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



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This is going to be the mural that will be painted on the dividing wall as you come into the pool building.

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Groton City Financial Report

June 2018

1st State Bank Checking Acct	\$ 737,512.47
1st State Bank Savings Acct	\$ 145,317.95
General Cash	\$ 300.00
Wells Fargo Savings Acct	\$ 102,636.71
SD FIT Acct	\$ 957,765.74
1st State Bank Water CD	\$ 81,200.00
SD FIT Water CD	\$ 100,000.00
BB Trust CD	\$ 1,500.00
SD FIT CD	\$ 200,000.00
Cemetery Perp Care CD	\$ 32,876.69
Total	\$ 2,359,109.56

Invested In		
Cash	\$ 300.00	0.01%
1st State Bank	\$ 998,407.11	42.32%
Wells Fargo Bank	\$ 102,636.71	4.35%
SD Fit	\$ 1,257,765.74	53.32%
Total	\$ 2,359,109.56	100.00%

	Beginning	Receipts	Expenditures	Transfers	Ending
	Cash Balance				Cash Balance
General	\$ 707,914.13	\$ 134,342.12	\$ 150,231.86		\$ 692,024.39
Bed, Board, Booze Tax	\$ 10,357.14	\$ 1,742.60	\$ -		\$ 12,099.74
Baseball Uniforms	\$ 1,710.20				\$ 1,710.20
Airport	\$ 23,006.10	\$ -	\$ 333.14		\$ 22,672.96
**Debt Service	\$ 467,045.14	\$ 6,546.29	\$ -		\$ 473,591.43
Cemetery Perpetual Care	\$ 34,706.69				\$ 34,706.69
Water Tower	\$ 180,000.00				\$ 180,000.00
Water	\$ 84,852.17	\$ 29,487.44	\$ 20,679.20		\$ 93,660.41
Electric	\$ 485,998.91	\$ 125,120.85	\$ 91,142.87		\$ 519,976.89
Wastewater	\$ 188,680.16	\$ 16,642.61	\$ 5,965.25		\$ 199,357.52
Solid Waste	\$ 27,574.44	\$ 6,741.29	\$ 6,833.48		\$ 27,482.25
Family Crisis	\$ 4,326.80	\$ -			\$ 4,326.80
Sales Tax	\$ 17,765.13	\$ 10,055.61	\$ 9,726.89		\$ 18,093.85
Employment	\$ (3,249.88)	\$ -	\$ 431.99		\$ (3,681.87)
Utility Prepayments	\$ 9,731.94	\$ 3,307.17	\$ 41.41		\$ 13,039.11
Utility Deposits	\$ 71,244.58	\$ 250.00	\$ 1,800.00		\$ 69,694.58
Other	\$ 354.61				\$ 354.61
Totals	\$ 1,590,381.28	\$ 334,235.98	\$ 287,186.09	\$ -	\$ 2,359,109.56

**Debt to be Paid		
**2015 Refinance	\$ 2,732,687.50	by 12/1/2035
**Sewer Lagoon	\$ 55,068.52	by 1/1/2019
**West Sewer	\$ 119,512.15	by 10/15/2022
**RR Sewer Crossing	\$ 70,445.81	by 7/15/22
Total Debt	\$ 2,977,713.98	

State Street residents want their street done

Imries, Kappes and Schinkels came before the city council Monday evening to talk about the future of State Street. It was pointed out the council that the street was suppose to be done in 2006 but because of the 125th celebration, it was axed that year and never put back into the budget. The street is soft in the spring and dusty in the summer. "We've had curb and gutter for 13 years and now we'd like to have a street," said Mike Imrie.

A proposed west side street improvement project was presented to the council from Clark Engineering. It would cost \$483,000 to the two blocks of State Street, one block of Lincoln Street, Meadowbrook Lane and that portion of Third Street west of State

Street. Councilman Jay Peterson said that Third Street is the best street and if any cuts need to be made, it would be that area. All other areas have gravel streets. "Third Street is the best one," he said. Councilman David McGannon said the reason Third Street was put into the project is because there are drainage issues in that area. The project will be considered at the upcoming budget review process in August.

Shirley Wells was sworn in as the new councilman for Ward 2, replacing the late Eddy Opp. Mayor Scott Hanlon presented the oath of office to Wells. The second reading of the tree trimming ordinance was passed. The Dakota Press was designated as the official newspaper for the next year.



Shirley Wells was given the Oath of Office by Mayor Scott Hanlon. Wells will be the new councilmember for the next year, taking the place of the late Eddy Opp in Ward 2. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Service Notice: Jake McKiver

Mass of Christian Burial for Jacky D. "Jake" McKiver, 66, of Groton will be 10:00 a.m., Thursday, July 26th at St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Catholic Church, Groton. Father Mike Kelly will officiate. Burial with military honors will follow in Union Cemetery under the direction of Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton.

Visitation will be held at the church on Wednesday from 5-7 p.m. with a wake service at 7:00 p.m.

Jake passed away July 22, 2018 at Mayo Clinic Methodist Hospital in Rochester, MN surrounded by his family. The flag at the Groton American Legion is at half mast in recognition of McKiver being a past commander of Post #39.

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July Gas Prices are Proving Volatile

July 23, 2018 - Volatility is the trend for July gas prices as the rate for crude oil rises and drops amid lingering geopolitical concerns. In the U.S., the first half of the month saw pump prices increase from \$2.85 to \$2.89, while the second half is proving cheaper with the national gas price average down to \$2.84 today. The national average has not been this low since early May.

"July gas prices have been on a roller coaster ride, but appear to be on a downward slope at the moment. If demand and supply stay consistent, prices have the potential to stabilize barring any major events – geopolitical or natural disasters," said Marilyn Buskohl, AAA spokesperson. "The market is also following this up and down trend lately. Last week, crude prices dropped below \$70/bbl for the first time since June, but then returned above the price point to close out the week."

On the week, Hawaii (+1 cent) was the only state to see gas prices increase, Montana (\$2.93) was the only state whose gas price average held steady, while all other states saw prices drop as much as 13 cents.

Today's national gas price average is four cents cheaper than last week, two cents cheaper than last month, but 57-cents more expensive than a year ago. Motorists can find gas for \$2.76 or more at 52 percent of stations across the country.

South Dakota Average Gas Prices:

Current Avg. \$2.873

Yesterday Avg. \$2.883

Week Ago Avg. \$2.885

Month Ago Avg. \$2.896

Year Ago Avg. \$2.271

Quick Stats

The nation's top 10 least expensive markets are: Alabama (\$2.54), South Carolina (\$2.54), Mississippi (\$2.54), Arkansas (\$2.58), Louisiana (\$2.58), Oklahoma (\$2.60), Virginia (\$2.61), Tennessee (\$2.61), Texas (\$2.61) and Missouri (\$2.61).

The nation's top 10 largest monthly changes are: New Mexico (-13 cents), Arizona (-12 cents), Nevada (-8 cents), Delaware (+8 cents), Utah (-8 cents), Nebraska (-7 cents), Ohio (+7 cents), Texas (-6 cents), Idaho (-6 cents) and California (-5 cents)

Great Lakes and Central

Gas prices are dropping – and for some by a lot – on the week across the Great Lakes and Central states. Seven states in the region land on the top 10 largest weekly change in gas prices list: Ohio (-13 cents), Michigan (-11 cents), Indiana (-11 cents), Kentucky (-8 cents), Illinois (-7 cents) Missouri (-5 cents) and Nebraska (-4 cents).

Despite cheaper gas prices on the week, state gas price averages are nearly 50-cents or more expensive than a year ago. North Dakota (\$2.85) and South Dakota (\$2.87) have the largest year-over-year increase at 61- and 60-cents, respectively. Nebraska has the smallest year-over-year increase at 47-cents.

Oil Market Dynamics

At the close of Friday's formal trading session on the NYMEX, WTI increased \$1.00 to settle at \$70.46. Oil prices trended higher at the end of last week following news from EIA on record-breaking crude production in the U.S. At 11 million b/d, total crude production in the U.S. hit its highest rate ever recorded since the EIA began reporting its data. Moving into this week, analyst are continuing to keep an eye on the global supply restraints due to U.S.-imposed sanctions on Iran's oil exports and ongoing economic troubles in Venezuela, which could send crude production prices higher.

Motorists can find current gas prices along their route with the free AAA Mobile app for iPhone, iPad and Android. The app can also be used to map a route, find discounts, book a hotel and access AAA roadside assistance. Learn more at AAA.com/mobile

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That All Important Shoulder

It was New Year's Eve and I was in the beautiful Black Hills of South Dakota celebrating with family and friends, enjoying great skiing and great company. It was a warm early season day and the skiing was great. However, the snow wasn't terribly deep, and I remember thinking that I should avoid the bare spot under a patch of trees at the bottom of the slope. Unfortunately, I was going too fast.



By Richard P. Holm M.D.

My skis hit the dirt and I was sent head-over-heels, hitting first on a hard and icy spot before striking my right shoulder and finally coming to stop. I resembled Beetle Bailey from an old comic strip—simply a heap of body parts. After accidents like that, I find myself thinking about what just happened and wishing in vain to go back five seconds and do something differently. But of course, there was no re-doing it.

Immediately I felt a burning pain coming from somewhere, and as I was checking each bone, I could tell the trouble was somewhere near my right shoulder. The pain did not subside with time, either. The doctor in the emergency room reviewed the x-rays with me and pointed out a separated acromioclavicular joint, which ties the shoulder girdle and arm to the body and the chest by virtue of the collar bone or clavicle. A few days later, my orthopedic partner, Dr. Ramsay, told me that although I had torn the joint, it wasn't unstable, and the only real problem was that I should expect it to hurt for maybe six months. And though eventually my shoulder healed back to full capacity with rest and rehabilitation, I remember how difficult those first few weeks were following the accident and how difficult it was to accomplish even simple tasks.

It was a lesson for me in understanding how important the shoulder is and how rehabilitation exercises can allow someone to actively take part in their recovery. It also made me realize how disabling joint pain can be, and how it can limit an individual. But it is most important to recognize that accidents due to recklessness and bad choices can happen in a flash.

All accidents cannot be undone, but many can be avoided. Watch On Call with the Prairie Doc® most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central on SDPTV and follow the Prairie Doc® on Facebook and YouTube for free and easy access to the entire Prairie Doc® library.



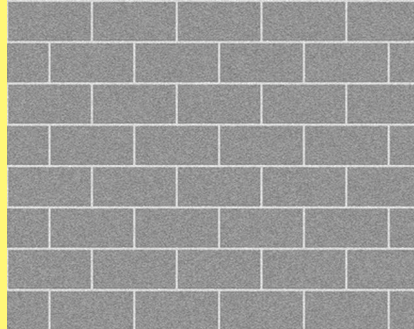
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Today in Weather History

July 24, 1993: A severe thunderstorm struck southern Hyde County, including the city of Highmore, with winds more than 60 mph and heavy rains of two to four inches. Near Stephan, in far southern Hyde County, an estimated of over four inches of rain in 20 minutes caused flooding damage to a bridge. Three to nine inches of rain caused widespread flash flooding and flood damage to Day, Roberts, and southeastern Marshall Counties. Especially hard hit was an area from Webster, northeastward through the Pickerell and Buffalo Lakes area, to Sisseton. A state of emergency was declared in Sisseton. The heavy rains overwhelmed a small creek that flows through Sisseton, swelling it to three blocks wide and up to five feet deep. The rushing water carried lumber, railroad ties, propane tanks, and several vehicles. Flood damage occurred to 70 percent of all buildings in Sisseton, including 100 homes. In Webster, the excessive rain flooded all the sewer lifts that pump water out of low-lying areas in town. The sewer system then backed up into homes and businesses. The rainstorm flooded nine of the 12 main floor rooms at the Super 8 motel in Webster. Roads and bridge damage was also extensive in Roberts, Day, and Marshall Counties with about 50 roads and bridges in Day County damaged by the flooding. Areas lakes, including Pickerell, Blue Dog, Enemy Swim, and Buffalo lakes rose over two feet, inundating areas around lake homes and submerging docks. Some estimated storm total rainfall amounts include; 4.60 inches in Webster; 3.91 in Waubay; 3.90 in Britton; and 3.60 inches near Ashton.

July 24, 1997: Over 6 inches of rain fell in the Conde area in far northeast Spink County. Water was over Highway 37, and many town basements were flooded. One basement filled with 5 feet of water. Nearly 7 inches of rain was received at Lake Poinsett, and over 6 inches of rain was received in Estelline. Hidewood Creek in Hamlin County overflowed its banks. Water went into many residences homes, and some people were evacuated. A small bridge was taken out by the high water, and Highway 28 was closed for an hour.

1930: An estimated, F5 tornado tore through Montello, Veneto, and Friuli in Italy. The tornado killed 23 people along its 50 miles path.

2008: A tornado fluctuated between the category EF1 and the more destructive EF2 strikes Northwood and Pittsfield, as well as nine other towns in New Hampshire. It first touches down in Deerfield, then travels through Northwood, Epsom, Pittsfield, Barnstead, and Alton. From there, it rages through New Durham, Wolfboro, Freedom, Ossipee, and Effingham. The storm destroys several homes, damaged dozens of others and kills at least one person.

1886 - Rain fell at Lawrence, KS, for the first time in four weeks. Rain fell over much of the state of Kansas that day relieving a severe drought which began in May. The very dry weather ruined crops in Kansas. (David Ludlum)

1942 - The temperature at Las Vegas, NV, hit 117 degrees to set an all-time record for that location. The record was tied on July 19, 2005.

1947 - One of the most powerful strokes of lightning ever measured yielded 345,000 amperes of electricity in Pittsburgh, PA. (The Weather Channel)

1952 - The temperature at Louisville, GA, soared to 112 degrees to establish a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1980 - Claudette, a weak tropical storm, deluged southeastern Texas with torrential rains. The Houston suburb of Alvin received 43 inches, a 24 hour record for the U.S. (David Ludlum)








1987 - Twenty-one cities in the eastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. The high of 91 degrees at Beckley, WV, was their hottest reading in 25 years of records, and marked their third straight day of record 90 degree heat. Bakersfield, CA, dipped to 60 degrees, marking their eighth straight morning of record cool weather. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Afternoon and evening thunderstorms produced large hail and damaging winds in Oklahoma, and over Nebraska and Wisconsin. Thunderstorms produced wind gusts to 75 mph at Brainerd, NE. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)


1989 - Afternoon thunderstorms produced some flash flooding in New Mexico. Albuquerque, NM, was deluged with an inch and a half of rain in forty minutes. Evening thunderstorms soaked Whie Pine, PA, with two inches of rain in one hour. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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Today	Tonight	Wednesday	Wednesday Night	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
						
Mostly Sunny	Severe Thunderstorms	Chance T-storms	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny
High: 83 °F	Low: 62 °F	High: 77 °F	Low: 55 °F	High: 74 °F	Low: 55 °F	High: 77 °F

Today




Highs: 80s

Tonight



Lows: 60s

Wednesday



Highs: 75-85°

Thunderstorms

Large hail and damaging winds are the main threats with any stronger storm that develops

Thunderstorms possible late this evening into early Wednesday afternoon. A few of these storms could be **strong to severe**.

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

www.weather.gov/abr

Published on: 07/24/2018 at 5:29AM

Graphic Created 7/24/2018 5:26 AM

Dry high pressure will bring one more warm and mostly dry day to the area today, before a storms system slides in from the west tonight into Wednesday. Showers and thunderstorms will be possible tonight into early Wednesday afternoon. A few of these storms could be strong or severe (large hail and damaging winds possible). Get the latest forecast for your area at www.weather.gov/abr

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 79.4 F at 4:27 PM

Heat Index:

Low Outside Temp: 59.4 F at 6:41 AM

High Gust: 17.0 Mph at 4:33 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 108° in 1931

Record Low: 46° in 1905, 1895

Average High: 84°F

Average Low: 60°F

Average Precip in July: 1.94

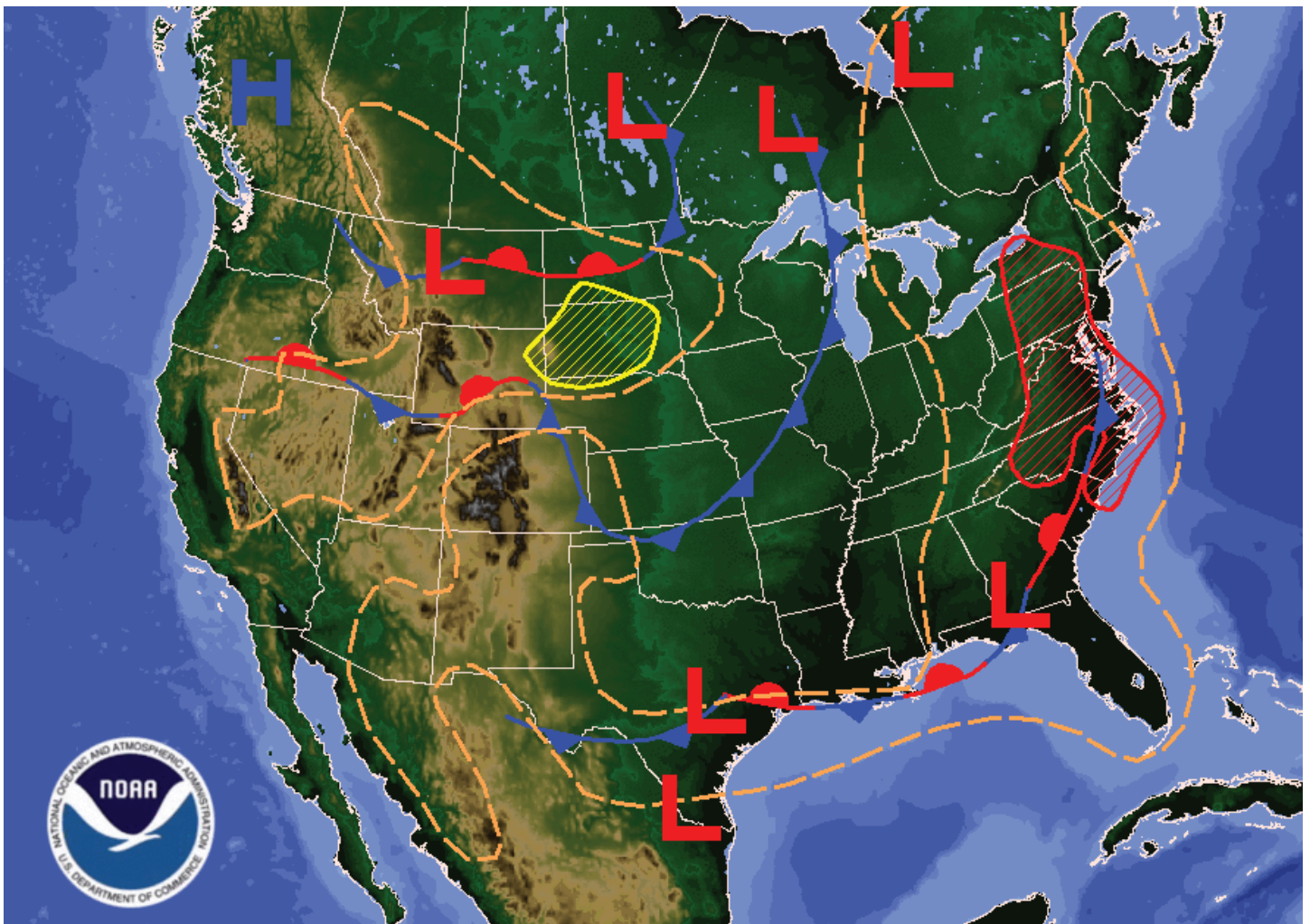
Precip to date in July: 3.84

Average Precip to date: 12.79

Precip Year to Date: 9.65

Sunset Tonight: 9:11 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:10 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Tue, Jul 24, 2018, issued 4:35 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)

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HERE'S TO HAPPINESS!

Abraham Lincoln once said, "Most people are about as happy as they want to be!" Although it is a very simple statement, it is a very brilliant statement and leads us to the fact that each of us is responsible for our happiness. Happiness, then, becomes an "inside" job.

Everyone seems to want to be happy. People often think it can be "discovered" in parties or riches or wealth or recognition or "things." Yet, many who search for it never find it, even though they may spend an entire life looking for it.

True happiness cannot be found in material things or worldly pleasures. World history proves that fact. We see far too many examples of people who tried to find "it" in "things" and "pleasures." Finally, when it was too late, they realized that their journey to find true happiness led them to all the wrong places. When they took their final inventory, they discovered that they had "everything" but happiness.

The Psalmist wrote, "I rejoice - I am happy - in Your promise, like one who has great spoil." The "picture" the Psalmist "paints" for us here is one of a warrior who has returned from battle and is looking at his "booty." He opens God's Word - God's booty - and "finds great spoils."

For many, life is a battle against the forces of evil - the promise that happiness is in the "things" of this world. But in the final analysis, when the smoke clears from the battlefield of life, it becomes obvious that happiness is only found in God's Word: the "gifts" we find in His Word.

Prayer: Lord, we are reminded again, that whatever we need can always be found in Your Word if we seek it there. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 119:162 I rejoice in your promise like one who finds great spoil.

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2018 Groton SD Community Events

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

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

News from the Associated Press

APNewsBreak: Judges crack down on illicit inmate cellphones

By DON THOMPSON, Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Judges in California and South Carolina have ordered cellphone carriers to disable nearly 200 contraband cellphones used by inmates to orchestrate crimes behind and outside prison walls, the most sweeping order of its kind ever won by corrections officials.

It's an important victory for prison officials who have been frustrated by their inability to stop the flow of smuggled phones that are used to coordinate drug deals, gang operations and killings. Even murderous cult leader Charles Manson, who died in November, obtained phones and used them to communicate with followers outside prison.

The warrant essentially orders carriers to "turn these phones into bricks," California Corrections Secretary Scott Kernan told The Associated Press on Monday. The phones will be shut down over the next week or two, he said.

Kernan expects other states will follow the lead of South Carolina and California and ask judges to approve broad shutdowns. He said the ruling is a big step forward in addressing the intractable and related issue of drugs and cellphones in prisons.

Last February, federal prosecutors said two inmates used smuggled cellphones to run a violent, drug-dealing street gang from inside California's super-maximum-security Pelican Bay State Prison. And South Carolina officials blamed a prison riot that killed seven inmates in April on a turf war between gangs over territory, money and contraband items such as drugs and cellphones.

The wireless industry has long been able to remotely disable cellphone if they are lost or stolen. But the industry has said it needs a court order before it can shut down the devices at the request of the government.

The goal is to not only stop inmates from using the phones to orchestrate crimes, but to disrupt the lucrative smuggling of cellphones by prison employees and others that Kernan said can bring the smuggler "about \$1,500 a pop on the (prison) black market." California authorities seized more than 13,000 cellphones last year alone, the most since 2011, "so you can do the math. That's a lot of black market."

Getting an order to shut down multiple cellphones is more efficient and cheaper than tracking them down and confiscating them one at a time.

In California, a Kern County judge on Friday ordered all the major carriers to shut down 97 devices including cellphones and SIM cards at Kern Valley State Prison in Delano, north of Bakersfield. A South Carolina judge issued a similar warrant for about 100 cellphones at one prison there, also on Friday, California officials said.

California plans to obtain similar warrants to regularly shut down phones in other prisons, Kernan said.

Corrections department Special Agent James Rochester cited the "voluminous offenses committed by the use of cellular phones" and "the direct link these phones have to the commission of crimes" as reasons for the judge granting the warrant. He said hundreds of inmates have told him they can easily obtain the phones that he said in his sworn affidavit have been used to coordinate violent crimes including assaults and murders along with narcotics and firearms trafficking.

It has long been illegal for inmates to have cellphones in prison. Prison officials identified the contraband phones using cellphone signal-capturing devices that were installed years ago at 18 of the California's 35 prisons. They halted expansion of that program in 2015 for fear the technology was being outpaced by advances in cellphones' sophistication.

South Carolina officials used similar technology to identify the illicit cellphones there, Kernan said.

California has since installed nearly 1,000 sophisticated metal detectors, scanners and secret security cameras in prisons to detect and deter the smuggling of cellphones and other contraband like drugs. That effort was paid for by Virginia-based Global Tel-Link, the nation's largest prison phone company, from the

projected \$17 million it receives each year from California inmates and their families who use landlines to make phone calls that are monitored for security reasons.

Police: Iowa football player mistook police car for Uber

IOWA CITY, Iowa (AP) — A University of Iowa football player faces a public intoxication charge after police say he drunkenly mistook a police car for an Uber.

University police say 22-year-old Brady Reiff was arrested in Iowa City early Saturday.

According to police, Reiff tried to open the doors of the parked cruiser. When an officer asked what he was doing, Reiff said he was looking for a ride. When the officer asked whether Reiff thought he was an Uber driver, Reiff replied, "Yes."

Reiff allegedly registered a blood-alcohol content of .204, more than twice the legal limit to drive.

University Athletics Director Gary Barta says officials are looking into the incident. Reiff, a junior defensive tackle from Parkston, South Dakota, had 13 tackles and one sack in 12 games last season and was competing for a starting position this season.

Wrong inmate released from Minnehaha County Jail

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Authorities are trying to find an inmate who was mistakenly released from the Minnehaha County Jail.

Warden Jeff Gromer says Adrian Ray Watson was released Monday after jail staff confused him with another inmate who has a similar name.

Watson was being held on charges including robbery, simple assault and petty theft. He was released without paying his \$2,500 cash or surety bond.

The Argus Leader reports anyone who sees Watson is asked to contact law enforcement.

Suicide rate reaches all-time high in South Dakota

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The number of suicides in South Dakota increased to an all-time high last year, while calls to a suicide prevention help line have also climbed dramatically, according to state officials.

The South Dakota Department of Health reported 192 suicide deaths in 2017, a 36 percent increase from 2014 and the highest number ever recorded in the state. Suicide is one of the leading causes of death in South Dakota and the second most common cause of death for young people ages 15 to 24, according to data collected by state health officials.

The suicide rate increase can't be attributed to a single reason, though risk factors include mental health, substance abuse and problems at work or with personal relationships, said Josh Clayton, the state's epidemiologist.

Prevention calls handled by the Helpline Center in Sioux Falls have nearly doubled in recent years, the Argus Leader reported. The center answered 2,135 calls last year.

Workers at the center, which manages South Dakota calls to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline, determine a plan to connect the caller or person of concern with local resources, including behavioral health centers, psychiatrists, psychologists and counselors.

Higher call volumes are a sign of progress because individuals know about the service and are willing to seek out help, said Janet Kittams, the helpline's president.

"We're very happy to have people call us on the early side of things," Kittams said.

There's still a need for more resources, said Sara Lindquist, executive director of the National Alliance on Mental Illness' Sioux Falls office.

"We have a lot of work to do yet," she said.

This story has been corrected to show that suicide is one of the leading causes of death in South Dakota, not the leading cause of death.

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

Authorities say Illinois man died in fall at Mount Rushmore

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Authorities in South Dakota say an autopsy has confirmed a man whose body was found at the bottom of a cliff near the Mount Rushmore National Memorial died in an accidental fall.

The Pennington County Sheriff's Office says the body of 58-year-old Anthony Rashid was found at the base of a cliff near a popular climbing area on July 20th. Authorities say the Illinois man had gone hiking or climbing on July 19th and was found by hikers the next morning.

Sheriff's officials say Rashid died of multiple force trauma due to the fall.

Officers from the National Parks Service and the Pennington County Sheriff's Office responded to the call from hikers. An investigation continues with the assistance of the FBI. No hometown for Rashid was given.

Sioux Falls casino robber sentenced to 20 years

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A man convicted of robbing a Sioux Falls casino using a pellet gun has been sentenced to 20 years in prison.

The Minnehaha County State's Attorney Office said Monday Michael Lebeaux and two others robbed Happy Jack's casino of \$14,000 in cash in February 2017.

Christine Barrett was tried and convicted in the robbery last November. She cooperated with prosecutors against Lebeaux and the other defendant in exchange for a lighter sentencing recommendation. Barrett was sentenced to 15 years in prison. Both Lebeaux and Barrett admitted to using methamphetamine at the time of the robbery.

Meanwhile, Sioux Falls police are investigating another armed robbery at Happy Jacks on Friday. Police say a man armed with a handgun threatened a casino employee and fled on foot with an unknown amount of cash.

Police investigate gunshots near Sioux Falls mall

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Sioux Falls police are investigating a report of gunfire near a mall.

A caller reported hearing gunshots near the Empire Mall Sunday about 10:30 p.m. Officers found shell casings south of the mall, but didn't locate anyone who was injured or who had possibly fired a weapon.

The investigation is ongoing.

Woman arrested after 2 high-speed police chases in Mitchell

MITCHELL, S.D. (AP) — Mitchell police arrested a woman over the weekend after an alleged hit-and-run and two high-speed chases in the city.

The Daily Republic reports officers on Saturday afternoon responded to a report of a van hitting two fences in an alley. An officer later spotted the van and gave chase when it fled, but the chase was called off for public safety reasons.

Officers spotted the van against about half an hour later but again called off the chase

Officers then spotted the van outside a store a short time later and arrested a woman on hit-and-run, reckless driving and aggravated eluding counts.

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

Spearfish man pleads guilty to youth sports embezzlement

DEADWOOD, S.D. (AP) — A Spearfish man accused of embezzling from youth sports programs has pleaded guilty in a deal with prosecutors.

Forth-three-year-old Nicholas Hoffman was charged in April with three counts of grand theft by embezzlement. The Black Hills Pioneer reports that he has pleaded guilty to one count and placed \$14,500 in restitution in escrow, and the other two counts have been dismissed.

Hoffman was accused of embezzling money from the Queen City Futbol Club, the Spearfish Youth Wrestling Club and the Spearfish Rams Football group. All three will get restitution.

Hoffman faces up to 10 years in prison.

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

Man sentenced to 12 years in Standing Rock Reservation death

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — A McLaughlin man has been sentenced to 12 years in federal prison in the death of another man on the South Dakota side of the Standing Rock Indian Reservation last September.

The U.S. attorney's office says 25-year-old Sinjin Cameron killed Titus Bobtail Bear during "a sudden quarrel and heat of passion" that included continuing to assault Bobtail Bear after he was unconscious.

Bobtail Bear died of head trauma. Court documents don't list his age.

Cameron will be on supervised release for three years following his prison term.

North Korea said to be dismantling key parts of launch site

By KIM TONG-HYUNG, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea appears to have started dismantling key facilities at its main satellite launch site in a step toward fulfilling a commitment made by leader Kim Jong Un at his summit with President Donald Trump in June.

While Pyongyang could be trying to build trust with Washington as they engage in talks to resolve the nuclear standoff, analysts say dismantling a few facilities at the site alone wouldn't realistically reduce North Korea's military capability or represent a material step toward denuclearization. And they expressed concern that the work is being done without verification.

The North Korea-focused 38 North website said commercial satellite images from July 20 to 22 indicate the North began dismantling key facilities at the Sohae launch site. The facilities being razed or disassembled include a rocket engine test stand used to develop liquid-fuel engines for ballistic missiles and space-launch vehicles and a rail-mounted processing building where space launch vehicles were assembled before being moved to the launch pad, according to the report.

"Since these facilities are believed to have played an important role in the development of technologies for the North's intercontinental ballistic missile program, these efforts represent a significant confidence building measure on the part of North Korea," analyst Joseph Bermudez wrote in the report.

An official from South Korea's presidential office said Tuesday that Seoul has also been detecting dismantlement activities at the Sohae launch site but did not specify what the North was supposedly taking apart.

Other analysts said North Korea is giving up little in dismantling the rocket engine test site when it's clear the country is satisfied with its current design of long-range weapons and could easily build other similar facilities if needed in the future.

Adam Mount, a senior defense analyst at the Federation of American Scientists, said it's also troubling that the North has been apparently allowed to duck verification by unilaterally dismantling parts of its nuclear and missile facilities without the presence of international inspectors. In May, North Korea invited foreign journalists to observe the destruction of tunnels at its nuclear testing ground, but did not invite outside experts capable of certifying what had been destroyed.

"The actions at Sohae are a helpful signal that Pyongyang wants to continue negotiations, but do not in themselves advance nuclear disarmament," Mount said in an email. "North Korea still has not disclosed or

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offered to dismantle facilities that produce or store nuclear or missile systems, or the means to transport the missiles. So far, the facilities dismantled have been peripheral to these core functions."

Lee Choon Geun, a missile expert at South Korea's Science and Technology Policy Institute, said the North's supposed move to dismantle the rail-mounted processing building was the more meaningful development as it potentially indicated to broader dismantlement activities at the site.

"If North Korea goes further and dismantles the entire Sohae site, that would meaningfully reduce the country's long-range missile capability by eliminating a facility where it could fire multiple ICBMs in succession," Lee said. "The North can also fire ICBMs from transporter erector launchers, but their technology with these vehicles isn't stable."

However, Mount said the military consequences of a broader dismantlement would be "marginal." North Korea has invested a great deal of effort in ensuring its missiles can be fired from austere locations and doesn't require a site like Sohae, he said.

"Dismantling a test site does not seriously constrain the existing arsenal or even future designs," said Mount. "While it would be a significant step for the regime to shut down its space launch programs, it has always argued that these programs are distinct from military ones. Easing the missile threat would require restrictions on the number, types, or capabilities of missiles or the vehicles that transport and fire them."

After his summit with Kim in Singapore on June 12, Trump said he was told by Kim that the North was "already destroying a major missile engine testing site" without identifying which site. The leaders concluded their summit by declaring their vague aspirational goal of moving toward a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula, but there's lingering doubts on whether Kim would ever agree to fully give up the nuclear weapons that he may see as a stronger guarantee of his survival than whatever security assurances the United States can provide.

In late 2017, Kim declared his nuclear weapons and missile program was complete, following a torrent of nuclear and missile tests that included the detonation of a purported thermonuclear warhead and flight tests of three developmental ICBMs potentially capable of reaching the U.S. mainland. Kim announced the mission of his nuclear testing site as finished weeks before inviting foreign journalists to observe the destruction of the tunnels.

The South Korean presidential official, who didn't want to be named, citing office rules, said the supposed dismantlement activities shows the North is moving gradually.

"We need further analysis to figure out why the North didn't turn the dismantlement activities into an event and whether the country is trying to control the speed of the process to maintain a pace it wants," he said.

Greek wildfires kill 50; hugging bodies found near beach

By DEREK GATOPOULOS and ELENA BECATOROS, Associated Press

RAFINA, Greece (AP) — Wildfires raged through seaside resorts near the Greek capital, torching homes, cars and forests and killing at least 50 people, authorities said, raising the death toll Tuesday after finding 26 bodies believed to be family members huddled together, some of them hugging.

Many tourists and residents fled toward the coastline to escape the ferocious flames and choking smoke. Authorities evacuated more than 700 people by sea overnight, said Merchant Marine deputy minister Nektarios Santorinios, whose ministry is in charge of the coast guard.

But some didn't make it to the beach. The head of Greece's Red Cross, Nikos Oikonomopoulos, told Skai television that a Red Cross rescue team reported finding the 26 bodies in a compound northeast of Athens. In all, the death toll stood at 50 by Tuesday morning, government spokesman Dimitris Tzanakopoulos said.

"Everything happened in seconds," said Andreaas Passios, who lives next to the compound. "I grabbed a beach towel. It saved my life. I soaked it, grabbed my wife and we ran to the sea."

Passios said he and his wife stayed by the sea for two hours: "It was unbelievable. Gas canisters were exploding. Burning pine cones were flying everywhere."

When the flames died down, Spyros Hadjiandreou came searching for loved ones.

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"My niece and cousin were staying here on holiday. I don't know if they made it out," he said. "I don't know if they are OK. I haven't heard from them."

The two largest wildfires — one 30 kilometers (20 miles) northeast of Athens near Rafina, the other 50 kilometers (30 miles) west of the capital in Kineta — broke out Monday during hot, dry summer conditions. Fanned by gale-force winds that frequently changed direction, the flames spread rapidly into populated seaside towns — too fast for many who were in their cars or homes to flee, fire department spokeswoman Stavroula Malliri said.

"The police tried to direct us away from the fire, but we couldn't escape it," said Aleka Papariga, a former Greek Communist Party leader who lives near Rafina. "We got stuck in traffic and the flames were on top of us. We managed to find a small gap and we made it out."

Evangelos Bournous, the Rafina mayor, blamed the winds.

"We were unlucky," he said. "The wind changed and it came at us with such force that it razed the coastal area in minutes."

Tzanakopoulos, the government spokesman, said 715 people were evacuated from beaches and coastline by navy vessels, yachts and fishing boats. The coast guard said 19 people were rescued at sea, some of whom had swum out to escape the flames.

Rafina's dock became a makeshift hospital during the night as paramedics checked survivors, some of them clad in only their bathing suits, emerging from coast guard vessels and private boats. The fire department said 156 adults and 16 children were hospitalized with injuries. Eleven of the adults were in serious condition.

In all, 47 brush and forest fires broke out across Greece Monday and early Tuesday, with most of them quickly extinguished, the fire department said. Ten were still burning late Tuesday morning, including blazes in Corinth, Crete, and in central and northern Greece.

More than 400 firefighters and volunteer firefighters were battling the two fires near Athens, supported by seven water-dropping helicopters and three aircraft.

Greece sought international help through the European Union. Spain was sending two firefighting aircraft while Cyprus was sending in 60 firefighters. Israel and Turkey both also offered assistance.

It was the deadliest fire season to hit Greece in more than a decade. More than 60 people were killed in 2007 when huge fires swept across the southern Peloponnese region.

"It's a difficult night for Greece," Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras said late Monday after cutting short a trip to Bosnia and returning to Athens.

Showers that passed over the Greek capital Monday missed the two big fires, but heavy rain was forecast across southern Greece on Wednesday.

Forest fires are common in Greece during the hot, dry summers, and temperatures recently hit highs up to 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit).

Becatoros reported from Athens. Associated Press writer Costas Kantouris in Thessaloniki contributed to this report.

Derek Gatopoulos on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/dgatopoulos>

Elena Becatoros on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/ElenaBec>

Toronto police delving into life of gunman in mass shooting

By **ROB GILLIES** and **TAMARA LUSH**, Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — Investigators are digging into the life of a 29-year-old man trying to explain what prompted him to fire a handgun into restaurants and cafes in a lively Toronto neighborhood, killing a 10-year-old girl and an 18-year-old woman and wounding 13 others.

The family of Faisal Hussain, who died during an exchange of gunfire with police, said Monday that he had long suffered from psychosis and depression but they never imagined this would be his fate. It was not

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immediately clear whether he took his own life or was killed by police during the rampage Sunday night.

The mass shooting in the Greektown district came just three months after a man used a van to plow over pedestrians on a sidewalk in another Toronto district, killing 10 people and injuring 14 in an attack apparently aimed at women.

A statement from Hussain's relatives said he had lifelong "severe mental health challenges." They said medications did not help him and the interventions of professionals were unsuccessful.

"While we did our best to seek help for him throughout his life of struggle and pain, we could never imagine that this would be his devastating and destructive end," the family said.

"Our hearts are in pieces for the victims and for our city as we all come to grips with this terrible tragedy. We will mourn those who were lost for the rest of our lives."

Investigators searched the low income east end apartment that Hussain shared with his parents and siblings on Thorncliffe Park Drive in the east end of the city.

Police Chief Mark Saunders said he would not speculate on a motive but did not rule out terrorism.

"We do not know why this has happened yet," he said. "It's going to take some time."

The slain 18-year-old was identified as Reese Fallon, a recent high school graduate who volunteered for Canada's Liberal party and was due to attend McMaster University in the fall. Her family said in a statement they were devastated.

"She was ... smart, passionate and full of energy. It is a huge loss," said Nathaniel Erskine-Smith, a member of Parliament who knew Fallon.

Flags at Toronto City Hall as well as at Fallon's former high school, Malvern CI, were lowered to half-staff.

"An engaging student, Reese Fallon graduated from Malvern CI just last month and was highly regarded by staff and loved by her friends," the school board said in a statement, adding that support was being offered to students.

The 13 wounded ranged in age from 10 to 59, and suffered injuries ranging from serious to minor, Saunders said. Officials did not identify the 10-year-old who was killed or name any of the wounded, who included six women and girls and seven men.

Dr. Najma Ahmed of St. Michael's Hospital said five patients were admitted in serious or critical condition, with three of them undergoing immediate lifesaving surgery.

A video taken by a witness showed a man dressed all in black walking quickly down a sidewalk and firing three shots into at least one shop or restaurant in Greektown, a residential area of million-dollar homes that is crowded with restaurants and cafes.

Witnesses heard many shots and described the gunmen walking along Danforth Avenue firing into restaurants, cafes and patios on both sides of the street.

At the corner of Danforth and Logan, where some of the shots were fired, about 50 people milled about on a small square Monday evening, talking in several languages. They expressed shock at a shooting in such a neighborhood, which is graced with parks, pretty two-story brick homes and street cafes.

Some hugged, others wept. Others were somber, wondering both why someone would want to hurt people in their neighborhood — and how he obtained a gun in a country with far stricter gun laws than in the neighboring U.S.

Bouquets of flowers lay near a plaque commemorating the city. A few steps away, people signed a makeshift memorial made of plywood reading: "we are Danforth strong," a reference to the neighborhood's main street.

"I'm out of my mind just thinking about it. It's Toronto," said Augustino Speciale, who paused to smell a bouquet of white lilies attached to a lamppost.

Ontario's police watchdog said there was an exchange of shots between the attacker and two officers on a side street before the gunman was found dead.

Jody Steinhauer was celebrating her birthday with family at Christina's restaurant when they heard 10 to 15 shots. They ran to the back to the restaurant and hid under a table.

"We heard a woman yell, 'Help!' My partner went outside the restaurant and the woman was right there.

She had been shot," she said.

Her boyfriend and a doctor who was in the restaurant attended to the woman who was shot in the thigh. "She was screaming and yelling and in shock. Nobody was with her. That was the scary part," Steinhauer said.

Though mass shootings are rare in Canada's largest city, Toronto police had deployed dozens of additional officers over the weekend to deal with a recent rise in gun violence in the city, which has seen 23 gun homicides so far this year, compared to 16 fatal shootings in the first half of 2017.

Toronto has long prided itself as being one of the safest big cities in the world.

"We were so used to living in a city where these things didn't happen and as we saw them going on in the world around us (we) thought they couldn't happen here," Mayor John Tory said. "This is an attack against innocent families and our entire city."

Associated Press writer Jennifer Peltz in New York contributed to this report.

AIDS drugs show more promise for preventing new infections

By MARILYNN MARCHIONE, AP Chief Medical Writer

New research shows more promise for using AIDS treatment drugs as a prevention tool, to help keep uninfected people from catching HIV during sex with a partner who has the virus.

There were no infections among gay men who used a two-drug combo pill either daily or just before and after sex with someone with HIV, one study found. In a second study, no uninfected men caught the virus if they had sex only with a partner whose HIV was well suppressed by medicines.

Both studies were discussed Tuesday at the International AIDS conference in Amsterdam.

The United States' top AIDS scientist, Dr. Anthony Fauci, called the results "very impressive" and "really striking."

About 36 million people worldwide have HIV and 1.8 million new infections occur each year, said Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases.

"The only way you're going to end the epidemic is by preventing additional cases of transmission," he said. The treatment drugs are "tools that, if widely implemented, theoretically could end the epidemic."

Expanding access to them is not only humanitarian but also smart policy, Fauci added.

"You get a twofer: You save the life of the person who's infected ... and you're making it virtually impossible for that person to transmit that infection to their sexual partner."

Until there's a vaccine, condoms are the best way to prevent HIV infection, but not everyone uses them or does so all the time, so other options are needed.

A two-drug combo used to treat people with HIV, sold as Truvada by Gilead Science and in generic form in some countries, has been shown to help prevent infection when one partner has the virus and one does not, but the evidence so far has been strongest for male-female couples.

A new study was designed as a real-world test in about 1,600 gay men in the Paris region who were at high risk of getting HIV because of many sex partners, reluctance to use condoms or other reasons. They were offered the preventive pills either for daily use, as is recommended in the United States, or "on demand" — before and after unprotected sex. A little more than half chose on demand, and have been tested every three months to see if they had caught HIV.

"Since we started a year ago, we have not seen a single infection," said the study leader, Dr. Jean-Michel Molina of Saint Louis Hospital in Paris. "On-demand seems to be at least as effective as daily when it's used in real life."

No one stopped using the drugs because of side effects.

"Now we can have just as much confidence in the power of treatment as prevention for gay male couples as we have had for heterosexual couples," said Dr. Linda-Gail Bekker, AIDS conference chief and deputy director of the Desmond Tutu HIV Center at the University of Cape Town in South Africa.

The second study tested a different approach — keeping an infected partner's virus severely suppressed

with HIV medicines, which is known to greatly reduce the risk of spreading it.

Dr. Alison Rodger of University College London led a study of 779 gay male couples in 14 European countries where one partner was uninfected and the other was taking drugs to suppress HIV. They were tested every six to 12 months to see if the infected partner still had the virus under control, and whether the other partner had caught it.

After a median of 18 months, none of the infected men spread HIV to their partner, despite about 75,000 sex acts without condoms. There were 17 new HIV infections among men who were uninfected when the study started; tests showed those infections were from sex with someone other than the partner in the study.

Marilynn Marchione can be followed on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/MMarchioneAP>

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Ryan Lochte's future? Even he isn't sure what's next

By **TIM REYNOLDS, AP Sports Writer**

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — Ryan Lochte doesn't know when he'll be in another race.

And that worries him.

What's next for Lochte is a mystery, even to himself. The U.S. Anti-Doping Agency's decision to suspend the 12-time Olympic swimming medalist because he broke a rule by getting an intravenous infusion of vitamins will keep him from competing in any major meet through July 2019.

So essentially, the only opponent he'll be facing other than training partners as he preps for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics is rust.

"I'm worried about that 100 percent," Lochte said Monday, shortly after USADA announced his ban. "I know I'll be able to swim in 2020, but in swimming, you have to compete. You have to race. It doesn't matter how well you train. That doesn't matter. It's how you compete when you get on those starting blocks. And the less chance I have of getting on those blocks, the worse it's going to be for me."

The suspension was handed down by anti-doping officials, who made clear that Lochte was not taking any banned substance. His mistake was getting an IV that exceeded the legal level of 100 milliliters — something he and his wife did together at a Gainesville, Florida, clinic on May 24 in an effort to bolster their immune systems after their infant son got sick.

Lochte posted a photo of the scene on his Instagram account, and USADA opened an investigation after seeing that image.

Lochte cooperated with the USADA probe, but apparently was shown no leniency. His penalty: A 14-month sanction, going back to the date of the photo. It will cost him the chance to swim at this week's U.S. national championships, the Pan Pacific Championships later this year, and next year's world championships.

Hence, his concern about rust.

"It's something I'll have to deal with," Lochte said.

He said he will continue his daily training regimen. It's possible Lochte could race in some unsanctioned events during the suspension — he said he would review options. He hasn't raced often since the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics, where he left in shame after his story about how he and three teammates were victims of an armed robbery unraveled and ultimately led to him being suspended for 10 months by U.S. officials.

"As soon as you get to a certain point or level, in any kind of sport career, you're always going to have an eye on you," Lochte said. "I think I've learned it the hard way, definitely — especially since Rio. And now this."

And now, he's on the deck again, over what he insists was an honest mistake. He simply didn't know the

rule about IVs. Under most circumstances, athletes cannot receive IVs unless related to a hospitalization or when allowed under the terms of a USADA-approved exemption, and Lochte fell into neither of those categories.

So instead of heading to California to compete at nationals, Lochte was holding a news conference inside a hotel conference room in South Florida — vowing that this experience will only stoke his fire to be at those 2020 Tokyo Games.

“I definitely made myself a better person after Rio,” Lochte said. “I was back in training. I was feeling good. I was swimming fast. My son being born, everything was happening, everything was perfect. And then this happened. And it’s devastating. But we’re a family, we’re going to stick together and we’re going to get through this.”

Police arrest suspect in Oakland train station stabbing

By LORIN ELENI GILL and OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ, Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — The hunt for a man police say killed an 18-year-old woman in an unprovoked knife attack in the San Francisco Bay Area ended where it began: In a train station.

John Cowell, 27, a recently paroled robber with a violent history, was peacefully arrested on an Antioch-bound train Monday night about a dozen miles from the Oakland station where investigators believe he killed Nia Wilson and wounded her sister Sunday night.

“This is the first step to achieving justice for Nia and her family,” Bay Area Rapid Transit Police Chief Carlos Rojas said at a news conference.

A phone call from a BART rider led police to stop and search a Richmond-bound train at the MacArthur Station in Oakland but Cowell wasn’t aboard, Rojas said.

“About 10 minutes later after we got the call, another patron told us the subject got on an Antioch-bound train,” Rojas said.

That train was stopped at the Pleasant Hill station in Walnut Park, northeast of Oakland. Cowell was on board and was arrested without incident. It wasn’t immediately known if Cowell had a lawyer.

Asked how a wanted man could have gotten back into the BART system, Rojas said he didn’t immediately know but said the public transportation system is “porous” and large.

Rojas said police officers were on duty at the MacArthur station where the attack took place but wasn’t sure it could have been prevented because of the suddenness of the unprovoked and possibly random attack.

In a “prison-style attack,” Cowell stabbed Nia Wilson twice in the neck and then attacked her sister before fleeing and apparently doffing his pants and sweatshirt to evade capture, Rojas said. The knife believed to have been used in the attack was found at a nearby construction site.

Letifah Wilson, 26, said that she, Nia and a third sister had been returning from a family outing when they were “blindsided by a maniac.”

“He didn’t know us, we didn’t know him,” Wilson said.

“I looked back and he was wiping off his knife and stood at the stairs and just looked. From then on, I was caring for my sister,” she told ABC7 News on Monday, speaking outside a family member’s home with a bandage on her neck.

The women’s father, Ansar Muhammad, said one of his daughters called him, crying hysterically, and told him to get to the MacArthur station.

“It’s nothing imaginable, seeing your child on the BART platform with a yellow tarp over her body,” Muhammad said Monday evening. “That is an image I’ll never forget for the rest of my life. So I want justice. All I want is justice.”

Surveillance video on the train and at the station’s platform showed Cowell had been riding the same car as the sisters Sunday, but they did not interact, Rojas said.

A motive for the attack remained unclear. Rojas said Cowell hasn’t been connected to any radical or white supremacist groups, although he added: “We are going to explore all options and all possibilities.”

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The victims were black and Cowell is white.

Monday night, Oakland City Councilmember Lynette McElhane said she had spoken to the district attorney and was told that Cowell will be arraigned Wednesday and the office hasn't ruled out charging him with a hate crime.

Oakland Mayor Libby Schaaf issued a statement acknowledging that there currently was no evidence that the attack was racially motivated but "the fact that his victims were both young African American women stirs deep pain and palpable fear in all of us who acknowledge the reality that our country still suffers from a tragic and deeply racist history."

A Monday night vigil held at the MacArthur BART station later swelled into a crowd of about a thousand that marched downtown, police said.

Marchers demonstrated about perceived abuses and neglect of the city's large African-American community.

Police said some people in the crowd became "disruptive" when two men were detained because of a dispute, and some firecrackers were thrown but police broke it up and the two men were later released.

Cowell has a reported history of drug use, homelessness and violence.

He was released from state prison on May 6 after completing a two-year sentence for second-degree robbery, said Vicky Waters, spokeswoman for the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

Cowell pulled a knife and a replica gun on a supermarket clerk who confronted him over stealing, court records show.

In 2016, a hospital in Richmond obtained a restraining order against Cowell, who was homeless, for allegedly repeatedly showing up in the emergency department and harassing and threatening staff members, the San Francisco Chronicle reported.

Cowell also had convictions for battery, being under the influence of a controlled substance and assault with a deadly weapon, the East Bay Times reported.

A neighbor Carol Kincaid of Concord, told the Times that she had known Cowell since he was a baby and said he was "always in trouble."

His behavior worried neighbors, especially since he recently returned to his aunt's house across the street, Kincaid said.

"He's no good at all," Kincaid said.

Nia Wilson's death was the third involving an attack in the BART system in five days, making it one of the deadliest weeks in the system's history.

On Sunday, a homeless man died after he was punched by an attacker Saturday at a station in San Leandro, fell down and struck his head on pavement. Another man who was attacked last week died Friday after a small cut he suffered became infected, the San Francisco Chronicle reported. An arrest was made in that case and authorities said neither case was connected to the stabbings.

Rodriguez reported from San Francisco.

Information from: San Francisco Chronicle, <http://www.sfgate.com>

Suspect arrested in Oakland train station stabbing attack

By LORIN ELENI GILL and OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ, Associated Press

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — A man who police say killed an 18-year-old woman in an unprovoked stabbing at an Oakland train station was arrested aboard a train about a dozen miles away Monday night, officials said.

An anonymous tip from a rider on a Bay Area Rapid Transit train led to the arrest of John Cowell, 27, BART Police Chief Carlos Rojas said at a news conference.

Cowell — a paroled felon — was arrested at another BART station in the San Francisco Bay Area. He had no weapon and was arrested peacefully, Rojas said.

"This is the first step to achieving justice for Nia and her family," Rojas said.

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A manhunt had been underway for Cowell since the Sunday night attack that killed 18-year-old Nia Wilson and wounded her sister on the platform at the MacArthur BART station.

Asked how a wanted man could have gotten back into the BART system, Rojas said he didn't immediately know but said the public transportation system is "porous" and large, serving four counties.

Surveillance video on the train and at the station's platform showed Cowell had been riding the same car as the sisters Sunday, but they did not interact, Rojas said.

As the group got on the platform, Cowell attacked, the police chief said. "It looks like it was an unprovoked, unwarranted, vicious attack," Rojas said.

Rojas didn't provide any motive for what he called a "prison-style attack" in which Nia was stabbed twice in the neck.

Rojas said Cowell hasn't been connected with any white supremacist groups but added that "we are going to explore all options and all possibilities."

Nia and her sister, Letifah Wilson, 26, are black and Cowell is white.

Cowell was released from state prison on May 6 after completing a sentence for second-degree robbery, said Vicky Waters, spokeswoman for the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation.

Cowell pulled a knife and a replica gun on a supermarket clerk who confronted him over stealing, court records show.

Cowell also had prior arrests that include assault with a deadly weapon, the East Bay Times reported.

Letifah Wilson said that she, Nia and a third sister had been returning from a family outing Sunday when they were "blindsided by a maniac."

"I looked back and he was wiping off his knife and stood at the stairs and just looked. From then on, I was caring for my sister," Wilson told ABC7 News on Monday, speaking outside a family member's home with a bandage on her neck.

Surveillance footage showed a man police say is Cowell fleeing the station through a parking lot and stripping off his clothes there. Detectives recovered a knife they believed was used in the attack at a nearby construction site, Rojas said.

Wilson said a woman with a stroller gave her a baby blanket to apply pressure to her sister's neck, but Nia Wilson died calling out her sister's name for help.

Wilson said she told her sister she loved her.

"We're gonna get through this, I got you, you're my baby sister," she said.

The women's father, Ansar Muhammad, said one of his daughters called him, crying hysterically, and told him to get to the MacArthur station.

"It's nothing imaginable, seeing your child on the BART platform with a yellow tarp over her body," Muhammad said Monday evening as he and other family members joined dozens of people for a vigil at the station. "That is an image I'll never forget for the rest of my life. So I want justice. All I want is justice."

Nia was "the baby" among six children, said her eldest sister, Unieve Wilson, 37.

She was "spunky, feisty, loved to dance," she said. "She wouldn't harm a fly."

Ebony Monroe, a cousin of the victims, said her cousin attended Oakland High School and loved her family, dancing and makeup.

"She was a beautiful person inside and out, and she didn't deserve it," Monroe said.

A man who witnessed the attack told them the suspect came out of nowhere, slit Nia's throat and stabbed her sister as she tried to stop him, she said.

"She died for no reason," Monroe said. "We want to see justice."

The killing was the third possible homicide on the BART line in just five days, the San Francisco Chronicle reported.

A homeless man at the Bay Fair Station in San Leandro died Sunday at a hospital, a day after he was punched by an attacker and fell down and hit his head on the pavement. He was identified as Don Stevens, 47.

Another man, Gerald Bisbee, 51, died Friday at his Pittsburg, California, home.

Bisbee was attacked by a man who was quickly arrested and suffered a bloody lip and a small cut to

the back of his knee.

An autopsy Sunday determined that Bisbee died because the cut became infected, Rojas told the Chronicle.

The three deaths appear to be unrelated but they represent a worrying "anomaly," the police chief said. "It's rare that we have a homicide, so of course this is ramped up to the highest priority when you have three deaths," Rojas said.

Rodriguez reported from San Francisco.

This story has been corrected to reflect the accurate spelling of Letifah Wilson's first name.

Information from: San Francisco Chronicle, <http://www.sfgate.com>

Trump considering pulling security clearances of critics

By JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is considering revoking the security clearances of six former top national security officials who have been critical of his administration, a move that opponents and experts say would be an unprecedented politicization of the clearance process.

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said Monday that the president is "exploring the mechanisms" to strip clearance from former CIA Director John Brennan as well as five other former officials who have held some of the most sensitive positions in government: former FBI Director Jim Comey; James Clapper, the former director of national intelligence; former CIA Director Michael Hayden; former national security adviser Susan Rice; and Andrew McCabe, who served as Trump's deputy FBI director until he was fired in March.

The leaders have served in both Democratic and Republican administrations, including Trump's.

Sanders accused the officials of having "politicized and in some cases monetized their public service and security clearances" by making "baseless accusations" that the Trump administration had improper contact with Russia or was influenced by Russia.

"The fact that people with security clearances are making these baseless charges provides inappropriate legitimacy to accusations with zero evidence," she said.

Sanders did not cite specific comments made by any of the officials. But the president has been seething over the backlash to his meeting last week with Russia's Vladimir Putin and the ongoing investigations into Russia's meddling in the 2016 election, whether his campaign aides were involved in the effort and whether he obstructed justice.

Democratic Rep. Adam Schiff of California, a ranking member of the House Intelligence Committee, tweeted that "politicizing security clearances to retaliate against former national security officials who criticize the President would set a terrible new precedent."

"An enemies list is ugly, undemocratic and un-American," he added.

The threat to deny the officials access to classified information marks the latest escalation in the president's ongoing war with the members of the U.S. intelligence community. It came hours after Republican Sen. Rand Paul of Kentucky tweeted that he would be meeting with Trump to discuss revoking Brennan's clearance for his scathing criticism of the president's performance at the summit with Putin.

Former CIA directors and other top national security officials are typically allowed to keep their clearances, at least for some period, as a courtesy and so they can be in a position to advise their successors. At least one of the former officials, McCabe, does not currently have security clearance, his spokeswoman said.

Experts appeared split on whether the president has the authority to unilaterally terminate a security clearance but said such a move would be unprecedented and ill-advised.

"Legalities aside, it seems like a terrible mistake to use the security clearance system as an instrument of political vendettas," said Steven Aftergood at the Federation of American Scientists' Project on Govern-

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ment Secrecy.

While standing next to Putin, Trump last week openly questioned his own intelligence agencies' conclusions that Moscow tried to tip the scales of the 2016 election in his favor and seemed to accept Putin's insistence that Russia's hands were clean.

Brennan slammed those comments as "nothing short of treasonous" and accused Trump of being "wholly in the pocket of Putin."

Paul, in turn, called Brennan "the most biased, bigoted, over-the-top, hyperbolic sort of unhinged director of the CIA we've ever had" in an interview on Fox News.

Clapper, reacting to the White House talk of revoking clearances, said on CNN that Trump's idea was "kind of a petty way of retribution, I suppose, for speaking out against the president, which I think, on the part of all of us, are borne out of genuine concerns about President Trump."

Hayden tweeted Monday that revoking his security clearance wouldn't "have any effect on what I say or write." And former Brennan deputy chief of staff Nick Shapiro said Brennan "hasn't made one penny off of his clearance" and "doesn't need a security clearance to speak out against the failings of Trump."

Melissa Schwartz, a spokeswoman for McCabe, tweeted that his security clearance was deactivated when he was terminated, per FBI policy.

"You would think the White House would check with the FBI before trying to throw shiny objects to the press corps," she wrote.

As for whether Trump has the authority to do what Sanders suggested, Aftergood called it "a disputed question."

Attorney Greg T. Rinckey, who specializes in national security and security clearance cases, said that while presidents have broad authority to grant clearances, there is "some debate over whether or not the president has the authority to revoke" them.

He said he was not aware of any past case in which a person had their clearance revoked by the president.

John V. Berry, an attorney who regularly represents federal intelligence agency employees, said that he didn't see any reason the president wouldn't be able to revoke clearance but that doing so would "be terrible for America" and "totally defeat the process of defending national security."

"If we start interjecting politics into this, our country's going to be significantly weakened," Berry said.

Rep. Elijah E. Cummings, ranking Democrat on the House oversight committee, said Trump had allowed his former national security adviser Michael Flynn "to keep his security clearance for weeks after the Justice Department warned that he was under investigation for lying about his secret conversations with the Russians" and "allowed his son-in-law Jared Kushner to keep his security clearance after repeatedly concealing his foreign contacts."

"President Trump should get his own staff's security clearances in order rather than engaging in crass political retribution against former officials," Cummings said in statement.

Associated Press writers Deb Riechmann and Lisa Mascaro contributed to this report.

First lady going on road for 'Be Best' children's campaign

By **DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Melania Trump is going on the road to promote her "Be Best" campaign to help children.

The first lady planned to advocate for her campaign Tuesday in Tennessee during a visit to Monroe Carell Jr. Children's Hospital at Vanderbilt in Nashville on what will be her first domestic trip to highlight the initiative. Mrs. Trump was to participate in a discussion about babies born addicted to drugs, tour a neonatal intensive care unit and visit with patients.

She has done little personally to publicize the campaign around the country since she unveiled it at the White House in May.

A week after the announcement, the first lady was hospitalized for kidney surgery, stayed five nights,

then spent several weeks out of the spotlight recuperating before resuming a public schedule. She has since made two trips to the U.S.-Mexico border to meet with adults and children affected by the president's policy of separating migrant families who cross into the U.S. illegally.

The first lady did promote "Be Best," which focuses on children's well-being, social media use and opioid abuse, when she accompanied the president to London this month. She has also discussed it during surprise visits in the Washington area, including an unannounced visit to Microsoft's Innovation and Policy Center in Washington last week.

Mrs. Trump visited with a group of students who help the computer software maker with its work on youth-centered online safety. Being good citizens online is one focus of the first lady's campaign, though her husband is routinely criticized for using Twitter against his foes.

"To see students taking action and being positive leaders in the digital world for youth is exactly what 'Be Best' is focused on," the first lady said after visiting Microsoft.

The issue taking her to Tennessee is neonatal abstinence syndrome, which occurs when a baby withdraws from drugs — usually an opioid painkiller — that he or she was exposed to in the womb. Withdrawal causes such symptoms as irritability, muscle tremors, difficulty feeding and sleeping, and breathing problems, according to testimony that Dr. Stephen Patrick, a pediatrician and neonatologist at the children's hospital that the first lady is scheduled to visit, gave earlier this year to a Tennessee state legislative committee.

Opioids are fueling the deadliest drug overdose epidemic in U.S. history. About 70,000 Americans died of a drug overdose last year, according to preliminary numbers released this month by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. That's a 10 percent increase from the previous year.

The practice of first ladies using their positions of prominence to promote issues and causes they care about can be traced to Martha Washington, America's original first lady. She was an advocate for Revolutionary War veterans, said Anita McBride, executive-in-residence at American University's Center for Congressional and Presidential Studies.

"Every first lady has done something," said McBride, who was chief of staff to Laura Bush when she was first lady.

One of Mrs. Trump's trip to the border was overshadowed by a hooded jacket she wore that had the words, "I really don't care, do u?" scrawled on the back. The garment choice for her Texas trip ricocheted across the internet, spawning memes about what message the former model may have been trying to send.

Her spokeswoman said it was just a jacket with no hidden message. But the president undercut that by later tweeting that his wife was really saying she doesn't care about the "fake news" media.

Follow Darlene Superville on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/dsupervillap>

Trump steps up pressure, but Iran says it's 'unimpressed'

By MATTHEW LEE and ZEKE MILLER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's explosive Twitter threat to Iran's leader comes as his administration is ratcheting up a pressure campaign on the Islamic republic that many suspect is aimed at regime change.

No one is predicting imminent war. But Trump's bellicose, all-caps challenge addressed to President Hassan Rouhani followed a speech by Secretary of State Mike Pompeo in which he accused Iran's leadership of massive corruption and widespread rights abuses and urged Iranians to rise up in protest.

Both the tweet and the speech landed less than two weeks before the administration will begin re-imposing sanctions on Iran that had been lifted under the 2015 nuclear deal. In the meantime, the U.S. is stepping up Farsi-language outreach that is intended to support Iranians demonstrating against the policies of their government.

Trump's tweet doesn't appear to have been prompted by any notable shift in rhetoric from Iran.

It could have been an impulsive reaction to reports from Tehran quoting Rouhani as giving the U.S. an oft-repeated reminder that conflict with Iran would be "the mother of all wars." Yet animosity directed at

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the Iranian leadership is an established part of the administration's broader foreign policy.

Iran publicly shrugged off Trump's late Sunday message — "NEVER EVER THREATEN THE UNITED STATES AGAIN OR YOU WILL SUFFER CONSEQUENCES THE LIKES OF WHICH FEW THROUGHOUT HISTORY HAVE EVER SUFFERED BEFORE."

Tweeted Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif on Monday: "COLOR US UNIMPRESSED: The world heard even harsher bluster a few months ago. And Iranians have heard them — albeit more civilized ones — for 40 yrs. We've been around for millennia & seen fall of empires, incl our own, which lasted more than the life of some countries. BE CAUTIOUS!"

Asked at the White House if he had concerns about provoking Iran, Trump said simply, "None at all."

Tehran is already aware of what is coming from the administration as consequences of Trump's May withdrawal from the 2015 nuclear accord take shape.

As Pompeo noted in his speech to Iranian-Americans and others in California on Sunday, the centerpiece will be the re-imposition of U.S. economic sanctions; the first batch will go back into force Aug. 4, targeting the Iranian automotive sector and trade in gold and other metals. A more significant set of sanctions that will hit Iran's oil industry and central bank by punishing countries and companies that do business with them will resume Nov. 4.

"Right now, the United States is undertaking a diplomatic and financial pressure campaign to cut off the funds that the regime uses to enrich itself and support death and destruction," Pompeo said in his speech at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum in Simi Valley.

Pompeo also slammed Iran's political, judicial and military officials, accusing several by name of participating in rampant corruption, and called its religious leaders "hypocritical holy men" who amassed wealth while allowing their people to suffer. He said the government has "heartlessly repressed its own people's human rights, dignity and fundamental freedoms," and he hailed the "proud Iranian people (for) not staying silent about their government's many abuses."

"The United States under President Trump will not stay silent either," he said.

He was right. True to form, Trump did not stay silent. But the White House blamed Rouhani for inciting the war of words with his comment that "America must understand well that peace with Iran is the mother of all peace and war with Iran is the mother of all wars."

"WE ARE NO LONGER A COUNTRY THAT WILL STAND FOR YOUR DEMENTED WORDS OF VIOLENCE & DEATH. BE CAUTIOUS!," Trump wrote.

Reaction from Congress, particularly Democrats, was swift and critical.

Democratic Sen. Jeanne Shaheen of New Hampshire, a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, acknowledged that Iran's terrorist activities in the Middle East pose a threat but suggested it wouldn't be solved through a tweet from Trump.

"Sadly, after pulling us out of the nuclear deal with Europe and Iran, there doesn't seem to be strategy for how to move forward to fight Iran's activities," she said.

And Virginia Sen. Tim Kaine, the 2016 Democratic vice presidential candidate, called the Twitter blast from the White House "another warning sign that Trump is blundering toward war with Iran."

Trump's National Security Council pushed back with a statement saying: "Our differences are with the Iranian regime's actions and, in particular, with the actions of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, not the Iranian people. The Trump administration's Iran policy seeks to address the totality of these threats and malign activities and to bring about a change in the Iranian regime's behavior."

"If anybody's inciting anything, look no further than to Iran," said White House press secretary Sarah Sanders said. She added that Trump has been "very clear about what he's not going to allow to take place."

Trump has a history of firing off heated tweets that seem to quickly escalate long-standing disputes with leaders of nations at odds with the U.S.

In the case of North Korea, the verbal war cooled quickly and gradually led to the high-profile summit and denuclearization talks. Still, there has been little tangible progress in a global push to rid North Korea of its nuclear weapons program since the historic Trump-Kim Jong Un summit on June 12.

Associated Press writers Nasser Karimi and Amir Vahdat in Tehran, David Rising in Dubai, Aron Heller in Jerusalem, Hyung-jin Kim in Seoul and Michael Casey in Concord, New Hampshire, contributed.

This story has been corrected to correct Trump tweet: 'Likes' of which, not 'like.'

Fiat Chrysler is shaken without visionary CEO behind wheel

By COLLEEN BARRY, AP Business Writer

MILAN (AP) — Fiat Chrysler shares were volatile Monday as investors expressed worry about the exit of ailing CEO Sergio Marchionne, whose driven and creative management style has been the company's fortune.

Shares in the Italian-American carmaker closed down 1.5 percent after a harder 4 percent opening tumble in the first trading since Marchionne's grave health condition was disclosed over the weekend.

Trading was volatile, particularly after news that the head of the company's big European operations, who had been considered one of Marchionne's potential successors, was quitting. Ferrari, where Marchionne was also replaced at the helm, closed down about 5 percent.

The Fiat Chrysler board on Saturday named long-time Jeep executive Mike Manley as CEO, unexpectedly accelerating a transition that was planned for early next year. The company said the 66-year-old Marchionne suffered complications from shoulder surgery in Zurich, Switzerland, last month that worsened in recent days, and that he could not resume his duties. No other details were released.

Marchionne will be a hard act to follow. Analysts credit his industry vision and ability to strike deals and take risks for increasing the market value of Fiat by tenfold since he took over in 2004. And while he was due to retire in 2019, most expected him to stay on in some role to guide the company.

"Some of us assumed he'd remain as chairman and be there to phone in his instructions," Max Warburton, an analyst at market research firm Bernstein who often publicly tussled with Marchionne on conference calls about the company's earnings.

"Marchionne ran FCA in a command and control style, with constant firefighting measures. There is no operating manual to follow," he said.

Marchionne engineered both the turnarounds of Italian carmaker Fiat and Chrysler, which Fiat acquired in 2009 in a deal with the U.S. government, creating the world's seventh-largest carmaker out of two formerly dysfunctional entities. He created shareholder value for the Fiat-founding Agnelli family with successful spinoffs of Fiat's heavy vehicle maker CNH Industrial and of the iconic Ferrari super sports car company. But his goal of another big merger failed to find any takers.

Marchionne proved himself a consummate deal-maker. He won control of Chrysler in a 2009 deal with U.S. President Barack Obama's government without putting a penny down, only in exchange for bringing more small-car technology to Chrysler.

In May of 2011, less than two years after leaving bankruptcy, Marchionne pulled off a huge refinancing of the company's \$7.5 billion loan from the U.S. government, retiring it with a combination of corporate bonds, loans and payments, even though Chrysler had not yet turned an annual profit. Some of the debt carried at 12 percent interest rate and cost the company \$1.2 billion in interest per year. The maneuver helped the company to start making money again.

The Italian Canadian manager later demonstrated his agility by refocusing U.S. production on trucks and SUVs and away from passenger cars to meet market demand, a process that got underway in 2016.

And when President Donald Trump took office, Marchionne quickly responded to his calls to keep jobs in America by repatriating production at a Mexican plant. On Monday, Trump called Elkann to inquire about Marchionne's condition, the company confirmed.

In Italy, Marchionne moved production away from low-margin small cars and toward pricier Alfa Romeo and Maserati models for the export market, even if his relaunch of Alfa still has not reached his targets.

Manley's first appointment in the role was at a regular Fiat Chrysler executive council meeting in Turin on Monday, and his first public appearance will be to present FCA's second quarter earnings on Wednesday.

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Marchionne had announced in his last major presentation to analysts last month that the quarterly results would show Fiat Chrysler at zero debt for the first time — an occasion for which the normally casually attired Italian-Canadian manager donned a tie — even if only briefly. The five-year plan included a significant shift to electrified motors.

Manley, 54, has been key to transforming the quintessentially American Jeep brand into a global marquee since taking over there in 2009, and he also has been the head of the Ram truck division since 2015.

Tokyo-based auto analyst for Nomura Securities, Anindya Das, called Manley “a natural choice” to replace Marchionne as “Manley has been heading FCA’s main profit and growth engine Jeep since 2009.”

Both brands have formed the leading edge of Fiat Chrysler’s North American strategy to move away from passenger car production and focus on SUVs and trucks to meet market demand.

“Although Mr. Manley’s public profile has been relatively low and limited to operational matters, he was heavily involved in setting the 2019-22 strategic plan,” Philippe Houchois, an analyst at Jeffries Financial Services, said in a note. “We expect continuity.” But he also expressed concern that Fiat Chrysler’s success has been linked to Marchionne’s ability to shift strategy to meet targets.

AP Auto Writer Tom Krisher contributed from Detroit.

Twin wildfires near Athens kill 24, gut vacation resorts

By DEREK GATOPOULOS and ELENA BECATOROS, Associated Press

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — Gale-fanned wildfires raged through holiday resorts near Greece’s capital, killing at least 24 people by early Tuesday and injuring more than 100, including 11 in serious condition, in the country’s deadliest fire season in more than a decade.

Greece sought international help through the European Union as the fires on either side of Athens left lines of cars torched, charred farms and forests, and sent hundreds of people racing to beaches to be evacuated by navy vessels, yachts and fishing boats.

Winds reached 80 kph (50 mph) as authorities deployed the country’s entire fleet of water-dropping planes and helicopters to give vacationers time to escape. Military drones remained in the air in the high winds to help officials direct more than 600 firefighters on the ground.

“We were unlucky. The wind changed and it came at us with such force that it razed the coastal area in minutes,” said Evangelos Bournous, mayor of the port town of Rafina, a sleepy mainland port that serves Greek holiday islands.

The dock area became a makeshift hospital as paramedics checked survivors when they came off coast guard vessels and private boats. The operation continued through the night.

The death toll rose further after the coast guard counted four bodies recovered at sea, a short distance from the fires.

At daybreak Tuesday, Ambulance Service deputy director Miltiadis Mylonas said the number of casualties was likely to rise as the more gutted homes and cars were checked.

“It took people by surprise and the events happened very fast. Also, the fires broke out on many fronts, so all these factors made the situation extremely difficult,” he said.

“The task we face now is organizing the identification of victims by members of their families.”

The fire posed no immediate threat to Greece’s famed ancient monuments, but as it raged inland where children’s’ summer camps and holiday homes were hastily abandoned. Fleeing drivers clogged highways into the capital, hampering the firefighting effort, and flecks of ash swirled onto central Athens.

It was the deadliest fire season to hit Greece in more than a decade. More than 60 people were killed in 2007 when huge fires swept across the southern Peloponnese region.

“It’s a difficult night for Greece,” Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras said after flying back to Athens from a trip to Bosnia that was cut short.

Authorities said Cyprus and Spain offered assistance after the request for EU help was made.

Greek Fire Service officials issued public pleas for residents in fire-affected areas to comply with evacu-

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ation orders and not stay on in an effort trying to save their homes.

Rafina's mayor said he believed about 100 houses in that area had burned. The fire service was not able to confirm the figure.

Showers that passed over the Greek capital Monday missed the two big fires — one at Rafina, 30 kilometers (18 miles) to the east, and the other at Kineta, 55 kilometers (35 miles) to the west. Heavy rain is forecast across southern Greece on Wednesday.

Forest fires are common in Greece during the hot, dry summers, and temperatures recently hit highs up to 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit).

Associated Press writer Costas Kantouris in Thessaloniki contributed to this report.

Derek Gatopoulos on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/dgatopoulos>

Elena Becatoros on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/ElenaBec>

NY Daily News slashes newsroom staffing in half

By DAMIAN J. TROISE, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The New York tabloid Daily News cut half of its newsroom staff Monday including Jim Rich, the paper's editor in chief.

The paper was sold to Tronc Inc. last year for \$1, with the owner of the Chicago Tribune assuming liabilities and debt.

In an email sent to staff Monday, Tronc said the remaining staff at the Daily News will focus on breaking news involving "crime, civil justice and public responsibility."

The newspaper has been a key fixture in New York City for the last century. It has won 11 Pulitzer Prizes, including last year for its work with ProPublica on the abuse of eviction rules in New York City.

There had been reports that the cuts were coming, and an early-morning tweet from Rich hinted at what was to come.

"If you hate democracy and think local governments should operate unchecked and in the dark, then today is a good day for you," Rich wrote.

New York Governor Andrew M. Cuomo urged Tronc to reconsider the layoffs, saying they were made without notifying the state or asking for assistance.

"I urge Tronc to reconsider this drastic move and stand ready to work with them to avert this disaster," Cuomo said in a printed statement. "I understand that large corporations often only see profit and dividends as a bottom line. But in New York, we also calculate loss of an important institution, loss of jobs, and the impact on the families affected. I hope Tronc does the same and recalculates its decision. New York State stands ready to help."

The cuts also targeted the tabloid's social media staff, evidenced by its Twitter feed which began posting GIFs and memes that were later deleted. One GIF was of a confused John Travolta character in the film "Pulp Fiction." It garnered 8,000 likes and was retweeted more than 2,000 times.

Revenue and print circulation have been sliding at the newspaper for years, even as it provided critical coverage of health issues in public housing and for first responders after the Sept. 11 attacks.

Revenue slid 22 percent between 2014 and 2016, and the paper had already been letting people go. Tronc declined to say how many journalists lost their jobs Monday.

"Since the year began, we've worked hard to transform the New York Daily News into a truly digitally-focused enterprise - one that creates meaningful journalism, delivers it more quickly and more frequently, and develops new approaches to engage our readers," Tronc said in an email that was sent to the newsroom. "We've gained a deeper understanding of our readership. We've redefined our structures. But we have not gone far enough."

Managing Editor Kristen Lee was also ousted.

Robert York, editor of Tronc-owned The Morning Call in Allentown, Pennsylvania, will take over as editor

of the Daily News.

"The reporters at the Daily News are some of the very best in the business. I am heartbroken for them today, and for New York," said New York Attorney General Barbara Underwood. "We need strong local newspapers to hold those in power to account."

Tronc owns the Chicago Tribune, The Baltimore Sun, the Orlando Sentinel, and other media operations. It has clashed with the leadership of other newspapers it has acquired during heavy staff cuts, including the Los Angeles Times. The paper last month was returned to local ownership after nearly two decades of control by the company that is now known as Tronc.

The Times once had more than 1,200 journalists and more than 25 foreign bureaus. Now it employs about 400 journalists with bureaus in Sacramento, Washington and a handful of foreign and national outposts.

Shares of Tronc Inc., down about 8 percent this year, rose slightly in afternoon trading on the Nasdaq.

For trapped Syrian rescuers, an elaborately planned escape

By SARAH EL DEEB, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — The call came on Saturday night. In the raging war zone that is southwestern Syria, with enemy forces on the march, the 98 White Helmets volunteers brought their spouses, children and a personal bag each. A total of 421 people massed at two collection points where they were to make their crossing to safety.

By the time they crossed, they were 422. One woman went into labor, requiring an emergency C-section. Her son, Nairouz, came into the world in an open field under the darkness of night just short of the frontier with the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights.

It was just one moment of drama in a complicated international rescue operation to extract the Syrian volunteer rescuers who work in opposition areas through their country's bitter enemy Israel by bus to a temporary haven in Jordan.

It was a nail-biting trip to a crossing over one of the most tightly sealed frontiers in the world. Up until the last minute, those on the ground were uncertain the operation would go through.

Another nearly 400 people were meant to be pulled out as well. Most didn't make it in time to the assembly points, unable to go through roads that were closing fast by the advancing Syrian forces on one side and the expanding Islamic State militants on the other.

In all, it took about six hours to complete the evacuation, according to a person close to the operation who agreed to discuss the details on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue.

"It was a 'Hail Mary' operation," said the person familiar with the evacuation. "The only place of safety was through their evacuation" to Jordan.

The operation was conceived by Britain, Germany and Canada and supported by Israel, Jordan, the United States, and the U.N. It took an unprecedented level of agreement and coordination — something international players have rarely demonstrated during eight years of war in Syria that have pitted world powers against one another.

The rescue of the besieged White Helmets was not without controversy.

It raised questions about the fate of 3,000 other White Helmets still operating in opposition-held northern Syria, living with other 1 million other displaced civilians in areas where the government is expected to target next.

The Syrian government denounced the evacuation as a "criminal process" that "smuggled terrorists" whom it blamed for undermining the country's security for years. A Syrian Foreign Ministry official repeated his government's accusations that the White Helmets staged and executed chemical attacks to blame Damascus.

The White Helmets is an organization of volunteers that since 2013 took on the task of rescuing the survivors and salvaging the dead in war-ravaged held areas, whether digging them from under the rubble of bombed buildings or pulling victims of chemical attacks from site. It has had Western backing and

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funding, and its work brought it a Nobel Prize nomination. The government waged a virulent campaign depicting them as agents and terrorists because its volunteers helped document atrocities by government forces and their allies.

In five years of operations, over 3,000 volunteers saved more than 115,000 lives, according to the White Helmets. The cost for the group has been high, with one in four of its volunteers wounded or killed.

The plan was conceived in Europe and Canada about two weeks ago.

The Syrian government offensive in the southwest, backed by Russia, unfolded in mid-June. Though it condemned the assault, Washington, which along with Jordan had backed armed groups in the area and sponsored the White Helmets, signaled it wouldn't help stop the advances.

By early July, government forces began negotiating surrender deals with armed groups and civilians in villages and towns that were fast crumbling under the assault. The negotiations allowed those who refused to live under government control — whether armed fighters, civilians or activists — to evacuate to the north.

Except for the White Helmets, said the person close to the planning.

Government officials and Russian representatives said the White Helmets were "a red line" who should be "eradicated," the source said.

This threat was particularly acute, he said, because during previous evacuations from fallen opposition areas elsewhere, nearly a dozen White Helmets volunteers were specifically targeted, pulled from buses, tortured and filmed making false confessions about being paid agents. They were even filmed with weapons to support the government's narrative they work closely with the armed groups.

"It was a pattern of behavior," he said.

The discussions about the White Helmets' safety started between Britain, Germany and Canada before the NATO summit on July 9. At the summit, there were leader-to-leader meetings over the issue.

Evacuating them through Jordan quickly became impossible as government forces advanced, seizing a vital border crossing from the rebels and then deploying along the border. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he agreed to let them cross through Israel, after an appeal from U.S. President Donald Trump and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau.

Finding where the volunteers were in the fast-changing battlefield was a challenge. Conscious not to raise expectations, the planners only asked the volunteers whether they would accept an opportunity to evacuate through Israel.

Some declined, the source said, fearing they had no guarantees where they would end up. The leadership of the White Helmets was unanimous in accepting, despite the likelihood the government would point to the Israel route in propaganda against them.

"The political ramification had to be secondary to saving what is to be saved," the source said.

There was an unexpected twist: Advances by an affiliate of the Islamic State group. As rebel forces retreated and surrendered in many villages between Daraa and Quneitra provinces, it was the IS affiliate — not government forces — that moved in.

This changed the landscape again, blocking some escape routes to the evacuation points.

One civil defense volunteer said before Saturday night that many of his colleagues were locked in areas seized by the government and the militants.

"In our minds, there were no guarantees this evacuation was going to happen until it happened," the source said.

The small window was quickly closing. On the night of July 21, the call came.

The evacuees congregated at two points in the northern end of the frontier.

Again, there was a problem.

A wife of one volunteer went into labor as the call was issued. "We were worried she won't make it," the source said.

An emergency C-section was performed on the Syrian side in a field near the frontier. "In a couple of hours, she was evacuated to the other side with a healthy baby boy" — Nairouz.

The evacuees crossed on foot and were received on the other side by Israeli soldiers, who verified their

identities and took them in buses to one of the two crossings into Jordan.

"The rescuers were rescued," the source said.

Germany, Canada and Britain said they will resettle the White Helmets and their families within three months. The U.S. and Jordan will not take any in.

The planners are still in touch with the volunteers who didn't make it out, advising them on what to do and where to be safe.

It is unclear if a similar operation can be reproduced. As for the hundred other volunteers in northern Syria, the source said the geography and landscape are different, with Turkish forces present in the area and far more options than the southwest, with firmly sealed frontiers from all sides.

In a statement Monday night, the White Helmets thanked "all governments who contributed" to the evacuation and asked the international community — if it won't act to end Syrian offensives — to "do more to help the hundreds of thousands remaining in southern Syria."

But the international players appear unlikely to pull together that will again.

"A great many factors and partners had to interact in the right way," German Foreign Ministry spokesman Christofer Burger said.

Pressed whether the action set a precedent for further world help in evacuations, he said: "The factors that made it possible in this case to help in this way people who faced an acute threat, a very specific group, cannot be reproduced at will."

Senate confirms Robert Wilkie for Veterans Affairs secretary

By HOPE YEN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Senate on Monday confirmed Pentagon official Robert Wilkie to be secretary of Veterans Affairs, charged with delivering on President Donald Trump's campaign promises to fire bad VA employees and steer more patients to the private sector.

Wilkie won approval on a bipartisan vote of 86-9, securing the backing of many Democrats after insisting at his confirmation hearing that he will not privatize the government's second-largest department. It was a moment of respite from the sharp political divisions engulfing Trump's other nominees in the final months before congressional midterm elections.

Wilkie is Trump's third pick for the job in 18 months. The longtime public official says he will "shake up complacency" at VA, which has struggled with long waits in providing medical treatment to millions of veterans.

In a statement released by the White House, Trump applauded the confirmation vote and said he looked forward to Wilkie's leadership. "I have no doubt that the Department of Veterans Affairs will continue to make strides in honoring and protecting the heroic men and women who have served our nation with distinction," he said.

Trump selected Wilkie for the post in May after firing his first VA secretary, David Shulkin, amid ethics charges and internal rebellion at the department over the role of private care for veterans. Trump's initial replacement choice, White House doctor Ronny Jackson, withdrew after allegations of workplace misconduct surfaced.

Wilkie, a former assistant secretary of defense under President George W. Bush, has received mostly positive reviews from veterans' groups for his management experience, but the extent of his willingness to expand private care as an alternative to government-run VA care remains largely unknown.

Trump last year pledged he would triple the number of veterans "seeing the doctor of their choice." Currently more than 30 percent of VA appointments are made in the private sector.

Under repeated questioning at his hearing, the Air Force and Navy veteran said he opposed privatizing the agency of 360,000 employees and would make sure VA health care is "fully funded." When pressed by Sen. Jon Tester, the top Democrat on the panel, if he would be willing to disagree with Trump, Wilkie responded "yes."

"I have been privileged to work for some of the most high-powered people in this town," said Wilkie,

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currently a Pentagon undersecretary for Defense Secretary Jim Mattis. "They pay me for their opinions, and I give those to them."

Wilkie's main task in the coming months will be carrying out a newly signed law to ease access to private health providers. That law gives the VA secretary wide authority to decide when veterans can bypass the VA, based on whether they receive "quality" care, but the program could face escalating costs.

Some Democrats have warned the VA won't be able to handle a growing price tag, putting it at risk of budget shortfalls next year. Major veterans' groups want full funding for core VA medical centers, which they see as best-suited to veterans' specialized needs such as treatment for post-traumatic stress.

As VA secretary, Wilkie also will have more power under a new accountability law to fire VA employees. Lawmakers from both parties have recently raised questions about the law's implementation, including how whistleblower complaints are handled and whether the law is being disproportionately used against rank-and-file employees rather than senior managers who set policy.

"The tone has been set by President Trump on the direction of VA reforms," said Dan Caldwell, executive director of the conservative Concerned Veterans for America. "There have been a tremendous number of bills passed in the last year and half, and all will require a lot of work to make sure they are properly implemented."

Republican Sen. Johnny Isakson of Georgia, chairman of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, praised Wilkie as "eminently qualified," saying he will "bring stability and leadership" to VA.

Wilkie served as acting VA secretary after Shulkin's firing in March, before returning to his role as Pentagon undersecretary.

He will replace current acting VA secretary Peter O'Rourke, who clashed with the VA inspector general after refusing to release documents relating to VA whistleblower complaints and casting the independent watchdog as an underling who must "act accordingly." Under pressure from Congress, the VA agreed last week to provide documents to the IG.

Mystery: Who bought websites implying US senators 'for sale'

By TAMI ABDOLLAH, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Dozens of web addresses implying U.S. senators were "for sale" have been quietly and mysteriously purchased online, amid heightened concerns on Capitol Hill that foreign agents — especially Russians — might be trying to meddle in upcoming midterm elections.

An Associated Press investigation found the responsible party: Democrats.

The Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee acknowledged to the AP that it had quietly purchased the addresses, which use a new internet suffix "forsale," in March for at least 27 incumbent senators facing re-election this fall and in 2020, without telling the senators. The cybersecurity director for the sergeant-at-arms, the highest-ranking U.S. law enforcement officer in the Senate, has been looking into the matter.

The addresses now controlled by the Democratic political group include the names of mostly Democrats but some prominent Republicans, too. The group masked its role in the purchase to ensure its identity as the buyer remained anonymous. The current price for such addresses, with a privacy guard, is roughly \$18 each.

"It's a routine campaign practice to purchase URLs to stop bad actors from getting them, and if we eventually decided to develop a URL into a website then there would be a clear disclosure of who was operating it," said Lauren Passalacqua, communications director at the DSCC.

Buying politically-related web addresses to use them later online — or prevent rival campaigns from using them — has been a routine practice for decades. But Washington has been transfixed by criminal charges filed against Russian military officers accused of secretly meddling in the 2016 presidential campaign, accused by federal prosecutors of setting up websites like DCLeaks.com and using anonymous Twitter accounts to peddle embarrassing information about U.S. politicians.

U.S. intelligence chief Dan Coats has cautioned that the "warning lights are blinking red" and that "the digital infrastructure that serves this country is literally under attack."

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The mysterious "forsale" purchases set off alarms. AP's review found roughly 280 political web addresses registered under the "forsale" domain, targeting President Donald Trump, the GOP, Supreme Court and National Rifle Association, as well as individual Democrats and Republicans. The Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee said it was responsible for at least 27 of them targeting U.S. senators and didn't provide further details.

"In this particular atmosphere, anything along these lines is concerning, because there's so much opportunity for malicious use of the internet, particularly in campaigns," said Sen. Angus King, I-Maine, before AP solved the mystery. King declined to comment after learning from AP that Democrats were responsible.

The latest actions show how lines and motives in American politics can blur among foreign adversaries, U.S. dirty-tricksters, pranksters or speculators hoping eventually to sell the web addresses to campaigns or their rivals. None of the addresses for the senators appears to be associated with an operational website, obscuring motives for future uses. Unlike in cases where so-called squatters register web addresses they hope to sell for profit, there were no indications the addresses were being made available for resale or populated with ads to make money.

Tim Groeling, an expert on political communication and new media at the University of California, Los Angeles, said the anonymity sought by the Democratic group was what troubled him. The identities of whoever registered the websites were purposefully masked. He said it's common for campaigns to purchase permutations of candidate names defensively and to use offensively against political opponents.

"The lack of transparency is both concerning from a standpoint of the potential for other governments to do this type of thing and not be revealed, and our domestic politics," Groeling said. "I'm a big fan of transparency. I think a lot of things can be fixed with sunlight."

The addresses use the new internet suffix "forsale" first made available in 2015 and intended to help consumers sell unwanted items without paying auction sites. The addresses the Democrats registered included the names of Sens. Bob Casey, D-Pa.; Claire McCaskill, D-Mo.; King; Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass.; Ted Cruz, R-Texas; Heidi Heitkamp, D-N.D.; Bernie Sanders, I-Vt.; Roger Wicker, R-Miss. and Dean Heller, R-Nev.

The technology infrastructure of the U.S. Senate and its offices around the country are the responsibility of the sergeant at arms. Terry Gainer, who previously served as sergeant at arms until 2014, said that if he had learned of the mysterious addresses in the current political environment, he would have his cybersecurity officer as well as the Capitol Police made aware. He said he would also ask the Secret Service and FBI to investigate.

"I don't believe in coincidences, and again, what's been going on since the whole Russian intrusions, there'd be much more sensitivity about taking a look at this," Gainer said.

It was unclear who purchased the addresses targeting the NRA, GOP and others. Internet records showed they were purchased anonymously hours before the Democrats bought the ones with the senators' names, and within seconds of each other. The address implying the Supreme Court was for sale was purchased last month.

"It's no different from dot-sucks," said Paul Vixie, a highly regarded computer scientist who helped design the system of internet addresses currently in use. "Social commentary has always thrived on the internet, due to reach and cost issues. These politicians are right to reserve those names, but wrong if they think other domains only slightly less clean won't appear."

Warren's staff declined to comment, as did McCaskill's and Cruz's. Heller, Casey, Heitkamp, Sanders and Wicker did not respond to questions. The GOP, DNC and NRA also did not respond to questions from the AP.

The U.S. Senate Sergeant at Arms Office declined to comment on the "active defense" of its system.

Politicians and celebrities, especially, have trademark rights to their own names, and can file a complaint and request arbitration through the World Intellectual Property Organization or the National Arbitration Forum with whoever registered the website, according to Alexander Urbelis, a partner at the New York-based Blackstone Law Group who detected the new registrations.

"It's a really nutty thing to do unilaterally because it's going to set off alarm bells," Urbelis said.

Rick Tyler, a longtime Republican political consultant, said such website purchases are typical campaign

tactics. He said third parties, like super PACs, are often used so the campaigns themselves appear virtuous.

"Ultimately in all of this, with the Russian meddling and the fake news ... it gets very confusing," Tyler said. "I think the information consumer has to just beware, they have to learn to discern what is true, and what is not."

Follow Tami Abdollah on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/latams>

Duck boat probe will check if Coast Guard rules were ignored

By JIM SALTER and HEATHER HOLLINGSWORTH, Associated Press

The investigation into the sinking of a sightseeing boat that claimed 17 lives will look at whether operators violated Coast Guard rules by venturing onto a Missouri lake as thunderstorms rolled in, a Coast Guard official said Monday.

More than three days after the deadly accident, a crane attached to a barge pulled the amphibious duck boat from Table Rock Lake near Branson, where it was submerged in 80 feet (24 meters) of water.

Divers attached a sling to the 33-foot, 4-ton vessel, then raised and drained it, officials said. It was to be loaded onto a vehicle and turned over to the National Transportation Safety Board.

Coast Guard Lt. Tasha Sadowicz of the agency's St. Louis office said the boat that capsized and sank was known as "Stretch Duck 07." Like all 22 duck boats in operation in Branson, it was required to undergo annual inspections. The most recent was in February.

But Sadowicz said the Coast Guard's "certificate of inspection" placed limits on when the boats can enter the water based on wind speed and "sea state," which refers to the height of waves.

Sadowicz did not have information on Stretch Duck 07's limits but said they will be a focal point of the investigation.

Some witnesses have said the lake was calm and the storm came up suddenly Thursday evening. Sadowicz said investigators want to find out if operators were adequately monitoring the weather and should have reasonably known a storm was approaching.

Turbulent weather has caused trouble for duck boats before.

Coast Guard records show that a similar duck boat in Philadelphia took on a 3- or 4-foot wave on Oct. 3, 2015, as it carried 12 passengers on a tour of the Delaware River. Water got into the engine compartment, causing the engine to stall and setting the vessel adrift.

The boat was safely towed to shore. The cause of the failure was determined to be "the rapidly worsening river conditions." But the Coast Guard also cited a "failure to anticipate the change in the weather conditions."

"The change of the tide from slack to flood and the strong northerly winds caused the waves to quickly build and exceeded the restriction on the vessel's COI (certificate of inspection)," the Coast Guard report stated.

Duck boats were designed for military use in World War II. The Missouri boat that sank was built in 1944.

Stretch Duck 07 had a few apparently minor problems in recent years.

In 2011, the vessel "lost steering while underway on Table Rock Lake" with 30 passengers on board. The driver was able to make it back to shore, according to Coast Guard records.

On June 6, 2015, water got into the engine compartment as the boat entered the lake from land, a process known as "splash down."

A January 2016 inspection found inoperable heat detectors, which were later fixed.

The Coast Guard prohibited the vessel from operating from January 2015 to April 2015, but the report does not state a reason other than "hazardous/unsafe condition." Another report from February 2015 cited leakage in a wheel well caused by sealant failure.

The owner of an inspection service in the St. Louis area said he issued a written report in August 2017 to the Branson duck boat operator, Ripley Entertainment, after inspecting two dozen boats. In the report, Steve Paul of Test Drive Technologies explained that the vessels' engines — and pumps that remove water

from their hulls — might fail in inclement weather.

On Saturday, former NTSB chairman James Hall said the design of duck boats makes them prone to the type of accident that occurred in Missouri, particularly when weather turns bad. He said they should be banned.

At a news conference Monday in Branson, Coast Guard Capt. Scott Stoermer said the investigation will also look into whether the boat captain followed company guidelines regarding use of life jackets.

Missouri law requires boat passengers ages 7 and younger to wear life jackets, but commercial vessels like the duck boats are exempt. The law requires enough life jackets for passengers and crew, and jackets that fit all of the children. Whether to advise passengers to use life jackets is an "operation decision" made by the captain, Stoermer said.

Several survivors made it to safety by climbing aboard another sightseeing boat that was nearby.

Many survivors told Missouri State Highway Patrol chaplain Steve Martin that they were able to swim to the Branson Belle paddle-wheeler. Some climbed up the paddle wheel itself. Others clung to the side of the boat until bystanders pulled them to safety.

"The waves were kind of pushing them toward the boat," Martin said.

Ripley Entertainment's website said it was offering to pay for all medical and funeral expenses for victims, to return all personal items from the accident scene and to help with families' travel or accommodations. The company also said it was offering grief counseling for its own employees.

Nine of the people who died belonged to one Indiana family. Others killed came from Missouri, Arkansas and Illinois. The dead included five children. Fourteen people survived.

Divers recovered a video-recording device from the boat and sent it to the NTSB lab in Washington, D.C. Agency spokesman Keith Holloway said it was unclear what the recorder captured.

Salter reported from St. Louis. Hollingsworth reported from Kansas City, Missouri.

R. Kelly sings about troubles in revealing 19-minute song

By MEFIN FEKADU, AP Music Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — R. Kelly sings about his troubles and battles in a new 19-minute song, addressing sexual abuse claims against him that have put a screeching halt on his career.

The song, "I Admit," was posted to Soundcloud on Monday. The track begins with the lyrics, "I admit I have made some mistakes/And I have some imperfect ways."

R. Kelly gets personal throughout the track, singing that he likes "all the ladies, that's both older and young ladies," following it up with: "But tell me how they call it pedophile because that (expletive) is crazy."

The embattled entertainer has long been accused of behavior that has ranged from questionable to criminal. He was accused of child pornography after a widely circulated videotape appeared to show him having sex with, and urinating on, a teenage girl. He was acquitted of all charges in 2008 and continued to rack up hits and sell out stadiums around the country.

On "I Admit," he sings that he's "not convicted, not arrested, dragged my name in the dirt/All this work to be successful, when you abandon me 'cause of what you heard."

R. Kelly is one of pop music's best-selling artists and his hits include "Ignition," "I Believe I Can Fly," "Step in the Name of Love" and "Bump N' Grind." He has also written hits for artists ranging from Celine Dion to Michael Jackson to Lady Gaga. While he's written classic love songs and even gospel music, he is defined by sexually explicit songs such as "Feelin' on Yo Booty," "Your Body's Calling Me," "Sex Me" and even more explicit fare.

In 2002, R. Kelly released a song about his troubles in similar fashion with "Heaven I Need a Hug," a response to his critics at the time. "Media, do your job/But please just don't make my job so hard," he sang on the song.

On the new song, he says he was sexually abused as a child, singing "a family member touched me" and revealing he was "so scared to say something, so I just put the blame on me."

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He also says that he does not own his music, that he dropped out of school and that he "couldn't read the teleprompter when the Grammy's asked me to present (an award)."

"I Admit" was not released on Sony's RCA Records, where R. Kelly is signed. The label said it had no comment about the song. R. Kelly posted a link to the song Monday with the caption: "Today is the day you've been waiting for."

Despite having a plethora of hit songs, he says he had to borrow money from his record label to "put food on the table."

"I was told I had to sell my cars, I was told I couldn't get a loan/Said I owed 20 million to the IRS and they were coming to get my home," he sings.

In April, R. Kelly's concert in his hometown of Chicago was canceled around the time the Times' Up campaign took aim at the singer over allegations he sexually abused women. Weeks later, Spotify removed his music from its playlists, citing its new policy on hate content and hateful conduct.

"Now the truth in this message is I'm a broke (expletive) legend/The only reason I stay on tour is 'cause I gotta pay my rent," he sings on the new track.

In May, a woman filed a lawsuit against R. Kelly, accusing the singer of sexual battery, knowingly infecting her with herpes and locking her in rooms for punishment.

"They're brainwashed, really?/Kidnapped, really?/Can't eat, really?/Real talk, that (expletive) sound silly," he sings.

R. Kelly says in the song he had a recent conversation with talk show host Wendy Williams, who asked him about the late singer Aaliyah, who was 15 when she married a 27-year-old R. Kelly in 1994. The marriage was later annulled.

"(Wendy) said, 'What about Aaliyah said?,' R. Kelly sings, responding with: "Love."

"She said, 'What about the tape?/I said hush,'" he continues. "I said my lawyer said 'don't say noth'/But I can tell you I've been set up."

R. Kelly also calls out journalist Jim DeRogatis, who has written extensively for The Chicago Sun-Times and BuzzFeed about the singer's sexual abuse claims. "To Jim DeRogatis, whatever your name is/You been tryna destroy me for 25 whole years," he sings.

"BuzzFeed News stands by every word we've reported in the last year, just as The Chicago Sun-Times has stood by every word I reported there since the first story Abdon Pallasch and I broke in December 2000," DeRogatis said in a statement Monday.

Online:

R. Kelly's "I Admit": <https://soundcloud.com/julius-darrington/rkelly-i-admit>

Drought spurs extreme measures to protect West's wild horses

By JULIAN HATTEM, Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Harsh drought conditions in parts of the American West are pushing wild horses to the brink and spurring extreme measures to protect them.

For what they say is the first time, volunteer groups in Arizona and Colorado are hauling thousands of gallons of water and truckloads of food to remote grazing grounds where springs have run dry and vegetation has disappeared.

Federal land managers also have begun emergency roundups in desert areas of Utah and Nevada.

"We've never seen it like this," said Simone Netherlands, president of the Arizona-based Salt River Wild Horse Management Group. In May, dozens of horses were found dead on the edge of a dried-up watering hole in northeastern Arizona.

As spring turned to summer, drought conditions turned from bad to worse, Netherlands said.

Parts of Utah, Colorado, Arizona and New Mexico are under the most severe category of drought, though extreme conditions are present from California to Missouri, government analysts say. Parts of the region have witnessed some of the driest conditions on record, amid a cycle of high temperatures and low

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snowmelt that appears to be getting worse, National Weather Service hydrologist Brian McInerney said. The dry conditions have fed wildfires that have destroyed hundreds of buildings across the West. This month, a firefighter was killed battling a blaze near California's Yosemite National Park.

The federal Bureau of Land Management — which oversees vast expanses of public land, mostly in the West — says the problem facing wild horses stems from overpopulation aggravated by severe drought. The region is home to roughly 67,000 wild horses.

"You're always going to have drought issues. That's a common thing out on the range," agency spokesman Jason Lutterman said. "What really exacerbates things is when we're already over population, because then you already have resource issues."

The agency's emergency roundup in western Utah began a week ago, aiming to remove roughly 250 wild horses from a population of approximately 670. The operation is expected to take several weeks.

Once the horses are rounded up, the government gives them veterinary treatment and offers them for sale or adoption. Those that aren't sold or adopted are transferred to privately contracted corrals and pastures for the long term.

A similar emergency roundup began this month in central Nevada, where officials said some horses in a herd of 2,100 could die from lack of water in coming weeks. The operation was quickly halted, ironically because of extreme rain, but will likely resume.

"The ground's so dry it's not absorbing that water. It's running off," bureau spokeswoman Jenny Leisentre said.

Volunteers are also taking action.

Since late spring, Netherlands's Salt River group has hauled hay to a dozen locations outside Phoenix to feed a herd of starving wild horses.

Roughly 200 miles (320 kilometers) north, a couple near Gray Mountain, on the Navajo Nation, have spearheaded an effort to leave water and food for horses they say would die without human intervention.

In western Colorado, volunteers say they're preparing to bring up to 5,000 gallons (18,900 liters) of water per day to a herd of 750 thirsty horses.

"Springs are drying up that have never dried up," said Cindy Wright, co-founder of Colorado conservation group Wild Horse Warriors for Sand Wash Basin.

Areas of the basin are low on food due to livestock grazing, so the group is hauling the water to others parts with more plentiful grass, said Aletha Dove, another group co-founder.

Wild horse advocates have balked at the Bureau of Land Management's insistence that wild horse populations are too high. Critics say the agency is using dry conditions as a smoke screen to shrink horse populations in response to pressure from ranchers whose livestock compete with the horses for grazing land.

"I do have a concern about the larger numbers that they're pulling off, and then a bigger concern about the BLM under this administration using all kinds of excuses to pull off horses," said Suzanne Roy, executive director of the American Wild Horse Campaign, an advocacy organization.

The agency is prohibited from euthanizing the wild horses it rounds up, though President Donald Trump has proposed allowing the animals to be killed or sold for slaughter.

Activists in Nevada held a rally last week at the bureau's state headquarters in Reno to protest a planned roundup later this year.

Critics want the government to instead use birth control to manage wild horse populations.

The bureau says the fertility treatment, which must be administered yearly and fired from a dart gun at close range, is too difficult for use except in certain cases where herds are easy to approach and have markings that make horses distinguishable from one another.

Whatever the long-term answer, volunteers say their efforts can't go on forever. Trucking in water and food could cost several thousand dollars per month and make horses overly dependent on humans, they said.

"If we don't have a very good fall with a lot of rain — and it's also warm so that our fall vegetation grows — we're going to lose horses," Wright said.

Associated Press writers Felicia Fonseca in Flagstaff, Arizona, and Scott Sonner in Reno, Nevada, contributed to this report.

Trump tries to cast fresh doubt on Mueller's 'Witch Hunt'

By ZEKE MILLER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump tried to cast fresh doubt Monday on the federal investigation into Russian election interference in the 2016 presidential election, calling it a “fraud and a hoax designed to target Trump” and demanding an immediate end to the “Witch Hunt.”

Trump also said former campaign adviser Carter Page, the subject of government documents released over the weekend, wasn't a spy or an agent of Russia.

“Carter Page wasn't a spy, wasn't an agent of the Russians - he would have cooperated with the FBI. It was a fraud and a hoax designed to target Trump,” the president said in a series of tweets quoting Tom Fitton, president of the conservative watchdog group Judicial Watch.

Fitton was interviewed Monday on “Fox and Friends,” an appearance Trump tweeted about.

“A disgrace to America,” Trump's tweet continued. “They should drop the discredited Mueller Witch Hunt now!”

The president was responding to the Justice Department's Saturday release of documents related to the wiretapping of Page. Trump has asserted without evidence that the documents, heavily redacted and released Saturday under the Freedom of Information Act, “confirm with little doubt” that intelligence agencies misled a special court that approved the wiretap warrant.

But lawmakers from both political parties said that the documents don't show wrongdoing and that they even appear to undermine some previous claims by top Republicans on the basis for obtaining a warrant against Page.

Visible portions of the documents show the FBI telling the court that Page “has been collaborating and conspiring with the Russian government.” The agency also told the court that “the FBI believes Page has been the subject of targeted recruitment by the Russian government.”

Trump's tweets landed as he continues to try to reassure the country that he accepts that longtime foe Russia interfered in the 2016 election, despite his public undermining of U.S. intelligence agencies in Helsinki while standing alongside Russian President Vladimir Putin.

“So President Obama knew about Russia before the Election,” Trump tweeted late Sunday. “Why didn't he do something about it? Why didn't he tell our campaign? Because it is all a big hoax, that's why, and he thought Crooked Hillary was going to win!!!”

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said Monday that Trump was “obviously” referring to allegations of collusion between his presidential campaign and Russian agents.

U.S. intelligence agencies unanimously concurred that Russia interfered in the 2016 campaign. Trump only reluctantly accepted their assessment amid the firestorm of last week's reaction to his comments at a summit news conference with Putin.

“Obviously the president is talking about the collusion with his campaign,” Sanders said. “He's been very clear that there wasn't any. I think he's said it about 1,000 times.”

In Monday's tweets, Trump again mischaracterized the documents released by the FBI this weekend that provided grounds for its surveillance of Page. Trump claimed without evidence that the FBI inappropriately used political research by British spy Christopher Steele to mislead the court into granting a wiretap order, then classified the documents to “cover up misconduct.”

That's not what the documents show, though. Released online under the Freedom of Information Act, the documents note the political ties to Steele's work but said it still believed some of his report to be “credible.”

The FBI said it suspected Page had been “collaborating and conspiring with the Russian government.” It told the court that “the FBI believes Page has been the subject of targeted recruitment by the Russian government.”

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Page denies being a foreign agent.

Special Counsel Robert Mueller is investigating potential collusion between Russia and Trump's campaign. Two Trump associates, former national security adviser Mike Flynn and campaign foreign policy aide George Papadopoulos, pleaded guilty last year to charges brought by Mueller alleging they had lied to the FBI about their Russia contacts.

The documents released over the weekend were part of officials' application for a warrant to the secretive foreign intelligence surveillance court.

"As usual they are ridiculously heavily redacted but confirm with little doubt that the Department of 'Justice' and FBI misled the courts. Witch Hunt Rigged, a Scam!" Trump tweeted over the weekend.

While the documents confirm that the FBI relied, in part, on information from Steele to obtain the initial warrant, they also show how the FBI informed the court of his likely motivation.

A page-long footnote in the warrant application lays out the FBI's assessment of Steele's history and the likely interest of his backer, adding that despite the political concern, the bureau believed at least some of his report to be "credible."

Democratic Rep. Adam Schiff of California, a ranking member on the House Intelligence Committee, said the documents detail "just why the FBI was so concerned that Carter Page might be acting as an agent of a foreign power."

"It was a solid application and renewals signed by four different judges appointed by three different Republican presidents," Schiff said on ABC's "This Week."

Republican Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida said he didn't think the FBI did anything wrong in obtaining warrants against Page.

"I have a different view on this issue than the president and the White House," Rubio said Sunday on CBS' "Face the Nation." "They did not spy on the campaign from anything and everything that I have seen. You have an individual here who has openly bragged about his ties to Russia and Russians."

In a 2013 letter, Page had described himself as an "informal adviser" to the Kremlin but now said "it's really spin" to call him an adviser.

Page has not been charged with a crime, but he has been interviewed by the FBI and congressional investigators about his ties to Russia. White House officials have argued that Page, announced by the president in early 2016 as a foreign policy adviser, played only a minor role in the Trump campaign.

The documents released Saturday include the FBI's October 2016 request to surveil Page and several renewal applications. It marks the first time in the more than 40-year history of the highly secretive court that underlying documents for a warrant have been released.

Gala opens countdown to 50th anniversary of 1st moon landing

By ALEX SANZ and MIKE SCHNEIDER, Associated Press

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Former NASA astronaut Buzz Aldrin was noticeably absent from a gala kicking off a yearlong celebration of the 50th anniversary of the first moon landing, even though his non-profit space education foundation is a sponsor and he typically is the star attraction.

Aldrin said he didn't attend because of objections over the foundation's current aims and ongoing legal matters associated with the foundation. The former astronaut is locked in a legal battle with family members who say he is suffering from mental decline.

The black-tie Apollo Celebration Gala was held Saturday under a Saturn V rocket at the Kennedy Space Center, featured a panel discussion by astronauts, an awards ceremony, and an auction of space memorabilia.

Hundreds of people attended the sold-out event, including British physicist Brian Cox, who presented Virgin Galactic founder Richard Branson with the ShareSpace Foundation's Innovation award.

Branson, whose company is developing a new generation of commercial spacecraft, said in a recorded video that the Apollo missions influenced his generation.

"Space is still hard, really hard. It still really matters," Branson said. "There would be no Virgin Galactic,

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no Virgin Orbit and no spaceship company had it not been for Apollo astronauts and the thousands of talented people who made their mission possible.”

Aldrin, Neil Armstrong and Michael Collins took part in the historic Apollo 11 mission, landing the first two humans on the moon on July 20, 1969. Armstrong was first to walk on the moon, joined soon after by Aldrin while Collins remained in orbit aboard the command module.

Dr. Carolyn Williams of the nonprofit From One Hand To AnOTHER received the foundation’s Education award, and former Johnson Space Center director Gerry Griffin, a flight director for all of the crewed Apollo missions, was honored with the Pioneer award.

“It’s very humbling, it kind of came out of the blue,” Griffin said. “It is so neat to know that we’ve passed the torch that will let this next generation take us to this next step.”

That next step, Griffin said, is a return of Americans to the Moon and, eventually, Mars — something former Apollo astronauts Walt Cunningham, Harrison Schmitt, Rusty Schweickart and Tom Stafford discussed during a conversation with Cox.

“We’re sort of going through a second door here. The door isn’t all the way open — we haven’t gone all the way through it — but it’s cracked open,” Schweickart, who flew as the lunar module pilot on Apollo 9, told The Associated Press. “Space is going to be much less expensive to go to, and that’s going to open up not just opportunities for people to fly, but because of the decreased cost, real opportunities for innovators to generate new ideas and to do things that have never been done before.”

Aldrin’s ShareSpace Foundation is one of the sponsors of the annual gala, which raises money for Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics — or STEAM education — and Astronaut Scholarship Foundation scholarships.

Renowned Brazilian pop artist Romero Britto donated artwork from his “Buzz Aldrin Space Series” for the auction, which also included a behind-the-scenes tour of Virgin Galactic in California and autographed space memorabilia. Tickets for the event ranged from \$750 to \$2,500 per person.

Aldrin sued two of his adult children and a former business manager last month, accusing them of misusing his credit cards, transferring money from an account and slandering him by saying he has dementia. Weeks before that, Andrew and Jan Aldrin filed a petition claiming their 88-year-old father was suffering from memory loss, delusions, paranoia and confusion.

Andrew and Jan Aldrin and business manager Christina Korp are on the foundation’s board and attended the gala. Aldrin’s oldest son, James, isn’t involved in the legal fight.

Buzz Aldrin said in a statement that he didn’t attend “due to the present course of events related to my space initiatives, also current legal matters linked to the ShareSpace Foundation.”

“I formed ShareSpace Foundation in 1998 for the promotion of individual space voyagers,” Aldrin added. “The Foundation is, in my view, now being used to promote quite different objectives.”

Andrew Aldrin acknowledged his father’s absence during the gala.

“We’re sorry dad can’t be here, I know some of you are disappointed,” Aldrin said. “Ultimately, what we’re about is creating the first generation of Martians.”

Follow Alex Sanz at <https://twitter.com/AlexSanz> and Mike Schneider at <https://twitter.com/MikeSchneiderAP>

Gunman in Trader Joe’s standoff was feuding with grandmother

By MICHAEL BALSAMO, Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A feud between a man and his grandmother over his girlfriend staying at the grandmother’s home exploded into violence that ultimately led to him taking dozens of people hostage inside a Los Angeles supermarket, a relative said Sunday.

Investigators believe Gene Evin Atkins, 28, shot his grandmother several times and wounded his girlfriend at their South Los Angeles home on Saturday afternoon before he led police on a chase, while exchanging gunfire with officers, crashed into a pole outside the Trader Joe’s in the city’s Silver Lake section and

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ran inside.

Atkins was booked Sunday on suspicion of murder after an employee was killed as he ran into the supermarket, police said.

His cousin, Charlene Eglan, told The Associated Press that he had been arguing with his grandmother — who had raised him since he was 7 years old — “on and off for about two or three weeks” over his girlfriend staying at the elderly woman’s home.

“She didn’t want the girl over there anymore,” Eglan said.

On Saturday, Atkins’ grandmother, Mary Elizabeth Madison, 76, was walking back into the home and told her grandson “he needs to turn some of them TVs off” when he shot her, she said.

Eglan said she heard about six gunshots before another cousin came running from the porch and shouted to Eglan, “I think Gene shot my mama!”

The girlfriend was grazed in the head, police said.

Eglan said she ran to call 911 and waited for an ambulance to arrive. At the same time, police said Atkins stole his grandmother’s car and forced his girlfriend into the vehicle.

Officers tracked the car using a stolen-vehicle tracking system and tried to stop the man in Hollywood, but he refused to pull over, police said. During the chase, he fired at officers, shooting out the back window of his car.

More gunfire ensued before Atkins crashed into a pole outside the supermarket. The man exchanged gunfire with police again and that’s when a 27-year-old Trader Joe’s employee, Melyda Corado, was shot and killed, Police Chief Michel Moore said. Officers escorted the girlfriend from the vehicle.

Customers and employees frantically dove for cover and barricaded themselves inside storerooms and bathrooms as bullets fired by police shattered the store’s glass doors.

As he heard gunfire, Sean Gerace, who was working in the back of the supermarket, grabbed several of his co-workers and the group made their way into an upstairs storage area. He grabbed a folding ladder and tossed it out a window, helping his colleagues escape to safety, he told KNBC-TV.

“I grabbed an emergency ladder, barricaded the hallway, grabbed a weapon, put the ladder out the window and just tried to get the attention of the SWAT officer,” Gerace told the television station.

About three hours later, Atkins — who had been shot in the left arm — agreed to handcuff himself and walked out the front door, surrounded by four of the hostages. He was being held on \$2 million bail Sunday and it wasn’t clear if he had an attorney to comment on the allegations.

A gun was found in the store, police said.

A 22-year-old woman was wounded by glass fragments and later took herself to a hospital, police said.

The Fire Department took six people to hospitals for non-life threatening conditions or injuries, police said.

Atkins’ grandmother initially was taken to a hospital in critical condition and police said she had been shot seven times but Eglan, who visited Madison at the hospital on Sunday, said she had only been shot three times, had undergone surgery and her condition was improving.

Atkins, who has two daughters, bounced between several jobs, including working as a security guard, but had been repeatedly fired, Eglan said. His license to work as a security guard expired in November 2017, according to state records. It was not clear whether the particular license he possessed would have allowed him to legally carry a firearm.

His grandmother had also tried to help him find employment and “was just trying to make him do better,” Eglan said.

Atkins never grew violent toward his grandmother before, Eglan said, but she started to grow concerned about him over the last several weeks because he seemed upset and distant.

“He didn’t seem right to me,” Eglan said. “I’m just devastated.”

On Sunday, grieving family members, co-workers and customers remembered Corado, the Trader Joe’s worker, as lively, hardworking and always smiling. A makeshift memorial of flowers, candles and notes grew on the sidewalk outside of the store on Sunday.

“I’m sad to say she didn’t make it. My baby sister. My world,” her brother, Albert Corado said on Twitter.

Trader Joe's said the store — known by customers as a neighborhood hangout with great customer service — would remain closed for the foreseeable future to give their employees time to process and grieve.

"Yesterday marks the saddest day in Trader Joe's history as we mourn the loss of one our own," company spokeswoman Kenya Friend-Daniel said in a statement. "Our thoughts are with her family, and our Crew Members and customers who experienced this terrifying and unimaginable ordeal."

Associated Press writers Christopher Weber and Robert Jablon contributed to this report.

Egypt hikes natural gas prices by up to 75 percent

CAIRO (AP) — In a story July 21 about the increase in Egypt's natural gas prices, The Associated Press erroneously reported the price increases. Gas consumption of up to 30 cubic meters increased to 1.75 Egyptian pounds, not 0.175. Gas consumption between 30-60 cubic meters went from 1.75 Egyptian pounds to 2.50 pounds per cubic meter, not from 0.175 Egyptian pounds to 0.250 pounds. Consumption of over 60 cubic meters was upped from 2.25 pounds to 3 pounds per cubic meter, not from 0.225 pounds to 0.300 pounds.

A corrected version of the story is below:

Egypt raised natural gas prices for households and businesses on Saturday by between 33.3 and 75 percent, the latest among tough austerity measures aimed at rebuilding the country's economy battered by years of unrest since a 2011 uprising.

The government's decision, published in the official gazette on Saturday, should come into effect starting in August. It sets the price for gas consumption of up to 30 cubic meters to 1.75 Egyptian pounds up from 1 pound per cubic meter, an increase of 75 percent.

Meanwhile, gas consumption between 30-60 cubic meters went up by 42.8 percent, from 1.75 Egyptian pounds to 2.50 pounds per cubic meter. Consumption of over 60 cubic meters was upped by 33.3 percent, from 2.25 pounds to 3.00 pounds per cubic meter.

The move is likely to further fan the flames of popular discontent, especially among poor and middle-class Egyptians who have borne the brunt of the government's economic reform program.

In recent months, Egypt introduced its latest wave of price hikes for fuel, drinking water and electricity. It also raised the price of new cellular phone lines and monthly cellular phone bills. Charges for issuing passports and car licenses also went up steeply.

The austerity policies are part of measures taken to meet demands by the International Monetary Fund for a \$12 billion bailout loan to support the government's reform plan. Egypt secured the three-year loan in 2016.

President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi says the reforms, he implemented after he took office in 2014, have put Egypt on "the right track" and that they will spur economic growth by over seven percent in the coming years.

He urged Egyptians to be patient with the reforms, which the government says should start benefiting citizens within two years.

Life in Haiti was getting worse for many before latest riots

By EZEQUIEL ABIU LOPEZ, Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — Chicken is a staple of the Haitian diet but its price has doubled in four years. Cooking oil and rice have gone up 10 percent the last 12 months. A liter of milk costs more than half the daily minimum wage, putting it out of reach for most of the country.

The cost of living seems like it is spiraling out of control to many Haitians, making life even more of a struggle in the Western Hemisphere's poorest nation.

"It's really hard," Cassandre Milord, an accountant in a small shop in Haiti's capital, said of the inflation that has been in double digits since 2014. "You never know how much money you need to go to the mar-

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ket. The prices go up every day.”

It’s a nearly universal complaint across Haiti, and it lies at the root of the four days of deadly protests over steep fuel price hikes that shut down Port-au-Prince earlier this month and raised the specter of the mass unrest that has paralyzed the country in the past. Inflation is a fact of life in much of the world, but amid so much misery it resonates painfully here with everyone from people selling small bags of rice in the street to owners of small businesses — everyone except the tiny elite.

“There’s no money to send the kids to school,” Arceline Charles said as she sat in a crowded downtown street selling eggs from a cardboard tray. “The country is a complete disaster.”

The government of President Jovenel Moise, who took office in February 2017 after a messy, contested election, set off protests when it abruptly announced double-digit increases in the prices for gasoline, diesel and kerosene. It was part of an agreement with the International Monetary Fund to eliminate fuel subsidies, to boost government revenue, in exchange for more support from member nations.

Officials may have thought the public would be distracted by that day’s World Cup match featuring local favorite Brazil, but the reaction was explosive: People flooded into the streets, erecting flaming barricades and clashing with police. At least seven people died and dozens of businesses and cars were looted, burned and destroyed.

Prime Minister Jack Guy Lafontant, facing a no-confidence vote in parliament, resigned along with his Cabinet. But the government has yet to explain why it failed to accept the IMF recommendation to enact the price hikes gradually or whether it still intends to comply with recommendations that it modernize its economy by improving tax collection and increase spending on infrastructure, education and social services.

Moise appealed for calm as he looks for a new prime minister. “I can understand the situation facing many of our unemployed compatriots. Hunger and misery are crushing us,” he said in a national address in Creole, the French-based language spoken by the majority of Haitians.

The president, a businessman and farmer who sold himself in his campaign as someone with the knowledge and expertise to lift the country, faces a steep challenge.

Haiti is one of the most unequal countries in the world, with the wealthiest living in walled-off mansions while about 60 percent of its nearly 10.5 million people struggle to get by on about \$2 a day. A January report by the U.S. Agency for International Development said about half the country is undernourished.

The fuel price increases, with diesel slated to rise about 40 percent and kerosene about 50 percent, would have rippled through an economy that is largely stagnant. Agriculture, the most important segment, is suffering from a long-standing drought and the devastation caused by Hurricane Matthew to one of the most fertile parts of the country in 2016.

The Central Bank has sought to contain inflation but prices are rising around 16 percent a year. And the bank’s policy of devaluing the currency, the gourde, has in the eyes of many only made the situation worse because Haiti relies heavily on imports.

Even those fortunate enough to work or to own a business find it increasingly difficult to survive. The minimum wage is about \$150 a month, far below what is needed to support a family in Haiti.

“It is a situation of massive impoverishment, with many sectors of the middle class becoming poorer and an increasing percentage of people who really can’t eat,” said Camille Chalmers, an economist and director of a non-governmental group that promotes the rights of workers.

Milord, the accountant, said she already spends about a quarter of her daily pay, equivalent to about \$3, on transportation and lunch. “Imagine how people get by who only make the minimum wage,” she said.

Business owners say they, too, are feeling the effects. Maxime Cantave, who opened a car wash and adjacent cafe in the Delmas area of the capital, said his business is down by a third over the past two years.

“People don’t have any money,” he said as two vehicles were getting cleaned and the cafe was empty on a recent afternoon, a time when both would normally be full.

Cantave returned to his native country from Florida after the devastating earthquake in January 2010, hoping to take advantage of the surge in international aid and private investment flowing into Haiti as part of the reconstruction. That investment has largely tapered off, hurting him as well as people like Benoit Vilceus, who runs a boutique hotel and a company that does construction and interior design.

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Vilceus says his businesses were already struggling but he had to temporarily halt a construction project in the city of Les Cayes because of the recent unrest.

"This has been building up for a long time," he said of the unrest. "It was just a matter of time."

Asian stocks advance, backed by strong US corporate earnings

By ANNABELLE LIANG, Associated Press

SINGAPORE (AP) — Asian markets rose on Tuesday, led by better-than-expected U.S. corporate earnings and a lack of bad news on trade tensions.

KEEPING SCORE: Japan's Nikkei 225 gained 0.6 percent to 22,534.03. South Korea's Kospi added 0.4 percent to 2,278.23. Hong Kong's Hang Seng jumped 1.5 percent to 28,683.80. The Shanghai Composite Index rebounded 1.7 percent to 2,902.87. Australia's S&P-ASX 200 rose 0.7 percent to 6,267.60.

WALL STREET: U.S. indexes were mixed on Monday as gains by banks and technology companies were offset by losses in other sectors. The S&P 500 index added 0.2 percent to 2,806.98. The Dow Jones Industrial Average edged less than 0.1 percent lower to 25,044.29. The Nasdaq composite gained 0.3 percent to 7,841.87 and the Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks rose 0.1 percent to 1,698.41.

U.S. CORPORATE EARNINGS: On Monday, Google parent Alphabet reported a profit of \$3.2 billion for the three months that ended June 30. It booked a \$5.1 billion charge to cover a fine levied by European regulators, who have accused Google of unfairly forcing handset makers to take its Chrome, Search and Play Store apps when using its free Android mobile system. Google has said it will appeal the European fine. Alphabet Inc.'s stock jumped 3.6 percent in after-market trading. Toy maker Hasbro was the biggest gainer in the S&P 500 on Monday after its quarterly earnings topped Wall Street's forecasts. Its stock rallied 12.9 percent to \$106.04. Companies such as Boeing, Facebook, Amazon.com and McDonald's are due to report results later this week.

ANALYST'S TAKE: "Investors are looking on the bright side. What we're seeing is a cautious dipping into the market, mainly driven by positive sentiment on the U.S. corporate earnings front," said Song Seng Wun, an economist at CIMB Private Banking.

JAPAN FACTORY OUTLOOK: A private survey suggested that manufacturing is slowing. The flash Markit/Nikkei purchasing managers' index fell to 51.6 in July from a final 53.0 in June, a 20-month low. Readings above 50 indicate expansion on the index's 100-point scale. The downbeat numbers could alleviate pressure on Japan's central bank to roll back its massive monetary stimulus policy. The data suggest "that the threat of a global trade war may be weighing on business confidence," said Marcel Thieli of Capital Economics. While new export orders rose slightly, growth slowed in the last quarter, he noted in a commentary.

CURRENCIES: The dollar eased to 111.25 yen from 111.34 yen. The euro slipped to \$1.1687 from \$1.1691.

OIL: Benchmark U.S. crude dropped 23 cents to \$67.66 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. On Monday, the contract dropped 37 cents to settle at \$67.89 per barrel. Brent crude, used to price international oils, shed 25 cents to \$72.81.

Today in History

By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, July 24, the 205th day of 2018. There are 160 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 24, 1959, during a visit to Moscow, Vice President Richard Nixon engaged in his famous "Kitchen Debate" with Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev.

On this date:

In 1862, Martin Van Buren, the eighth president of the United States, and the first to have been born a U.S. citizen, died at age 79 in Kinderhook, New York, the town where he was born in 1782.

In 1866, Tennessee became the first state to be readmitted to the Union after the Civil War.

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In 1915, the SS Eastland, a passenger ship carrying more than 2,500 people, rolled onto its side while docked at the Clark Street Bridge on the Chicago River; an estimated 844 people died in the disaster.

In 1937, the state of Alabama dropped charges against four of the nine young black men accused of raping two white women in the "Scottsboro Case."

In 1969, the Apollo 11 astronauts — two of whom had been the first men to set foot on the moon — splashed down safely in the Pacific.

In 1974, the U.S. Supreme Court unanimously ruled that President Richard Nixon had to turn over subpoenaed White House tape recordings to the Watergate special prosecutor.

In 1983, a two-run homer by George Brett of the Kansas City Royals was disallowed after New York Yankees manager Billy Martin pointed out there was too much pine tar on Brett's bat. However, American League president Lee MacPhail reinstated the home run. (The game was completed Aug. 18, 1983 with the Royals beating the Yankees, 5-4.)

In 1987, Hulda Crooks, a 91-year-old mountaineer from California, became the oldest woman to conquer Mount Fuji, Japan's highest peak.

In 1998, a gunman burst into the U.S. Capitol, killing two police officers before being shot and captured. (The shooter, Russell Eugene Weston Jr., is being held in a federal mental facility.)

In 2002, nine coal miners became trapped in a flooded tunnel of the Quecreek (KYOO'-kreek) Mine in western Pennsylvania; the story ended happily 77 hours later with the rescue of all nine.

In 2005, Lance Armstrong won his seventh consecutive Tour de France. (Those wins were stripped away after Armstrong's 2013 confession to using steroids and other banned performance-enhancing drugs and methods.)

Ten years ago: Ford Motor Co. posted the worst quarterly performance in its history, losing \$8.67 billion. Cheered by an enormous crowd in Berlin, Democratic presidential contender Barack Obama summoned Europeans and Americans together to "defeat terror and dry up the well of extremism that supports it" as surely as they had conquered communism a generation ago. Zvonko Busic, who'd served 32 years in a U.S. prison for hijacking a TWA jetliner and planting a bomb that killed a policeman, was paroled and returned home to Croatia.

Five years ago: The House narrowly rejected, 217-205, a challenge to the National Security Agency's secret collection of hundreds of millions of Americans' phone records. A high-speed train crash outside Santiago de Compostela in northwest Spain killed 79 people. Pope Francis made an emotional plea in Aparecida, Brazil, for Roman Catholics to shun materialism in the first public Mass of his initial international trip as pontiff. It was announced by Kensington Palace that the newborn son of Prince William and Kate, the Duchess of Cambridge, would be named George Alexander Louis. Virginia Johnson, half of the renowned Masters and Johnson team of sex researchers, died in St. Louis at age 88.

One year ago: In a speech to a national Boy Scout gathering in West Virginia, President Donald Trump railed against his enemies and promoted his political agenda, bringing an angry reaction from some parents and former Scouts from both parties. A Taliban suicide bomber killed 24 people in an early morning assault in a neighborhood of the Afghan capital where prominent politicians live. President Donald Trump's son-in-law and adviser Jared Kushner answered questions from Senate investigators for four hours about contacts with Russians during and after Trump's campaign for the White House; he said he "did not collude with Russia" and that all of his actions "were proper."

Today's Birthdays: Actor John Aniston is 85. Political cartoonist Pat Oliphant is 83. Comedian Ruth Buzzi is 82. Actor Mark Goddard is 82. Actor Dan Hedaya is 78. Actor Chris Sarandon is 76. Comedian Gallagher is 72. Actor Robert Hays is 71. Former Republican national chairman Marc Racicot (RAWS'-koh) is 70. Actor Michael Richards is 69. Actress Lynda Carter is 67. Movie director Gus Van Sant is 66. Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., is 65. Country singer Pam Tillis is 61. Actor Paul Ben-Victor is 56. Basketball Hall of Famer Karl Malone is 55. Retired MLB All-Star Barry Bonds is 54. Actor Kadeem Hardison is 53. Actress-singer Kristin Chenoweth is 50. Actress Laura Leighton is 50. Actor John P. Navin Jr. is 50. Actress-singer Jennifer Lopez is 49. Basketball player-turned-actor Rick Fox is 49. Director Patty Jenkins ("Wonder Woman") is 47. Actress Jamie Denbo (TV: "Orange is the New Black") is 45. Actor Eric Szmanda is 43. Actress Rose Byrne is 39.

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Country singer Jerrod Niemann is 39. Actress Summer Glau is 37. Actress Elisabeth Moss is 36. Actress Anna Paquin is 36. Actress Sarah Greene is 34. Actress Megan Park is 32. Actress Mara Wilson is 31. Rock singer Jay McGuiness (The Wanted) is 28. Actress Emily Bett Rickards is 27. Actor Lucas Adams is 25. TV personality Bindi Irwin is 20.

Thought for Today: "Everything has two sides — the outside that is ridiculous, and the inside that is solemn." — Olive Schreiner, South African author and feminist (1855-1920).