JILL LAWLESS, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British Prime Minister Theresa May corralled her Cabinet inside an English country house for a long, hot day Friday, and announced that the divided government had finally agreed on a plan for a future free-trade deal with the European Union.

The proposal aims to keep the U.K. and the bloc in a free-trade zone for goods, but not for services, which make up the bulk of the British economy.

After almost 12 hours of talks at Chequers, the prime minister's country retreat, May said that "the Cabinet has agreed our collective position for the future of our negotiations with the EU" — a pronouncement akin to the British government equivalent of white smoke from the Vatican announcing the election of a new pope.

But getting the Conservative government to agree with itself may be the easy part. As ministers met behind closed doors — and without their phones, to prevent snooping and leaks — the EU's chief negotiator, Michel Barnier, warned the bloc would not accept anything that treated the union's single market, which allows the free flow of goods and services, as a "big supermarket."

After the British statement, Barnier tweeted that the EU would "assess proposals to see if they are workable & realistic."

At first glance the British proposals sit uneasily with repeated EU warnings that the U.K. cannot "cherry pick" the benefits of EU membership, such as access to the tariff-free customs union and single market, without accepting the responsibilities, which include allowing the free movement of EU citizens to the U.K.

The U.K. is firm that it will end free movement, as well as the jurisdiction of the EU's top court in British affairs.

Friday's meeting at the 16th-century manor house 40 miles (65 kilometers) northwest of London came with just nine months to go until the U.K. leaves the bloc, and with the EU warning that time is running out to seal a divorce deal.

Currently Britain is part of the EU's single market — which allows for the frictionless flow of goods and services among the 28 member states — and its tariff-free customs union for goods. That will end after Brexit, but what will replace it remains unclear.

Ever since Britain voted to leave the EU two years ago, its government has been divided between Brexit-backing ministers who want a sharp break from the EU so the U.K. can strike new trade deals around the world, and a more pro-EU group that wants to avoid tariffs and other friction between the U.K. and its biggest trading partner.

That view has been echoed by big manufacturers, including Airbus and Jaguar Land Rover, who warn they could abandon Britain if the EU and the U.K. cannot strike a strong free trade deal. Airbus alone employs some 14,000 workers in Britain.

Airbus chief executive Tom Enders slammed Britain's divided government early Friday, saying "Her Majesty's government still has no clue, or at least no consensus, on how to execute Brexit without severe harm."

Leading pro-Brexit Cabinet ministers, including Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson and Brexit Secretary David Davis, met in private on the eve of Friday's meeting, sparking rumors some could quit rather than agree to May's proposal.

For now, though, May appears to have united the pro-Brexit and pro-EU wings of her government behind a compromise. Under the proposals — which will be published in detail next week — Britain would agree to maintain the same rules as the bloc for trade in goods and agricultural products.

The U.K. will also promise to keep "high regulatory standards" for areas including the environment and employment law, which could ease fears among unions and others that the government plans to slash standards to secure new trade deals.

Under the plan, however, Britain will not seek to stay in the single market for services. The government said it recognized that meant the U.K. and the EU would have less access to each other's markets than they do now.

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On customs, the plan calls for the U.K. to use technology at the border to determine whether goods are bound for Britain or the EU, and to charge the appropriate tariffs.

May said the plan would "avoid friction in terms of trade, which protects jobs and livelihoods" — a key concern of ministers who want a "soft" Brexit. She said it would also leave Britain free to strike new trade deals around the world, a major preoccupation of government Brexiteers.

Britain said the proposal would also solve the problem of the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland, which will be the U.K.'s only land frontier with an EU member after Brexit. Britain has promised to maintain an invisible border, free of customs posts and other infrastructure, but until now has not said how it plans to achieve that.

In a tacit acknowledgement that Brussels may not like the proposals, the British government said it would step up preparations for a "no deal" Brexit — though it said it strongly favored an agreement.

Initial business reaction was positive. Carolyn Fairbairn, head of the Confederation of British Industry, said the agreement was "a genuine confidence boost."

But arch-euroskeptics accused the government of a betraying Brexit. Former U.K. Independence Party leader Nigel Farage said the proposal was "a sell-out to the global corporates."

Associated Press writers Danica Kirka in London and Raf Casert in Brussels contributed to this report.

Singer Chris Brown arrested on Florida felony battery charge

By TAMARA LUSH, Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — Singer Chris Brown walked off stage after his concert in Florida and into the hands of waiting deputies, who arrested him on a felony battery charge involving a nightclub photographer last year.

Tampa Police released more details about the battery warrant Friday after Brown posted \$2,000 bond to be released from the Palm Beach County Jail.

The warrant accuses Brown of hitting Bennie Vines Jr., who was hired by a club in Tampa to take pictures during an event hosted by Brown in April 2017.

Vines told officers Brown punched him while he was snapping photos. Brown was gone by the time officers arrived that night. Vines refused medical treatment, but he told the officers that he wanted to prosecute over a minor lip cut.

Emails to Brown's agents weren't immediately returned.

The entertainer is in the middle of his Heartbreak On A Full Moon Tour and was scheduled to perform in Tampa Friday night.

Brown has been in repeated legal trouble since pleading guilty to the felony assault in 2009 of his then-girlfriend, Rihanna, ahead of the Grammys. He completed his probation in that case in 2015.

In 2013, Brown was charged with misdemeanor assault after he was accused of striking a man outside a Washington, D.C., hotel. He was ordered into rehab but was dismissed for violating facility rules.

Brown spent 2½ months in custody, with U.S. marshals shuttling him between Los Angeles and the nation's capital for hearings.

After he completed court-ordered anger-management classes, Brown was accused of throwing a brick at his mother's car following a counseling session.

After Brown posted a picture to his 44 million Instagram followers in January showing his 3-year-old daughter, Royalty, cuddling with a pet monkey, California fish and wildlife agents seized the capuchin monkey named Fiji from his home in Los Angeles. Agents said then that Brown could face a misdemeanor charge carrying up to six months in jail for lacking a permit for the primate.

This story has been corrected. A headline was corrected to say battery, not assault; the warrant was from Tampa Police, not the Hillsborough Sheriff.

In Supreme Court fight, Dems target 2 GOP Senate moderates

By ALAN FRAM, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — By themselves, Democrats can't stop the Republican-run Senate from confirming President Donald Trump's Supreme Court pick. But they're determined to make it agonizing for a pair of pivotal GOP senators to back the nominee.

Just a weekend from Trump's big reveal on Monday, Democrats' early strategy is to cast the battle as either protecting the right to abortion and the 2010 health care law, or emasculating both. Citing Trump's views on the issues, they say the latter is exactly what Trump's selection would inevitably do.

The hope is to pressure GOP Sens. Susan Collins of Maine or Alaska's Lisa Murkowski to vote "no," which many view as difficult. Neither faces re-election this year, but both are centrists who've backed abortion rights and helped block their party's 2017 drive to repeal former President Barack Obama's health care statute.

If either flips, the nominee's fate would be in Democrats' hands. Republicans control the chamber 51-49, but Sen. John McCain's absence as he battles cancer has pared that edge to 50-49, making every GOP vote decisive.

The pressure on Collins and Murkowski is just starting. Demand Justice, a new group helping coordinate liberal opposition to the pick, has started airing ads in Maine and Alaska, part of \$5 million it plans to spend nationally during the campaign.

"Why won't she rule out voting for Trump's anti-choice picks?" each spot asks. The American Civil Liberties Union began similar TV ads in both states.

A Republican defection would turn the tables and focus attention on three Democrats seeking re-election in states that gave Trump landslides in 2016: Indiana's Joe Donnelly, Joe Manchin of West Virginia and North Dakotan Heidi Heitkamp.

If Republicans have the votes to prevail, some Democrats looking ahead to November's elections for congressional control want to give the three moderates room to stray if they so decide.

"There's a reason we still have the ACA, OK?" Jim Kessler, vice president of Third Way, the centrist Democratic group, said of Obama's Affordable Care Act, which the Senate narrowly thwarted Trump from dismantling last year. "And that's because we have these senators."

But the three moderates' decisions about voting would be far more fraught if the nominee's fate is in the balance. They'd face enormous pressure from the party's liberal base and probably Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y.

"Then his job becomes exponentially harder," Patrick Griffin, a former top Democratic White House and Senate aide, said of Schumer. Griffin said at that point, Schumer would likely tell them, "I need you, because the argument would be defeat of the candidate is paramount."

Whatever happens, the fight offers both parties a chance to raise money and galvanize voters. Right now, it seems unlikely that Senate Republicans would sink a Trump nominee, due to the sky-high stakes and the country's hyper-partisan political climate.

Yet that would still confront top Democrats with a tough balancing act, even as Election Day rolls closer. They'd need to satisfy anti-Trump liberal voters demanding a battle royale against his selection while allowing Heitkamp, Manchin and Donnelly latitude to make their own voting decisions.

The brewing fight is already highlighting Democrats' strains.

Winnie Wong, political adviser of Women's March, said her liberal activist group is planning marches, rallies and "massive civil disobedience" and said Schumer should press all Democrats to oppose Trump's nominee. Women's March helped organize a noisy Senate office building protest against Trump immigration policies last week in which nearly 600 women were arrested.

"I want them to hold the line and I don't want them to cave," said Wong.

Republicans are mocking Democratic opposition to a nominee who's not yet been named. "Radical Left Takes The Reins," headlined an email aides to Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., sent reporters.

Aiming their comments at Collins and Murkowski, Demand Justice and other liberal organizations said

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Thursday that Trump's nominee must explicitly endorse the rights to abortion, contraception and same-sex marriage and voice support for Obama's health care statute.

Collins has said she would not back someone hostile to *Roe v. Wade*, the 1973 Supreme Court decision that established the right to abortion. The groups said her litmus test was insufficient because past nominees have said they'd honor precedents but ruled otherwise as justices.

Schumer this week called abortion rights and the health care law "the most consequential issues" at stake in the fight. By painting those guidelines in a *New York Times* column, Schumer offered a roadmap for Donnelly, Manchin and Heitkamp.

Their states' conservative voters would be uncomfortable with a senator voting "no" based on abortion rights. But defending Obama's health care law is popular, especially provisions like its protections for people with pre-existing medical conditions. That could give those endangered Democrats a safer political pathway to opposing the pick.

Liberal organizations are already preparing the battlefield. The anti-Trump group Indivisible is organizing demonstrations around the country next week. Abortion-rights groups are planning a "Day of Action" for August 26, the anniversary of the 1920 adoption of the 19th Amendment giving women the right to vote.

Brian Fallon, Demand Justice's executive director, said the group plans spots next week in Manchin's, Donnelly's and Heitkamp's home states asking them to continue protecting patients with pre-existing conditions by opposing a nominee who'd threaten that.

Trump weighs 2 or 3 candidates for court, to meet with Pence

By CATHERINE LUCEY, ZEKE MILLER and KEN THOMAS, Associated Press

BERKELEY HEIGHTS, N.J. (AP) — Savoring the suspense, President Donald Trump is weighing his choice on a replacement for retiring Supreme Court Justice Anthony Kennedy from the seclusion of his golf club in New Jersey, consulting with the vice president and others as he zeroes in on a nominee.

Ahead of a Monday night announcement from the East Room in the White House, the president told reporters he was focused on four people and "of the four people I have it down to three or two." He was set to have dinner Friday night with Vice President Mike Pence, who has also been meeting with the finalists.

The president's top contenders include federal appeals court judges Amy Coney Barrett, Brett Kavanaugh and Raymond Kethledge, with federal appeals court judge Thomas Hardiman still considered in the mix. As part of the rollout process, the White House has been preparing information packages on all four, said two people familiar with the process who were not authorized to speak publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Starting from a list of 25 names vetted by conservative groups, Trump has also given serious consideration to federal appeals court judges Amul Thapar and Joan Larsen, and it's possible the White House will prepare materials for more people. The president enjoyed the suspenseful process leading up to his announcement last year that he was nominating Neil Gorsuch for the high court and is hoping to keep the guessing game going until he announces his pick Monday in prime time.

The president and White House officials involved in the process have fielded calls and messages and have been on the receiving end of public pleas and op-eds for or against specific candidates ever since Kennedy announced on June 27 that he would retire this summer.

As Trump's list tightened, there was some internal concern that the president's options could be narrowed by the public outcry — particularly what had appeared to be mounting conservative reservations about Kavanaugh. But in recent days the White House has seen the pressure ebb, as Kavanaugh's defenders — most recently Alberto Gonzales, who served as attorney general under President George W. Bush — have provided balance.

Now, advisers believe, all of Trump's finalists can earn the support of the president's party, and ultimately confirmation. All he has to do is make up his mind.

"I am interviewing some extraordinarily talented and brilliant people and I'm very, very happy with them and we will pick somebody who will be outstanding, hopefully for many years to come," Trump said Thursday.

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Pence met in person with Kethledge and Barrett while he was vacationing in Indiana earlier this week and met with Kavanaugh at the Naval Observatory on Wednesday, said a person familiar with the process who was not authorized to speak publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity. Pence has also spoken to Republican senators, including Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas and Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky, about the process.

As Trump closes in on his second court pick in two years — a nominee who could tip the balance toward conservatives and revisit landmark rulings on abortion access, gay marriage and other issues — momentum is also growing among GOP supporters and detractors of the top contenders.

Aware that judicial picks are key voting issues, Trump has stressed that he wants a justice who will be a strict constitutionalist. Viewed warily by his party's conservative base, Trump has been keen to note that all of his picks have been vetted by conservative groups like the Heritage Foundation and the Federalist Society. He also prioritizes academic credentials and likes to have a breadth of legal opinions to gauge how the judge applies the law.

Conservatives and some libertarian-leaning Republicans, including Paul, have raised concerns about Kavanaugh, warning he could disappoint Republicans if his past decisions are a guide. Paul and Cruz are supporting fellow Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, who is not said to be under serious consideration by the White House but is the only lawmaker Trump has considered for the position.

With the Senate narrowly divided, 51-49, in favor of Republicans, Trump's announcement will set off a contentious confirmation process as Republicans seek to shift the court to the right and Democrats strive to block that effort. And with the ailing Arizona Sen. John McCain away from Washington, any GOP defections could begin to doom a nominee.

Kavanaugh's allies have begun pushing back, reaching out to influential Republicans to ward off potential criticisms, according to one conservative who was the recipient of such outreach and spoke on condition of anonymity Thursday to discuss the situation.

In *The Washington Post*, Gonzales pushed back against the criticism of Kavanaugh's past decisions, as well as the suggestion that his time in Bush's administration as staff secretary in the executive office marks him as an "establishment" Republican.

"I remind my Republican friends that Justice Neil M. Gorsuch also served in the George W. Bush administration, yet I do not recall conservatives using that as an excuse to question his commitment to the rule of law or to conservative principles," Gonzales wrote.

Some conservatives have pointed to Kethledge as a potential justice in the mold of Gorsuch. Both Kethledge and Gorsuch once served Kennedy as law clerks, as did Kavanaugh. Kethledge, a Michigan Law graduate, would add academic diversity to a court steeped in the Ivy League.

Barrett's profile rose rapidly last year with conservative groups after her confirmation hearing featured questioning from Democrats over how her Roman Catholic faith would affect her decisions. A former law clerk to Justice Antonin Scalia and a longtime Notre Dame Law School professor, she serves on the 7th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

Hardiman was a runner-up for the vacancy ultimately filled by Gorsuch. He has a personal connection to the president, having served with Trump's sister, Maryanne Trump Barry, on the Philadelphia-based 3rd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

Associated Press writers Lisa Mascaro, Darlene Superville, Ken Thomas and Alan Fram in Washington and Bruce Schreiner in Louisville, Kentucky, contributed to this report.

Syrian troops recapture vital border crossing with Jordan

By OMAR AKOUR and BASSEM MROUE, Associated Press

JABER AS-SARHAN, Jordan (AP) — Syrian government forces recaptured a vital border crossing with Jordan on Friday and raised the national flag for the first time in years, restoring sovereignty over a key region and potentially reopening a gateway for Syrian exports to Arab countries.

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Weakened by a crushing government offensive backed by Russia and abandoned by their U.S. allies, rebels in southern Syria found themselves compelled to accept yet another humiliating surrender deal that would see opposition fighters transported by buses to areas held by rebels in the country's north.

The capture of the Naseeb border crossing came hours after the rebels announced they had reached an agreement with Russian mediators to end the violence in Daraa province and surrender the crossing.

It marks the return of President Bashar Assad's forces to the province where the uprising against him began seven years ago, following successive military victories across most of the country with the help of powerful allies Russia and Iran.

It also underscores America's remarkable declining role and influence in Syria.

"What is happening in southern Syria is a big achievement for the Syrian army and its allies and a resounding defeat for America, Israel and their allies," said an official of the Iranian-backed Hezbollah militia, Ali Daamoush, during a Friday prayers sermon in Beirut.

The rebels in southern Syria once received significant backing and support from the U.S. that has receded and all but dried up over the past few years. Although the U.S. government negotiated a de-escalation agreement for southern Syria last year, it has remained silent as Assad's forces marched onto Daraa in the past two weeks in a crushing assault that displaced more than 330,000 people.

Similarly, Israel is quietly acknowledging that Assad's forces will soon be on its doorstep, laying down red lines for postwar relations with the Syrian leader. Israel's main concern now is to keep archrival Iran as far away from its border as possible — along with its proxy, the Lebanese militia Hezbollah.

The government's offensive to retake Daraa and the nearby Quneitra region on the frontier near the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights began on June 19, and is now expected to turn more forcefully toward retaking Quneitra, potentially setting up a clash with Hezbollah and Iran unless they agree to stay away from the area as Israel demands.

The assault has forced hundreds of thousands to flee toward the sealed Jordanian border and the frontier near the Golan in one of the largest displacements in the seven-year Syrian conflict. Dozens have been killed.

An Associated Press journalist on the Jordanian side of the border could see the Syrian side of the crossing, along with the former free zone and some blue tents housing displaced people. The Syrian flag flew in the distance, along with what appeared to be a Russian flag.

The rebels seized control of the crossing in 2015, severing a major lifeline for Syrian exports and disrupting a major trade route between Syria and Jordan, Lebanon and the oil-rich Gulf countries.

There was no immediate comment from Jordan on the Syrian forces' recapture of the Naseeb crossing. On Twitter, Jordanian Foreign Minister Ayman Safadi said Amman was holding talks with all parties to the Syrian conflict focused on ensuring the return of the displaced.

"The solution is political and the protection of civilians, preventing their displacement and saving the (Syrian) brothers more suffering is everyone's responsibility," he wrote.

The rebels accused Washington of betraying the opposition fighters after international community bowed to Russian pressure.

"We were betrayed mostly by the Americans. We should have been cautious by our friends and the betrayal of friends," the spokesman for the rebels' joint operations room, Ibrahim Jabawi, said bitterly.

Hezbollah, meanwhile, boasted that some of its elite units were helping to direct battles close to the front with the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.

An official with the Iran-led coalition supporting Assad, known as the axis of resistance, told the AP that the Hezbollah forces were deployed and ready to take part in fighting when needed. The claim could not be independently verified.

"Our comrades are taking part in planning and in directing operations," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak to the media. "Our fighters are present in limited numbers to intervene when needed but so far the Syrian army has been carrying out the mission."

Hezbollah has sent thousands of fighters to Syria since 2013 to help Assad's forces, tipping the balance

of power in his favor in several areas, including along the border with Lebanon. The group has in the past aired videos of its fighters' participation but this time they appeared to be taking a lower profile so as not to escalate tensions in a region where any wrong step could lead to a regional war.

Jabawi, the rebel spokesman, said that under the Russian-mediated surrender agreement, the insurgents would begin to hand over some of their heavy weapons in return for a government pullout from several southern villages.

He added that Russian military police would deploy along the border with Jordan, including at the Naseeb crossing, and that rebels opposed to the deal would be evacuated to rebel-held regions in northern Syria.

Friday's agreement came after the bombardment of rebel-held areas intensified earlier this week after the rebels rejected a deal with the Russians. The crushing new wave of attacks appears to have compelled the rebels to accept the deal.

A Syrian man on the Syrian side of the border said he and his family had been camped out near the Jordanian border for 10 days after fleeing the bombardment and airstrikes. The 70-year-old, identifying himself only as Abu Mohammed, said Syrian troops were now heading for the border.

"We are stuck here and God only knows what the regime will be doing now," he said by telephone, with the sounds of children around him.

He said he was angry at Jordan for keeping its border closed "and watching us dying."

Assad's forces, he added bitterly, will now take over the crossing points with Jordan "so (Jordan's) economic interest will resume at our expense."

Earlier on Friday, the government-controlled Central Military Media said government forces now control most of the towns and villages on the eastern side of southern Daraa province.

Mroue reported from Beirut. Associated Press writers Albert Aji in Damascus, Syria, Fares Akram in Amman, Jordan, and Zeina Karam in Beirut contributed to this report.

33 Chinese dead in boat sinking off Thai island, 23 missing

By VINCENT THIAN, Associated Press

PHUKET, Thailand (AP) — Thai authorities on Friday evening suspended the search for missing tourists who were on a boat that sank during a storm off the southern resort island of Phuket, as the death toll rose to 33, all of them Chinese nationals.

The search for another 23 people still missing will resume at 5 a.m. Saturday, said Prapan Khanprasang, chief of the Phuket Provincial Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Office.

The accident appeared to be Thai tourism's biggest disaster in years, and drew sharp attention from the Chinese Embassy in Bangkok. Visitors to Thailand from China totaled more than 9.8 million people in 2017, constituting the largest share by country of a record 35.38 million foreign tourists in all.

The death toll jumped after the navy sent divers to enter the wreck of the tour boat, which capsized and sank Thursday evening when it was hit by 5-meter (16-foot) -high waves. It was carrying 105 people, including 93 tourists, 11 crew and one tour guide. At least 12 of the injured were hospitalized.

In images Thursday after the sinking, rescued people sat in large rubber life rafts surrounded by churning seas. Wearing life jackets, the survivors were then moved to the deck of what appeared to be a fishing trawler.

As the seas calmed Friday, divers were transporting the bodies of the dead, including at least one child, from smaller boats to a larger ship taking part in the search effort.

Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-ocha, the leader of Thailand's military government, expressed his "sympathies and deepest condolences" to the families of the dead.

The government will "exert all efforts to find those still missing and provide support to all survivors of this tragic event," he said in a statement.

Reports in Thai media said police charged the owner and captain of the stricken ship with carelessness causing death and injury.

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Chinese Ambassador Lyu Jian had an “emergency conversation” by phone with Thai Deputy Prime Minister Somkid Jatusripitak, the Chinese Embassy said in a statement quoting the envoy calling on Thailand to quickly mobilize an intensive search for the missing and “to tend and make appropriate arrangements for the rescued Chinese tourists, treat and cure the injured and receive family members of the Chinese tourists involved.”

Ambassador Lyu said it hoped the cause of the capsizing would be quickly ascertained and asked Somkid to have the relevant Thai agencies closely cooperate with China on the matter.

Fatal accidents among foreign tourists at Thai beaches are not unusual, but normally involve drownings in unsafe swimming areas or accidents involving smaller boats.

Thai officials were rushing to cope with some of the logistics of the aftermath of the sinking.

At the request of Phuket’s governor, the Phuket Tourist Association was seeking 80 volunteer Chinese language translators to assist the outgoing Chinese passengers at the provincial airport.

Many of the victims had been on group tours, booked in Phuket and China.

The government of the eastern Chinese city of Haining in Zhejiang province said on its official microblog account that it received a distress alert sent by phone text message from the head of the Haining Haipai Furniture Co. Ltd., from Thailand Friday morning.

It said that 37 of the furniture company’s employees and family members had traveled together to Phuket and that on July 5 at around 5 p.m. they encountered the “biggest storm in five years” and they sought the government’s help. The group had booked their tours to the islands online on their own, said the posting.

A Chinese tour operator based in the central province of Hunan said on its official Sina Weibo account that three travelers it had booked were missing.

Lazy Cat Travel said it had sent personnel to Phuket to help out its clients, who also included 35 passengers who had to be rescued from another boat that it had chartered that ran into trouble on Thursday. It said that second boat had lost power after being swamped by waves. All on board were returned safely to shore.

The accidents came as rescuers, also led by Thai navy divers, support 12 boys and their soccer coach stranded nearly two weeks inside a flooded cave in the country’s far north, and try to determine how and when to extract them.

Associated Press researcher Shanshan Wang in Beijing contributed to this report.

US adds a solid 213,000 jobs; unemployment up to 4 pct.

By JOSH BOAK, AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. employers kept up a brisk hiring pace in June by adding 213,000 jobs, a sign of confidence in the economy despite the start of a potentially punishing trade war with China.

The job growth wasn’t enough to keep the unemployment rate from rising from 3.8 percent to 4 percent, the government said Friday. But the rate rose for an encouraging reason: More people felt it was a good time to begin looking for a job, though not all of them immediately found one.

The growing optimism that people can find work suggested that the 9-year old U.S. economic expansion — the second-longest on record — has the momentum to keep chugging along. Yet its path ahead is uncertain. Just hours before the monthly jobs report was released, the Trump administration imposed taxes on \$34 billion in Chinese imports, and Beijing hit back with tariffs on the same amount of U.S. goods.

“The tariffs jumble things about what we should expect to see in the next few months,” said Cathy Barrera, chief economist at ZipRecruiter, the online jobs marketplace.

Some companies will likely respond to the tariffs by putting their hiring plans on hold until the trade picture becomes clearer.

Major U.S. stock indexes were mostly higher Friday after the jobs report was issued, keeping the market on track for a weekly gain after two weeks of losses.

The June jobs data showed an economy that may be on the cusp of producing stronger pay growth,

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something that could be disrupted if additional tariffs are imposed. Trump has suggested that more than \$500 billion worth of Chinese imports could be taxed in his drive to force Beijing to reform its trade policies, which he insists have unfairly victimized the United States.

Average hourly pay rose just 2.7 percent in June from 12 months earlier. That relatively modest increase means that, after adjusting for inflation, overall wages remain nearly flat. But the average was skewed downward in June because the job seekers were mainly those with only a high school education or less, who are generally paid lower wages, Barrera noted.

The ranks of unemployed people seeking jobs jumped by 499,000 in June, which caused the unemployment rate to rise from its previous 18 year-low. With 93 straight months of job growth — a historical record — many employers have said they're feeling pressure to raise wages. But significant pay gains have yet to emerge in the economic data.

Mara Fortin, who owns seven Nothing Bundt Cake stores in the San Diego area, said she raised pay last month to \$13 an hour from \$11.50. A widespread availability of jobs and the prospect of higher wages at other employers made it harder to retain workers, she said.

"In the past six months, people were just leaving right and left," she said. "We've seen that happen at an alarming rate."

Manufacturers added 36,000 jobs last month. The education and health sector added 54,000. But retailers shed 21,600 jobs, with the losses concentrated at general merchandise stores.

In its report Friday, the government revised up its estimate of job growth in May and April by a combined 37,000. Over the past three months, the economy has produced a robust average monthly job gain of 211,000.

The broader U.S. economy appears sturdy. Economists are forecasting that economic growth accelerated to an annual pace of roughly 4 percent during the April-June quarter, about double the previous quarter's pace.

Signs of strength have helped bolster hiring despite the difficulty many employers say they're having in finding enough qualified workers to fill jobs.

Manufacturers and services firms have said in recent surveys that their business is improving despite anxiety about the tariff showdown. Housing starts have climbed 11 percent so far this year. Retail sales jumped a strong 0.8 percent in May in a sign that consumers feel secure enough to spend.

Though economic growth appears to be solid, the gains have been spread unevenly. President Donald Trump's tax cuts have provided a dose of stimulus this year, but the benefits have been tilted significantly toward wealthy individuals and corporations. Savings from the tax cuts enabled companies in the Standard & Poor's 500 stock index to buy back a record number of shares in the first three months of 2018.

Yet the tax cuts have done little to generate substantial pay growth. Most economists say they still think the low unemployment rate will eventually force more employers to offer higher pay in order to fill jobs.

The economy also faces a substantial threat from the trade tension with China and from other trade disputes with U.S. allies, including Canada and Europe. Any escalation in the conflict with China could disrupt hiring as companies grapple with higher import prices and diminished demand for their exports. On Thursday, Trump floated the prospect of imposing tariffs on more than \$500 billion in Chinese imports.

The Trump administration has also applied tariffs on steel and aluminum from allies like Canada and Mexico and has threatened to abandon the North American Free Trade Agreement. Trump has spoken about slapping tariffs on imported cars, trucks and auto parts, which General Motors has warned could hurt the U.S. auto industry and drive up car prices. Automakers added 12,000 jobs in June.

Cult leader executed for Japan sarin attacks still a mystery

By MARI YAMAGUCHI, Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — The execution of Japanese doomsday cult leader Shoko Asahara leaves unanswered questions about Aum Shinrikyo, which carried out the 1995 sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway that killed 13 people and sickened 6,000.

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Japanese government spokesman Yoshihide Suga confirmed that Asahara was executed Friday. The authorities said six other cult members were hanged.

Born Chizuo Matsumoto in 1955, Asahara founded Aum Shinrikyo, or Supreme Truth, in the mid-1980s. It attracted young people disillusioned with the modern materialistic way of life.

Half-blind, with a shaggy hair and beard, Asahara was the key figure in the stunningly random and lethal attack targeting Tokyo commuters.

He used a mixture of Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity and yoga to draw followers. They took part in bizarre rituals, such as drinking his bathwater and wearing electrical caps they believed synchronized their brain waves with Asahara's.

Asahara chose doctors, lawyers and scientists from Japan's top universities as his top aides, making them ministers of his pseudo-government of the Aum empire. They worshipped him and carried out his orders.

The group used donations from followers and earnings from yoga classes and health food businesses to amass cash to buy land and equipment. They made and bought conventional weapons in and outside Japan, while the scientists he had recruited developed and manufactured sarin, VX and other deadly chemical and biological weapons.

During his trial, Asahara often used diapers and sat on a cushion intended to make his incontinence inconspicuous. He stopped communicating with his children and defense team.

A court-appointed psychiatrist suggested he might be faking insanity to avoid punishment. The initial death sentence in 2004 became final after his defense team could not file an appeal citing his mental state.

In a rare interview in 2006, two of Asahara's four daughters told The Associated Press that never in dozens of visits to him in prison had they had a real conversation.

Asahara just sat and at times fidgeted or grunted. The daughters' repeated petitions for retrials were refused. They said his condition might have worsened since the last being allowed to see him in 2008.

Yoshihiro Yasuda, Asahara's main lawyer during his trial, said the last time he was allowed to see Asahara at the detention center was in 2006. After that, the Tokyo detention center rejected requests for meetings with Asahara more than 400 times, citing the absence of a reaction from Asahara.

Yasuda sought medical treatment for Asahara and said in April 2018 that he had appealed for his release. The reasons behind the sarin gas attack remain an enigma.

Cult members have said they believed Asahara's prophesy that an apocalypse was coming and they alone would survive it.

Even before the attack, in 1989, lawyer Tsutsumi Sakamoto, who opposed the cult, his wife and baby boy were murdered by cult members.

Tomomasa Nakagawa, a doctor also executed Friday, and several other cultists broke into the Sakamotos' apartment late at night, strangled them to death and buried them in the mountains.

Cult activities escalated after the defeat of Aum members in the 1990 parliamentary election. During their bizarre election campaign, Asahara and his top disciples sang and danced to the guru's songs.

In June 1994, the cult spread sarin gas in Matsumoto in central Japan, killing eight people and injuring more than 140 others, in an attack targeting residents who were protesting the cult's presence in their neighborhood and court officials handling their legal disputes.

Nakagawa and key members produced sarin at a cult compound and sprayed it from a van, in what was later regarded as an experiment for the subsequent subway gassing.

Under intensifying scrutiny from the government, the cult plotted the larger sarin attack on the subways in Tokyo on March 20, 1995.

Asahara guided the attack, according to testimony by his right-hand man, Yoshihiro Inoue, who also was executed Friday. Inoue headed Aum's intelligence unit and was one of the few cult members who later turned against Asahara.

The five cultists who carried bags of sarin onto the trains targeted three subway lines converging at Kasumigaseki, Japan's government and political center similar equivalent to Washington's Capitol Hill.

The horrifying scenes in the aftermath of the attack shocked a country where the crime rate is relatively

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low and people tend to take their personal safety for granted.

The investigation into the attack uncovered more doomsday preparations, weapons arsenals and multiple killings by Aum.

Asahara was captured two months later, dragged out of a hidden compartment in a ceiling where he had holed up to evade arrest.

In 2004, he was convicted of having killed 27 people in 13 murders and other assaults and kidnappings spanning six years that culminated in the subway attack in his elaborate scheme to hasten Armageddon that he threatened.

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US stocks snap higher despite escalating US-China trade tiff

By ALEX VEIGA, AP Business Writer

The trade dispute between the U.S. and China escalated Friday, but Wall Street focused on a solid jobs report instead.

After a wobbly start, U.S. stocks mounted a broad rally, shaking off two consecutive weekly losses.

Growing jitters in recent weeks over a stepped-up trading dispute between the world's two largest economies had weighed on the markets well ahead of Friday, when Beijing and Washington launched dueling tariffs on billions in goods.

"The markets had already sold off the prior two weeks," said Dan Heckman, national investment consultant at U.S. Bank Wealth Management. "The market probably had built that expectation in already and today we're seeing a nice rebound."

A solid pickup in hiring by U.S. employers last month also helped keep investors in a buying mood.

The S&P 500 index rose 23.21 points, or 0.8 percent, to 2,759.82. The Dow Jones Industrial Average gained 99.74 points, or 0.4 percent, to 24,456.48. The Nasdaq composite added 101.96 points, or 1.3 percent, to 7,688.39. The Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks picked up 14.57 points, or 0.9 percent, to 1,694.05.

The U.S. put a 25 percent tax on \$34 billion worth of Chinese imports Friday. China retaliated with taxes on an equal amount of U.S. products, including soybeans, pork and electric cars, calling the move the start of the "biggest trade war in economic history."

Though the first exchange of tariffs is unlikely to inflict much economic harm on either nation, the damage could soon escalate. President Donald Trump, who has claimed that winning a trade war would be easy, has said that he's prepared to drastically raise tariffs on more Chinese imports. Mounting tariffs could raise costs across the board for consumers and businesses, slowing growth and investment and hurting companies that rely on imported parts to make their goods.

Despite the market's gains Friday, much damage has already been inflicted on stocks that would stand to lose in a protracted trade battle with China. American companies that do a lot of business there have seen steep drops in their stock prices in the past few weeks.

Aircraft maker Boeing, which relies on China for 12.3 percent of its sales, according to FactSet, has seen its stock fall 9.9 percent over the last month as the trade tensions with China worsened.

Heavy equipment maker Caterpillar, for whom China is also its second-biggest market after the U.S., is off 13.5 percent over the same time. Liquor maker Brown-Forman, whose products include Jack Daniels, is off 15 percent since late May. Whiskey, along with soybeans, pork and cheese, is among the products Chinese is slapping retaliatory tariffs on.

As the prospect of Chinese tariffs on soybeans grew in recent weeks, the price of soybeans has fallen sharply. Soybean futures have fallen from \$10.42 a bushel in late May to \$8.95 Friday, a drop of 14 percent.

That hurts U.S. soybean farmers and could also have an impact on makers of farm equipment, such as Deere & Co. Deere's stock has fallen 11.7 percent over the last month. Last year China bought 30 percent

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of the soybeans produced in the U.S.

"The market is counting on this to subside," said Erik Davidson, chief investment officer at Wells Fargo Private Bank. "If they get an indication that this will continue to escalate, that will cause some problems."

Investors also welcomed new data Friday from the government showing that U.S. employers kept up a brisk pace of hiring last month, without having to hike wages much. Markets have been watching to see if tight labor market conditions would force wages higher, a sign of inflation.

The Labor Department said that U.S. employers added 213,000 jobs in June. Average hourly pay rose just 2.7 percent from a year earlier, which means that after adjusting for inflation wages remain nearly flat.

Health care stocks posted the biggest gains, led by Biogen. The drugmaker's stock soared 19.6 percent to \$357.48 on encouraging results from an Alzheimer's therapy.

Technology companies also notched solid gains. Advanced Micro Devices rose 5.6 percent to \$16.36.

U.S. crude oil prices reversed an early slide. Benchmark U.S. crude gained 86 cents, or 1.2 percent, to settle at \$73.80 per barrel in New York. Brent crude, used to price international oils, fell 28 cents to close at \$77.11 per barrel in London.

Bond prices rose. The yield on the 10-year Treasury fell to 2.82 percent from 2.83 percent late Thursday.

The dollar fell to 110.45 yen from 110.68 yen on Thursday. The euro strengthened to \$1.1745 from \$1.1680.

Gold dropped \$3 to \$1,255.80 an ounce. Silver slipped 3 cents to \$16.07 an ounce. Copper was little changed at \$2.82 a pound.

In other energy futures trading, heating oil slipped 1 cent to \$2.17 a gallon. Wholesale gasoline lost 2 cents to \$2.11 a gallon. Natural gas rose 2 cents to \$2.86 per 1,000 cubic feet.

Major indexes in Europe finished higher. Germany's DAX added 0.3 percent, while France's CAC 40 rose 0.2 percent. Britain's FTSE 100 gained 0.2 percent.

Asian markets erased earlier losses to finish mostly higher as the uncertainty ended over whether Washington would escalate tensions with Beijing. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index gained 0.5 percent, while South Korea's Kospi added 0.7 percent. Tokyo's Nikkei 225 jumped 1.1 percent after a four-day losing streak. Australia's S&P-ASX 200 rose 0.9 percent.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Saturday, July 7, the 188th day of 2018. There are 177 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 7, 1865, four people were hanged in Washington, D.C. for conspiring with John Wilkes Booth to assassinate President Abraham Lincoln: Lewis Powell (aka Lewis Payne), David Herold, George Atzerodt and Mary Surratt, the first woman to be executed by the federal government.

On this date:

In 1846, U.S. annexation of California was proclaimed at Monterey after the surrender of a Mexican garrison.

In 1898, the United States annexed Hawaii.

In 1919, the first Transcontinental Motor Convoy, in which a U.S. Army convoy of motorized vehicles crossed the United States, departed Washington, D.C. (The trip ended in San Francisco on Sept. 6, 1919.)

In 1937, the Second Sino-Japanese War erupted into full-scale conflict as Imperial Japanese forces attacked the Marco Polo Bridge in Beijing.

In 1946, Italian-born Mother Frances Xavier Cabrini was canonized as the first American saint by Pope Pius XII. Jimmy Carter, 21, married Rosalynn (ROH'-zuh-lihn) Smith, 18, in Plains, Georgia.

In 1948, six female U.S. Navy reservists became the first women to be sworn in to the regular Navy.

In 1954, Elvis Presley made his radio debut as Memphis, Tennessee, station WHBQ played his first recording for Sun Records, "That's All Right."

In 1969, Canada's House of Commons gave final approval to the Official Languages Act, making French

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equal to English throughout the national government.

In 1976, President and Mrs. Gerald R. Ford hosted a White House dinner for Britain's Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Philip. The United States Military Academy at West Point included female cadets for the first time as 119 women joined the Class of 1980.

In 1981, President Ronald Reagan announced he was nominating Arizona Judge Sandra Day O'Connor to become the first female justice on the U.S. Supreme Court.

In 1987, Lt. Col. Oliver North began his long-awaited public testimony at the Iran-Contra hearing, telling Congress that he had "never carried out a single act, not one," without authorization.

In 1990, the first "Three Tenors" concert took place as opera stars Luciano Pavarotti, Placido Domingo and Jose Carreras performed amid the brick ruins of Rome's Baths of Caracalla on the eve of the World Cup championship.

Ten years ago: A suicide bomber struck the Indian Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan, killing at least 60 people. President George W. Bush met Russian President Dmitry Medvedev for the first time at the Group of Eight summit in Hokkaido, Japan. Actress Nicole Kidman gave birth to a girl; she and her husband, country star Keith Urban, named their daughter Sunday Rose Kidman Urban.

Five years ago: A de Havilland DHC-3 Otter air taxi crashed after taking off from Soldotna, Alaska, killing all 10 people on board. Andy Murray became the first British man in 77 years to win the Wimbledon title, beating Novak Djokovic 6-4, 7-5, 6-4 in the final.

One year ago: Islamic militants attacked a remote Egyptian army outpost in the Sinai Peninsula with a suicide car bomb and heavy machine gun fire, killing at least 23 soldiers in the deadliest attack in the turbulent region in two years. The 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals dismissed Hawaii's attempt to challenge Trump administration rules for a travel ban on citizens from six majority-Muslim countries, saying it didn't have jurisdiction to address the issue.

Today's Birthdays: Musician-conductor Doc Severinsen is 91. Pulitzer Prize-winning author David McCullough is 85. Rock star Ringo Starr is 78. Comedian Bill Oddie is 77. Singer-musician Warren Entner (The Grass Roots) is 75. Actor Joe Spano is 72. Pop singer David Hodo (The Village People) is 71. Country singer Linda Williams is 71. Actress Shelley Duvall is 69. Actress Roz Ryan is 67. Actor Billy Campbell is 59. Actor Robert Taylor is 58. Rock musician Mark White (Spin Doctors) is 56. Singer-songwriter Vonda Shepard is 55. Actor-comedian Jim Gaffigan is 52. Rhythm-and-blues musician Ricky Kinchen (Mint Condition) is 52. Actress Amy Carlson is 50. Actress Jorja Fox is 50. Actress Cree Summer is 49. Actress Robin Weigert is 49. Actress Kirsten Vangsness is 46. Actor Troy Garity is 45. Actress Berenice Bejo (BEH'-ruh-nees BAY'-hoh) is 42. Actor Hamish Linklater is 42. Olympic silver and bronze medal figure skater Michelle Kwan is 38. Rapper Cassidy is 36. Country singer Gabbie Nolen is 36. Actor Ross Malinger is 34. Actor-comedian Luke Null (TV: "Saturday Night Live") is 28. Pop singer Ally Hernandez (Fifth Harmony) (TV: "The X Factor") is 25. Pop musician Ashton Irwin (5 Seconds to Summer) is 24. Country singer Maddie Marlow (Maddie and Tae) is 23.

Thought for Today: "It takes people a long time to learn the difference between talent and genius, especially ambitious young men and women." — Louisa May Alcott, American author (1832-1888).