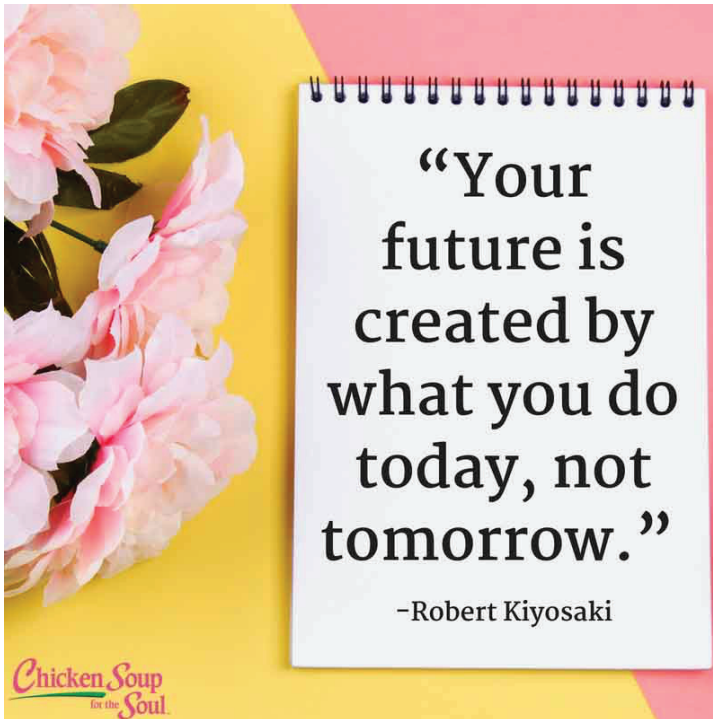


Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 18, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 009 ~ 1 of 37



- 1- Chicken Soup for the Soul
- 1- Harr Auto Body Ad
- 1- Recycling Trailer
2. Sunrise Photo
- 3- Mosquito control last night
- 4- South Dakota Earns Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting
- 4- SunDial Manor ad
- 5- Midwest Masonry ad
- 6- Today in Weather History
- 7- Today's Forecast
- 8- Yesterday's Weather
- 8- National Weather map
- 8 Today's Weather Almanac
- 9- Daily Devotional
- 10- 2018 Groton Community Events
- 11 - News from the Associated Press

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

"From minor scratches to a complete rebuild . . . we can do it all"

NOW OPEN

Harris
Auto Body ABDN

225 Brown County Hwy 19 South
Aberdeen: 605/725-4900

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 18, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 009 ~ 2 of 37



This is your sunrise photo for today!

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 18, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 009 ~ 3 of 37

Mosquito Control Tuesday Evening



41.28 miles

13 gallons Evolver 4x4

70 degrees with a SSE wind at 2 mph

South Dakota Earns Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting

PIERRE, S.D. – The Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting has been awarded to the State of South Dakota by Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada (GFOA) for its Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). The GFOA's Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment.

"This is the second consecutive year this certificate was awarded to the Bureau of Finance and Management (BFM), which is responsible for completing the State's annual financial statements" Gov. Dennis Daugaard said. "However, the achievement of this award would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of every accountant in state government, including that of our independent auditor, the Department of Legislative Audit."

The State's CAFR has been judged by an impartial panel of GFOA staff and the GFOA Special Review Committee to meet the high standards of the program, which includes demonstrating a constructive "spirit of full disclosure" to clearly communicate its financial story. South Dakota earned the highest grade of "proficient" status in all seventeen grading categories.

This achievement comes after South Dakota state government closed the 2018 budget year with a \$16.9 million surplus, while both Fitch and S&P recently reaffirmed South Dakota's AAA Issuer Default Rating with a stable outlook.



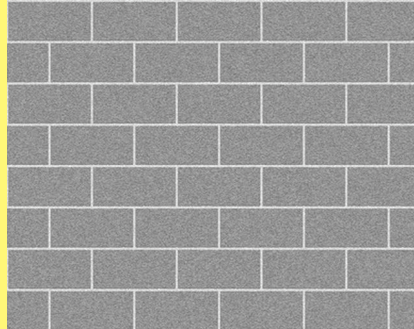
**Sun Dial Manor in Bristol
is accepting applications for
full time and part time CNA's.
12 hr. shifts - days and nights
(SIGN ON BONUS OFFERED)
DIETARY OPENINGS
Full time cook, 8 hr. shifts
(WITH SIGN ON BONUS)**

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

MIDWEST MASONRY & CONCRETE PUMPING



**NEW OR REPLACED
SIDEWALK**



BLOCK WALLS



EGRESS WINDOWS



DRIVEWAY

BASEMENT FLOORS

STONE AND BRICK

WORK



GARAGE FLOORS

Call for a free quote

605/397-8383

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 18, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 009 ~ 6 of 37

Today in Weather History

July 18, 1883: An estimated F3 tornado moved southeast from south of Redfield to north of Hitchcock, to 6 miles southeast of Crandon in Spink County. At least one farm house was destroyed and swept away. Three people were killed on one farm.

July 18, 1986: In the afternoon, an F2 tornado that touched down in the northern suburbs of Minneapolis became one of the most observed and photographed tornadoes ever. The detailed coverage included video from a Minnesota DOT traffic camera and a remarkable aerial video taken from a helicopter by a television camera crew. The tornado began in Brooklyn Park and moved slowly northeast, causing light to moderate damage. It then turned east and slowed as it crossed the Mississippi River. Also on this day, an F2 tornado touched down two miles southeast of Bryant, in Hamlin County. This tornado traveled near Dolph Creek and moved east along the creek to the Lake Norden area. The tornado damaged many trees and destroyed a barn. A second F2 tornado touched down three miles west of Toronto and moved southeast. The tornado destroyed a barn, silo, and six other buildings and caused extensive damage to farm equipment on a farm one mile south and a half mile west Astoria.








July 18, 2008: Severe thunderstorms developed across parts of central and north-central South Dakota bringing large hail up to the size of golf balls and damaging winds to near 80 mph. Some tree, vehicle, and building damage occurred with some of the storms. Eighty mph winds or higher brought down many branches along with some trees in Fort Pierre. Power was cut off for parts of Fort Pierre when branches fell on power lines. Several truck trailers and feed silos were tipped onto their sides by the high winds. Also, some buildings were damaged. A loaded train was pushed down the tracks almost a quarter of a mile by the strong winds. Seventy mph winds or greater brought down many tree branches along with some trees in Pierre. There were power outages in Pierre along with some buildings receiving damage. Damaging thunderstorm winds also downed six power poles between Sully Buttes and Onida knocking power out to over 800 homes in and around Onida.

64: The great fire of Rome breaks out and destroys much of the city on this day. Despite the well-known stories, there is no evidence that the Roman emperor, Nero, either started the fire or played the fiddle while it burned. The fire began in the slums of a district south of the legendary Palatine Hill. The area's homes burned very quickly, and the fire spread north, fueled by high winds.

1996: A massive rainstorm in north central and northeast Illinois led to widespread flooding. Aurora reported 16.94 inches of rain, establishing a state record for the most rain in a single day. Other heavy totals included 13.60 inches at Joliet, 9.24 inches in Wheaton, 8.09 inches in DeKalb, and 7.82 inches at Elgin. This event is often called "the second most damaging weather disaster in Illinois History."

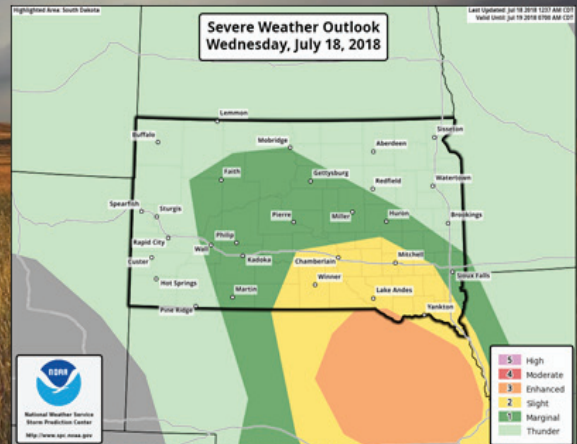
Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 18, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 009 ~ 7 of 37

Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
						
Sunny	Mostly Clear	Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms	Slight Chance T-storms then Mostly Sunny
High: 85 °F	Low: 62 °F	High: 82 °F	Low: 64 °F	High: 82 °F	Low: 63 °F	High: 80 °F

Areas of Showers and Thunderstorms Today Through Thursday Morning

- Severe storm potential to our south
- Marginal threat for central SD
- Heavy rain possible as well



National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD



Updated: 7/18/2018 5:00 AM Central

Published on: 07/18/2018 at 5:04AM

Low pressure will form and slowly move across the region today through Thursday morning, bringing areas of showers and thunderstorms. Areal coverage is forecast to increase through the day as the system moves east. The biggest threat for severe storms is centered over southeast South Dakota and into Nebraska, although there is a marginal threat over central South Dakota. Heavy rain is possible as well.

Groton Daily Independent

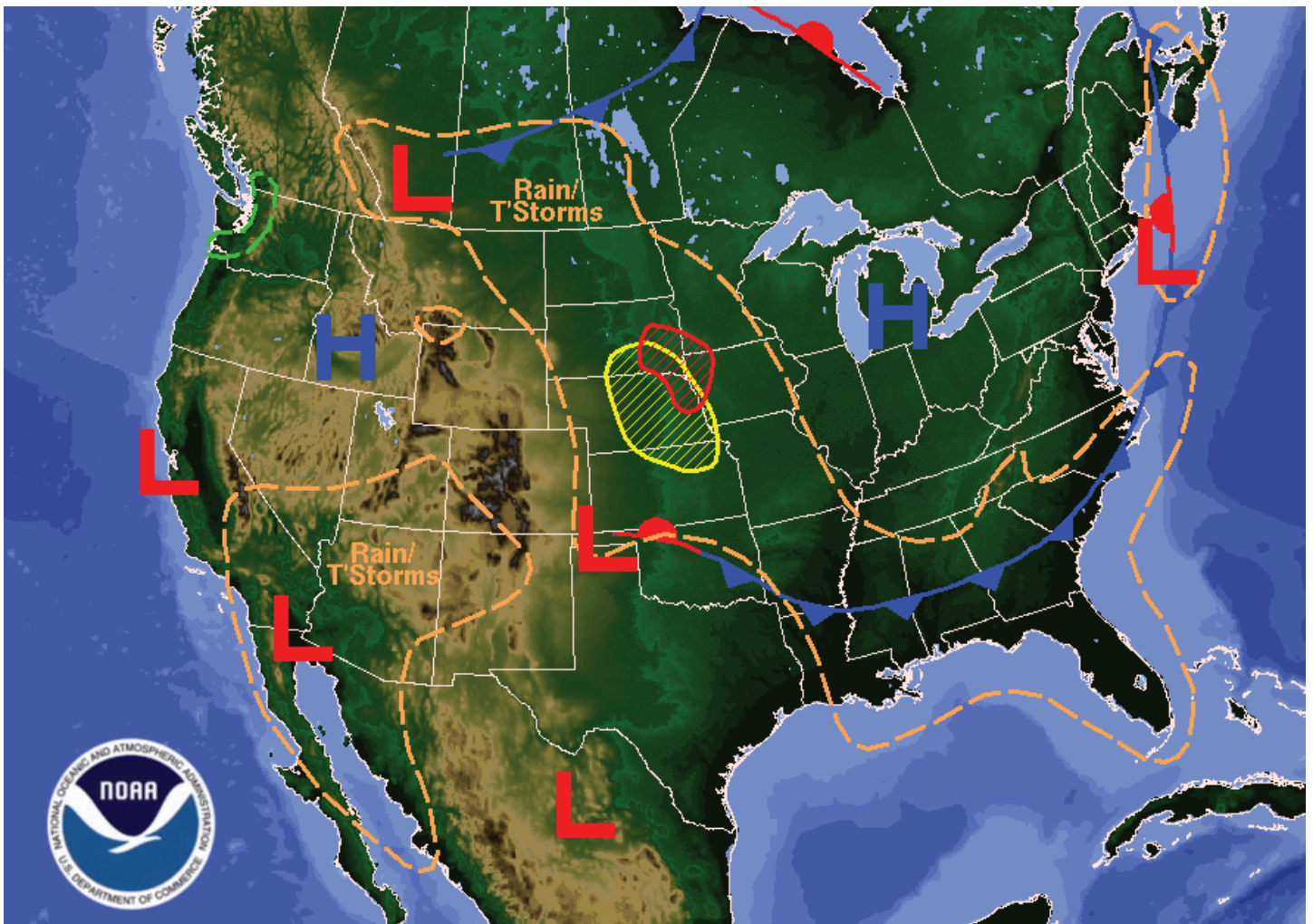
Wednesday, July 18, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 009 ~ 8 of 37

Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 88.2 F at 5:23 PM
Heat Index: 91.0 at 4:44 PM
Low Outside Temp: 61.2 F at 5:14 AM
High Gust: 12.0 Mph at 9:23 AM
Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 106° in 1936
Record Low: 40° in 1915
Average High: 84°F
Average Low: 60°F
Average Precip in July: 1.57
Precip to date in July: 2.74
Average Precip to date: 12.42
Precip Year to Date: 8.55
Sunset Tonight: 9:17 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:04 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Wed, Jul 18, 2018, issued 4:30 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McCreynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

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

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 18, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 009 ~ 9 of 37



MORE THAN LIGHT

In 1787 the HMS Bounty was sent to the Pacific Ocean on a botanical mission. After some time at sea, a seaman, Christian Fletcher, led a mutiny against Captain William Bligh. Bligh and eighteen of his men were forced off of the Bounty on a small vessel.

Most of the mutineers who remained on the Bounty were able to escape to Pitcairn Island. Among them were sixteen men and twelve native women who decided to form a colony. It was not long before the men learned how to make liquor. Soon the island became a place where drunkenness and disorderliness were a way of life. In a few years fifteen of the sixteen men were dead. The only one who survived was John Adams.

One day he was searching through an old chest that the men had taken from the Bounty. In it he found an old, tattered Bible. He opened it and shortly after he began to read it, the Holy Spirit spoke to his heart and he became a Christian. Immediately, he began to study the Bible and was so moved by its message of hope that he began to teach others the Word of God.

About twenty years later an American ship visited the island. Much to their surprise, they found a culture that was founded and governed by Christian principles. There was no crime, no racial strife, no alcohol abuse and no social problems. When Adams was asked how this came to be, he simply responded by saying, "The Bible."

"The unfolding of Your words gives light," wrote the Psalmist. God's Word will bring right living if followed.

Prayer: Lord, how wonderful our lives will be when we follow Your ways. Give us courage and willingness to obey. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 119:130a The unfolding of your words gives light;

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 18, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 009 ~ 10 of 37

2018 Groton SD Community Events

- Groton Lion's Club Bingo- Wednesday Nights 6:30pm at the Groton Legion (Year Round)
- 11/18/2017-3/31/2018 Groton Lion's Club Wheel of Meat- Saturday Nights 7pm at the Groton Legion (Fall/Winter Months)
- 1/27/2019 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm
- 4/13/2019 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 5/4/2019 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)
- 5/27/2019 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Program at the Cemetery, Lunch to follow at the American Legion (Memorial Day)
- 6/14/2018 Transit Fundraiser (Middle Thursday in June)
- 6/15/2018 SDSU Golf at Olive Grove
- 6/16/2018 Triathlon (Saturday before Father's Day)
- 7/4/2018 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
- 7/22/2018 Summer Fest (4th Sunday in July)
- 9/8/2018 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 10/6/2018 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/12/2018 Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/31/2018 Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
- 11/10/2018 Groton American Legion Post #39 Turkey Shoot (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
- 12/01/2018 Olive Grove Golf Course 2018 Holiday Party

- Best Ball Golf Tourney
- SDSU Golf Tourney
- Sunflower Golf Tourney
- Santa Claus Day
- Fireman's Stag
- Tour of Homes
- Crazy Dayz/Open Houses
- School Events

News from the Associated Press

Sioux Falls approves \$300K for park safety improvements

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Sioux Falls has approved \$1.7 million to fund city projects that include improving safety at a park where a 5-year-old drowned this spring.

The Argus Leader reports that the Sioux Falls City Council voted Tuesday to divide the money to four projects, including safety railings and viewing platforms at Falls Park. The funding package designates \$300,000 to build the park's platforms, walkways and railings beginning next year.

Mayor Paul TenHaken recommended the safety improvements last month following an external review of park safety protocols in place when a child died in March after falling into the Big Sioux River.

Some council members say they would've preferred a safety study prior to constructing the platforms and railings.

Councilor Rick Kiley says he plans to introduce a measure soon to hire a safety consultant.

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

Hy-Vee recalls spring pasta salad tied to salmonella cases

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Midwest grocery store chain Hy-Vee Inc. has recalled its store-brand spring pasta salad after 20 people got salmonella in Minnesota, South Dakota, Nebraska and Iowa.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration said Wednesday the West Des Moines-based grocery chain discovered potential salmonella contamination on Monday night and pulled the product from its shelves.

The recall includes 16-ounce and 48-ounce containers of Hy-Vee Spring Pasta Salad produced between June 1 and July 13. It was available from deli service cases in the company's 244 stores across eight states including Iowa, Illinois, Missouri, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Salmonella can cause serious and sometimes fatal infections in the young, frail and elderly.

Corsica man accused of stealing from grandmother

CORSICA, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota man is accused of theft after allegedly spending more than \$17,000 that belonged to his grandmother.

The Daily Republic reports that 48-year-old David Stetson, of Corsica, faces three felony counts of theft by exploitation. A police affidavit says Stetson had power of attorney for his grandmother, who was receiving care in a nursing home.

The document says the nursing home contacted authorities because it hadn't received payment for the woman's care. There was allegedly an outstanding balance of roughly \$11,000 as of September 2017.

Court documents say authorities in January interviewed Stetson, who allegedly admitted knowing that he wasn't meant to use the money for himself. The affidavit says Stetson used the funds to pay personal bills such as cable and utilities.

It wasn't immediately clear if Stetson has an attorney.

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

Candidate for Alaska House doesn't live in Alaska

By BECKY BOHRER, Associated Press

JUNEAU, Alaska (AP) — Carol Hafner is on the Democratic primary ballot for an Alaska U.S. House seat. She doesn't live in Alaska. In fact, she's never been to the state. Hafner, who listed New Jersey and South Dakota addresses in her candidate filing, says she's serious about running, though she doesn't plan

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 18, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 009 ~ 12 of 37

to campaign in person.

Democratic officials are questioning her authenticity and political affiliation.

Under the U.S. Constitution, to serve in Congress one must meet age and citizenship requirements and inhabit the state at the time elected. Generally, Alaska candidates in such races are from the state. But not always.

In 2014, a New York man, who has run in other states, challenged then-U.S. Sen. Mark Begich in Alaska's Democratic primary and got crushed.

It happens elsewhere, too: In Wyoming, also in 2014, an Arizona man whose campaign consisted almost entirely of sock-puppet videos, won the Democratic nomination for U.S. House — unopposed — but lost to incumbent Republican Rep. Cynthia Lummis in the general election.

"You may have a right to run, doesn't mean you're going to be well-received, or it's going to be an easy campaign for you," said Jay Parmley, executive director of the state Democratic party. "If you're not from somewhere, that's a pretty tall order."

Hafner faces long odds and has focused her attention online, where she boasts a comparable number of Twitter followers to those of the highest-profile candidates: Democrat Dimitri Shein and independent Alyse Galvin. Independents who want Democratic support can run in the party primary.

Shein and Galvin have been campaigning and participating in spirited debates ahead of the Aug. 21 primary. Republican U.S. Rep. Don Young faces little-known opponents in his primary.

Hafner listed on her candidacy filing a home and mailing address in New Jersey. She also listed an address at a mail-drop location in South Dakota popular with RVers and others with more transient lifestyles as her campaign contact on Alaska's website listing of candidates. Public records show property and voter registration records for Hafner in New Jersey.

The New Jersey addresses match those used by Eric Hafner during a failed run as a Democrat in an Oregon U.S. House primary earlier this year, which caught the attention of Julie Olsen, an Anchorage Democratic party leader. She said she was worried that Eric Hafner had "hijacked" Carol Hafner's identity and created an online persona to file for office. Olsen supports Shein.

Hafner, 64, said Eric Hafner is her son. She said he also ran unsuccessfully in the Republican primary for a U.S. House seat in Hawaii in 2016. Efforts to reach him were unsuccessful.

The Associated Press reached out to Carol Hafner via the email listed as her campaign contact. She responded by phone.

Hafner said she travels extensively and considers South Dakota her base. She said she has been in New Jersey for a family illness but is "on my way out."

She felt compelled to run to share her perspective on the environment, including climate change, education, health care and other issues. Hafner said she was stunned that Alaskans have kept Young in office for 45 years.

"I want to do good in a place that I feel a kinship for," she said.

She said she's angry that Olsen has been "playing Nancy Drew" and questioning her run.

People must pull together to solve problems, Hafner said. "Don't lock me out just because I'm not a homeboy," she said, adding later: "You ought to be thankful that I care enough and I'm interested enough and passionate enough to want to make things better."

"I'm certainly permitted to do what I have done," she said.

The Division of Elections said challenges to Hafner's candidacy by Parmley and Olsen were received after the protest deadline passed. The division said Hafner properly filed to run, a process that includes submitting a \$100 filing fee, and it had no reason to question the veracity of her candidacy.

Olsen said she'd like to see changes to the process, such as having a candidate file in person or provide a phone number or copy of their driver's license.

Kimberly Slone, of Wasilla, found out about Hafner by Googling candidates.

Slone said she sent Hafner via email questions about the Arctic National Wildlife and found that she opposes drilling there, as does Slone.

"I thought how audacious of her to run for election in Alaska," Slone said.

She donated to Hafner's campaign, but Slone said she's not sure who will get her vote. It doesn't matter to her if a candidate lives outside Alaska "as long as the candidate shows up to campaign and is knowledgeable about the state and will move here as required."

Suzanne Hudson, an antique shop owner in Juneau, said she hasn't been paying much attention to the race but bristled at the idea of an outsider weighing in on Alaska issues.

"If you don't live in the state and don't know what's going on personally, you should stay out of it, because you could be making a law or a rule that's going to really hurt a lot of people, even though it's your opinion that it's going to be better," she said.

Researcher Jennifer Farrar in New York and reporter Mead Gruver in Cheyenne, Wyoming, contributed to this report.

South Dakota mom sentenced for killing son who wet the bed

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota woman accused of beating her 2-year-old son to death after he wet his bed has been sentenced to 40 years in federal prison.

Thirty-year-old Katrina Shangreaux, of Porcupine on the Pine Ridge Reservation, pleaded guilty in March to second-degree murder in the July 2016 death of 2-year-old Kylen Shangreaux. She was sentenced Tuesday.

The Rapid City Journal reports that Shangreaux admitted assaulting the toddler with a studded belt. She also threw him to the ground, kicked him in the abdomen and head, and bit him several times.

Shangreaux's mother, Sonya Dubray, has pleaded not guilty to being an accessory and hindering the investigation.

The boy's father is serving time in federal prison for abuse and neglect of a son with a different woman.

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

Storm levels home, downs power lines in Oglala Lakota County

PINE RIDGE, S.D. (AP) — A strong storm leveled a mobile home in Manderson and knocked down power lines in Oglala Lakota County.

The National Weather Service is working to determine whether a tornado or straight-line winds caused the damage on Tuesday afternoon.

The Rapid City Journal reports that there were also widespread reports of hail in the Black Hills region. There were no immediate reports of injuries.

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

Tornado-damaged trees being salvaged in national forest

SPEARFISH, S.D. (AP) — Salvage operations are beginning this week on tornado-damaged trees in the Black Hills National Forest.

The U.S. Forest Service says the trees were damaged by a June 29 tornado that hit the Bearlodge and Northern Hills ranger districts. Commercial logging trucks and equipment will be moving into the area to begin harvesting the trees.

The operation is expected to last 6-8 weeks. The Forest Service is cautioning the public that roads in the area will see a large increase in logging traffic.

Former Spearfish volunteer fire chief accused of embezzling

SPEARFISH, S.D. (AP) — A former volunteer chief with the Spearfish Fire Department is accused of embezzling from the organization.

The Black Hills Pioneer reports that 50-year-old Lloyd Hesper Jr. faces a grand theft charge that's punish-

able by up to 10 years in prison and \$20,000 in fines.

He's accused of stealing tens of thousands of dollars over a period of about two years ending last March. The exact amount is still being determined.

Heser is free on \$1,500 bond. His attorney didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

Information from: Black Hills Pioneer, <http://www.bhpioneer.com>

Rapid City man who died in motorcycle crash identified

BOX ELDER, S.D. (AP) — Authorities have identified a Rapid City man who died in a trike motorcycle crash in Pennington County.

The Highway Patrol says 62-year-old Brian Minor was a passenger on the machine that went out of control on an Interstate 90 on-ramp near Box Elder.

The vehicle entered the ditch and hit a barbed wire fence, and Minor was pronounced dead at the scene about 1:30 p.m. Saturday.

The woman driving the motorcycle suffered serious injuries. Charges are pending against her.

South Dakota winter wheat crop one-fifth harvested

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — About one-fifth of South Dakota's winter wheat crop is now in the bin.

The federal Agriculture Department says in its weekly crop report that the winter wheat harvest is behind last year's pace but equal to the average. Most of the crop is rated in fair or good condition.

The majority of most other major crops in South Dakota also are rated in those categories.

Topsoil moisture supplies statewide are rated 78 percent adequate to surplus, with 74 percent of subsoil moisture in those categories.

Pasture and range conditions statewide are mostly rated fair or good.

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Mega Millions

40-41-61-66-67, Mega Ball: 12, Megaplier: 5

(forty, forty-one, sixty-one, sixty-six, sixty-seven; Mega Ball: twelve; Megaplier: five)

Estimated jackpot: \$375 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$110 million

State doesn't plan appeal of measure's removal from ballot

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Attorney General's office said Tuesday that the state doesn't plan to appeal after a judge barred from the ballot an initiative to cap the price state agencies could pay for prescription drugs.

Officials don't feel they have the basis for an appeal, attorney general spokeswoman Sara Rabern said in an email. Judge Patricia DeVaney on Monday sided with ballot question opponents who filed a legal challenge, issuing a writ prohibiting Secretary of State Shantel Krebs from putting the measure before voters.

DeVaney said in a separate court filing that supporters of Initiated Measure 26 didn't submit the nearly 14,000 valid signatures needed for it to appear on the November ballot.

The plan — adapted from an Ohio measure voters rejected in 2017 — would have prohibited state agencies from paying more than the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs for prescription drugs. Supporters

say it was meant to save taxpayer dollars and drive down the cost of prescriptions.

Krebs had approved the measure for the ballot before critics challenged the validity of many signatures submitted to qualify it. DeVaney said in the filing that some signatures the secretary of state reviewed in her random sample were invalid because petitioners failed to witness the signings or because of the omission of circulator verification documentation, among other issues.

DeVaney wrote that when the lower validity rate is applied to the roughly 22,000 signatures initiative supporters submitted, the number of valid signatures falls short of the necessary threshold.

An opposition campaign spokeswoman has said initiative proponents lack legal standing to appeal. Initiative supporter Rick Weiland said backers don't have the resources to appeal even if they could. He said the outcome a "big win for Big Pharma."

"If we had been successful here, other states would have tried it," Weiland said. "That's why Big Pharma was trying to do everything in its power to keep this from going to a vote in November."

Boy flags for help after 6 hurt in South Dakota crash

OACOMA, S.D. (AP) — Authorities say a 9-year-old boy climbed out of a pickup after a serious crash in South Dakota and flagged down help on the interstate.

The South Dakota Department of Public Safety says six people were hurt when the pickup traveling west on Interstate 90 crashed near Oacoma on Monday.

Officials say the crash happened about 6 p.m. when the pickup left the interstate, went through a ditch and fence and into a ravine. The 9-year-old flagged down another vehicle, which had a paramedic who helped care for the injured until other first responders arrived.

The Daily Republic reports a 20-year-old woman suffered life-threatening injuries. The boy and two other children, including an 8-month-old baby, were hurt, along with two other adults, including the 46-year-old man who was driving.

South Dakota modifies high school graduation requirements

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota education officials have revised high school graduation requirements to offer more flexibility to students in the upcoming school year.

The state's Board of Education Standards adopted the revisions Monday despite concerns from parents and teachers that changing graduation requirements might lower academic standards, the Argus Leader reported. The changes are the first in nearly a decade.

Revisions include adding three endorsement options to graduation plans so that students can show they've taken coursework with a specified focus.

Laura Scheibe, director of the Division of Career and Technical Education within the state's Education Department, told the Rapid City Journal that residents should think of endorsements "like college majors."

The three endorsements options include different requirements for math, science, technology, English and social studies classes. One career-focused endorsement option also requires students to pass a National Career Readiness Certificate exam or industry-recognized test.

"Today's students need to be prepared for what comes after graduation — to find that intersection of aptitude, interests and workforce opportunity," said Gov. Dennis Daugaard. "These new requirements are about providing vital flexibility so that each student can find his or her own right way to success and make informed choices about that next step."

The board also approved an amendment directing the state's Education Department to review graduation requirements again in 2026.

School districts could implement the changes by Aug. 20, depending on approval from the Legislature's Rules Review Committee. All districts must make endorsement options available to students by 2020.

Woman accused of being Russian agent spoke in South Dakota

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A 29-year-old gun-rights activist charged with being a covert agent for Russia inside the U.S. spoke of freedom and entrepreneurship at events in South Dakota in 2015.

Maria Butina spoke at a Sioux Falls school, at the University of South Dakota and at a teenage Republican camp held in the Black Hills, the Argus Leader reported. Federal prosecutors have charged Butina with conspiracy to act as an unregistered agent of the Russian government and accused her of working to infiltrate American political organizations, including the NRA.

In South Dakota, the organizations agreed to host Butina after Sioux Falls businessman and conservative political operative Paul Erickson vouched for her, the newspaper reported. Erickson didn't immediately return a telephone message seeking comment from The Associated Press.

Dusty Johnson, who is now the Republican U.S. House nominee, organized the teenage Republican summer camp in July 2015. Johnson said Erickson offered to have Butina give a speech on the value of freedom that he felt would afford the campers important perspective.

"I'm angry that instead of being a freedom fighter that she promised she was, it seems as though instead she's a scam artist and a liar," Johnson said. "Expecting that people at a summer camp would sniff out a Russian spy as part of a 25-minute speech about freedom is probably expecting more than any rational person could."

Johnson said he examined Butina's record online before the event and felt more comfortable about the free speaker because the University of South Dakota and Sioux Falls schools had hosted her.

University spokeswoman Michelle Cwach said Erickson recommended Butina, and roughly a dozen students listened to her talk in April 2015 about gun rights in Russia.

"USD regularly offers programs designed to offer students and the public insight into national and state politics, campaigns and elections, public administration and international relations," Cwach said in a statement.

In May 2015, Butina spoke to students at the Career and Technical Education Academy's Academy of Finance in Sioux Falls. A volunteer teacher there, Erickson invited Butina to talk about owning a business. Ben Schumacher, a school district spokesman, said in a statement there was "no political discussion whatsoever."

Butina and Erickson in 2016 formed a South Dakota company called Bridges, LLC. Erickson told McClatchy in 2017 that the company was created in case Butina needed financial help with her graduate studies.

Butina's attorney, Robert Driscoll, on Monday called the allegations against her "overblown." Driscoll said Butina was not an agent of the Russian Federation but was instead in the U.S. on a student visa, graduating from American University with a master's degree in international relations.

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

South Dakota man killed, woman injured in Nebraska crash

HARTINGTON, Neb. (AP) — A South Dakota man has died and a woman has been critically injured in a single-vehicle crash in northeastern Nebraska.

The Norfolk Daily News reports that the 26-year-old Keannan Simpson, of Yankton, South Dakota, died following a Monday afternoon crash on a rural road near Hartington.

Investigators say Simpson was driving when he lost control of his sport utility vehicle and rolled several times.

Officials say Simpson was thrown from the vehicle and taken to a Yankton hospital, where he died.

A 25-year-old Yankton woman who was riding in the SUV also was thrown in the crash and is in Sioux Falls hospital in critical condition.

The Cedar County Sheriff's Office says neither Simpson nor his passenger were wearing seat belts.

Information from: Norfolk Daily News, <http://www.norfolkdailynews.com>

2 sisters plead not guilty to vandalizing Poet's Table

CUSTER, S.D. (AP) — Two sisters have pleaded not guilty to charges they vandalized a popular Black Hills hiking spot known as Poet's Table.

Twenty-nine-year-old Skyler Anders and 27-year-old Shelby Johnson entered their pleas Tuesday to intentionally damaging property and petty theft, both misdemeanors. Trial is set for October.

The women's attorney, Spearfish attorney Matt Kinney, told the Rapid City Journal the sisters were only doing what state park officials should have done years ago to the treasured hiking destination — tidy it up.

The spot was a secret when the table and chairs were placed there about 50 years ago, but has since become popular among hikers, including some who have left poems.

Video surfaced on social media in May showing two women sawing the table in half and carrying the pieces away.

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

Lottery scam kingpin's property forfeited; will aid victims

By **BLAKE NICHOLSON, Associated Press**

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Cash and jewelry seized from a Jamaican man accused of masterminding a large lottery scam in the U.S. will be liquidated and the proceeds doled out to victims under a federal judge's order, a step toward getting at least some restitution for victims.

The property was seized from Lavrick Willocks when he was arrested in the Caribbean country in November 2016. It includes the equivalent of nearly \$12,000 in U.S. currency and jewelry of unknown worth including gold chains, gold rings, gold and silver bracelets including one with a diamond, and Rolex watches.

Authorities say at least 90 mostly elderly Americans lost a total of more than \$5.7 million to the scam operated out of a Kingston, Jamaica, mansion where Willocks lived with his mother. Court documents list victims in North Dakota, South Dakota, South Carolina and Texas, with illegal scam-related activity also alleged in New York, New Hampshire, California and Florida.

Willocks pleaded guilty a year ago to conspiracy in a deal with prosecutors and awaits sentencing. He faces up to 40 years in prison, though prosecutors will recommend about 10 years because he cooperated. Sentencing likely will be later this year.

Willocks in April agreed to forfeit the property to the U.S. government for restitution as Jamaican authorities prepared to take the cash. About a month later the Jamaican government dropped its plans, and U.S. District Judge Daniel Hovland on July 9 signed an order of forfeiture to the U.S. government.

The property isn't likely to end up in U.S. hands for several months, according to Assistant U.S. Attorney Clare Hochhalter. Willock's plea deal and others in the case call for restitution to the victims, though it isn't clear how realistic that is.

"Every effort is made to locate forfeitable assets, but it's a real challenge when dealing with foreign defendants," Hochhalter said.

The scam began to unravel when a North Dakota woman lost her life savings of more than \$300,000 in 2011. Federal authorities began investigating in 2012. The case that resulted is believed to be the first large-scale Jamaican lottery scam tried in U.S. courts, with federal conspiracy, fraud and money laundering charges filed against 27 people.

All have pleaded guilty, agreed to do so or been convicted except a Rhode Island woman accused of funneling scam proceeds between the U.S. and Jamaica through her airline job, and a man who was a fugitive until being captured by a Jamaican counter-terrorism team in January. Melinda Bulgin and Mario Hines are scheduled for trial in September.

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

Flandreau Santee not required to pay tax on casino work

FLANDREAU, S.D. (AP) — A federal judge has ruled that South Dakota cannot force a Native American tribe to pay excise taxes on its \$24 million casino renovation.

The Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe sued the state last year after it rejected the tribe's contention that non-tribal contractors working on the Royal River Casino expansion were not required to pay the tax. State law requires contractors to pay 2 percent of their gross receipts on construction projects.

Judge Karen Schreier has ruled in favor of the tribe's argument that South Dakota violated the Indian Gaming Regulatory Act, the federal law that allows tribes to establish casinos. Schreier noted the state's compact with the tribe doesn't include a provision permitting the collection of the tax, the Argus Leader reported.

"The state's excise tax undermines the objective of IGRA because the tax is passed from the contractor to the tribe which interferes with the tribe's ability to make a profit from gaming activities," Schreier wrote. "Thus, Congress intended for IGRA to completely regulate Indian gaming and there is no room for the state's imposition of an excise tax."

State officials will review the decision and decide next steps, said Tony Venhuizen, the chief of staff to Gov. Dennis Daugaard.

The ruling is the latest in a decades-long legal battle between the tribe and the state over taxation and tribal sovereignty. Former governors clashed with tribal officials over sales tax payments and amending its compact to accommodate more slot machines.

Daugaard eventually approved a new compact that doubled the number of slot machines from 500 to 1,000. The tribe has said its expansion project is necessary in order to make room for the new machines.

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

Hail storm damage evident from space

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The damage from the hail storm that pounded western and central South Dakota last month was so severe it shows up on NASA satellite sensors that detect land surface heat.

The space agency's satellites capture the heat signature that shows a light brown area stretching across more than half the state. In some spots, the hail scar is 6 miles wide. The Argus Leader reports NASA research meteorologist Jordan Bell says because hail-stripped areas lack the protection of crops and other vegetation, they run hotter than surrounding areas.

The first storm swept from southwestern North Dakota into north central South Dakota on June 27. Another storm on June 29 developed over Wyoming and swung into western South Dakota, spawning tornadoes and 4½-inch hail.

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

6-story building planned for Sioux Falls rail yard site

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Officials say a development group will invest as much as \$70 million in redeveloping the downtown Sioux Falls rail yard.

The Argus Leader reports that city officials have chosen David and Erika Billion to lead the first phase of development on 10 acres acquired in 2015 from BNSF Railway.

The Billions' project, called the Black Iron Railyard development, would encompass roughly 4 acres of the parcel. The company's plans feature at least a six-story, 100,000-square-foot building with commercial offices and residential space.

The plans also include an access road and a bike trail.

The City Council hasn't yet approved the deal, which includes a \$2.6 million land purchase agreement and construction milestones.

Mike Cooper, who leads the city's planning department, says the first phase of the Billions' investment

is about \$32 million.

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

Sioux Falls man gets 20 years for raping 15-year-old girl

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A judge says a Sioux Falls man who pleaded guilty to sexually assaulting a 15-year-old girl must serve 20 years in prison.

The Argus Leader reports that David Counts was arrested in September 2017, after police said he forced the teenage daughter of a family friend to drink beer before sexually assaulting her. He pleaded guilty in April to third-degree rape.

The victim detailed the night of the assault in her 15-minute testimony to the court. She said Counts "does not belong in society." The victim's mother said Counts has brought a "rain of destruction" upon her family.

Defense attorney Aaron Fox said Counts has accepted responsibility for his actions and was remorseful. Fox asked the judge to consider his client's continual struggles with alcohol.

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

South Dakota inmate sentenced for threat to prison worker

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota inmate serving time for child sex abuse has been given an additional sentence for threatening to sexually assault and kill an employee of the prison.

The Argus Leader reports 43-year-old Joshua John Armstrong was sentenced to 20 years, with 10 years suspended if he complies with the conditions of parole.

Armstrong is serving a 25-year sentence for a 2009 conviction of sexual contact with a child under 16. He was convicted in May of threatening to commit a sexual offense after he wrote letters to a penitentiary employee, describing how he would rape and kill her.

At his sentencing hearing, Armstrong told a judge he wrote the letters because he felt they were his "only avenue" to get justice for himself in his case.

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

Man convicted of fatally shooting teen won't get new trial

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A man convicted of fatally shooting a 13-year-old girl on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation awaits sentencing in October after a judge rejected his request for an acquittal or a new trial.

A federal jury in May 2017 found 29-year-old James Dowty of Pine Ridge guilty of second-degree murder and a firearms count in the killing of Te'Ca Clifford, who was walking with three friends in July 2016 when she was shot.

The Rapid City Journal reports that Dowty asked for the verdict to be overturned or to be granted a new trial, citing lack of evidence and questionable credibility of witnesses. U.S. District Judge Jeffrey Viken upheld the conviction.

Dowty faces anywhere from 10 years to life in prison.

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

Rapid City airport pursuing daily nonstop flight to Phoenix

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Rapid City Regional Airport has received nearly \$1 million in federal and local grant money to pursue a daily nonstop flight to Phoenix.

The Rapid City Journal reports the grant money includes \$700,000 from the federal Transportation De-

partment's Small Community Air Service Development Program.

Airport Executive Director Patrick Dame says the grant allows for a revenue guarantee for a flight to Phoenix, though it doesn't guarantee that will actually materialize. The airport will set up a meeting with American Airlines, but there's no timetable.

Dame says a Phoenix flight would provide Rapid City travelers with better connections to the West Coast.

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

Tale of sex, deception emerges about suspected Russian agent

By CHAD DAY and ERIC TUCKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A 29-year-old gun-rights activist suspected of being a covert Russian agent was likely in contact with Kremlin operatives while living in the United States, prosecutors said Wednesday in court papers that also accused her of using sex and deception to forge influential connections.

The woman, Maria Butina, was observed by the FBI dining privately with a Russian diplomat suspected of being an intelligence operative in the weeks before the envoy's departure from the U.S. last March, prosecutors say. She also had contact information for people who investigators believe were employees of Russia's Federal Security Services, or FSB, the successor intelligence agency to the KGB.

The allegations, made in court filings aimed at persuading a judge to keep Butina in custody, add to the portrait of a Russian woman who the Justice Department says worked covertly to establish back-channel lines of communication to the Kremlin and infiltrate U.S. political organizations, including the National Rifle Association, and gather intelligence for a senior Russian official.

Butina awaits trial on charges of conspiracy and acting as an unregistered foreign agent for Russia. A judge will hear arguments Wednesday on whether to keep Butina in jail as the court case moves forward.

Citing her intelligence ties, the government is arguing that Butina poses an "extreme" risk of fleeing the U.S., where she has been living on a student visa. In seeking her detention, prosecutors said Butina's "legal status in the United States is predicated on deception."

Her lawyer has called the allegations overblown and has denied that Butina is a Russian agent.

Butina was arrested over the weekend amid signs that she planned to leave the country.

Her lease on an apartment ends later this month and her belongings were packed at the time of her arrest, prosecutors said. Her personal ties, "save for those U.S. persons she attempted to exploit and influence," are to Russia, according to the government court filing.

"The concern that Butina poses a risk of flight is only heightened due to her connection to suspected Russian intelligence operatives," prosecutors wrote.

Prosecutors also said Butina was regarded as a covert agent by a Russian official with whom she was in touch, with text messages discovered by the FBI showing how the official likened her to Anna Chapman, a Russian woman who was arrested in 2010 and then deported as part of a prisoner swap.

In March 2017, following news coverage of Butina, the Russian official wrote, "Are your admirers asking for your autographs yet? You have upstaged Anna Chapman. She poses with toy pistols, while you are being published with real ones," according to the court filing.

Butina and the official messaged each other directly on Twitter, prosecutors said. One such exchange occurred a month before the U.S. presidential election when Butina said she understood that "everything has to be quiet and careful."

They also spoke on January 20, 2017 when Butina sent the official a photo of her near the U.S. Capitol on the day Donald Trump was inaugurated as president. According to court papers, the Russian official responded, "You're a daredevil girl! What can I say!()" Butina responded, "Good teachers!"

Authorities have not named the Russian official, but details in the court papers match the description of Alexander Torshin, a former legislator who is now a senior official in the Central Bank of the Russian Federation.

Torshin, who became an NRA life member in 2012, was among a group of Russian oligarchs and officials

targeted in April by Treasury Department sanctions for their associations with Russian President Vladimir Putin and their roles in "advancing Russia's malign activities."

Prosecutors say the official directed Butina to use her contacts with the NRA and other conservative causes to gather intelligence on American officials and political organizations. She is also accused of trying to establish back-channel lines of communications for the Kremlin.

The NRA, which has previously been connected to Butina, has not commented on the charges. Butina's attorney, Robert Driscoll, has called the allegations "overblown" and denied his client was a Russian agent.

Driscoll said she was just a student, attending American University in the nation's capital, who "at most" was seeking to promote a better relationship between the U.S. and Russia.

But in court papers, prosecutors said Butina's university enrollment was a cover for her covert duties and that she suggested, falsely, on her visa application that she was no longer employed by the Russian official at the time she applied for a student visa.

Prosecutors also alleged that she used a personal relationship with an unnamed American political operative, with whom she was living, "as simply a necessary aspect" of her covert activities on behalf of Russia.

Authorities say the relationship with the operative, identified as "U.S. Person 1" in court papers, shouldn't be seen as a "strong tie" to the U.S., noting she "offered an individual other than U.S. Person 1 sex in exchange for a position within a special interest organization."

Court papers do not name the individual or the special interest group.

Follow Chad Day and Eric Tucker on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/ChadSDay> and <https://twitter.com/etuckerAP>

Black teens terrified by Minneapolis Park Police with guns

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Three black teenagers say they feared for their lives when a Minneapolis Park Police officer pulled a gun on them while responding to a bogus 911 report that they were armed.

The July 10 incident at Minnehaha Park drew widespread attention after a bystander recorded part of it and posted a video to Facebook that's been viewed over 2.8 million times.

The officers were responding to a female 911 caller who falsely reported that four teens were following her boyfriend and wielding knives and sticks. Park police released the four after finding they were unarmed and hearing witness accounts that contradicted the caller's story. The department has since said the call was "misleading" and apologized to the boys.

At a news conference Monday called by the Minnesota chapter of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, 14-year-old Aden Aden said he and his friends were just trying to have fun when a white kid confronted them. Witnesses have corroborated that account.

"When I was at the park, I was just trying to have a good day with my friends," Aden said. "And this white kid came up to us saying racial slurs towards us, and when the cops came, they just pulled guns to our faces. And I felt like I was discriminated (against) and I felt like it was not supposed to happen, and I hope it never happens to anyone again."

Fourteen-year-old Suhaib Ahmed said the officers frightened them. "I was scared he was going to shoot me."

Police said in a news release last week that one of the officers "unholstered his firearm and pointed it in the general direction of the four suspects."

Three of the boys attended the news conference. A fourth did not attend due to a family emergency.

The woman shooting the video says she saw a boy about 17 years old confront the younger boys and threaten them with a knife. She points out that one of the black teens is being bitten by mosquitoes and that the officer won't allow him to put his shirt back on. Two of the boys can be seen in the video with their hands cuffed behind their backs as they are ushered into the back of a patrol car.

The families of the boys, who are Somali-American, are considering legal action, said Jaylani Hussein, executive director of the Minnesota CAIR chapter, who called the 911 call a hate crime. He did not describe

the nature of the proposed legal action.

The Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board, which announced it will form a civilian advisory review council amid the public outcry, said Monday that the incident remained under investigation and pointed out that making a false 911 call is a crime. A board spokeswoman did not immediately return a call Wednesday seeking an update on the investigation.

Park Police Chief Jason Ohotto said last week that his department hadn't identified the caller or her boyfriend, and no arrests have been announced.

This story has been corrected to show the confrontations took place July 10, not June 10.

Syrian forces' bombing intensifies in southern rebel holdout

By SARAH EL DEEB, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Syrian government forces determined to retake the largest opposition holdout in the country's southwest unleashed an intense bombing campaign, killing at least a dozen people and wounding over 100 in a densely populated town, activists and rescuers said Wednesday.

The aerial bombardment of the town of Nawa came after talks to cede the town failed on Tuesday, triggering the heavy bombardment.

Separately, some 7,000 civilians were expected to be evacuated from two pro-government villages in northwestern Syria as part of a negotiated deal with insurgents who have besieged them for three years.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said "frenzied" overnight bombing in Nawa and the town's surroundings continued into Wednesday, with at least 350 missiles launched. The Observatory said at least 12 people were killed as rescuers struggled to get to the casualties.

Khaled Solh, head of the local Syria Civil Defense known as White Helmets, said they have documented 14 people killed while Nawa's only hospital was bombed and rendered non-operational late Tuesday. Only one ambulance was able to get to the town and civilians relied on their cars to bring out at least 150 wounded. He said one of the last orthopedists in the town was killed in the strikes.

The government has stepped up its military offensive on the remaining opposition pockets in the southwestern region, which includes the Daraa and Quneitra provinces that straddle the border with Jordan and the frontier with the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. In recent days, Syrian forces have turned to the last opposition pockets near the frontier with Israel.

Images from across the frontier in the Israel-occupied Golan Heights showed large plumes of smoke rising over the Nawa area, as the bombing continued Wednesday.

Hundreds of civilians were seen taking cover in shelters along the frontier, apparently seeking safety in the de-militarized zone between the two countries. Israel has occupied the Golan Heights since 1967, and a cease-fire deal was reached in 1974.

In less than a month, Syrian government forces backed by Russian air power have been able to seize control of most of southwestern Daraa province, including the provincial capital of the same name. The city of Daraa was the cradle of the uprising against President Bashar Assad more than seven years ago.

Alongside the military offensive, the government has struck "reconciliation" deals, essentially a negotiated capitulation in a number of villages that have been in rebel hands for years, to restore government control there.

Talks to hand over Nawa, one of the most densely populated towns in Daraa province, have been ongoing for a couple of days. That has encouraged displaced civilians to return to Nawa, said a local activist who goes by the name Selma Mohammed.

But the talks faltered, triggering the overnight onslaught and a new wave of displacement, with hundreds leaving the town again.

On Wednesday, the bombing focused on towns and villages surrounding Nawa, making the road in and out of town deadly, Mohammed said.

The Observatory said warplanes and ground forces have also targeted the southern tip of the region,

which is held by militants affiliated with the Islamic State group.

The government offensive has displaced more than 230,000 people, many of them on the run in the open. Jordan said it will not take in new refugees and Israeli soldiers have shooed away dozens of protesters who had approached the frontier Tuesday, demanding protection.

Meanwhile, about 7,000 Syrians were expected to be evacuated from two pro-government villages in northwestern Syria, ending a three-year siege by insurgents who control the surrounding area. Dozens of buses arrived in the Foua and Kfraya villages to transport the evacuees on Wednesday, Syrian state media said.

Evacuation deals have been criticized by the United Nations as forced displacement.

A negotiated deal to evacuate Foua and Kfraya villagers earlier this year faltered after the evacuation of only 40 people from a third village. The evacuees' first stop is the government-controlled city of Aleppo.

Associated Press writer Shlomo Mor in Tal Fares in the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights contributed to this report.

Elon Musk apologizes for comments about cave rescue diver

BANGKOK (AP) — Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk has apologized for calling a British diver involved in the Thailand cave rescue a pedophile, saying he spoke in anger but was wrong to do so.

There was no immediate public reaction from diver Vern Unsworth to Musk's latest tweets .

Musk's initial tweet calling Unsworth a "pedo" was a response to a TV interview Unsworth gave. In it, he said Musk and SpaceX engineers orchestrated a "PR stunt" by sending a small submarine to help divers rescue the 12 Thai soccer players and their coach from a flooded cave. Unsworth said the submarine, which wasn't used, wouldn't have worked anyway.

"My words were spoken in anger after Mr. Unsworth said several untruths ..." Musk tweeted.

"Nonetheless, his actions against me do not justify my actions against him, and for that I apologize to Mr. Unsworth and to the companies I represent as leader. The fault is mine and mine alone."

Musk's Sunday tweet, later deleted, had sent investors away from Tesla stock, which fell nearly 3 percent Monday but recovered 4.1 percent on Tuesday. Unsworth told CNN earlier this week that he was considering legal action. He did not respond to requests for comment from The Associated Press.

In his latest tweets, Musk said the mini-sub was "built as an act of kindness & according to specifications from the dive team leader."

Musk has 22.3 million followers and his active social media presence has sometimes worked well for Tesla. The company has said in its filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission that it doesn't need to advertise because it gets so much free media attention.

But straying away from defending his companies into personal insult brought Musk some unfavorable attention at a time when Tesla, worth more than \$52 billion, is deep in debt and struggling for profitability.

In northern Thailand on Wednesday, the 12 Thai soccer players and their coach answered questions from journalists, their first meeting with the media since their rescues last week. Doctors said all are healthy.

Out of hospital, Thai boys recount moment they were found

By TASSANEE VEJPONGSA and KAWEEWIT KAEWJINDA, Associated Press

CHIANG RAI, Thailand (AP) — Trapped in the recesses of a flooded cave in northern Thailand, the 12 boys and their soccer coach were trying to dig their way out when they heard voices in the darkness. Their coach quickly told everyone to be quiet.

"We weren't sure if it was for real," said 14-year-old Adul Samon. "So we stopped and listened. And it turned out to be true. I was shocked."

That stunning moment when two British divers found the missing soccer team was recounted by the boys Wednesday at their first news conference since the rescue that riveted the world.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 18, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 009 ~ 24 of 37

The group, looking healthy after recuperating at a hospital, entered to applause from reporters and classmates and put on a quick demonstration of their ball-handling skills on a miniature soccer field set up in the hall where they met journalists from around the world.

The boys — dressed in green and white uniforms with a red wild boar, their team's nickname — then hugged their friends before taking seats up front with doctors and members of the Thai navy SEAL unit that helped rescue them. Others who helped them during their ordeal, which ended after more than two weeks when they were brought out of the cave last week, were also there.

In one poignant and emotional moment, a portrait was displayed of Saman Gunan, the former Thai navy SEAL diver who died in the rescue attempt, and the team members showed their gratitude and respect for him. One of the boys, Chanin Vibulrungruang, covered his eyes as if wiping away a tear.

The boys, whose ages range from 11 to 16, and their 25-year-old coach answered questions submitted by the media, including about the lessons they learned during their experience.

"I feel stronger, I have more patience, endurance, tolerance," said 13-year-old Mongkol Boonpiam.

Adul said, "This experience teaches me not to live life carelessly."

Several said they want to become professional soccer players, while four said they want to emulate the heroes who saved them.

"I want to be a navy SEAL because I want to help others," said one.

All said they want to apologize to their parents, most of whom they had not informed in advance about the trek to the cave after soccer practice.

"I know my mom is going to punish me and I am in big trouble with my mother," one of the boys said when asked what he expected to happen when he got home.

Doctors said the 13 were healthy in body and mind. They said the boys gained around 3 kilograms (6.6 pounds) on average since they were rescued from the cave. They were said to have lost an average of 4 kilograms (9 pounds) during the more than two weeks they were trapped in the cave.

The news conference was the first opportunity the members of the team had to speak directly to the media, though video of them in the hospital was released previously. Officials reviewed questions in advance to make certain none might cause damaging psychological effects.

The Wild Boars teammates had entered the Tham Luang cave on June 23 for what was to be a quick, relaxing excursion after soccer practice. But rain began falling while they were underground, and water filled the caverns, cutting off their escape.

The British divers found the group huddling on a spot of dry ground deep inside the cave on July 2, hungry but generally healthy. An international team of rescuers using diving equipment and pulleys extracted the 12 boys and their coach through the tight, flooded passageways in three separate missions last week.

Some of the boys were treated for minor infections during their hospital stay, but all 13 have been described as recovering well.

Following Wednesday's news conference, about 30 relatives gathered at 13-year-old Duangpetch Promthep's house to welcome him home, clapping their hands and cheering.

Banphot Konkum, an uncle who has raised Duangpetch, was teary-eyed as he hugged his nephew.

Earlier Wednesday, Banphot said he would have a renovated bedroom and gifts awaiting him.

"We'll do whatever he wants," he said. "If he wants anything, we'll buy it for him as a present, as we promised that when he gets out, whatever he wants, we'll do it for him."

EU fines Google a record \$5 billion over mobile practices

By RAF CASERT, Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Union fined Google a record \$5 billion Wednesday for forcing cellphone makers that use the company's hugely popular Android operating system to install Google apps.

The EU said the practice restricts competition and reduces choices for consumers.

The fine, which caps a three-year investigation, is the biggest ever imposed on a company by the EU for anticompetitive behavior.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 18, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 009 ~ 25 of 37

It is likely to stoke tensions between Europe and the U.S., which regulates the tech industry with a lighter hand and has complained that the EU is singling out American companies for punishment.

Google immediately said it will appeal. Android has "created more choice for everyone, not less," Google CEO Sundar Pichai tweeted.

In its ruling, the EU said Google broke the rules when it required mobile phone makers to pre-install the Google Search and browser apps if they wanted to use Google's app store. Google also paid big producers to exclusively pre-install the Google Search app.

EU Competition Commissioner Margrethe Vestager said "companies must compete on their merits," playing by rules that favor consumers and open markets, and not restrict competition.

Vestager said that given the size of the company, the 4.34 billion euro fine is not disproportionate. The penalty is on top of 2.42 billion euro fine (\$2.8 billion) that regulators imposed on Google a year ago for favoring its shopping listings in search results.

The latest fine is well within Google's means. Its parent company, Alphabet, made \$9.4 billion in profit in the first three months of the year and reportedly had over \$100 billion in cash reserves.

But the EU's insistence that Google change its practices could have a bigger impact than the fine itself.

"The important thing is not to be distracted by the size of the fine. What is important is that Google has to change its abusive behavior," Rich Stables, CEO of the rival search engine Kelkoo, told The Associated Press.

Android is an open-source operating system that Google lets cellphone makers use for free. As a result, it is the most widely used system, beating even Apple's iOS. The EU says Google has market share exceeding 90 percent in most European countries.

The EU wants to ensure that phone makers are free to pre-install apps of their choosing and allow for competition in services such as internet searches. It also wants cellphone makers to be able to more easily use altered versions of Android.

Google argues that could hurt its ability to provide Android for free, as its main way of making money from the operating system is through advertising and the sale of content and apps. Its main rival in mobile systems, Apple, makes most of its money from the sale of devices.

Giving phone makers more freedom to use altered versions of Android could also hurt Google. Samsung, a hugely popular maker of Android devices through its Galaxy line, could break off and take much of the Android system with it.

If Google's business activities are too harshly constrained, the argument follows, it might no longer be able to provide Android for free to cellphone manufacturers.

Daniel Castro, vice president of the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, a think tank in Washington, said the ruling "is a blow to innovative, open-source business models."

The EU's clash with Google is reminiscent of the bloc's battle with Microsoft. In that case, the EU said Microsoft used the market dominance of its Windows operating system to lead consumers to use Microsoft's browser, Internet Explorer. Microsoft was fined and in the end was forced to give users a more explicit choice of browsers.

As technology's impact in modern life spreads, European regulators have set the pace in shaping rules for the industry. European governments tend to want to exert more control than the U.S.

The difference in approach was highlighted after a scandal over the misuse of millions of Facebook users' personal data in political campaigns, including the 2016 White House contest. European regulators had already been working on tougher privacy regulation and in May enforced new rules that are influencing the way some companies operate outside of the region as well.

The Google crackdown comes at a sensitive time for trans-Atlantic relations, with President Donald Trump lambasting the EU as a "foe" only last week. The U.S. imposed tariffs on EU steel and aluminum this year, and the EU responded with import duties on American goods. The U.S. is now also considering taxes on imports of European cars.

The U.S. has also complained that the EU has mainly targeted American companies — including also

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 18, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 009 ~ 26 of 37

Apple and Amazon — for breaking competition or tax rules.

"We have to protect consumers and competition to make sure consumers get the best of fair competition," Vestager said. "We will continue to do it, no matter the political context."

Ryan Nakashima in Menlo Park, California, contributed to this report.

Trump: Montenegro's 'aggressive people' could start WWIII

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is taking another jab at NATO, questioning whether the alliance's mutual defense pact might conceivably let tiny Montenegro's "very aggressive people" start World War III.

Trump commented in an interview with Tucker Carlson of Fox News Channel that aired Tuesday night. The interview was conducted Monday after the Helsinki summit.

Trump and Carlson were discussing NATO when the Fox News host questioned why his son should have to defend Montenegro if it's attacked. Russia was irked when Montenegro joined NATO in 2017, and relations between the two countries have been frosty.

The president replied that he's asked the same question. Montenegro "may get aggressive and congratulations, you're in World War III," Trump said.

Trump is a longstanding skeptic of NATO. A scenario where tensions over Montenegro would trigger nuclear war seems unlikely.

Historians say Trump upends norms of presidential behavior

By JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

HELSINKI (AP) — Plenty of U.S. presidents have created commotion in their travels abroad, but none as much as President Donald Trump.

The president's tumultuous trip across Europe, historians say, smashed the conventions of American leaders on the world stage.

Trump's "America first" approach to foreign policy had him seeming to accept the word of a hostile power over his own intelligence agencies, insulting allies and sowing doubts about his commitment to the NATO alliance.

"We've never had a president go abroad and not only lecture to our NATO allies, but also to embarrass them," said Russia expert William Pomeranz, deputy director of the Kennan Institute at the Wilson Center. "We've never had our president go on a foreign tour and categorize our allies as foes. And we've never had our president hold a joint news conference with a Russian leader where he assigned blame, from his perspective, to both parties, but in fact dedicated most of his time to blaming the U.S. Justice Department and intelligence services."

While past presidents have had difficult foreign trips and been criticized for their summits with Soviet leaders, Trump's behavior has few parallels, in the view of presidential historians and longtime Russia watchers.

Franklin Roosevelt was accused of "selling out" to Joseph Stalin at the Yalta Conference in 1945; John F. Kennedy and his aides admitted that he'd been unprepared for his 1961 Vienna summit with Nikita Khrushchev; the Reykjavik summit between Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev in 1986 was seen at the time to have ended in failure; and George W. Bush was mocked for telling reporters in 2001 after meeting with Putin that he had "looked the man in the eye" and "found him to be very straightforward and trustworthy."

Trump's trip was different.

"Frankly, I don't think those U.S. presidents at any point came off as not pursuing U.S. security interests, as being taken in by the Soviet leader they were meeting with," said Alina Polyakova, a foreign policy fellow at the Brookings Institution. "I think even President George W. Bush's meeting, where he had that famous quote about looking into Putin's eyes and seeing into his soul — this summit dwarfs that by a

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 18, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 009 ~ 27 of 37

factor of a thousand.”

Indeed, even before he departed Washington, Trump had made clear that he was itching for a fight. He criticized members of NATO, the decades-old military alliance, for failing to spend enough on defense and suggested he might not be interested in “paying for Europe’s protection” any longer.

In his first appearance at a pre-summit breakfast in Brussels, he went after German Chancellor Angela Merkel, claiming Germany was “totally controlled” by Russia and later asked on Twitter, “What good is NATO.” The summit ended in a whiplash-inducing proclamation from the president that NATO was stronger than ever as he claimed he’d secured new commitments to defense spending, which those present later disputed.

The drama continued as Trump headed to his next stop, the U.K. His first official visit was overshadowed by fallout from the rhetorical grenade he’d lobbed at British Prime Minister Theresa May before arriving. In a tabloid interview, he criticized May’s Brexit plans, said he might no longer be open to a trade deal with the U.K., and said one of May’s political rival would be an excellent prime minister, undermining her at a time when her government is in turmoil.

Then came yet another interview, this one from one of his golf courses in Scotland, in which Trump categorized the European Union as a top geopolitical “foe.”

Nothing, however, had quite prepared the world for Trump’s comments in Helsinki after hours of meetings with Russian President Vladimir Putin, whose government, U.S. intelligence officials have concluded, meddled in the 2016 election, hacked Democratic Party emails and disseminated them in an effort to help Trump win.

Standing on stage with the man accused of complicity in an attack on the very bedrock of American democracy, Trump said his intelligence people “think it’s Russia. I have President Putin. He just said it’s not Russia. I will say this I don’t see any reason why it would be.” He also went after his Justice Department, calling its investigation into Russia’s efforts and potential collusion with Trump’s campaign a “disaster for our country.”

It was a stunning comment from an American president — one that he partially tried to walk back 24 hours later by blaming a grammatical glitch. But he did not retreat from a number of his other comments giving credence to Putin’s denials of election interference

“Trump 0 - Putin 1,” blared the front page of Finland’s Kauppalehti newspaper.

Douglas Brinkley, a presidential historian and professor at Rice University, compared Trump to “a bull carrying his own china shop around with him.”

“Just standing and selling your country downriver on foreign soil in front of your adversary — there’s no precedent for such disgraceful and irrational behavior,” Brinkley said.

Pomeranz said Trump had done himself political damage by suggesting both sides were to blame for the Russia probe that has hurt U.S. relations with Moscow — just as Trump did when he blamed both sides when responding to violent white supremacist protests in Charlottesville, Virginia.

Pomeranz said the damage Trump did by describing the E.U. as a foe and lecturing his NATO allies was significant.

“I think that is what’s going to be remembered from this week,” he said.

Follow Colvin on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/colvinj>

A Comic-Con without Marvel, HBO gives others a chance to pop

By LINDSEY BAHR, AP Film Writer

Over 130,000 pop culture devotees are descending on San Diego’s Gaslamp District on Wednesday for the annual four-day comic book convention Comic-Con, the big, bright and very heavily branded confab of costumed superfans and the corporate sponsors vying for their attention — and dollars.

Interested in dining at a working replica of the “Demolition Man” Taco Bell for the movie’s 25th anniversary? Or witness a mock court-martial of Star Wars’ Poe Dameron for leading a mutiny in “Star Wars:

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 18, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 009 ~ 28 of 37

The Last Jedi"? How about a wine and beer tasting with Neil deGrasse Tyson? Or a "Ready Player One" experience with retro gaming stations and recreation of Room 237 from "The Shining"? If you like pop culture, it's highly likely there is something tailor-made for you at Comic-Con 2018.

What started as a 300-person event in 1970 has evolved into a massive operation with events year-round. But San Diego Comic-Con is the marquee occasion. Tickets for four-day access plus preview night can set attendees back \$276, before hotel, travel costs, food and any souvenirs. And attendees have come to expect exclusive merchandise on the convention center floor, newsy announcements from some of Hollywood's biggest studios, and screenings of anticipated films and television shows.

This year Warner Bros. is coming armed with stars and footage from "Aquaman," "Shazam!," "Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald" and "The LEGO Movie 2"; Sony is hyping its Spider-Man spinoff "Venom"; and Universal Pictures will be teasing "Halloween" and M. Night Shyamalan's "Glass." On the television side, fans will get a glimpse of new "Doctor Who" star Jodie Whittaker and have a chance to check out "Star Trek: Discovery" and "Riverdale." And streaming services like Netflix and Hulu will be back with properties like Marvel's "Iron Fist" and the new J.J. Abrams-produced "Castle Rock," based on Stephen King stories.

But a few of the major players are conspicuously absent from Hall H, the 6,500-seat room in the San Diego Convention Center that boasts the highest-profile presentations and often attracts an enthusiastic fan base willing to camp out overnight in line to secure a coveted seat. Those skipping this year include Marvel Studios, HBO ("Game of Thrones") and Star Wars.

"It's a huge deal when major properties like Marvel, Star Wars or HBO don't show up," says Germain Lussier, an entertainment reporter for io9/Gizmodo who has been attending the convention for 15 years. "For the past decade, Marvel Studios panels have consistently been the No. 1 most anticipated thing for movie fans at Comic-Con. Their panels never failed to disappoint with exclusive footage, huge news and big surprises."

Production schedules are more to blame than anything else, however. Lussier notes that each of the absent brands has a big (and intensely secretive) installment coming in 2019, including "Avengers 4," "Star Wars: Episode IX" and the final season of "Game of Thrones."

"Instead of showing up and disappointing fans, they're simply bowing out to not bolster expectations," he says.

Also, other brands and properties could benefit from an unusually open runway.

"Every year, there's always one or two things everyone is talking about. And if it's not 'Avengers 4' or 'Star Wars,' what's it going to be?" says Lussier. "I think this is a huge opportunity for Warner Bros. to steal every headline with major news and exciting footage."

Follow AP Film Writer Lindsey Bahr on Twitter: www.twitter.com/lldbahr

A day after back-tracking, Trump defends summit performance

By ZEKE MILLER and LISA MASCARO, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Taking to Twitter early Wednesday, President Donald Trump defended anew his much-criticized performance at the Helsinki summit, promising "big results" from better relations with Russia and hitting back at "haters."

Trump made no mention of his having walked back comments that called into question U.S. intelligence findings of Russian meddling in the 2016 presidential election. Those comments, delivered alongside Russian President Vladimir Putin at a summit press conference Monday, had prompted blistering, bipartisan criticism at home.

"So many people at the higher ends of intelligence loved my press conference performance in Helsinki," Trump tweeted.

He added: "We got along well which truly bothered many haters who wanted to see a boxing match."

In a follow-up tweet, Trump wrote that Russia has agreed to help in delicate negotiations with North Korea. But he gave no details on how and when that would happen.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 18, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 009 ~ 29 of 37

"Big benefits and exciting future for North Korea at end of process!" he wrote.

Amid bipartisan condemnation of his embrace of a longtime U.S. enemy, Trump sought to end 27 hours of recrimination by delivering a rare admission of error Tuesday. He backed away from his public undermining of American intelligence agencies, saying he misspoke when he said he saw no reason to believe Russia had interfered in the 2016 U.S. election.

"The sentence should have been, 'I don't see any reason why I wouldn't, or why it wouldn't be Russia'" instead of "why it would," Trump said Tuesday of the comments he had made standing alongside Putin on the summit stage in Helsinki.

That didn't explain why Trump, who had tweeted a half-dozen times and sat for two television interviews since the Putin news conference, waited so long to correct his remarks. And the scripted cleanup pertained only to the least defensible of his comments.

He didn't reverse other statements in which he gave clear credence to Putin's "extremely strong and powerful" denial of Russian involvement, raised doubts about his own intelligence agencies' conclusions and advanced discredited conspiracy theories about election meddling.

Trump also accused past American leaders, rather than Russia's destabilizing actions in the U.S. and around the world, for the souring of relations between two countries. And he did not address his other problematic statements during a week-long Europe tour, in which he sent the NATO alliance into emergency session and assailed British Prime Minister Theresa May as she was hosting him for an official visit.

"I accept our intelligence community's conclusion that Russia's meddling in the 2016 election took place," Trump conceded Tuesday. But even then he made a point of adding, "It could be other people also. A lot of people out there. There was no collusion at all."

Moments earlier, the usually reserved Senate majority leader, Mitch McConnell, publicly reassured America's allies in Europe with whom Trump clashed during his frenzied trip last week.

"The European countries are our friends, and the Russians are not," McConnell declared.

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer said Trump was trying to "squirm away" from his comments alongside Putin. "It's 24 hours too late and in the wrong place," he said.

By dusk, hundreds of activists, led by attorney Michael Avenatti and actress Alyssa Milano, staged a protest near the White House, with chants of "traitor!" echoing along Pennsylvania Avenue.

Trump still maintained that his meetings with NATO allies went well and his summit with Putin "even better." But this reference to diplomatic success carried an edge, too, since the barrage of criticism and insults he delivered in Brussels and London was hardly well-received.

Later Tuesday, Trump tweeted, "The meeting between President Putin and myself was a great success, except in the Fake News Media!"

On Capitol Hill, top Republican leaders said they were open to slapping fresh sanctions on Russia, but they showed no sign of acting any time soon.

"Let's be very clear, just so everybody knows: Russia did meddle with our elections," said House Speaker Paul Ryan, another steady Trump political ally. "What we intend to do is make sure they don't get away with it again and also to help our allies."

In the Senate, McConnell said "there's a possibility" his chamber would act, pointing to a bipartisan measure from Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., and Sen. Chris Van Hollen, D-Md., to deter future Russian interference by ordering sanctions against countries if they do.

Both parties called for Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and other officials to appear before Congress and tell exactly what happened during Trump's two-hour private session with Putin. Pompeo is to publicly testify before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on July 25.

Schumer also urged the Senate to take up legislation to boost security for U.S. elections and to revive a measure passed earlier by the Judiciary Committee to protect Special Counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into Russian election interference.

But minority Democrats have few tools to enforce anything.

In the House, Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi staged a vote in support of the intelligence committee's findings that Russia interfered in the 2016 election. But even that largely symbolic measure was blocked

party-line by Republicans.

Senators had floated a similar idea earlier, and Republican Jeff Flake of Arizona said he was preparing a bipartisan bill. But The No. 2 Republican, Sen. John Cornyn of Texas, said sanctions may be preferable to a nonbinding resolution that amounts to "just some messaging exercise."

Trump's meeting with Putin in Helsinki was his first time sharing the international stage with a man he has described as an important U.S. competitor — but whom he has also praised as a strong, effective leader.

Standing alongside Putin, Trump steered clear of any confrontation with the Russian, going so far as to question American intelligence and last week's federal indictments that accused 12 Russians of hacking into Democratic email accounts to hurt Hillary Clinton in 2016.

"I have great confidence in my intelligence people, but I will tell you that President Putin was extremely strong and powerful in his denial today.

"He just said it's not Russia. I will say this: I don't see any reason why it would be," Trump said. That's the part he corrected on Tuesday.

White House officials did not elaborate on how Trump came to issue the clarification, but administration aides described being stunned by his initial remarks Monday..

After his walk-back, Trump said his administration would "move aggressively" to repel efforts to interfere in American elections.

"We are doing everything in our power to prevent Russian interference in 2018," he said. "And we have a lot of power."

Follow Miller on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/@ZekeJMiller> and Mascaro at <http://twitter.com/@LisaMascaro>.

Ala. congresswoman wins runoff turning on loyalty to Trump

By KIM CHANDLER and STEVE PEOPLES, Associated Press

MILLBROOK, Ala. (AP) — U.S. Rep. Martha Roby won Alabama's Republican runoff, fighting through lingering fallout from her years-old criticism of then-candidate Donald Trump in a midterm contest that hinged on loyalty to the GOP president.

The four-term incumbent will now represent the GOP on the November ballot having defeated Bobby Bright, a former Democrat who tried to cast himself as the more authentic Trump ally in the low-turnout Republican contest.

The Trump White House was on Roby's side.

"It's been a true privilege to have the support of the White House through this campaign," Roby told cheering supporters Tuesday night, her voice cracking with emotion at times. "I am so humbled that the people of Alabama's 2nd Congressional District have again placed their trust and their confidence in me."

Trump and Vice President Mike Pence endorsed the four-term incumbent in recent weeks. The vice president went further over the weekend and recorded robocalls distributed on her behalf saying she's a reliable vote for the Trump agenda.

Some intervention was required after Roby angered Alabama Republicans in the closing days of the 2016 presidential election when she said Trump's lewd comments about women — captured on an "Access Hollywood" tape — made him unacceptable as a candidate for president.

She spent much of the last two years trying to convince her constituents in Alabama's 2nd Congressional District that she was sufficiently loyal to Trump.

On Wednesday, Trump credited himself for her win when tweeting his congratulations.

"My endorsement came appropriately late, but when it came the "flood gates" opened and you had the kind of landslide victory that you deserve. Enjoy!" he wrote.

Trump's support did not guarantee a victory, of course, even in a deep-red district that overwhelmingly backed him two years ago. The president has a mixed record this primary season, having backed a hand-

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 18, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 009 ~ 31 of 37

ful of Republican candidates in friendly districts who ultimately lost.

The most noteworthy, perhaps, was Alabama's own Republican Senate candidate Roy Moore, who earned the president's strong backing but suffered an embarrassing loss just eight months ago.

Voters indicated they were willing to move past Roby's criticism of Trump.

Don Bascom, a retired mechanical engineer who lives in Prattville, said he generally supports the president, but he also shared Roby's concerns about him in 2016. He voted for the congresswoman on Tuesday.

"I think she has done a good job. She's an incumbent so to some degree she's proven herself," he said. "One of the criticisms I've heard of her is that she simply couldn't vote for Trump when he ran, and to be honest, I couldn't either because of the way he treats people."

Deborah Gilliam, a registered nurse from Millbrook, said she too was bothered by Roby's comments about Trump, but she ultimately voted for her. She said she felt uneasy with Bright's party switch.

"It was a toss-up," Gilliam said. "I'll give her one more chance."

Roby faced the runoff test because she earned only 39 percent of the vote in the first primary contest back in June. Bright was the second-place finisher.

Despite her past criticism of Trump, the White House eventually emerged as Roby's most powerful backer.

Trump called Roby a "reliable vote for our Make America Great Again Agenda" on Twitter and bashed Bright as "a recent Nancy Pelosi voting Democrat."

The president was referring to Bright's support of Pelosi's bid to become House speaker when he was a Democrat in Congress.

Roby made clear she would return the favor should she win re-election in November, as widely expected in heavily Republican state. She'll face Democrat Tabitha Isner, a political newcomer.

"It has been a great privilege to be a part of the conservative momentum and to work alongside my colleagues in Congress and the Trump administration," Roby told supporters Tuesday night. "I am ready to continue the fight."

Peoples reported from New York.

Sign up for "Politics in Focus," a weekly newsletter showcasing the AP's best political reporting from across the United States leading up to the 2018 midterm elections: <http://apne.ws/3Gzcraw>

Ex-FBI chief Comey urges voters to support Democrats in fall

WASHINGTON (AP) — James Comey, the FBI director who was fired last year by President Donald Trump, is urging voters to support Democrats in November's midterm elections.

Comey says on Twitter that the "Republican Congress has proven incapable of fulfilling the Founders' design that 'Ambition must ... counteract ambition.'" That refers to the need for Congress to provide checks and balances to presidential power.

Comey writes: "All who believe in this country's values must vote for Democrats this fall. ... History has its eyes on us."

The former FBI director recently said he no longer considers himself a Republican.

On Monday, after Trump's press conference with Russian President Vladimir Putin, Comey tweeted, "This was the day an American president stood on foreign soil next to a murderous lying thug and refused to back his own country."

APNewsBreak: Twitter suspended 58 million accounts in 4Q

By BARBARA ORTUTAY and KEN SWEET, The Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Twitter suspended at least 58 million user accounts in the final three months of 2017, according to data obtained by The Associated Press. The figure highlights the company's newly aggressive stance against malicious or suspicious accounts in the wake of Russian disinformation efforts during the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 18, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 009 ~ 32 of 37

Last week, Twitter confirmed a Washington Post report that it had suspended 70 million accounts in May and June. The cavalcade of suspensions has raised questions as to whether the crackdown could affect Twitter's user growth and whether the company should have warned investors earlier. The company has been struggling with user growth compared to rivals like Instagram and Facebook.

The number of suspended accounts originated with Twitter's "firehose," a data stream it makes available to academics, companies and others willing to pay for it.

The new figure sheds light on Twitter's attempt to improve "information quality" on its service, its term for countering fake accounts, bots, disinformation and other malicious occurrences. Such activity was rampant on Twitter and other social-media networks during the 2016 campaign, much of it originating with the Internet Research Agency, a since-shuttered Russian "troll farm" implicated in election-disruption efforts by the U.S. special counsel and congressional investigations.

Suspensions surged over the fourth quarter. Twitter suspended roughly 15 million accounts last October. That number jumped by two-thirds to more than 25 million in December.

Twitter declined to comment on the data. But its executives have said that efforts to clean up the platform are a priority, while acknowledging that its crackdown has affected and may continue to affect user numbers.

Twitter said in April it had 336 million monthly active users, which it defines as accounts that have logged in at least once during the previous 30 days. The suspended accounts do not appear to have made a large dent in this number, which was up 3 percent from a year earlier. Twitter maintains that most of the suspended accounts had been dormant for at least a month, and thus weren't included in its active user numbers.

Michael Pachter, a stock analyst with Wedbush Securities, said he thinks the purge late last year may have been part of an initial sweep of inactive accounts that had little effect on activity or advertising revenue. But he said he expected advertising revenue to fall 1 to 2 percent due to the more recent purge last week, when Twitter said it was removing frozen accounts from follower counts.

He expects the company to be upfront about the impact when it announces quarterly earnings on July 27, and said the cleanup is good for users and advertisers. "They're certainly doing the right thing," he said.

Scott Kessler, an analyst with CFRA who has a "sell" rating on Twitter stock, said multiple reports and vague clarifications by executives are creating uncertainty about what Twitter's numbers really mean.

The purge activity "adds a level of uncertainty," he said. "As an analyst, I want a more genuine view of the user base."

Chief Financial Officer Ned Segal said in February that some of the company's "information quality efforts" that include removing accounts could affect monthly user figures. Segal offered no specifics.

Six months later, in late June, Twitter disclosed that its systems found nearly 10 million "potentially spammy or automated accounts per week" in the month of May, and 6.4 million per week in December 2017. That's up from 3.2 million per week in September. The company didn't say how many of these identified accounts were actually suspended.

Following the Post report, which caused Twitter's stock to drop sharply, Segal took to Twitter to reassure investors that this number didn't count in the company's user metrics. "If we removed 70M accounts from our reported metrics, you would hear directly from us," he tweeted last Monday.

Shares recovered somewhat after that tweet. The stock has largely been on an upswing lately, and more than doubled its value in the past year.

Twitter is taking other steps besides account deletions to combat misuse of its service, working to rein in hate and abuse even as it tries to stay true to its roots as a bastion of free expression. Last fall, it vowed to crack down on hate speech and sexual harassment and CEO Jack Dorsey echoed the concerns of critics who said the company hasn't done enough to curb such abuse.

Associated Press reporters Chad Day in Washington and Ryan Nakashima in Menlo Park, California, contributed to this story.

Marriott hotels eliminating plastic straws by 2019

By DEE-ANN DURBIN, AP Business Writer

DETROIT (AP) — Marriott International plans to remove plastic straws and drink stirrers from all of its 6,500 hotels and resorts worldwide by next year.

The world's largest hotel company said Wednesday that the move will eliminate approximately 1 billion straws and 250 million stirrers by July 2019.

Bethesda, Maryland-based Marriott says the year-long timeframe will let hotels deplete their existing supplies and identify alternatives to plastic straws. Customers will be given alternatives upon request.

Marriott is the latest big company to ditch plastic straws. Starbucks and American Airlines announced plans to eliminate plastic straws last week. Hilton Hotels and Hyatt Hotels Corp. have also said they plan to stop using plastic straws by the end of this year.

The push to ban the straws gained traction after a viral video in 2015 showed rescuers removing a straw from a sea turtle's nose. Plastic straws are too small and lightweight to be easily recycled, and many wind up in the ocean.

Some Marriott hotels have already begun eliminating plastic straws. In February, more than 60 Marriott hotels in the United Kingdom banned them. Hotels in Costa Rica, Hawaii and Australia have made similar moves.

The JW Marriott Marco Island Beach Resort in Florida was using 65,000 straws each month before it eliminated them in March, said Amanda Cox, the resort's director of sales and marketing.

Cox said the 810-room resort — which has 10 restaurants — now puts biodegradable paper straws in its pina colodas and sugar cane stirrers in its mojitos. It serves other cocktails and non-alcoholic beverages without straws, but will provide paper ones upon request.

Cox said the move was a natural one on the island, which is a nesting ground for loggerhead sea turtles. She said resort guests and convention planners had been asking about the hotel's environmental practices.

"Guests choose to vacation here because it's a tropical paradise," Cox said. "We have to protect it the best we can."

Cox said banning straws has gone over well with patrons, partly because the resort has posted signs explaining why straws aren't offered. The resort had anticipated that half of patrons would request paper straws for their ice tea and other beverages, but Cox said only about 20 percent have made that request.

Marriott has made other moves to reduce its environmental footprint. Earlier this year, it began replacing small bottles of shampoo and conditioner with in-shower dispensers at many of its hotels. The company says it will have the dispensers in 1,500 hotels by the end of this year, which will eliminate 35 million plastic toiletry bottles annually.

MGM sues Vegas shooting victims in push to avoid liability

By REGINA GARCIA CANO, Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — MGM Resorts International has sued hundreds of victims of the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history in a bid to avoid liability for the gunfire that rained down from its Mandalay Bay casino-resort in Las Vegas.

The company argues in lawsuits filed in Nevada, California, New York and other states this week and last that it has "no liability of any kind" to survivors or families of slain victims under a federal law enacted after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

The lawsuits target victims who have sued the company and voluntarily dismissed their claims or have threatened to sue after a gunman shattered the windows of his Mandalay Bay suite and fired on a crowd gathered below for a country music festival.

High-stakes gambler Stephen Paddock killed 58 people and injured hundreds more last year before killing himself. Victims with active lawsuits against MGM don't face the company's legal claim.

MGM says the 2002 law limits liabilities when a company or group uses services certified by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and mass attacks occur. The company says it is not liable because its

security vendor for the concert, Contemporary Services Corp., was federally certified at the time of the Oct. 1 shooting.

MGM claims the victims — through actual and threatened lawsuits — have implicated CSC's services because they involve concert security, including training, emergency response and evacuation.

"If defendants were injured by Paddock's assault, as they allege, they were inevitably injured both because Paddock fired from his window and because they remained in the line of fire at the concert. Such claims inevitably implicate security at the concert — and may result in loss to CSC," according to the MGM lawsuits.

CSC's general counsel, James Service, told The Associated Press on Tuesday that it doesn't comment on litigation involving the company or a third party.

MGM wants a court to declare that the U.S. law "precludes any finding of liability" against the company "for any claim for injuries arising out of or related to Paddock's mass attack."

Brian Claypool, an attorney who was at the music festival during the shooting, called the lawsuits a "hypocritical maneuver" that will turn into a "public relations nightmare for MGM."

"We collectively view this as a bullying tactic to intimidate the survivors who are rightfully seeking social change and redress through the litigation process," Claypool, who represents dozens of victims, said in a statement.

MGM spokeswoman Debra DeShong said Congress determined that federal courts should handle any lawsuits over mass attacks where federally certified security services were provided.

"While we expected the litigation that followed, we also feel strongly that victims and the community should be able to recover and find resolution in a timely manner," she said in a statement Tuesday.

Attorney Robert Eglet, who represents victims in a lawsuit pending in federal court in Nevada, also decried the casino operator's move, saying the company is filing complaints nationwide in search of a sympathetic judge. He told AP he has been flooded with calls from victims.

"This is absolute gamesmanship. It's outrageous. It's just pouring gasoline on the fire of (the victims') suffering," Eglet said. "They are very distraught, very upset over this. MGM is trying to intimidate them."

Associated Press writer Michelle L. Price contributed to this report.

Follow Regina Garcia Cano on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/reginagarciaKNO>

Immigrant children describe treatment in detention centers

By AMY TAXIN, Associated Press

SANTA ANA, Calif. (AP) — Wet and muddy from their trek across the Mexican border, immigrant children say they sat or lay on the cold, concrete floor of the immigration holding centers where they were taken.

It was hard to sleep with lights shining all night and guards kicking their feet, they say. They were hungry, after being given what they say were frozen sandwiches and smelly food.

Younger children cried in caged areas where they were crammed in with teens, and they clamored for their parents. Toilets were filthy, and running water was scarce, they say. They waited, unsure and frightened of what the future might bring.

"I didn't know where my mother was," said Griselda, 16, of Guatemala, who entered the U.S. with her mother in the McAllen, Texas, area. "I saw girls ask where their mothers were, but the guards would not tell them."

The children's descriptions of various facilities are part of a voluminous and at times scathing report filed in federal court this week in Los Angeles in a case over whether the Trump administration is meeting its obligations under a long-standing settlement governing how young immigrants should be treated in custody.

Dozens of volunteer lawyers, interpreters and other legal workers fanned out across the Southwest in June and July to interview more than 200 immigrant parents and children in holding facilities, detention centers and a youth shelter.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 18, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 009 ~ 35 of 37

Advocates said the government isn't complying with the decades-old Flores agreement, which lays out detention conditions and release requirements for immigrant children.

"They have spoken out loud and clear, and what they've said is they are experiencing enforced hunger, enforced dehydration, enforced sleeplessness," said Peter Schey, an attorney for the children who has asked the court to appoint a special monitor to enforce the agreement. "They are terrorized, and I think it is time for the courts and the public to hear their voices."

The Department of Homeland Security, which oversees immigration and border enforcement, did not immediately comment. But in their own reports to the court last month, government monitors said that immigration authorities were complying with the settlement agreement.

In his report, Henry Moak Jr., juvenile coordinator for U.S. Customs and Border Protection, documented the air temperature as appropriate at a number of border facilities and said he drank the water himself from 5-gallon (19-liter) containers at a processing center in McAllen.

He said some children and parents told him they disliked the food and weren't sure the water was drinkable, but there were no allegations the food was spoiled.

At the Yuma station in Arizona, he said he tried the water there, too, and, "I can confirm the water fountains worked and the water tasted clean."

The litany of complaints compiled by advocates comes after a global outcry drove the Trump administration to stop separating immigrant families at the border. Authorities are now reuniting parents and children under a separate court order and said they will seek to detain families together during their immigration proceedings, though under the Flores agreement immigrant children are generally supposed to be released from custody in about 20 days.

In that case, Justice Department lawyers assured a judge this week that the children in government custody were being well cared for.

Many of the children described conditions in U.S. Customs and Border Protection facilities where they were taken and processed in the initial days after crossing the border. They were identified in the reports solely by their first names.

Timofei, a 15-year-old from Russia who sought asylum at the border with his parents over their beliefs as Jehovah's Witnesses, said night and day blended together in the locked, crowded room where he was held with other boys. It had a single window overlooking an empty corridor, he said. He said there was no soap in the bathroom, and he only sometimes got a single-use toothbrush.

He said he was offered a shower upon arriving at the San Ysidro, California, facility but didn't take one and wasn't allowed one on his second or third day there.

Some children were later sent to the Casa Padre shelter in Texas for immigrant children traveling alone or who were separated from their parents. The facility operates under a contract with the Department of Health and Human Services. There, teenage boys described going hungry and not being given enough time to speak with their parents by phone.

Kenneth Wolfe, a spokesman for HHS's Administration for Children and Families, said the agency wouldn't comment on specific cases but if a contractor doesn't comply with agency procedures, the issue is addressed.

Also in Texas, Keylin, a 16-year-old girl from Honduras, said she traveled north with her mother after her mother's life was threatened back home. The pair turned themselves in at the border near McAllen and were taken to a facility she called the "ice box" because it was so cold.

A day later, they were taken to a facility with caged areas she called the "dog house." There, they were separated and allowed to speak once for 10 minutes over the next four days, she said.

In both places, the food was frozen and smelled bad and she couldn't eat it, she said. She said female guards yelled at her and other girls and made them strip naked and leered at them before they showered.

"I was very frightened and depressed the entire time. I was scared of the guards and scared I would be deported without my mother," she said, adding they were later reunited and sent to a family detention center.

Angel, a 13-year-old who came from Mexico with his mother, said guards told boys in his cell in McAllen,

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 18, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 009 ~ 36 of 37

Texas they were going to be adopted and wouldn't see their parents again. He was later sent to family detention with his mother where he said they passed an asylum screening and were awaiting release.

"I am excited to get out of here and get past this nightmare," he said.

Associated Press writer Astrid Galvan in Phoenix contributed to this report.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, July 18, the 199th day of 2018. There are 166 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 18, 1940, the Democratic National Convention at Chicago Stadium nominated President Franklin D. Roosevelt (who was monitoring the proceedings at the White House) for an unprecedented third term in office; earlier in the day, Eleanor Roosevelt spoke to the convention, becoming the first presidential spouse to address such a gathering.

On this date:

In A.D. 64, the Great Fire of Rome began, consuming most of the city for about a week. (Some blamed the fire on Emperor Nero, who in turn blamed Christians.)

In 1536, the English Parliament passed an act declaring the authority of the pope void in England.

In 1817, English novelist Jane Austen died in Winchester at age 41.

In 1863, during the Civil War, Union troops spearheaded by the 54th Massachusetts Volunteer Infantry, made up of black soldiers, charged Confederate-held Fort Wagner on Morris Island, S.C. The Confederates were able to repel the Northerners, who suffered heavy losses; the 54th's commander, Col. Robert Gould Shaw, was among those who were killed.

In 1918, South African anti-apartheid leader and president Nelson Mandela was born in the village of Mvezo.

In 1932, the United States and Canada signed a treaty to develop the St. Lawrence Seaway.

In 1944, Hideki Tojo was removed as Japanese premier and war minister because of setbacks suffered by his country in World War II. American forces in France captured the Normandy town of St. Lo.

In 1947, President Harry S. Truman signed a Presidential Succession Act which placed the speaker of the House and the Senate president pro tempore next in the line of succession after the vice president.

In 1955, President Dwight D. Eisenhower, Soviet Premier Nikolai Bulganin, British Prime Minister Anthony Eden and French Premier Edgar Faure held a summit in Geneva.

In 1969, Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, D-Mass., left a party on Chappaquiddick Island near Martha's Vineyard with Mary Jo Kopechne (koh-PEHK'-nee), 28; some time later, Kennedy's car went off a bridge into the water. Kennedy was able to escape, but Kopechne drowned.

In 1984, gunman James Huberty opened fire at a McDonald's fast food restaurant in San Ysidro (ee-SEE'-droh), California, killing 21 people before being shot dead by police. Walter F. Mondale won the Democratic presidential nomination in San Francisco.

In 1994, a bomb hidden in a van destroyed a Jewish cultural center in Buenos Aires, Argentina, killing 85. Tutsi rebels declared an end to Rwanda's 14-week-old civil war.

Ten years ago: One of the world's largest mobile cranes collapsed at a refinery in southeast Houston, killing four people and injuring seven others. Two French humanitarian aid workers were kidnapped in Afghanistan's Day Kundi province. (They were released about two weeks later.) The epic Batman sequel "The Dark Knight," starring Christian Bale as the caped crusader and Heath Ledger as the Joker, premiered.

Five years ago: Once the very symbol of American industrial might, Detroit became the biggest U.S. city to file for bankruptcy, its finances ravaged and its neighborhoods hollowed out by a long, slow decline in population and auto manufacturing.

One year ago: President Donald Trump declared that it was time to "let Obamacare fail" after the latest

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, July 18, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 009 ~ 37 of 37

Republican effort to repeal President Barack Obama's health care law was blocked in the Senate. President Donald Trump announced that he would nominate former Utah Gov. Jon Huntsman to be U.S. ambassador to Russia. The Trump administration slapped new sanctions on 18 Iranian individuals, groups and networks, a day after certifying to Congress that Iran was technically complying with the nuclear deal and could continue enjoying nuclear sanctions relief.

Today's Birthdays: Skating champion and commentator Dick Button is 89. Olympic gold medal figure skater Tenley Albright is 83. Movie director Paul Verhoeven is 80. Musician Brian Auger is 79. Singer Dion DiMucci is 79. Actor James Brolin is 78. Baseball Hall of Famer Joe Torre is 78. Singer Martha Reeves is 77. Pop-rock musician Wally Bryson (The Raspberries) is 69. Country-rock singer Craig Fuller (Pure Prairie League) is 69. Business mogul Richard Branson is 68. Actress Margo Martindale is 67. Singer Ricky Skaggs is 64. Actress Audrey Landers is 62. World Golf Hall of Famer Nick Faldo is 61. Rock musician Nigel Twist (The Alarm) is 60. Actress Anne-Marie Johnson is 58. Actress Elizabeth McGovern is 57. Rock musician John Hermann (Widespread Panic) is 56. Rock musician Jack Irons is 56. Talk show host-actress Wendy Williams is 54. Actor Vin Diesel is 51. Actor Grant Bowler is 50. Retired NBA All-Star Penny Hardaway is 47. Bluegrass musician Jesse Brock (The Gibson Brothers) is 46. Alt-country singer Elizabeth Cook is 46. Actor Eddie Matos is 46. MLB All-Star Torii Hunter is 43. Dance music singer-songwriter M.I.A. is 43. Rock musician Daron Malakian (System of a Down; Scars on Broadway) is 43. Actress Elsa Pataky ("The Fast and the Furious" films) is 42. Rock musician Tony Fagenson (Eve 6) is 40. Movie director Jared Hess is 39. Actor Jason Weaver is 39. Actress Kristen Bell is 38. Actor Michiel Huisman (MIHK'-heel HOWS'-man) is 37. Rock singer Ryan Cabrera is 36. Actress Priyanka Chopra is 36. Christian-rock musician Aaron Gillespie (Underoath) is 35. Actor Chace Crawford is 33. Actor James Norton is 33. Musician Paul Kowert (Punch Brothers) is 32. Actor Travis Milne is 32. Bluegrass musician Joe Dean Jr. (Dailey & Vincent) is 29.

Thought for Today: "While we read history we make history." — George William Curtis, American author-editor (1824-1892).