Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, July 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 017 ~ 1 of 42

1- Chicken Soup for the Soul
1- Dakota Outdoors Ad
1- Recycling Trailer
2- Obit: Elliot Milbrandt
3- Tagged Lake Oahe Salmon: From Silver to Gold
3- Outdoor Campus West to Host Great Plains Trail Presentation
4- Midwest Masonry ad
5- Today in Weather History
6- Today's Forecast
7- Yesterday's Weather
7- National Weather map
7 Today's Weather Almanac
8- Daily Devotional
9- 2018 Groton Community Events
10- News from the Associated Press

Open: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

© 2018 Groton Daily Independent

The Life of Elliot Milbrandt

Parkston - Elliot Gerald Milbrandt, 11 months, died at Avera St. Benedict Hospital in Parkston on Monday, July 23, 2018. Funeral service will be Friday, July 27, 2018 at 11:00 AM at Immanuel Lutheran Church near Dimock. Visitation will be Thursday, July 26 from 5:30 - 7:00 PM at Immanuel Lutheran Church near Dimock with a prayer service at 7:00 PM. Arrangements by Koehn Bros Funeral Home in Parkston.

Elliot Gerald Milbrandt was born on August 19, 2017 to Eric and Ashley (Stene) Milbrandt in Sioux Falls, SD. He was a baptized member of Immanuel Lutheran Church near Dimock. Elliot was a loving, happy child who enjoyed bath time, playing with his twin brother, Everett, flirting with girls, piggy back rides from his father, cuddling, and snuggling with his Lion King Blanket. He went to his heavenly home on Monday, July 23, 2018 at Avera St. Benedict Hospital in Parkston at the age of 11 months.

He is survived by his parents, Eric and Ashley Milbrandt, twin brother, Everett, grandparents, Greg and Julie Milbrandt and Bruce and Rhonda May and Glen Stene, uncles, Jacob Milbrandt, Garrett Stene, Eric May, and Alex May, aunts, Breanna Marzahn and Nicole Pederson, great-grandparents, Marlys Visser, Karen and Myron Stene, Ardath May, Lyle and Trudy Schaunaman, and Nadine Milbrandt, and many great aunts, uncles and cousins.

He was preceded in death by his great-grandpa, Marvin Milbrandt and great-grandpa, Gerald Visser.

Tagged Lake Oahe Salmon: From Silver to Gold

PIERRE, S.D. – South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) wants to know how stocking salmon in different locations improves their survival. Anglers can help GFP gather information and be entered to win $100.

GFP is encouraging anglers to turn in heads of tagged Chinook salmon caught on Lake Oahe and the Oahe tail waters.

"Research projects are underway evaluating salmon return to anglers," said GFP fisheries biologist Robert Hanten. "Having anglers report tagged salmon is a crucial part of the research."

According to Hanten, thousands of specially-tagged Chinook salmon have been stocked in Lake Oahe. A small, coded-wire tag, only a millimeter long and the diameter of human hair, was implanted in these fish. Although tags cannot be seen by anglers, tagged fish can be identified by the absence of a tiny fin on their back.

"Salmon have a small fleshy-lobed adipose fin directly in front of their tail, but this fin is removed as part of the tagging process," Hanten said.

If anglers catch a salmon missing the adipose fin, Hanten asks that they turn in the fresh or frozen head of that salmon at the GFP Fort Pierre District Office, Spring Creek Resort or West Whitlock Recreation Area.

Information on where and when a salmon was caught along with the angler's address and phone number must be included when submitting salmon heads. In addition, a coded-wire tag must be found in the head of the fish to be entered in the cash drawing.

Ten, $100 rewards will be issued each calendar year with a maximum of three rewards per person, per year. The annual drawing for winners of the $100 prizes will occur by Jan. 1.

For more information, visit gfp.sd.gov/pages/salmon-tags/

Fort Pierre District Office, 20641 SD Hwy 1806, Fort Pierre, SD 57532 or call 605.223.7681.

-GFP-

Outdoor Campus West to Host Great Plains Trail Presentation

RAPID CITY, S.D. – The Outdoor Campus West will host Luke "Strider" Jordan and his presentation, "Thru-Hiking the Great Plains Trail," on Aug. 2 at 6 p.m. MDT.

The 50 minute presentation will feature highlights of his journey, including the 200+ mile Black Hills portion.

"Strider's program is the story about a hiker's journey over the newly established Great Plains Trail," said The Outdoor Campus West director, Chad Tussing. "It's a story of adventure and discovery on the first-ever thru-hike of this newly established resource."

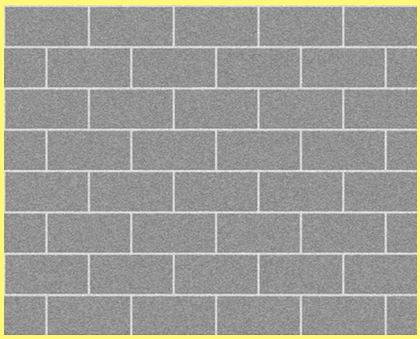
Follow along as Strider traverses this trail from the desert of west Texas to the Canadian Border, in an attempt to raise awareness and generate support of this resource, highlighting the history and scenery of the Great Plains.

The event is open to the public and free of charge.

For more information, contact The Outdoor Campus West at 605.394.2310 or TOCWest@state.sd.us.

Midwest Masonry & Concrete Pumping

New or Replaced Sidewalk



Block Walls

Egress Windows

Driveway

Garage Floors

Basement Floors

Stone and Brick Work

Call for a free quote

605/397-8383

Today in Weather History

July 26, 1963: An estimated F2 tornado moved northeast from 4 miles northeast of Raymond. Barns and outbuildings were destroyed on one farm, and the home was unroofed. Asphalt was ripped off a state highway.

1874: Torrential rainfall brought flash flooding to Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. Click HERE for more information from the Pittsburg Post-Gazette.

1890: During the morning hours, an estimated F3 tornado went through the southern part of Lawrence, Massachusetts. The tornado left 500 people homeless as the tornado destroyed 35 homes and damaged 60 others.

1897: Jewel, Maryland received 14.75 inches of rain in a 24 hour period. This record is currently the oldest, state rainfall record in the United States. All other state rainfall records are in the 1900s and 2000s.

1921: On the summit of Mt. Wellenkuppe, in Switzerland, the temperature reached 100 degrees by 10 am. The summit had an elevation of 12,830 feet and was covered in snow.

1931: A swarm of grasshoppers descends on crops throughout the American heartland, devastating millions of acres. Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota, already in the midst of a bad drought, suffered tremendously from this disaster.

1979: Tropical Storm Claudette stalled over Alvin, Texas, inundating the town with 45 inches of rain in 42 hours. The total included 43 inches in 24 hours, which is the maximum 24-hour rainfall in American history.

1819 - Twin cloudbursts of fifteen inches struck almost simultaneously at Catskill, NY, and Westfield, MA. Flash flooding resulted in enormous erosion. (David Ludlum)

1943 - Tishomingo, OK, baked in the heat as the mercury soared to 121 degrees, a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1960 - The temperature at Salt Lake City, UT, hit 107 degrees, an all-time record high for that location. (The Weather Channel)

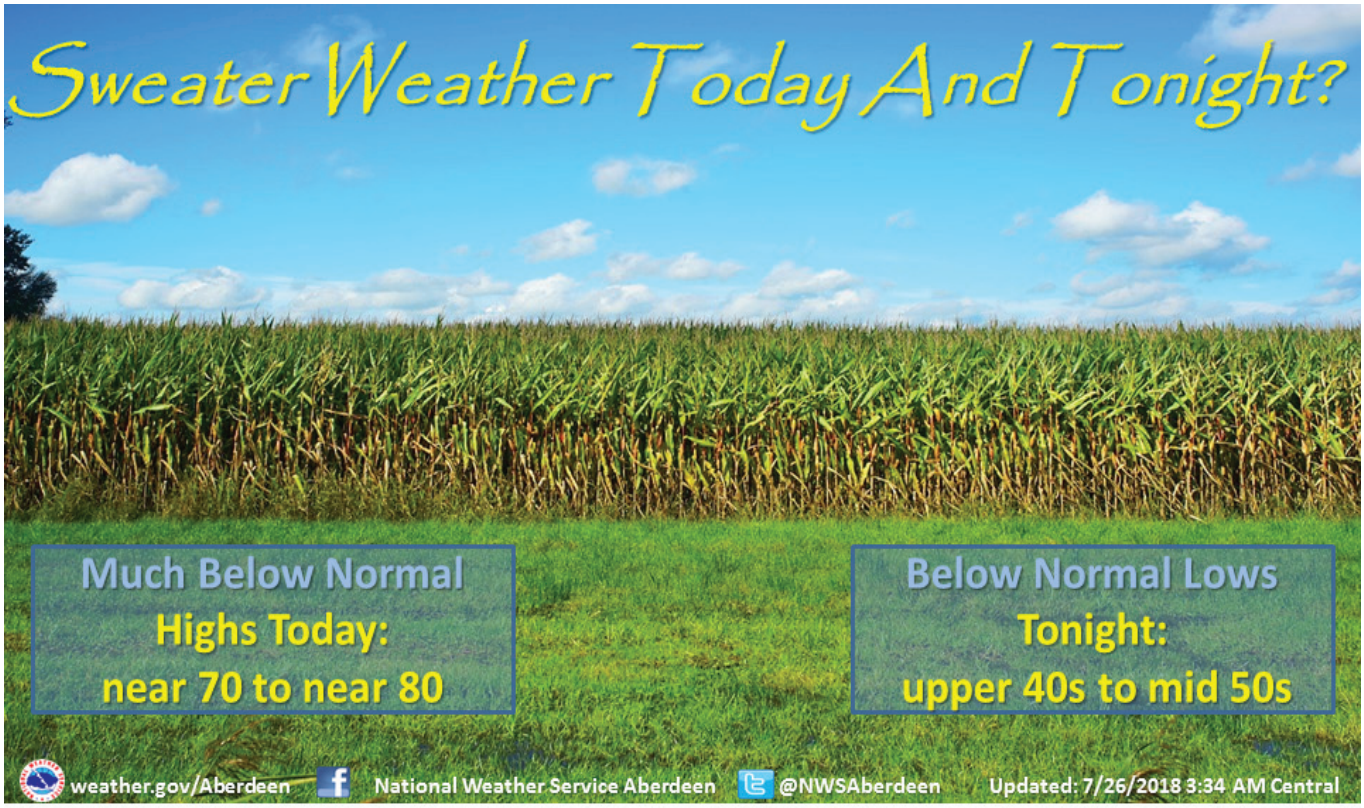
1987 - Thunderstorms developing along a cold front produced hail two inches in diameter in McHenry County, IL, and wind gusts to 70 mph at Auburn, ME. A wind gust of 90 mph was recorded at Blairstown, NJ, before the anemometer broke. The high winds were associated with a small tornado. The record high of 88 degrees at Beckley, WV, was their sixth in a row. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced large hail and damaging winds in the Middle Atlantic Coast Region, and in the south central U.S. Eight cities in the northwestern and north central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Salem, OR, hit 103 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Morning thunderstorms produced heavy rain in southeastern Texas, with more than three inches reported at the Widllife Refuge in southwestern Chambers County. Evening thunderstorms produced severe weather in Montana, with wind gusts to 62 mph reported at Helena. Eight cities from Maine to Minnesota reported record high temperatures for the date, including Newark, NJ, with a reading of 99 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

Groton Daily Independent
Thursday, July 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 017 ~ 6 of 42

Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday
Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Slight Chance T-storms	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny
High: 72 °F	Low: 52 °F	High: 75 °F	Low: 55 °F	High: 76 °F	Low: 56 °F	High: 78 °F



Published on: 07/26/2018 at 3:40AM

It's possible, for some folks today, that temperatures could feel downright chilly. There should be plenty of sunshine around, though, by mid afternoon to offset the nip in the air. The forecast today and tonight, by and large, should be a dry one.

Groton Daily Independent
Thursday, July 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 017 ~ 7 of 42

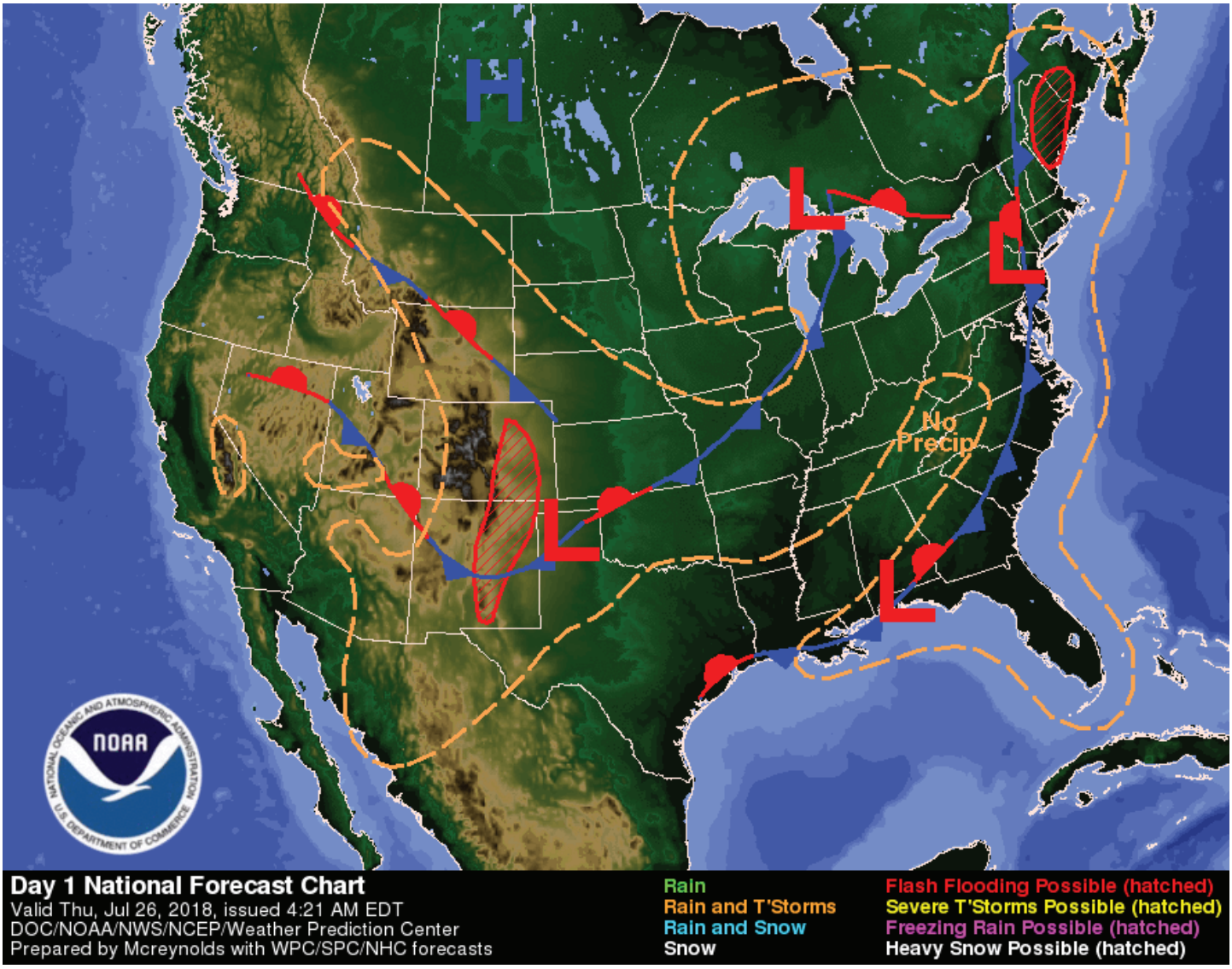
Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 76.4 F at 6:24 PM
Heat Index:
Low Outside Temp: 59.4 F at 11:26 PM
High Gust: 26.0 Mph at 3:24 AM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 112° in 1931
Record Low: 42° in 1962
Average High: 84°F
Average Low: 59°F
Average Precip in July: 2.11
Precip to date in July: 3.99
Average Precip to date: 12.87
Precip Year to Date: 9.89
Sunset Tonight: 9:09 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:12 a.m.



Groton Daily Independent
Thursday, July 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 017 ~ 8 of 42

PRAY - BUT HOW AND FOR WHAT?

Mary Jane was snuggling down in bed when her mother entered her room. "Did you pray before getting in bed?"

"Well, kind of," was her reply.

"Kind of?" asked her Mom. "What does that mean?"

"Well, I started to pray and my list was the same as it was yesterday and the day before that. So I decided to tell Jesus the story about Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. And you know what, Mom? I think He enjoyed it!"

The attitude of the Psalmist was very different from Mary Jane's: "May my cry come before You, Lord; give me understanding according to Your Word." Not only was he intense and sincere, he was passionate and purposeful!

He did not speak to God in a still, soft voice. On this occasion he literally "cried" to God requesting a "direct audience." He wanted his prayer to go directly to Him!

Obviously, he must have known that there were certain conditions that he would have to meet. He must have been aware of this. What would hinder his prayers?

1. Disobedience: We get what we ask for if we are obedient. John wrote we "receive what we ask for because we keep His commandments." (1 John 3:22)
2. Doubt: When we ask for food, we need to have a container available to carry it home. "Whatever you ask for, if you believe you will receive." (Mark 11:24)
3. Disagreement: We must ask for things that are consistent with His nature. "Ask in my name." (John 16:32)

God hears our cries if we meet His criteria!

Prayer: Help us, Father, to align our requests with Your requirements and live within Your will for our lives. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 119:169 May my cry come before you, Lord; give me understanding according to your word.

Groton Daily Independent
Thursday, July 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 017 ~ 9 of 42

2018 Groton SD Community Events

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

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

News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Dakota Cash
05-10-13-17-34
(five, ten, thirteen, seventeen, thirty-four)
Estimated jackpot: $141,000

Lotto America
06-08-13-20-35, Star Ball: 4, ASB: 2
(six, eight, thirteen, twenty, thirty-five; Star Ball: four; ASB: two)
Estimated jackpot: $5.38 million

Mega Millions
Estimated jackpot: $40 million

Powerball
02-18-41-44-64, Powerball: 26, Power Play: 2
(two, eighteen, forty-one, forty-four, sixty-four; Powerball: twenty-six; Power Play: two)
Estimated jackpot: $147 million

Dimock Cheese breaking ground on $1 million facility

DIMOCK, S.D. (AP) — After making and selling its products in the same location for 87 years, Dimock Cheese is breaking ground on a new facility.

Owners of the plant in the Hutchinson County town say the project is expected to cost nearly $1 million and should be completed during the upcoming winter.

The Daily Republic reports that a ground-breaking ceremony was set for Thursday a half-mile from the current site.

The new location will house the company's office headquarters, a larger packaging and labeling room, a larger refrigeration space and a retail store. The cheese will continue to be processed at the current site on Main Street.

___

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

Minnesota boys sue to join girls high school dance teams

By JEFF BAENEN, Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Two teenage boys sued the Minnesota State High School League on Wednesday, alleging it maintains unconstitutional rules that bar boys from joining girls' competitive high school dance teams.

Dmitri Moua and Zachary Greenwald filed a federal lawsuit with help from their parents and the Pacific Legal Foundation, which has worked on similar cases with students in at least two other states.

The two 16-year-olds want to try out for their schools' dance teams in suburban Minneapolis, but the league's rules prohibit boys from competing on girls' dance teams, according to the lawsuit. The suit argues the rules violate Title IX, the federal law that bars sex discrimination in education programs that receive

federal funds.

"Things are changing," Moua told The Associated Press on Wednesday. "I feel that students should not be limited based on sex."

Foundation attorney Caleb Trotter added in a statement: "Minnesota's school sports league cannot discriminate against boys based on nothing more than an outdated stereotype that dancing is for girls only."

The Minnesota State High School League doesn't comment on pending litigation, spokesman Tim Leighton said Wednesday.

Moua, who will be a junior this fall at Roseville Area High School, volunteered to become the manager for his school's dance team but no longer wants to sit on the sidelines. He said he finds that dance gives him "self-confidence and a feeling of acceptance and belonging," the lawsuit said.

Greenwald, who will be a junior at Hopkins High School, began dancing in fifth grade and "thrives on the athleticism and competition of dance," according to the lawsuit.

The Minnesota State High School League was previously threatened with a lawsuit by the California-based Pacific Legal Foundation after the league barred a male student from the high school dance championship in 2017. The student attended a high school in northwestern Wisconsin that competed against Minnesota teams.

Attorneys for the student filed a federal civil rights complaint that November. In May, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights determined that there wasn't enough evidence to conclude that the league discriminated against boys in the case. The student's school had already withdrawn from the Minnesota league, and he was able to dance with his team in Wisconsin, according to the foundation.

The South Dakota High School Activities Association board of directors voted to suspend its rule to allow a male student to compete on his high school's dance team this fall. The move came after the student filed a lawsuit with help from the foundation.

Online shoppers to begin paying taxes in Minnesota

ST. PAUL, Minn. (AP) — Online shoppers in Minnesota will soon have to pay more on goods and services in their digital shopping carts.

The Minnesota Department of Revenue said Wednesday that it's requiring online sellers operating out of state to start collecting state sales taxes by Oct. 1. It's a response to last month's U.S. Supreme Court decision that makes it easier for states to collect taxes on online sales.

States can require vendors to collect sales tax if they don't have a physical presence in their state following the ruling. Officials in South Dakota, who brought the case forward, say states were deprived of millions of dollars in tax revenue from online purchases.

The U.S. Government Accountability Office estimates Minnesota could take in between $132 million and $206 million in additional revenue annually.

Governor might call special session over sales tax ruling

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Dennis Daugaard might call a special legislative session after a recent U.S. Supreme Court ruling in the state's favor that could yield millions of dollars in online sales taxes.

The governor's chief of staff, Tony Venhuizen, said in an email this week that Daugaard has informed legislative leaders a special session might be needed later in the summer or early fall to expedite the ruling's implementation. The Republican governor wanted to notify officials that new legislation could be required, Venhuizen said.

He said in an interview that one example could be creating a license for websites that provide marketplaces for other merchants — but don't sell products themselves — to collect sales taxes for the retailers that use the platforms.

"If we want to move quickly to implement this and to capture the online activity that's going on, that could easily be something that we need to consider implementing sooner than later," Venhuizen said.

House Majority Leader Lee Qualm, a Republican, said he needs more information about the changes that would be made and whether the issue can wait.

"We are looking at potential dates, what works for everybody, and I'm just waiting for the governor to give more specifics as to why this should be a special session," Qualm said.

State lawmakers and a new governor will gather for the 2019 legislative session in January. Republican Kristi Noem and Democrat Billie Sutton are campaigning to succeed Daugaard, who cannot run again because of term limits. The last special session was held in 2017.

South Dakota currently can't enforce its requirement that out-of-state retailers collect sales taxes as state-level legal proceedings continue. The obligation applies to sellers outside the state who do more than $100,000 of business in South Dakota or more than 200 transactions annually with state residents.

It was a South Dakota case that led to the U.S. Supreme Court's decision in June to overturn two decades-old high court decisions that have made it tougher for states to collect sales taxes for certain purchases online, a situation they said costs them revenues each year. South Dakota has estimated it loses about $50 million annually to e-commerce.

State law requires a 2016 sales tax hike for teacher pay be scaled back if the state is able to collect tax on the online purchases. Under the law, the state's 4.5 percent rate is to be rolled back by one-tenth of a percent for every additional $20 million the state reaps, with a floor of 4 percent.

Venhuizen told the Legislature's budget-writing committee on Wednesday that if lawmakers plan to carry out the law as intended, certain provisions need to be clarified.

Mitchell continues to host popular airplane race

MITCHELL, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota city continues drawing pilots from all over the world as the biennial host of a prestigious airplane race.

Pilots flocked Sunday to Mitchell, which served as the starting point of this year's AirVenture Cup. The 450-mile (724-kilometer) race attracted pilots from as far as Denmark and Australia to compete for the fastest flight time to Oshkosh, Wisconsin.

Pilots range in experience levels from Air Force veterans flying fighter jets to World War II B-25 bombers. Some fly planes that are hand-built or antiques.

Mitchell Airport Director Mike Scherschligt told the Daily Republic that pilots enjoy Mitchell because of the prevailing winds while racing to the Wisconsin finish line.

Mitchell was chosen in 2008 as an ideal starting point for the race, said Eric Whyte, founder of the AirVenture Cup. The city has hosted the race every other year, alternating with Mount Vernon, Illinois.

"We chose Mitchell because of the airport having two runways, a great big ramp space, and the Wright Brothers Aviation business has been so helpful with this event," Whyte said.

He said the race has "put Mitchell on the map in the aviation community."

Keith Phillips, a retired Air Force fighter pilot, flew his hand-built aircraft to Mitchell from his home in Daytona Beach, Florida.

"The comradery and uniting of pilots is just a great time, and this race brings us all together," Phillips said. "The support we get from Mitchell is so great, we even had a city councilman want us to fly over town. That isn't the case in other states the race has been held."

___

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

Dakota Access pipeline builder wants state lawsuit dismissed

By BLAKE NICHOLSON, Associated Press

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — The company that built the Dakota Access oil pipeline wants a North Dakota judge to throw out a lawsuit over its ownership of agricultural land, claiming it's not violating a Depression-era state ban on corporate farming that it calls unconstitutional anyway.

Attorneys for Dakota Access LLC also asked the judge in court documents filed Tuesday to prevent North Dakota Attorney General Wayne Stenehjem from enforcing the state's anti-corporate farming law. It prohibits large corporations from owning and operating farms in order to protect the state's family farming heritage.

Stenehjem's office filed a civil complaint July 3 alleging that the pipeline company's continued ownership of ranch land it bought in September 2016 violates the law. He wants the court to fine the company $25,000 and order it to sell the land within a year or face more fines.

Dakota Access LLC was formed by Texas-based Energy Transfer Partners to build the $3.8 billion pipeline to move North Dakota oil through South Dakota and Iowa to a shipping point in Illinois. The company bought 12 square miles of ranchland in an area of southern North Dakota where thousands of pipeline opponents gathered to protest in 2016 and 2017. It cited the need to protect workers and help law officers monitoring the protests.

Stenehjem deemed the purchase temporarily necessary to provide a safer environment and reached a deal with the company under which he agreed not to immediately sue. The agreement expired at the end of June, and he sued. He declined comment Wednesday on the company's formal response.

Dakota Access attorney Lawrence Bender argues that the company's ownership of the land falls within an exception within the anti-corporate farming law that allows for companies to own farmland if it's necessary for an industrial project. He also said the land continues to be used for agriculture.

"The land is necessary for Dakota Access's business purpose and has at all times been available to be leased, and has been leased, by persons who farm or ranch," he wrote.

Bender also maintains North Dakota's anti-corporate farming law violates several clauses of the U.S. Constitution, including one that bars infringements on interstate commerce.

It's not the first time that claim has been made. North Dakota Farm Bureau and other plaintiffs sued in federal court two years ago, contending the law limits farmers' business options and interferes with interstate commerce by barring out-of-state corporations from being involved in North Dakota's farm industry. Stenehjem is defending the law in that case. Trial isn't scheduled until April.

___

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

Michigan teen fined $1,000 for climbing Mount Rushmore

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A 19-year-old Michigan man has been fined $1,000 for climbing Mount Rushmore.

The U.S. Attorney's Office in South Dakota said Wednesday that park rangers arrested Zachary Schossau, of South Rockwood, on Sunday. Schossau appeared Monday before a federal magistrate who issued the fine and ordered him to pay a $30 court processing fee.

The U.S. Attorney's Office and the National Park Service caution that climbing the Mount Rushmore National Memorial is illegal and that violations will be prosecuted.

The memorial in the Black Hills of South Dakota features the faces of President George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt sculpted into the granite mountain face.

Motorcycle crash in Faulk County kills 55-year-old man

ZELL, S.D. (AP) — A motorcycle crash in Faulk County has killed a 55-year-old man.

The Highway Patrol says the driver went into the ditch off U.S. Highway 12 on Tuesday afternoon, about 2 miles west of Zell. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

He wasn't immediately identified. He was alone on the bike.

Authorities say driver died after truck ran off highway

ARNOLD, Neb. (AP) — Authorities say a South Dakota man may have had a medical issue before his truck ran off a state highway west of Arnold in central Nebraska.

The Custer County Sheriff's Office says 56-year-old Steven Rogers was pronounced dead Tuesday at a North Platte hospital.

The truck veered off Nebraska Highway 92 west of Arnold around 9 a.m. Tuesday and ran about 100 yards into a pasture before stopping. Sheriff Daniel Osmond said Wednesday there was no crash: The truck just ran off into the field for about 100 yards (91 meters) and stopped. Osmond says that's what leads investigators to suspect Rogers suffered a medical problem.

Authorities say Rogers lived in Milbank, South Dakota.

Parkston police investigate death of infant

PARKSTON, S.D. (AP) — Police in Parkston say they're investigating the death of a child.

Authorities say an infant died at a Parkston daycare on Monday. Police Chief Corrinna Wagner says there's nothing to suggest the death was suspicious, but declined to say any more about it.

Wagner says they are still gathering information.

New warden named for South Dakota Women's Prison

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The state Corrections Department has named a new warden for the South Dakota Women's Prison in Pierre.

Wanda Markland is an associate warden at the West Tennessee State Penitentiary. She has held numerous corrections-related positions in Tennessee and Michigan during her career. She holds a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Saginaw Valley State University.

She begins her new duties in August, replacing Brent Fluke. He has been named warden of the medium-security Mike Durfee State Prison in Springfield, to replace the retiring Bob Dooley.

Sanford Health dedicates $6M Sanford House in Sioux Falls

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Sanford Health has dedicated a $6 million tribute to the billionaire philanthropist whose financial gifts have benefited the Dakotas-based health care system.

Banking and credit card mogul T. Denny Sanford was in attendance Tuesday in Sioux Falls for a ribbon-cutting at the Sanford House.

The Argus Leader reports the 17,000-square foot building serves as offices for the Sanford Health Foundation, the hospital system's charitable giving arm. It also includes a museum dedicated to Sanford's life and achievements, event space, and bar and lounge areas. It opened late last year.

Sanford has donated nearly $1 billion to the health care system that uses him as a namesake.

On Tuesday, he also received the Vatican's 2018 Pontifical Key Philanthropy Award, from a representative of the Vatican in Rome.

State conservation officer loses law officer certification

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — A state conservation officer in Potter County has had his law enforcement certification suspended after allegedly admitting to intentionally altering information on three trespassing citations last year.

The American News reports that the certification of South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks officer Bradley Saltsman was suspended until Dec. 15 by the state Law Enforcement Officers Standards and Training Commission in February.

Saltsman is going through the appeals process.

___

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

Rapid City man pleads not guilty in friend's shooting death

KEYSTONE, S.D. (AP) — A Rapid City man accused of fatally shooting his friend at a Keystone apartment has pleaded not guilty.

Eighteen-year-old Maxton Pfeiffer is charged with first-degree manslaughter in the June 13 death of 19-year-old Ty Scott. Scott died at the scene from a chest wound.

Police say a group of people were passing around a handgun when Pfeiffer allegedly picked up another handgun, pointed it at his companions, and the gun went off. Pfeiffer's lawyer has described the shooting as accidental.

The charge against Pfeiffer carries a maximum punishment of life in prison. He's free on $10,000 cash bond.

Recent hail damage in Northern Black Hills costing millions

DEADWOOD, S.D. (AP) — Recent hail damage to public buildings in Deadwood is expected to exceed $2 million.

Transportation and Facilities Director Tom Kruzel says a $1.8 million damage estimate involves only the 45 public structures in town, and doesn't include city vehicles and hundreds of the city's iconic globe lamps.

Kruzel says City Hall got hit particularly hard, with damage to the roofs, air handlers and skylights.

The Black Hills Pioneer reports the city is moving forward with insurance work.

Many residents and businesses in the Northern Black Hills also are dealing with the repercussions of the recent severe weather. In Lead, the Black Hills Mining Museum needs a new roof that will cost $50,000.

___

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

Woman pleads not guilty to driving drunk, injuring children

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A Rapid City woman accused of driving drunk with children in her car has pleaded not guilty.

The U.S. attorney's office alleges that 26-year-old Maria Big Crow last October was driving drunk with juvenile passengers on the Rosebud Sioux Reservation when her vehicle rolled, resulting in unspecified injuries.

Big Crow faces federal charges of child abuse and driving under the influence with a minor in the vehicle. She faces up to 15 years in prison if convicted. Her trial wasn't immediately scheduled.

South Dakota winter wheat harvest reaches halfway point

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota's winter wheat harvest has reached the halfway point.

The federal Agriculture Department says in its weekly crop report that 47 percent of the crop is in the bin, ahead of the average pace.

Development of the corn and soybean crops in the state also is ahead of the average pace.

The majority of most crops in South Dakota remain rated in fair or good condition.

Topsoil moisture supplies statewide are rated 84 percent adequate to surplus, with 78 percent of subsoil moisture in those categories.

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

Clock ticks toward reuniting families separated at border

By ASTRID GALVAN and ELLIOT SPAGAT, Associated Press

EL PASO, Texas (AP) — The Trump administration faced a court-imposed deadline Thursday to reunite thousands of children and parents who were forcibly separated at the U.S.-Mexico border, an enormous logistical task brought on by its "zero tolerance" policy on illegal entry.

Authorities have identified 2,551 children 5 and older who may be covered by the order to be reunited

with their parents by Thursday's court-imposed deadline. That effort was expected to fall short, partly because hundreds of parents may have already been deported without their children.

But, by focusing only those deemed by the government to be "eligible" for reunification, authorities expected claim success.

As of Tuesday, there were 1,012 parents reunified with their children in U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement custody. Hundreds more had been cleared and were just waiting on transportation.

Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen told members of Congress on Wednesday that the administration was "on track" to meet the deadline, an assertion that was greeted with disbelief and anger by the all-Democrat Congressional Hispanic Caucus, according to people who attended. Nielsen declined to comment to reporters as she left the closed-door meeting.

For the last two weeks, children have been arriving steadily at ICE locations in Texas, Arizona and New Mexico to be reunited with parents. Faith-based and other groups have provided meals, clothing, legal advice and plane and bus tickets. Parents are typically equipped with ankle-monitoring bracelets and given court dates before an immigration judge.

Natalia Oliveira da Silva, a mother from Brazil, waited nervously outside a detention center in Pearsall, Texas, for her young daughter, Sara. She soon spotted the 5-year-old approaching in a vehicle, a seatbelt over her chest.

Sara got out and was quickly in her mother's arms, asking her, "They're not going to take you away again, right?"

Since their separation in late May, the girl had been at a shelter for immigrant minors in Chicago, while Oliveira was moved through facilities across Texas.

U.S. District Judge Dana Sabraw in San Diego commended the government Tuesday for its recent efforts and for apparently being on track to reunify the roughly 1,600 parents it deems eligible, calling it "a remarkable achievement." Yet Sabraw also seized on the government's assertion that 463 parents may be outside the United States. The Justice Department said this week that the number was based on case files and under review, signaling it could change.

"It is the reality of a policy that was in place that resulted in large numbers of families being separated without forethought as to reunification and keeping track of people," said Sabraw, an appointee of Republican President George W. Bush.

Lee Gelernt, an attorney for the American Civil Liberties Union who represents the separated families, said the government is "letting themselves off the hook" by focusing on those it deems eligible and excluding parents who were deported or haven't been located.

"I think the critical point to remember, is that they are only reunifying by the deadline those families who they are claiming unilaterally are eligible for reunification by the deadline," he told reporters. "The deadline is the deadline for just those parents and children the government says it can reunite."

Lourdes de Leon, who turned herself into immigration authorities, was deported to her native Guatemala on June 7 but her 6-year-old son, Leo, remained in the United States.

De Leon said Guatemalan consular officials told her signing a deportation order would be the easiest way to be reunited with Leo.

"He is in a shelter in New York," de Leon said. "My baby already had his hearing with a judge who signed his deportation eight days ago. But I still do not know when they are going to return him to me."

The government was expected to provide the judge with an updated count by the end of Thursday. Both sides were due in court Friday.

Spencer Amdur, another ACLU attorney, said there are three categories of concern: The roughly 1,600 children who "everyone agrees have to be reunified" by Thursday; children whose parents were deported and who must be reunified but not necessarily by Thursday; and others the government deems ineligible, including parents with criminal records or are suspected of abuse or neglect and some who aren't really the children's parents.

In El Paso, the Annunciation House, which has been assisting dozens of reunited families, said progress

has been slow considering Thursday's deadline. The organization has already received about 250 reunited families. Advocacy group FWD.us has been buying plane tickets for them to quickly leave.

"We are under a logistical 24/7 crisis all-hands-on-deck moment to get through the (Thursday) deadline. We will not stop until all of these children are reunited with their parents and that is regardless of where their parents are," said Alida Garcia, coalitions and policy director for FWD.us.

The government gives advocates sometimes as little as an hour's notice when they're releasing parents and children, Garcia said. The government has been shuttling kids from their shelters to the parking lots of the detention centers where their parents are held. Then they are handed over to non-governmental and faith-based groups that help them get to their intended destination.

Late last month, Sabraw ordered a nationwide halt to family separations, which President Donald Trump effectively did on his own amid an international outcry. He issued a 14- day deadline to reunite children under 5 with their parents and 30 days for children 5 and older.

Attention will now shift largely to the hundreds of children whose parents may have been deported and to how much time reunified parents in the United States should have to decide if they want to seek asylum.

The ACLU, which wants the judge to give families at least seven days after reunification to decide on their next steps, filed a raft of affidavits from attorneys working on the border Wednesday that detail what it considers flawed procedures, including limited phone access and strict visitation policies, language barriers and being given only a few minutes to decide whether to leave their children in the United States.

___

Spagat reported from San Diego. Associated Press writers Alan Fram in Washington and Sonia Perez D. in Guatemala City contributed.

Pakistan cricket star Imran Khan leads amid slow vote count

By KATHY GANNON and ZARAR KHAN, Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Pakistan's former cricket star Imran Khan and his party were maintaining a commanding lead Thursday amid slow and tedious counting of ballots from a historic election the previous day that was marred by allegations of fraud and militant violence.

Election officials said an official count confirming Pakistan's next government was expected later in the evening.

However, more than a dozen TV channels in Pakistan, based on official but partial counts, are projecting — using their own, undisclosed methodologies — that Khan is getting as many as 119 seats of the 270 parliament seats that were contested.

The remainder in the 342-seat Lower House of Parliament includes reserved seats for women and minorities. Voting for two seats was postponed after one candidate died during the campaign and another was disqualified.

It still wasn't clear whether Khan's Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) would get a simple majority or have to form a coalition.

But before even half the votes were counted, Khan's leading rival Shahbaz Sharif, who heads the Pakistan Muslim League — the party of jailed ex-prime minister Nawaz Sharif — rejected the vote, generating fears that disgruntled losers could delay the formation of the next government. Television projections give his party hardly 61 seats.

In a tweet on his official page, Sharif said "our democratic process has been pushed back by decades," adding that "had the public mandate been delivered in a fair manner, we would have accepted it happily."

Complaints have also emerged from the independent Human Rights Commission, which issued a statement saying that in some places women were not allowed to vote.

In other areas, it said, "polling staff appeared to be biased toward a certain party," without naming the party. In the days before Wednesday's election, leading rights activist I.A. Rehman called the campaign "the dirtiest" in his country's troubled journey toward sustained democracy.

Analysts have expressed concern that disgruntled losers could create instability for the incoming new

government, which will face mounting challenges — including a crumbling economy, a crippling debt and a raging militancy.

As voting got underway on Wednesday in the southwestern city of Quetta, the Baluchistan provincial capital, militants sent a suicide bomber to a crowding polling station to carry out a deadly attack that killed 31 people.

The election, in which Pakistanis voted for the National Assembly, the lower house of parliament, and the four provincial assemblies, marked only the second time in Pakistan's 71-year history that one civilian government has handed power to another in the country of 200 million people.

Yet there have been widespread concerns during the election campaign about manipulation by the military, which has directly or indirectly ruled Pakistan for most of its existence. The military had deployed 350,000 troops at the 85,000 polling stations.

In a tweet on his official account, Pakistan's military spokesman Gen. Asif Ghafoor called accusations of interference "malicious propaganda." The tweet featured a collage of pictures of Pakistanis handing military personnel at polling stations flowers and elderly women kissing soldiers.

Baluchistan also saw the worst violence during campaigning earlier this month, when a suicide bomber struck at a political rally, killing 149 people, including the candidate Siraj Raisani. Another 400 were wounded. The Islamic State group claimed responsibility for that attack. Baluchistan has been roiled by relentless attacks, both by the province's secessionists and Sunni militants who have killed hundreds of Shiites there.

Throughout the night, Khan supporters celebrated outside party offices countrywide. Most of the revelers were young men, who danced to the sound of beating drums draped in Tehreek-e-Insaf party black and green-colored flags.

Khan, a cricket legend of almost mythical proportions, has appealed to the youth with promises of a new Pakistan. According to the United Nations, 65 percent of Pakistan's population is 30 years old.

On Wednesday, video images of a smiling Khan marking his ballot landed him in trouble with the Election Commission. Its spokesman Nadeem Qasim said Khan had violated constitutional provisions on "the secrecy of the ballot" and that his vote could be disqualified.

Moeed Yusuf, associate vice president of the Asia Center at the Washington-based U.S. Institute of Peace, said the top challenge for the next government will be the economic crisis.

"The new government is going to be in an unenviable position, and especially Imran Khan, as he is not the preferred prime minister for Pakistan's two traditional chief patrons, China and the U.S," he said.

Khan has been an outspoken critic of the U.S.-led war in neighboring Afghanistan as well as China's massive investment in Pakistan, which has racked up millions of dollars in debt to Beijing.

David Markey of Johns Hopkins University's Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies said he expected a Khan-led government to "try to renegotiate terms with Beijing, using its populism as a point of leverage but never actually aiming to sever ties in ways that would upset the army," which has historically close ties with China.

Khan is also likely to be met with trepidation in neighboring Afghanistan, where he has been vocal in his opposition to the U.S.-led invasion that followed the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the United States.

___

Associated Press writers Munir Khan in Islamabad; Abdul Sattar in Quetta, Pakistan; Zaheer Babar in Lahore; Adil Jawad in Karachi, Pakistan, and Riaz Khan in Peshawar, Pakistan, contributed to this report.

Backing off auto tariffs, US and EU agree to more talks

By KEN THOMAS and PAUL WISEMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump and European leaders pulled back from the brink of a trade war over autos Wednesday and agreed to open talks to tear down trade barriers between the United States and the European Union.

But while politicians and businesses welcomed the deal Thursday, the agreement was vague, the nego-

tiations are sure to be contentious and the United States remains embroiled in major trade disputes with China and other countries.

In a hastily called Rose Garden appearance with Trump, European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncker said the U.S. and the EU had agreed to hold off on new tariffs, suggesting that the United States will suspend plans to start taxing European auto imports — a move that would have marked a major escalation in trade tensions between the allies.

Trump also said the EU had agreed to buy "a lot of soybeans" and increase its imports of liquefied natural gas from the U.S. And the two agreed to resolve a dispute over U.S. tariffs on steel and aluminum.

"It's encouraging that they're talking about freer trade rather than trade barriers and an escalating tariff war," said Rufus Yerxa, president of the National Foreign Trade Council and a former U.S. trade official. But he said reaching a detailed trade agreement with the EU would likely prove difficult.

The tone was friendlier than it has been. During a recent European trip, Trump referred to the EU as a "foe, what they do to us in trade." Juncker, after Trump imposed tariffs on steel and aluminum imports, said in March that "this is basically a stupid process, the fact that we have to do this. But we have to do it. We can also do stupid."

On Wednesday, Trump and Juncker said they have agreed to work toward "zero tariffs" and "zero subsidies" on non-automotive goods.

Trump told reporters it was a "very big day for free and fair trade" and later tweeted a photo of himself and Juncker in an embrace, with Juncker kissing his cheek.

"Obviously the European Union, as represented by @JunckerEU and the United States, as represented by yours truly, love each other!" he wrote.

The agreement was welcomed by political and business leaders in Germany, the EU's biggest economy, though their relief was tempered with caution that details have to be firmed up.

"Very demanding and intensive negotiations lie ahead of us," German Economy Minister Peter Altmaier said, vowing that "we will represent and defend our European interests just as emphatically as the U.S. does with its interests." He said the Trump-Juncker accord was "a good start — it takes away many people's worries that the global economy could suffer serious damage in the coming months from a trade war."

Trump campaigned on a vow to get tough on trading partners he accuses of taking advantage of bad trade deals to run up huge trade surpluses with the U.S.

He has slapped taxes on imported steel and aluminum, saying they pose a threat to U.S. national security. The U.S. and EU are now working to resolve their differences over steel and aluminum — but the tariffs are still in place. And they would continue to hit U.S. trading partners like Canada, Mexico and Japan even if the U.S. and the EU cut a deal.

Whatever progress was achieved Wednesday could provide some relief for U.S. automakers. The escalating trade war and tariffs on steel and aluminum had put pressure on auto companies' earnings. General Motors slashed its outlook, and shares of Ford Motor Co. and auto parts companies have fallen.

"Our biggest exposure, our biggest unmitigated exposure, is really steel and aluminum when you look at all of the commodities," GM CEO Mary Barra said Wednesday.

Trump has also imposed tariffs on $34 billion of Chinese imports — a figure he has threatened to raise to $500 billion — in a dispute over Beijing's aggressive drive to supplant U.S. technological dominance.

China has counterpunched with tariffs on American products, including soybeans and pork — a shot at Trump supporters in the U.S. heartland.

The EU is stepping in to ease some of U.S. farmers' pain. Juncker said the EU "can import more soybeans from the U.S., and it will be done."

Mary Lovely, a Syracuse University economist who studies trade, said, "The Chinese are not going to be buying our soybeans, so almost by musical chairs our soybeans are going to Europe." The trouble is, China last year imported $12.3 billion in U.S. soybeans, the EU just $1.6 billion.

Trump's announcement stunned lawmakers who arrived at the White House ready to unload concerns over the administration's trade policies only to be quickly ushered into Rose Garden for what the chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee called "quite a startling" development.

"I think everybody sort of changed what they were going to say," said Sen. Pat Roberts, R-Kan.

Lawmakers said they still needed to see details of the agreement with the EU as well as progress on the other deals. But they said the breakthrough announcement was a step in the right direction.

"We have more confidence in him now than we did before," said Rep. Mike Conaway, R-Texas, the chairman of the House Agriculture Committee.

The White House announcement came as the Trump administration announced a final rule aimed at speeding up approval of applications for small-scale exports of liquefied natural gas. The Trump administration has made LNG exports a priority, arguing that they help the economy and enhance geopolitical stability in countries that purchase U.S. gas.

Juncker said the two sides also agreed to work together to reform the World Trade Organization, which Trump has vehemently criticized as being unfair to the U.S.

The auto tariffs would have significantly raised the stakes in the dispute. Taxes on EU cars, trucks and auto parts could have hit goods that were worth $335 billion last year. The European Union had warned it would retaliate with tariffs on products worth $20 billion.

Daniel Ikenson, director of trade studies at the libertarian Cato Institute, warned that the fight could flare up again if Trump grows impatient with Europe.

"Auto tariffs are looming unless the EU buys more U.S. stuff and does other things Trump demands," he said.

___

Lisa Mascaro, Kevin Freking, Christopher Rugaber, Darlene Superville, Matthew Daly and Josh Boak in Washington and Geir Moulson in Berlin contributed to this story.

Trump touts trade win in Illinois steel town as others lose

By SARA BURNETT, Associated Press

Steelworkers in Granite City, Illinois, threw a street party — complete with hot dogs, cold beer and a singer in red, white and blue — when U.S. Steel announced earlier this year it was bringing hundreds of laid-off employees back to work at the local mill.

On Thursday they'll celebrate again, this time with President Donald Trump.

U.S. Steel credited Trump's plan to impose tariffs on imported steel and aluminum when the company announced in March it was firing up a furnace at Granite City Works that had been idled for more than two years. Since then, Trump has pointed to the community east of St. Louis as an example of how his "America First" approach to trade will help U.S. workers — a case he'll make again Thursday before a crowd of employees and local residents who say this steel town has come alive again.

"Our community is excited to have the president come, and we're especially excited to see jobs coming back to Granite City," said James Amos, the city's economic development director. "To have the president of the United States visit your city feels like, maybe, icing on the cake."

But not everyone is in a partying mood. Others in Illinois and the Midwest, from farmers to manufacturers and technology companies, warn a global trade war and retaliatory tariffs from countries such as China, Mexico and Canada are causing job losses. The new tariffs threaten more than $3.8 billion in Illinois exports, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce says, and major Illinois-based companies including Caterpillar and Boeing already have been negatively affected.

"While we're happy Granite City has those jobs coming back, it's a lot harder to see the jobs that are lost or not created in the rest of the state because of the tariffs," said Illinois Chamber of Commerce President Todd Maisch. He described the administration's policies as "really negative" for most of Illinois, the nation's fifth-largest economy.

Richard Guebert, a farmer and president of the Illinois Farm Bureau, said he told Vice President Mike Pence during a meeting last week that there's "a lot of angst" among farmers after several tough years and with another strong crop likely to lower prices this year. He worries particularly about whether young farmers will be able to keep going in a state where one of every four rows of soybeans is exported to China.

"Older, more seasoned farmers have a better asset base. They can weather storms like this," Guebert said. "The young farmers are having a definite challenge."

A $12 billion aid package the administration announced Tuesday to help farmers hurt by the trade disputes is "a start," Guebert said, but "won't make farmers whole in the face of continued trade tensions."

Factories around the region also have been hurt. Mid Continent Nail Corp. in Poplar Bluff, Missouri, has shuttered a multimillion-dollar plant and is "on the brink of extinction."

The company, which says it's the nation's largest nail manufacturer, employed 510 workers before Trump raised tariffs on June 1 but has since slashed its workforce to 370, spokesman James Glassman said. The tariffs led to a big jump in the price of steel wire, the raw material Mid Continent imports from Mexico to make nails. When Mid Continent raised its prices 25 percent, customers turned to cheaper foreign-made nails.

"This is a county that went 79 percent for Trump so people are certainly willing to give him the benefit of the doubt," Glassman said. "But their jobs are at stake because of this misguided tariff."

Trump will travel to Granite City with Republican U.S. Rep. Mike Bost, whose southern Illinois district includes the steel mill as well as many farmers. The seat is one of Democrats' top targets as they look to regain control of the House this fall.

Bost, who's being challenged by St. Clair County State's Attorney Brendan Kelly, could get a boost from the Trump visit. While Illinois went heavily for Hillary Clinton in 2016 thanks to large support from the Chicago area, most of Southern Illinois backed Trump.

The more than 2,000 workers laid off from Granite City Works got the notice just before Thanksgiving 2015. U.S. Steel cited low oil prices — because the mill produces steel for oil refineries and the auto industry — as well as the availability of cheap, imported steel.

Granite City Works is now near its 2015 employment level of 2,100, with a second blast furnace to be operating by this fall. Jobs there mean dozens more at steel-processing plants throughout the city that bend or cut or coat or reshape the raw product, Amos said.

"There's no question we're thankful for what's happened and we're not afraid to say that the president and Congressman Bost did something we're thankful for," he said.

___

Associated Press reporters John O'Connor in Springfield, Illinois, and Jim Salter in St. Louis contributed. Burnett reported from Chicago.

Audio recording steps up feud between Trump, former 'fixer'

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and ZEKE MILLER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The sudden public airing of Donald Trump talking about paying for a Playboy model's silence marks a turning point in the legal game of cat-and-mouse between the president and the lawyer who once promised to take a bullet for Trump but now seems out to save himself.

The feud between Trump and his onetime legal "fixer," Michael Cohen, escalated when an audio recording of their 2016 pre-election conversation was released Tuesday by Cohen, prompting Trump to tweet Wednesday: "What kind of a lawyer would tape a client? So sad!"

As the two sides battled over the exact meaning of the sometimes-garbled words on the recording, it was clear that the tape could be just an opening volley. At least a dozen more recordings were seized from Cohen's office as well as hundreds of thousands of documents.

The tape, made just weeks before the 2016 election, appears to undermine Trump's contention that he was not aware of a payment to former Playboy Playmate Karen McDougal, who has alleged she had an affair with the married future president.

That raises questions about possible campaign finance violations. It shows Cohen advising Trump on campaign matters, and that could be of interest to investigators looking into whether the lawyer violated election laws by orchestrating hush money payouts.

Cohen says on the tape he's already spoken with the Trump Organization's finance chief, Allen Weissel-

berg, on "how to set the whole thing up." Weisselberg's involvement has led to speculation about whether Trump's private business tried to protect his campaign.

Trump's lawyers say the payments were never made.

The tape's revelations also mark a new chapter for Cohen, who, as he mulls cooperating with federal prosecutors and perhaps special counsel Robert Mueller, is viewed by many in Trump's orbit as the greatest threat to the former businessman's presidency.

Cohen rose through the ranks of the Trump Organization by mimicking his boss' style in handling his personal and political problems. Now he and his own attorney, former Clinton lawyer Lanny Davis, are taking another page from the Trump playbook — fighting a legal battle in the court of public opinion.

With his apartment under construction after a pipe burst, Cohen has been holed up in a Midtown Manhattan hotel. From that luxurious bunker, Cohen has grown increasingly concerned that his relationship with the president has fractured beyond repair, according to two people familiar with his views but not authorized to discuss them publicly.

Cohen, who would make bad stories disappear and travel the globe to make deals for the Trump Organization, now feels increasingly isolated and burned by the attacks against him by Trump attorney Rudy Giuliani and by the president's efforts to play down his former fixer's role.

And when the president's legal team waived attorney-client privilege, prompting Giuliani to declare that the tape was "exculpatory" for Trump, Cohen's team moved to release it, believing it backed up his own version of events, the people said. The attorney told confidants that he was tired of being a punching bag and wanted to try to seize control of the story.

The meaning of the tape is up for debate.

Days before the recording, American Media Inc., which owns the National Enquirer, paid $150,000 to McDougal for the rights to her story about the alleged 2006 affair. She later sued, claiming that AMI paid for the story with the intention of burying it to protect Trump. AMI president David Pecker is a close friend of the president.

Cohen is heard on the tape discussing AMI's payment, and says of "David" that "I'll have to pay him something."

The audio is muffled but Trump can be heard saying something about "cash," and then something about paying by check. Giuliani insists Trump says, "Don't pay with cash."

But Davis, Cohen's attorney, maintains that Trump's reference to "cash" is damaging. "The only people who use cash are drug dealers and mobsters," he told CNN. In another twist in a tale full of them, Davis himself had previously worked with AMI and moved to squash unflattering stories about the company. He did not return calls for comment Wednesday.

Whichever account is accurate, the tape appears to bring limited additional legal exposure to the president himself. But the revelation of the audio on prime-time television, complete with exaggerated appeals by Davis to Trump's supporters to listen to the president's comments, was designed to impeach the credibility of the president and his leading lawyer.

The recorded conversation took place in early September 2016. But a campaign spokesperson told The Wall Street Journal in November of that year concerning the McDougal agreement, "We have no knowledge of any of this."

Trump, for his part, weighed in on Twitter on Wednesday, suggesting the sudden conclusion to the recording should be viewed suspiciously.

"Why was the tape so abruptly terminated (cut) while I was presumably saying positive things?" he tweeted. "I hear there are other clients and many reporters that are taped - can this be so? Too bad!"

Trump's searing tweets marked a new low point in his relationship with Cohen, who worked for the president for a decade and grew close to his family. Though Cohen was Trump's right-hand man at the business, he was not given a major role in the campaign. He did run the president's outreach to faith groups and became a fierce defender on television, including a notable CNN clip in which he demands, "Says who?" after being shown poor poll numbers.

Though he hoped for a key White House position, Cohen was left behind in New York, where he capitalized on his access to the president in business dealings with a number of corporate clients. Famously brusque with most reporters, he vehemently challenged the references to him in a dossier of uncorroborated information about Trump even as he was called in to testify before special counsel Mueller.

After the raid by federal prosecutors, Cohen's relationship with Trump shattered. The men have not spoken for months and Giuliani has routinely lobbed grenades at the attorney.

Though Cohen's move to record Trump was unorthodox, it likely was not illegal. In New York, only one party has to give consent to a conversation being recorded. Steven Lubet, a Northwestern University expert on legal ethics, said he was unaware of any rule in New York that explicitly bars a lawyer from recording a client without consent.

But other rules, such as ones requiring lawyers and clients to have full and open communication, and barring them from engaging in fraud, dishonesty or misrepresentation, could possibly be construed as requiring an attorney to obtain consent. Rule or not, it's certainly an unorthodox practice and could leave lawyers subject to a bar complaint. Trump has a "legitimate complaint" and it's fair for him to ask what kind of lawyer would secretly record a client, Lubet said.

"The nature of the attorney/client relationship itself would dictate that a client's consent would be needed for taping," Lubet said.

___

Lemire reported from New York. Associated Press writer Eric Tucker contributed.

___

Follow Lemire at http://twitter.com/@JonLemire and Miller at http://twitter.com/@zekejmiller

Man explodes small device outside US Embassy in Beijing

By CHRISTOPHER BODEEN, Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — A man exploded a small homemade bomb outside the U.S. Embassy in Beijing on Thursday, injuring only himself, according to police and an embassy spokesperson.

Photos on social media showed a large amount of smoke and police vehicles surrounding the embassy shortly after the incident. Apart from a heightened security presence, the scene outside appeared to be normal by early afternoon.

The Beijing Police Department posted a statement on its website identifying the suspect only by his surname, Jiang, and said he was 26 years old and a native of Tongliao city in the Chinese region of Inner Mongolia. He was injured on the hand by the explosive device, which was made from fireworks and was detonated at about 1 p.m., police said.

There was no word on a motive and the statement said the investigation was continuing.

No damage was done to embassy property and no other injuries were recorded, a U.S. embassy spokesperson said, speaking on routine condition of anonymity.

Only one person was involved and police responded to the situation, the spokesperson said.

Neither the police nor the embassy had any comment on a report by the ruling Communist Party newspaper Global Times that said officers had earlier removed a women from outside the embassy who had sprayed gasoline on herself in a "suspected attempt at self-immolation" at around 11 a.m.

China and the U.S. are in the middle of a trade dispute, but America remains a hugely popular destination for travel, education and immigration for Chinese citizens.

On weekdays, large lines of visa applicants form outside the embassy, which sits in a busy corner of the city hosting numerous diplomatic installations as well as hotels and stores.

Groton Daily Independent
Thursday, July 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 017 ~ 24 of 42

11 House Republicans seek impeachment of DOJ's Rosenstein

By MARY CLARE JALONICK, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A group of 11 House conservatives introduced articles of impeachment against Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein, the Justice Department official who oversees special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation.

The move came Wednesday after months of criticism aimed at the department — and the Russia investigation in particular — from Trump and his Republican allies in Congress. Trump has fumed about Mueller's probe and repeatedly called it a "witch hunt," a refrain echoed by some of the lawmakers. The impeachment effort is led by North Carolina Rep. Mark Meadows, who talks to Trump frequently and often defends him to his colleagues.

It is unclear whether there will be enough support in the party to pass the impeachment resolution, as Republican leaders have not signed on to the effort and are unlikely to back it.

Meadows, Ohio Rep. Jim Jordan and the other Republicans who introduced the resolution have criticized Rosenstein and Justice Department officials for not being responsive enough as House committees have requested documents related to the beginning of the Russia investigation and a closed investigation into Democrat Hillary Clinton's emails.

The introduction does not trigger an immediate vote, but Meadows could make procedural moves on the House floor that could force a vote late this week or when the House returns in September from its upcoming recess. The House is scheduled to leave Thursday for the five-week recess.

The five articles charge Rosenstein of "high crimes and misdemeanors" for failing to produce information to the committees, even though the department has already provided lawmakers with more than 800,000 documents, and of signing off on what some Republicans say was improper surveillance of a Trump adviser.

The resolution also goes directly after Rosenstein for his role in the ongoing Mueller investigation, criticizing him for refusing to produce a memo that outlines the scope of that investigation and questioning whether the investigation was started on legitimate grounds. Mueller is investigating Russian interference in the 2016 election and whether Trump's campaign was in any way involved.

It is highly unusual, if not unprecedented, for lawmakers to demand documents that are part of an ongoing criminal investigation.

In a statement, Meadows said Rosenstein's conduct is "reprehensible."

"It's time to find a new deputy attorney general who is serious about accountability and transparency," Meadows said.

It's uncertain how many of Meadows' fellow Republicans agree. Rosenstein, along with FBI Director Christopher Wray, faced dozens of angry Republicans at a House hearing last month. The lawmakers alleged bias at the FBI and suggested the department has conspired against Trump — but many could draw the line at impeachment.

"Impeachment is a punishment, it's not a remedy," House Oversight and Government Reform Chairman Trey Gowdy said shortly before Meadows introduced the resolution. "If you are looking for documents, then you want compliance, and you want whatever moves you toward compliance."

The impeachment resolution came about two hours after GOP lawmakers met with Justice Department officials about the documents. Meadows said after that meeting that there was still "frustration" with how the department has handled the oversight requests.

Republican leaders, however, have said in recent weeks that they are satisfied with the Justice Department's progress. Gowdy said after the meeting that he was pleased with the department's efforts. House Speaker Paul Ryan has also said he is satisfied with progress on the document production.

Meadows heads the conservative Freedom Caucus and has sparred with Ryan on issues such as immigration and federal spending. His open threat of triggering a vote on impeachment — which he can do if he follows a certain set of procedural rules — could help him win concessions on other contentious issues before the House.

A spokeswoman for the Justice Department said she had no comment on the articles of impeachment.

Rosenstein has overseen the Russia investigation since last year, when Attorney General Jeff Sessions recused himself from the probe following reports of his meeting with the Russian ambassador.

Democrats have criticized the Republican efforts to pressure the Justice Department, saying they are attempts to undermine Mueller's investigation.

In a joint statement, the top Democrats on the House Judiciary, Oversight and Government Reform and intelligence committees called the move a "panicked and dangerous attempt to undermine an ongoing criminal investigation in an effort to protect President Trump as the walls are closing in around him and his associates."

So far, the special counsel has charged 32 people and three companies. That includes four Trump campaign advisers and 12 Russian intelligence officers.

Democratic Reps. Jerrold Nadler of New York, Elijah Cummings of Maryland and Adam Schiff of California said Rosenstein "stands as one of the few restraints against the overreaches of the president and his allies in Congress."

___

Associated Press writers Lisa Mascaro and Chad Day contributed to this report.

Proposed Trump-Putin meeting at White House is put off

By MATTHEW LEE and KEN THOMAS, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration sought to fend off accusations the president is too soft on Russia, putting off a proposed second summit with Russian leader Vladimir Putin and declaring the U.S. will never recognize Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea.

As members of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee peppered Secretary of State Mike Pompeo with demands for details about last week's summit in Finland, the White House said Wednesday that President Donald Trump had opted against trying to arrange another meeting with Putin this fall. Putin already had sent signals that he wasn't interested in coming to Washington.

National security adviser John Bolton cited special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 election as the reason for the delay, although many members of Congress had objected to the meeting and said Putin would not be welcome on Capitol Hill.

"The President believes that the next bilateral meeting with President Putin should take place after the Russia witch hunt is over, so we've agreed that it will be after the first of the year," Bolton said in a statement, using Trump's favored but highly controversial term for the Mueller probe.

While the statement signaled optimism that the Mueller probe would be completed by the end of this year, no timetable has been given for when it will be wrapped up and it could very well stretch into 2019.

The White House said last week that Trump had directed Bolton to invite Putin to visit Washington in the fall, moving quickly for a follow-up meeting amid the backlash over Trump's performance at a news conference with Putin following their Helsinki summit.

In his testimony, Pompeo faced often-contentious questioning from senators demanding information about what Trump discussed with Putin while they were alone for nearly two hours with only translators present.

Pompeo struggled to answer, insisting the president is entitled to have private meetings but stressing that he had a full understanding of the discussion. Heated questions were also posed about North Korea, NATO and Iran.

"It's not for me to disclose the content of those conversations," Pompeo said in response to one such barrage of questions.

The committee chairman, Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn., who set a contentious tone for the hearing by telling Pompeo that senators "are filled with serious doubts about this White House and its conduct of American foreign policy," later said those doubts are due to Trump's frequent contradictory statements on the Russia probe and assaults on allies.

"It's the president that causes people to have concerns," Corker said.

Pompeo replied by saying that some of Trump's comments "actually achieve important policy outcomes,"

but the administration should be judged by its actions rather than the president's words.

He later clarified that the president's words are indeed policy, prompting an angry exchange with the ranking committee member, Sen. Bob Menendez, D-N.J. Menendez said that Pompeo, a former Republican congressman from Kansas, would have been so angry that he would have had to have been peeled off the ceiling of the Capitol if President Barack Obama had said and done some of the same things as Trump.

Pompeo, whom Democrats accused of playing politics with the investigation into the 2012 attack on U.S. facilities in Benghazi, Libya, accused Menendez of pursuing a "political soliloquy" but then declined the opportunity to respond. Menendez had earlier accused the administration of holding "incoherent and contradictory views" on foreign policy and the president himself of being "misleading and untruthful" in describing his positions.

In an unsuccessful bid to blunt some of the hostile questioning, particularly on Russia, Pompeo before the hearing issued a statement titled the "Crimea Declaration" in which he said the U.S. will continue to insist that Ukraine's territorial integrity be restored. He said the U.S. would hold to its long-standing principle of refusing to recognize Kremlin claims of sovereignty over territory seized by force in violation of international law. And he called for Russia to respect principles it claims to respect and "end its occupation of Crimea."

The spokeswoman for the Russian Foreign Ministry brushed off the Crimea Declaration as just another U.S. policy that could easily change in the future. In a Facebook posting, Maria Zakharova cited the Iran nuclear deal and the Paris climate accord — two Obama-era deals that Trump scrapped.

"We know the value of these 'fateful declarations,'" she said.

Russia has said Crimean voters approved the annexation in a referendum. The U.S. and its European allies have said the referendum was deeply flawed and illegal, as it was held without the consent of the government in Kiev. Pompeo told senators that U.S. sanctions imposed in response to the annexation would remain in place until and unless Russia returns Crimea to Ukrainian sovereignty.

He also pushed back on allegations the Trump administration has been weak or subservient to Russia over Ukraine or its meddling in the election. He noted that the administration had just days ago provided the Ukraine government with an additional $200 million in military equipment and maintained that the administration was serious about combatting Russian interference in the U.S. and Western democracies. He said he agreed that additional sanctions could be "constructive" to that end.

Pompeo said he had personally told top Russian officials that there will be "severe consequences" for any interference in U.S. elections or the American democratic process. He said that Trump, despite his denigration of the Mueller probe, accepts that there was Russian interference in the 2016 election and fully understands the threat posed by Moscow.

"He has a complete and proper understanding of what happened," Pompeo said of Trump.

__

Associated Press writers Zeke Miller, Darlene Superville and Lynn Berry contributed.

Police arrest man suspected of starting California wildfire

By CHRISTOPHER WEBER and NOAH BERGER, Associated Press

A man was arrested Wednesday on suspicion of starting a fire that burned five homes and prompted evacuation orders for an entire Southern California mountain town.

Brandon N. McGlover, 32, of Temecula was booked on suspicion of setting five fires, including a blaze threatening an estimated 600 homes in the San Jacinto Mountains east of Los Angeles, state fire officials said.

It wasn't immediately clear whether McGlover had an attorney.

One of the fires erupted Wednesday afternoon and quickly grew to 7 ½-square miles (19 square kilometers), fueled by dry brush and trees in rugged terrain. It was burning in and around San Bernardino National Forest, prompting officials to order evacuations for Idyllwild and surrounding communities, which are home to about 12,000 people.

No injuries were reported but dozens of horses and other animals and several hundred people, including

children from summer camps, went to shelters.

William Blodgett of Idyllwild said he couldn't get home because of the fire and had to wait along with others at a gas station in nearby Mountain Center — until the fire hopped a highway and began to move in his direction.

"We were all peeling out of there as fast as we could," he told KNBC-TV. "It was apocalyptic."

The fire is one of several across California amid a statewide heat wave. To the north, in the San Francisco Bay Area, at least one home burned in a fast-moving blaze in Clayton, where houses are spread out around windy roads.

Yosemite Valley, the scenic heart of the national park, was closed at noon Wednesday during the height of tourist season as smoke cast a pall on the region from a fire in the Sierra Nevada. The closure was heartbreaking for travelers, many of whom mapped out their trips months in advance to hike and climb amid the spectacular views of cascading waterfalls and sheer rock faces.

"We had one guest who planned a weeklong trip," said Tom Lambert, who owns a vacation rental property near Yosemite Valley. "It was a father-daughter trip, for her high school graduation ... Now it's done. It's sad." Another guest had to delay plans to climb Half Dome.

The closure has also been a financial blow to Lambert and other businesses that rely on the summer tourist traffic.

Most people left the valley Tuesday, when officials reluctantly announced the closure, park spokesman Scott Gediman said. The remaining campers packed up their gear Wednesday, joining the exodus that has been mostly orderly.

"People have been very understanding," Gediman said.

Officials emphasized that Yosemite wasn't in imminent danger from the fire. Authorities decided on the shutdown to allow crews to perform protective measures such as burning away brush along roadways without having to deal with traffic in the park that welcomes 4 million visitors annually.

On Wednesday, an extended family from Los Angeles on their annual trip to Yosemite prepared to leave the Upper Pines campground.

"Very disappointed," Lisa Salgado said. "We look forward to this all year. This is the trip of our summer."

The group arrived Monday and had planned to stay through Saturday. Instead, they packed tents and other gear into vehicles, hoping they could find another campground elsewhere.

"So, this is a new memory," said Miguel Martinez. "I've never been evacuated before."

Yosemite Valley will be closed until at least Sunday, along with a winding, mountainous, 20-mile (32-kilometer) stretch of California's State Route 41 that leads into the area, Gediman said.

At least 1,000 campground and hotel bookings were canceled — to say nothing of the impact on day visitors, park workers and small businesses along the highway, Gediman said.

The last time the 7.5-mile-long (12-kilometer-long) valley was closed because of fire was 1990, he said.

Lambert and his wife, Theresa Ho, were briefly evacuated last week when smoke cast an unhealthy pall over the home where they live upstairs and rent the downstairs to tourists.

"Basically June, July and August are the big revenue months," he said, estimating that about 100 nearby vacation properties would be forced to offer refunds. "We're gonna lose half of July and half of August probably."

Yosemite Valley is the centerpiece of the visitor experience, offering views of landmarks such as Half Dome, Bridal Veil Fall, El Capitan and Yosemite Falls. The glacial valley has been enveloped by a choking haze of smoke from the Ferguson Fire.

Over nearly two weeks, flames have churned through 60 square miles (155 square kilometers) of timber in steep terrain of the Sierra Nevada just west of the park. The fire was just 25 percent contained.

Mandatory evacuations are in place in several communities while other people have been told to get ready to leave if necessary.

More than 3,300 firefighters are working the fire, aided by 16 helicopters. One firefighter was killed July 14, and six others have been injured.

Gediman suggested valley visitors divert to Tuolumne Meadows, on Yosemite's northern edge, or to

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks to the south.

In the state's far north, a 7-square-mile (18-square-kilometer) wildfire has forced the evacuation of French Gulch, a small Shasta County community that dates to the Gold Rush.

___

Berger reported from Yosemite; Weber from Los Angeles. AP reporters Robert Jablon, Michael Balsamo and John Antczak in Los Angeles contributed.

___

Follow Weber at https://twitter.com/WeberCM

White House: Nothing malicious in Trump-Putin omission

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Pushing back against allegations of attempting to alter the historical record, the White House said Wednesday that the omission of a key question from its transcript of President Donald Trump's news conference with Russian President Vladimir Putin "was by no means malicious."

MSNBC host Rachel Maddow leveled the charge Tuesday night, accusing the White House of deliberately leaving out the question.

Two reporters each from the U.S. and Russian press corps asked questions of Trump and Putin following their July 16 summit in Helsinki. White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders first called on Jeff Mason, a White House correspondent for the Reuters news agency.

After posing his questions to Trump, Mason then asked Putin: "Did you want President Trump to win the election and did you direct any of your officials to help him do that?" The question is central to the federal investigation — Trump calls it a "witch hunt" — into Russian interference in the 2016 election.

But the White House transcript, and its video of the news conference, left out the first part of Mason's two-part question.

Maddow made the omission the lead of her prime-time broadcast Tuesday night. She compared the White House transcript and video to those produced by others which included Mason's question. Maddow noted that the English version of the Russian government transcript didn't even mention Mason.

"A critical exchange deleted from the transcript. A reporter's question edited out of the videotape," she said. "The U.S. government essentially following the Kremlin's playbook and maintaining that something we all saw with our own eyes, we all heard happen with our own ears, has nevertheless disappeared like old political opponents being airbrushed out of photos."

"It's weird, right? It's creepy. Turns out it wasn't a mistake. Turns out it was on purpose," Maddow claimed.

The White House denied that the omission was deliberate.

"The White House stenographer uses the audio from the White House audio to produce the transcript," the White House press office said Wednesday in an emailed statement. "The audio mixer at the site did not bring up the question (microphone) level in time to catch the beginning of Jeff's question because the translator was still speaking. This was by no means malicious."

The White House said the transcript has been updated for presidential records.

The statement did not address the identical omission that is noticeable on White House video of the news conference, or whether the transcript available on its website would also be updated. As of Wednesday, the transcript did not include Mason's first question to Putin.

The Atlantic and The Washington Post are among news organizations that cast doubt on Maddow's determination that the omission was purposeful, citing the muddled audio.

Maddow defended herself Wednesday in a series of tweets, saying the Post report offered "one possible explanation" for why the White House transcript and video did not include Putin saying he wanted Trump to win in response to Mason's first question.

Maddow also noted that the White House transcript and video hadn't been updated, more than a week after the news conference.

"I love WaPo with the heat of 1000 suns, but nothing here from WaPo disproves our report," she tweeted.

Trump has not hidden his disdain for special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation, regularly referring to it in public comments and on Twitter as a "witch hunt." U.S. intelligence agencies all concluded that Russia interfered in the 2016 election to try to help Trump win, a fact that Trump has wavered on fully accepting. Putin has said the Russian state did not interfere, and Trump appeared at the news conference to accept Putin's fresh denials.

Putin answered Mason's question by saying, "Yes, I did" want Trump to win "because he talked about bringing the U.S.-Russia relationship back to normal."

Journalism ethicists questioned why the White House still hadn't updated its transcript.

"I find it very worrisome that a week after the Helsinki press conference that the White House would not have corrected the record by now," Indira Lakshmanan, the Newmark chair in journalism ethics at the Poynter Institute, said in an interview. "More transparency is what we need, not less."

___

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

Lawmakers: DHS chief asserts family reunifications on track

By ALAN FRAM, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The chief of the Homeland Security Department has told members of Congress that the government is "on track" to meet Thursday's court-ordered deadline of reuniting hundreds of migrant children with their families, lawmakers who met privately with her said.

Wednesday's assertion by Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen was greeted with open disbelief and anger, according to many of the roughly 20 members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus — all Democrats — who attended. The private, hourlong meeting seemed to achieve little toward dousing lawmakers' criticism of how children taken from their parents are being handled.

Nielsen also told the group, "I am not a racist," according to two of the lawmakers. One of them, Rep. Luis Gutierrez, D-Ill., said she made the remark after he told her she worked for a "racist regime." Gutierrez said she cited her friendship with the first lady of Honduras and other Latina women.

Rep. Joaquin Castro, D-Texas, tweeted that she told the lawmakers: "I am not a racist. Nobody believes families should be separated."

A spokeswoman for the Homeland Security Department was asked for comment and did not immediately provide one.

After the meeting, lawmakers said Nielsen provided no statistics to support her assertion that the deadline for reuniting families would be met.

"She said they believe they're on track" to meet the court deadline, said Rep. Jim Costa, D-Calif., one of several lawmakers who said she used that phrase to describe the status of reuniting separated families.

"That's impossible. And we all said this to her," said Rep. Ruben Gallego, D-Ariz.

Gutierrez said he told Nielsen "she is committing crimes against humanity, that she is a child abuser" and that she is "an accomplice of Donald Trump's racist regime."

U.S. District Judge Dana Sabraw in San Diego set a Thursday deadline for reuniting children age 5 and older who have been held by the government since their families were caught entering the country without authorization.

As many as 2,551 children age 5 and up were separated from their families and 1,187 children have been reunified with parents, guardians or sponsors, the government has said. The exact number still separated is unclear. The government has been releasing hundreds of families to faith-based groups, which are caring for them.

The government has said 463 migrant parents may have been deported after being separated from their children, further complicating the reunification process. Sen. Robert Menendez, D-N.J., said Nielsen suggested to the lawmakers Wednesday that those children were left behind in the U.S. at those parents' requests.

"We simply do not believe that's true," Menendez said.

A separate deadline that Sabraw had set for reuniting around 100 children younger than age 5 with their families passed two weeks ago. Just over half have rejoined their parents or guardians, according to the latest figures.

The separations caused a bipartisan, nationwide uproar against Trump's policy of "zero tolerance," in which the government prosecutes all migrants entering the U.S. illegally.

The government initially separated children from their detained parents or guardians. Under pressure, Trump abandoned the family separation policy, but hundreds of children remain apart from their parents in conditions that visitors have described as horrid.

Nielsen ignored reporters' questions when she left the meeting.

"Very productive. Very frank," she said.

The lawmakers said Nielsen also told them her agency is financing the costs of detaining families with a 1 percent across-the-board cut to its programs.

A Homeland Security spokeswoman said the added costs are due to increased numbers of people being caught entering the country, and the money is being used for additional beds and transportation expenses.

Separately, the Republican-dominated House Appropriations Committee approved $5 billion for building parts of Trump's proposed border wall with Mexico after rejecting a Democratic effort to redirect that money to other immigration programs.

Trump has requested the $5 billion for next year, but the Senate version of the bill financing the Homeland Security Department has just $1.6 billion. The final amount will need to be worked out later this year.

Milwaukee police officer fatally shot; suspect is in custody

MILWAUKEE (AP) — The Milwaukee police chief confirmed Wednesday that an officer died after being shot and that a suspect was in custody.

Police Chief Alfonso Morales announced the officer's death at a press briefing. Morales said the officer, a 17-year police veteran, was also a friend of his.

The suspect was wanted on gun and drug violations, Morales said.

Deputy Fire Chief David Votsis said the Milwaukee Fire Department was called to the shooting shortly after 5 p.m. Wednesday and that the officer was taken to a nearby hospital.

Votsis earlier noted that one other person was wounded in the shooting, but Morales said at the briefing that the suspect was not wounded.

The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported officers swarmed the scene in Metcalfe Park after the shooting.

The shooting comes nearly two months after the death of Milwaukee Officer Charles "Chuckie" Irvine Jr., who was killed after the squad car he was in crashed while in pursuit of a reckless driver.

Trump tape a turning point in legal game of cat-and-mouse

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and ZEKE MILLER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The sudden public airing of Donald Trump talking about paying for a Playboy model's silence marks a turning point in the legal game of cat-and-mouse between the president and the lawyer who once promised to take a bullet for Trump but now seems out to save himself.

The feud between Trump and his onetime legal "fixer," Michael Cohen, escalated when an audio recording of their 2016 pre-election conversation was released Tuesday by Cohen, prompting Trump to tweet Wednesday: "What kind of a lawyer would tape a client? So sad!"

As the two sides battled over the exact meaning of the sometimes-garbled words on the recording, it was clear that the tape could be just an opening volley. At least a dozen more recordings were seized from Cohen's office as well as hundreds of thousands of documents.

The tape, made just weeks before the 2016 election, appears to undermine Trump's contention that he was not aware of a payment to former Playboy Playmate Karen McDougal, who has alleged she had an affair with the married future president.

That raises questions about possible campaign finance violations. It shows Cohen advising Trump on campaign matters, and that could be of interest to investigators looking into whether the lawyer violated election laws by orchestrating hush money payouts.

Cohen says on the tape he's already spoken with the Trump Organization's finance chief, Allen Weisselberg, on "how to set the whole thing up." Weisselberg's involvement has led to speculation about whether Trump's private business tried to protect his campaign.

Trump's lawyers say the payments were never made.

The tape's revelations also mark a new chapter for Cohen, who, as he mulls cooperating with federal prosecutors and perhaps special counsel Robert Mueller, is viewed by many in Trump's orbit as the greatest threat to the former businessman's presidency.

Cohen rose through the ranks of the Trump Organization by mimicking his boss' style in handling his personal and political problems. Now he and his own attorney, former Clinton lawyer Lanny Davis, are taking another page from the Trump playbook — fighting a legal battle in the court of public opinion.

With his apartment under construction after a pipe burst, Cohen has been holed up in a Midtown Manhattan hotel. From that luxurious bunker, Cohen has grown increasingly concerned that his relationship with the president has fractured beyond repair, according to two people familiar with his views but not authorized to discuss them publicly.

Cohen, who would make bad stories disappear and travel the globe to make deals for the Trump Organization, now feels increasingly isolated and burned by the attacks against him by Trump attorney Rudy Giuliani and by the president's efforts to play down his former fixer's role.

And when the president's legal team waived attorney-client privilege, prompting Giuliani to declare that the tape was "exculpatory" for Trump, Cohen's team moved to release it, believing it backed up his own version of events, the people said. The attorney told confidants that he was tired of being a punching bag and wanted to try to seize control of the story.

The meaning of the tape is up for debate.

Days before the recording, American Media Inc., which owns the National Enquirer, paid $150,000 to McDougal for the rights to her story about the alleged 2006 affair. She later sued, claiming that AMI paid for the story with the intention of burying it to protect Trump. AMI president David Pecker is a close friend of the president.

Cohen is heard on the tape discussing AMI's payment, and says of "David" that "I'll have to pay him something."

The audio is muffled but Trump can be heard saying something about "cash," and then something about paying by check. Giuliani insists Trump says, "Don't pay with cash."

But Davis, Cohen's attorney, maintains that Trump's reference to "cash" is damaging. "The only people who use cash are drug dealers and mobsters," he told CNN. In another twist in a tale full of them, Davis himself had previously worked with AMI and moved to squash unflattering stories about the company. He did not return calls for comment Wednesday.

Whichever account is accurate, the tape appears to bring limited additional legal exposure to the president himself. But the revelation of the audio on prime-time television, complete with exaggerated appeals by Davis to Trump's supporters to listen to the president's comments, was designed to impeach the credibility of the president and his leading lawyer.

The recorded conversation took place in early September 2016. But a campaign spokesperson told The Wall Street Journal in November of that year concerning the McDougal agreement, "We have no knowledge of any of this."

Trump, for his part, weighed in on Twitter on Wednesday, suggesting the sudden conclusion to the recording should be viewed suspiciously.

"Why was the tape so abruptly terminated (cut) while I was presumably saying positive things?" he tweeted. "I hear there are other clients and many reporters that are taped - can this be so? Too bad!"

Trump's searing tweets marked a new low point in his relationship with Cohen, who worked for the president for a decade and grew close to his family. Though Cohen was Trump's right-hand man at the

business, he was not given a major role in the campaign. He did run the president's outreach to faith groups and became a fierce defender on television, including a notable CNN clip in which he demands, "Says who?" after being shown poor poll numbers.

Though he hoped for a key White House position, Cohen was left behind in New York, where he capitalized on his access to the president in business dealings with a number of corporate clients. Famously brusque with most reporters, he vehemently challenged the references to him in a dossier of uncorroborated information about Trump even as he was called in to testify before special counsel Mueller.

After the raid by federal prosecutors, Cohen's relationship with Trump shattered. The men have not spoken for months and Giuliani has routinely lobbed grenades at the attorney.

Though Cohen's move to record Trump was unorthodox, it likely was not illegal. In New York, only one party has to give consent to a conversation being recorded. Steven Lubet, a Northwestern University expert on legal ethics, said he was unaware of any rule in New York that explicitly bars a lawyer from recording a client without consent.

But other rules, such as ones requiring lawyers and clients to have full and open communication, and barring them from engaging in fraud, dishonesty or misrepresentation, could possibly be construed as requiring an attorney to obtain consent. Rule or not, it's certainly an unorthodox practice and could leave lawyers subject to a bar complaint. Trump has a "legitimate complaint" and it's fair for him to ask what kind of lawyer would secretly record a client, Lubet said.

"The nature of the attorney/client relationship itself would dictate that a client's consent would be needed for taping," Lubet said.

___

Lemire reported from New York. Associated Press writer Eric Tucker contributed.

___

Follow Lemire at http://twitter.com/@JonLemire and Miller at http://twitter.com/@zekejmiller

Georgia governor's matchup sets a battle for the middle

By BILL BARROW and BEN NADLER, Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — With the Georgia governor's race now set, the contest between Republican Brian Kemp and Democrat Stacey Abrams becomes a question of which candidate can move beyond their partisan bases to capture the electoral middle in this emerging battleground state.

Kemp, a two-term secretary of state backed by President Donald Trump, hardly moderated his approach as he celebrated an overwhelming runoff victory Tuesday. After a campaign featuring guns, chain saws and his smiling pledge to "round up criminal illegals" in his pickup truck, the newly minted Republican nominee painted Abrams as a radical leftist threat to Georgia values.

Abrams, a former state legislative leader, isn't a radical by any conventional definition of U.S. politics, but she's run an aggressive campaign to energize the Democratic base by pledging to expand Medicaid insurance and spend more on education, infrastructure, and job training. She also backs tighter gun restrictions, abortion rights and removing Confederate monuments from state property. Her effort to become the nation's first black woman elected governor has made her a national political celebrity.

"The contrast ... could not be sharper," said Emory University political science professor Alan Abramowitz. "Kemp is running as an all-out Trump supporter and a 'politically incorrect conservative.' Abrams is not only the first African-American candidate for governor in Georgia, but probably the most liberal Democratic candidate for governor in history."

Both national parties are running ads labeling the opposition as dangerous.

A Republican Governors Association spot slams Abrams as the "most radical liberal ever to run for governor" -- the voiceover doesn't even limit the claim to Georgia. The Democratic Governors Association labels Kemp irrational, using the same secretly recorded audio Kemp exploited to defeat Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle, who lamented that the GOP contest came down to "who had the biggest gun, who had the biggest truck, and who could be the craziest."

For her part, the 44-year-old Abrams steered clear of heated partisan broadsides. After Kemp's victory, she sent a Twitter fundraising appeal that mentioned her Republican rival only by his last name. "Service, faith & family guide our vision for GA: Affordable health care. Excellent public schools for every child. An economy that works for all," she wrote. She isn't expected to campaign publicly or grant media interviews until Thursday.

Georgia's version of the widening gulf between the two major parties in style and substance in the Trump era offers plenty of spillover effects nationally. Kemp's victory margin affirms Trump's imprint and the Republican base's continued embrace of hardliners, sending another warning to establishment critics of the president.

November's vote will test this strategy with two candidates that could hardly be more different.

Will a Deep South state — led by white, male governors since 1776 and not long removed from having Confederate insignia on its flag — elect a self-declared progressive black woman from Atlanta as its chief executive?

Or will an increasingly urban, diversifying state — now the eighth most populous and home to The Coca-Cola Company, Delta, Home Depot, UPS and the 1996 Summer Olympics — embrace a brash, chain saw-cranking Republican who pretended to intimidate his daughter's boyfriend with a shotgun in a campaign ad.

Kemp credited Trump's late endorsement for sealing his victory, and Trump tweeted his congratulations on Wednesday, urging Kemp to "go win against the open border, crime loving opponent that the Democrats have given you."

It was trademark over-the-top rhetoric: Abrams has criticized Trump's immigration policy but has never advocated open borders. She also worked with outgoing Republican Gov. Nathan Deal on a criminal justice overhaul that earned broad bipartisan support.

And Wednesday evening, Trump tweeted anew: "Thank you Georgia! They say that my endorsement last week of Brian Kemp, in the Republican Primary for Governor against a very worthy opponent, lifted him from 5 points down to a 70% to 30% victory! Two very good and talented men in a great race, but congratulations to Brian!

Before Trump's endorsement, public polling late in the race suggested Kemp had the advantage by a relatively narrow margin. While Kemp had momentum on his side nearing the end, his nearly 70 percent winning margin surprised many.

Trump won Georgia by less than 5 percentage points in 2016 — a closer margin than elsewhere in the South — and Democrats argue his support is softer among more affluent, educated Republicans and independents, giving Abrams an opening as Kemp copies the Trump playbook.

"The craziest Republican emerged," Washington Gov. Jay Inslee, chairman of the Democratic Governors Association, said in an interview. Inslee called Kemp a "sycophant for Donald Trump," and said Abrams offers a "real economic agenda." The DGA recently steered $250,000 to the Georgia Democratic Party for its fall efforts.

No Democrat has won a race for governor or senator in Georgia since 1998, and no Democratic presidential nominee has carried the state since 1992. But in the last decade, GOP nominees in those races typically garner no more than 53 percent of the vote.

Both nominees have weaknesses. The personal data of millions of registered Georgia voters was twice compromised during Kemp's tenure as secretary of state; Kemp blamed an employee and the contractor running the state's elections system. Abrams reported $170,000 in credit card and student loan debt along with owing $50,000 to the IRS, liabilities she attributes to her Yale law education and her financial support for her relatives.

Republicans, like party strategist and pollster Mark Rountree, argue that Abrams' agenda means higher taxes, anathema to the suburban voters she'll need.

But Jason Carter, who lost the 2014 governor's race as Democratic nominee, said Abrams "has the substance" to explain her ideas well. The question, he said, is whether Abrams can "connect with enough voters" personally to capitalize on the historic nature of her candidacy "without being consumed by it."

———

Follow Barrow and Nadler on Twitter at https://twitter.com/BillBarrowAP and https://twitter.com/benjaminrnadler .

Man bites dog: North Koreans eat dog meat to beat the heat

By ERIC TALMADGE, Associated Press

PYONGYANG, North Korea (AP) — In North Korea, summer is not a good time to be a dog.

In the sizzling heat, North Korea's biggest brewery is pumping out twice as much beer as usual, Pyongyang residents are lining up to get their "bingsu" — a syrupy treat made with shaved ice — and restaurants are serving up bowl after bowl of the season's biggest culinary attraction: spicy dog meat soup.

Euphemistically known as "dangogi," or sweet meat, dog has long been believed to be a stamina food in North and South Korea and is traditionally eaten during the hottest time of the year, giving a sad twist to the old saying "dog days of summer."

The dates are fixed according to the lunar calendar and dog meat consumption centers around the "sambok," or three hottest days — July 17 and 27, and Aug. 16 this year. Demand appears to be especially high this year because of a heatwave in East Asia. Temperatures in the North have been among the highest ever recorded, hovering near 40 degree Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) in several cities.

As is the case with almost everything, good statistics are not available for how much dog is eaten in the North.

But in South Korea, where even President Moon Jae-in has dogs as pets, at least 2 million canines are slaughtered and eaten each year even though its popularity as food is waning. While many older South Koreans believe dog meat aids virility, younger people generally are either against the practice or indifferent to it and there has been increasing pressure to ban it altogether.

On both sides of the Demilitarized Zone, dogs used for their meat are raised on farms for that express purpose.

"It's been our national food since olden times," explained Kim Ae Kyong, a waitress at the Pyongyang House of Sweet Meat, the largest dog specialty restaurant in the North Korean capital. "People believe that heat cures heat, so they eat dog meat and spicy dog soup on the hottest days. It's healthier than other kinds of meat."

The restaurant's menu lists more than a dozen dog dishes, including ribs, hind legs and boiled dog skin.

Like their neighbors to the South, North Korean attitudes toward dogs are changing.

It is increasingly common to see people walking their dogs on leashes in Pyongyang and other cities in the North, a trend that seems to have just begun to catch on over the past few years. Feral dogs are common in the countryside, however, and left to fend for themselves.

How leader Kim Jong Un feels about all this isn't known.

But in January he made a point of donating 30 pet dogs of seven breeds — including a bulldog — to Pyongyang's newly renovated Central Zoo, where dogs are put on display much like the wild animals. The canine center at the zoo is, in fact, one of its most popular attractions, and posters near the cages explain how to properly care for and feed — not eat — canine companions.

___

Talmadge is the AP's Pyongyang bureau chief. Follow him on Instagram and Twitter: @EricTalmadge

Trump, European Union leaders pull back from trade war

By KEN THOMAS and PAUL WISEMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump and European leaders pulled back from the brink of a trade war over autos Wednesday and agreed to open talks to tear down trade barriers between the United States and the European Union.

But the agreement was vague, the coming negotiations with Europe are sure to be contentious and the United States remains embroiled in major trade disputes with China and other trading partners.

In a hastily called Rose Garden appearance with Trump, European Commission President Jean-Claude

Juncker said the U.S. and the EU have agreed to hold off on new tariffs, suggesting that the United States will suspend plans to start taxing European auto imports — a move that would have marked a major escalation in trade tensions between the allies.

Trump also said the EU had agreed to buy "a lot of soybeans" and increase its imports of liquefied natural gas from the U.S. And the two agreed to resolve a dispute over U.S. tariffs on steel and aluminum.

"It's encouraging that they're talking about freer trade rather than trade barriers and an escalating tariff war," said Rufus Yerxa, president of the National Foreign Trade Council and a former U.S. trade official. But he said reaching a detailed trade agreement with the EU would likely prove difficult.

The tone was friendlier than it has been. During a recent European trip, Trump referred to the EU as a "foe, what they do to us in trade." Juncker, after Trump imposed tariffs on steel and aluminum imports, said in March that "this is basically a stupid process, the fact that we have to do this. But we have to do it. We can also do stupid."

On Wednesday, Trump and Juncker said they have agreed to work toward "zero tariffs" and "zero subsidies" on non-automotive goods.

Trump told reporters it was a "very big day for free and fair trade" and later tweeted a photo of himself and Juncker in an embrace, with Juncker kissing his cheek.

"Obviously the European Union, as represented by @JunckerEU and the United States, as represented by yours truly, love each other!" he wrote.

The president campaigned on a vow to get tough on trading partners he accuses of taking advantage of bad trade deals to run up huge trade surpluses with the U.S.

He has slapped taxes on imported steel and aluminum, saying they pose a threat to U.S. national security. The U.S. and EU are now working to resolve their differences over steel and aluminum — but the tariffs are still in place. And they would continue to hit U.S. trading partners like Canada, Mexico and Japan even if the U.S. and the EU cut a deal.

Whatever progress was achieved Wednesday could provide some relief for U.S. automakers. The escalating trade war and tariffs on steel and aluminum had put pressure on auto company earnings. General Motors had slashed its outlook, and shares of Ford Motor Co. and auto parts companies had fallen.

"Our biggest exposure, our biggest unmitigated exposure, is really steel and aluminum when you look at all of the commodities," GM CEO Mary Barra said Wednesday.

Trump has also imposed tariffs on $34 billion of Chinese imports — a figure he has threatened to raise to $500 billion — in a dispute over Beijing's aggressive drive to supplant U.S. technological dominance.

China has counterpunched with tariffs on American products, including soybeans and pork — a shot at Trump supporters in the U.S. heartland.

The EU is stepping in to ease some of U.S. farmers' pain. Juncker said the EU "can import more soybeans from the U.S., and it will be done."

Mary Lovely, a Syracuse University economist who studies trade, said, "The Chinese are not going to be buying our soybeans, so almost by musical chairs our soybeans are going to Europe." The trouble is, China last year imported $12.3 billion in U.S. soybeans, the EU just $1.6 billion.

Trump's announcement stunned lawmakers who arrived at the White House ready to unload concerns over the administration's trade policies only to be quickly ushered into Rose Garden for what the chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee called "quite a startling" development.

"I think everybody sort of changed what they were going to say," said Sen. Pat Roberts, R-Kan.

Lawmakers said they still needed to see details of the agreement with the EU as well as progress on the other deals. But they said the breakthrough announcement was a step in the right direction.

"We have more confidence in him now than we did before," said Rep. Mike Conaway, R-Texas, the chairman of the House Agriculture Committee.

The White House announcement came as the Trump administration announced a final rule aimed at speeding up approval of applications for small-scale exports of liquefied natural gas. The Trump administration has made LNG exports a priority, arguing that they help the economy and enhance geopolitical

stability in countries that purchase U.S. gas.

Juncker said the two sides also agreed to work together to reform the World Trade Organization, which Trump has vehemently criticized as being unfair to the U.S.

The biggest news from the Trump-Juncker meeting is that it appears to have delayed an impending trade war over autos. Trump had threatened to tax imported cars, trucks and auto parts, potentially targeting imports that last year totaled $335 billion.

The European Union had warned that it would retaliate with tariffs on products worth $20 billion if Trump put duties on cars and auto parts from Europe.

But the auto trade war with Europe is on hold while the U.S. and EU engage in further trade talks. Daniel Ikenson, director of trade studies at the libertarian Cato Institute, warned that the fight could flare up again if Trump grows impatient with Europe.

"Auto tariffs are looming unless the EU buys more U.S. stuff and does other things Trump demands," he said.

___

Associated Press writers Lisa Mascaro, Kevin Freking, Christopher Rugaber, Darlene Superville, Matthew Daly and Josh Boak in Washington contributed to this story.

___

On Twitter, follow Ken Thomas at https://twitter.com/KThomasDC and Paul Wiseman at https://twitter.com/PaulWisemanAP

Jerry Jones: Cowboys can't stay in locker room for anthem

By SCHUYLER DIXON, AP Pro Football Writer

OXNARD, Calif. (AP) — Dallas Cowboys owner Jerry Jones doubled down Wednesday on insisting that his players stand for the national anthem, declaring that he wouldn't support anyone who chose to stay in the locker room.

Speaking at his annual news conference to open training camp in California, the outspoken billionaire became the first owner to say publicly that his players would not be allowed to stay off the field during the anthem.

"No," Jones said when asked if he would support players staying in the locker room. "Our policy is that you stand at the anthem, toe on the line."

Last week, the NFL and the players' union agreed to suspend the rule approved by owners this spring that gave players the option of staying in the locker room while allowing teams to discipline players who took a knee or sat during the anthem.

The decision to begin negotiating on the issue came hours after The Associated Press reported that Miami Dolphins players who protested during the anthem could be suspended for up to four games under team policy.

Last season, Jones was the first owner to declare that he would bench a player for protesting during the anthem. Two of his players — defensive linemen David Irving and Damontre Moore — raised their fists briefly as "The Star Spangled Banner" ended but weren't disciplined.

"I obviously wouldn't dare speak for any of the other owners, much less in general about 31 other owners," Jones said. "As far as the Dallas Cowboys are concerned, you know where I stand. Our team knows where I stand on the issue."

The issue erupted in 2016 when then-San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick began protesting police brutality, social injustice and racial inequality by kneeling during the national anthem. The demonstration spread to other players and teams.

The NFL started requiring players to be on the field for the anthem in 2009, the year it signed a marketing deal with the military. Jones had already owned the Cowboys for 20 years when players moved from the locker room to the field for the anthem.

Jones said he understood the point of view of players who say they aren't protesting the flag or the

military.

"This is a case where we need to in my mind check that and be real clear that it is, the priority is about the flag, and be real clear about that," Jones said. "Sometimes it's best to just be real clear and succinct so that nobody misunderstands. I think that's our case."

Executive vice president Stephen Jones said the Cowboys don't have an anthem issue because his father has made his stance clear from the beginning.

"I do understand when you see the back and forth," Stephen Jones said. "But we've been consistent and we've never moved. Jerry's never changed his stance once. I think he feels strongly about it."

The younger Jones didn't want to speak for the players when asked if Jerry Jones' strong message is the reason none of his players have defied him.

"I was always brought up when you work for somebody and they're the boss, you play by their rules," Stephen Jones said.

Jones, who drew praise from President Donald Trump when he said last year that he would bench players, said Trump's continuing involvement in the anthem issue is "problematic" for the league.

Trump weighed in again after news of the Dolphins' policy broke, tweeting "The $40,000,000 Commissioner must now make a stand," a reference to Roger Goodell.

"His interest in what we're doing is problematic from my chair and I would say, in general, in the owner's chairs," Jerry Jones said. "And unprecedented if you really think about it. But like the very game itself, that's the way it is and we'll deal with it. But, yes, everybody would like for it to go away."

Unlike other sports organizations, the Cowboys haven't distanced themselves from Papa John's after founder and CEO John Schnatter was ousted over a racial slur.

Schnatter was already under fire for suggesting last year that the pizza company's sluggish sales were a result of the controversy surrounding the anthem.

Jerry Jones, who has had a close relationship with Schnatter, said the Cowboys couldn't cut ties with the company because of an ownership stake in Papa John's stores. Stephen Jones said the team was linked to 50 stores in the Dallas area.

"I regret that for John," Jerry Jones said. "But at the end of the day we've got too many people, too many customers, too many people that we just need to do as good as we can do under the circumstances."

NOTES: DE David Irving was placed on the "did not report" list after getting clearance from the Cowboys to deal with personal issues. Jerry Jones said he didn't expect Irving to attend camp for the three weeks the Cowboys are in California. ... DT Maliek Collins (foot) was placed on the physically unable to perform list, while S Kavon Frazier and DE Randy Gregory are on the non-football injury list. Gregory was recently reinstated from a yearlong ban for violating the NFL's substance-abuse policy.

___

More AP NFL: http://pro32.ap.org and http://twitter.com/AP_NFL

IS fighters ambush city, villages in southern Syria

By ALBERT AJI, Associated Press

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP) — Islamic State fighters ambushed a city and several villages in southern Syria on Wednesday, triggering ferocious clashes between residents and the militants that provincial health officials said killed more than 200 people.

The coordinated attacks across the province of Sweida, which included several suicide bombings, shattered the calm of a region that has been largely insulated from the worst of the violence of Syria's seven year long civil war.

The suicide bomb blasts inside the provincial capital, also called Sweida, were apparently timed to coincide with attacks on villages in the eastern countryside, creating mayhem across the province.

The attacks triggered deadly clashes between pro-government fighters and residents who picked up weapons to defend their hometowns on one side and IS militants on the other.

By nightfall, the province's health directorate had recorded 204 civilians killed and 180 wounded, ac-

cording to local official Hassan Omar, making it the single bloodiest day for the province since the 2011 national revolt that sparked the ongoing civil war.

Sultan Bou Ammar, a resident of the village of Shbiki, said some residents unwittingly opened their doors when militants knocked early Thursday morning, so unexpected was the attack.

"They kidnapped more than 40 people, all of them women or children," said Bou Ammar.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitoring group said at least 183 people were killed, including 94 residents who were part of local defense militias that have the backing of the Syrian government. At least 45 IS militants were killed in the fighting.

Al-Ikhbariya state-run TV showed images from several locations in the province and its capital where the bombers blew themselves up.

The rare attacks in Sweida, populated mainly by Syria's minority Druze, came amid a government offensive elsewhere in the country's south. Government forces are battling the IS-linked group near the frontier with Israeli-occupied Golan Heights and near the border with Jordan. The group also has a small presence on the eastern edge of Sweida province.

Since their offensive in June, Syrian President Bashar Assad's forces have retaken territories controlled by the rebels along the Golan Heights frontier and are now fighting militants in the country's southern tip.

IS has been largely defeated in Syria and Iraq, but still has pockets of territory it controls in eastern and southern Syria.

The extremist group boasted that its "soldiers" killed more than 100 people in Sweida. In a statement posted on the group's social media channels, it said its militants carried out surprise attacks on government and security centers, sparking clashes with Syrian troops and allied militias.

The death toll in Sweida, initially reported at 27, quickly climbed. The Observatory also reported a series of suicide blasts and the clashes in the province's countryside. It said the dead included civilians, pro-government fighters and IS militants.

An activist-operated media platform on Facebook, Sweida News Network said a local militia was fighting the advancing IS-affiliated group and that at least 30 militiamen were killed in the clashes with the militants.

Al-Ikhbariya said one of the suicide bombers hit a vegetable market in the city of Sweida just after 5 a.m., a busy time for the merchants at the start of their day.

The bomber drove through the market on a motorcycle and there detonated his explosives, the TV station said. A second attacker hit in another busy square in the city. Two other attackers blew themselves up as they were chased by security forces, the TV said.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres "strongly condemns the terrorist attacks" and "is appalled by the utter disregard for human life" displayed by IS, U.N. spokesman Stephane Dujarric said. "Those responsible for the attacks must be held accountable."

The city of Sweida has largely been spared most of the violence that Syrian cities have witnessed in the years since the conflict started in 2011. The provinces' religious and civil leaders have preached coexistence with Damascus, even as cities elsewhere in the country heaved with protests.

But the largely rural province has suffered from emigration as weak employment prospects and conscription pressures to serve in the national army have pushed men out.

Bou Ammar, from Shbiki, said there weren't many men left to defend the village when the militants attacked.

"We got reinforcements from (security) forces near and far, God grant them peace," he said.

For the southern offensive, government forces redeployed troops from Sweida province last month to attack rebels and IS-affiliate militants in the nearby provinces of Daraa and Quneitra.

The government is now in control of Daraa but continues to battle the IS-affiliate militants in Quneitra.

___

Associated Press writers Sarah El Deeb, Zeina Karam and Philip Issa in Beirut contributed to this report.

Groton Daily Independent
Thursday, July 26, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 017 ~ 39 of 42

Grim house search yields more bodies in Greek fires, 81 dead

By COSTAS KANTOURIS and DEREK GATOPOULOS, Associated Press

MATI, Greece (AP) — Rescuers intensified a grim house-to-house search Wednesday for more casualties from a deadly forest fire outside Athens, as the country's military said it was using footage from U.S. combat drones and surveillance aircraft to try to determine whether arsonists were behind the blaze and stop future attacks.

Joint patrols of the Fire Service, army personnel, and volunteer rescuers discovered more bodies in the gutted homes near the port of Rafina east of Athens, raising the death toll to 81.

Nikos Giannopoulos stood with his wife and two children outside the destroyed home of his 88-year-old mother, waiting for news as rescuers searched each room.

They found her charred body in the bathroom.

Giannopoulos had searched the home earlier but failed to spot his mother's body in the blackened interior.

Her remains were put into a yellow body bad and placed in a wooden coffin, and Giannopoulos vented anger that his mother had not been rescued as Monday's ferocious wildfire raged down from the mountains and tore through vacation homes.

"She died helpless, an 88-year-old woman. I lost my nearby home in the fire, and my mother's was burned too," he said, his voice cracking with emotion. "So many people died that it took the rescuers three days to find her."

The fire forced hundreds to sprint to sea for safety, swimming out into the rough waters to avoid the suffocating smoke until they were picked up by boats after nightfall. Divers and coast guard patrols were still searching Wednesday for bodies at sea.

The mayor of the fire-ravaged Marathon area, Ilias Psinakis, said many residents only had a few minutes to save themselves.

He described losing his own home. "We could smell something burning. Then everything was gone in minutes. The wind came, then moved away, then came back again," he said after a meeting in Athens with Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras, regional government leaders and public safety officials to discuss the relief effort.

"My house was lost but nothing happened to five or six cars parked outside. One had a broken mirror. That's to give you an idea of what happened."

Flags across Greece, including those at parliament, public hospitals and the ancient Acropolis in Athens, flew at half-staff after Tsipras declared three days of national mourning.

Fire-fighting planes from Italy and Romania and fire patrols from Cyprus joined the Greek effort on Wednesday, while Defense Minister Panos Kammenos announced that U.S. surveillance aircraft had also assisted in the firefighting effort and were gathering footage to try to determine whether Monday's fire had been started deliberately.

Arsonists frequently target forests around the capital to try to clear more land for development.

A U.S. government official said MQ-9A Reaper drones currently based in central Greece had been used in the effort, along with U.S. Navy VP-10 and P-8A reconnaissance and patrol aircraft. The official asked not to be identified because details of the U.S. assistance had not yet been formally announced.

Kammenos said the footage from the Greek and U.S. surveillance aircraft would be analyzed along with satellite images, and that preliminary findings suggested that the fire started at multiple points, which would now be examined on the ground.

Joint police and military patrols have been sent to the fire-stricken areas to deter looters and monitor nearby areas for potential arson attacks, he said.

"We will forward our findings to the Fire Service because they are ultimately responsible for the investigation," Kammenos said. "But this had such tremendous force, powered by winds up to 110 kilometers per hours. … It jumped over a road as wide as a highway. When you have conditions like this, nothing can stop it."

———

Gatopoulos contributed from Athens. Associated Press writers Elena Becatoros in Athens and Menelaos Hadjicostis and Boris Pilipenko in Rafina, Greece, contributed to this report.

Follow Kantouris at http://www.twitter.com/CostasKantouris and Gatopoulos at http://www.twitter.com/dgatopoulos

Russian hackers tricked people into giving their passwords

By COLLEEN LONG, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Russian hackers who penetrated hundreds of U.S. utilities, manufacturing plants and other facilities last year gained access by using the most conventional of phishing tools, tricking staffers into entering passwords, officials say.

The Russians targeted mostly the energy sector but also nuclear, aviation and critical manufacturing, Jonathan Homer, head of Homeland Security's industrial control system analysis, said during a briefing Wednesday.

They had the capability to cause mass blackouts, but chose not to, and there was no threat the grid would go down, the officials said. Instead, the hackers appeared more focused on reconnaissance.

The 2017 attack prompted a rebuke from the Trump administration earlier this year.

The victims ranged from smaller companies with no major budget for cybersecurity to large corporations with sophisticated security networks, Homer said. Vendors were targeted because of their direct access to the utilities — companies that run diagnostics or update software or perform other tasks to keep the systems running. The victims were not identified.

"This is a situation where they went in and said this is what they're looking for, and found weaknesses there," Homer said.

The newly disclosed details of the 2017 hack come amid growing concerns over Russia's efforts to interfere in the November midterm elections and the recent indictments of a dozen Russian military intelligence officers accused of infiltrating the Clinton presidential campaign and the Democratic Party and releasing tens of thousands of private communications.

U.S. national security officials previously said they had determined that Russian intelligence and others were behind the cyberattacks. They said the hackers chose their targets methodically, obtained access to computer systems, conducted "network reconnaissance" and then attempted to cover their tracks by deleting evidence of the intrusions. The U.S. government said it had helped the industries expel the Russians from all systems known to have been penetrated.

It wasn't clear if more had been compromised since news of the attack was made public earlier this year. Wednesday's briefing was intended to help businesses defend themselves from future attacks.

Homer said the attack began in 2016 with a single breach that stayed dormant nearly a year before other infiltrations occurred in concentric circles closer and closer to the U.S. systems.

Hackers used a mix of real people downloading open-source information from company websites like photos and other data, and attacks that trick employees into entering passwords on spoofed websites. Hackers then use the passwords to compromise corporate networks. It's possible some of the companies are unaware they were compromised, because hackers used credentials of actual employees to get inside, which could make it harder to detect, officials said.

Asian shares mostly lower on easing of US-EU trade tensions

By ANNABELLE LIANG, Associated Press

SINGAPORE (AP) — Asian shares are mostly lower after President Donald Trump agreed with the EU to hold off on new tariffs. The worry is that an easing of tensions with Europe could bode ill for a compromise with Beijing over trade.

KEEPING SCORE: Japan's Nikkei 225 edged 0.1 percent lower to 22,592.23 while South Korea's Kospi added 0.5 percent to 2,285.29. Hong Kong's Hang Seng shed 0.6 percent to 28,749.16. The Shanghai

Composite Index lost 0.4 percent to 2,893.18. Australia's S&P-ASX 200 slipped 0.1 percent to 6,243.00.

WALL STREET: U.S. indexes were buoyed by a strong performance from technology stocks and signs of progress in the trade dispute between the U.S. and the European Union. The S&P 500 index climbed 0.9 percent to 2,846.07 on Wednesday. The Dow Jones Industrial Average added 0.7 percent to 25,414.10. The Nasdaq composite closed at an all-time high, jumping 1.2 percent to 7,932.24. The Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks rose 0.3 percent to 1,685.20.

U.S.-EU AGREEMENT: President Trump and European leaders pulled back from the brink of a trade war over autos on Wednesday and agreed to start talks to dismantle trade barriers between the United States and the European Union. Trump and European Commission President Jean-Claude Juncke came to a vague agreement to hold off on new tariffs, suggesting that the United States will suspend plans to start taxing European auto imports — a move that would have marked a major escalation in trade tensions between the allies. Trump said the EU had agreed to buy "a lot of soybeans" — possibly lessening the fallout from tariffs imposed by China on its imports of American soybeans — and increase its imports of liquefied natural gas from the U.S. The two also agreed to resolve a dispute over U.S. tariffs on steel and aluminum. Earlier Wednesday, Trump tweeted that China was "vicious" on trade and said it was targeting U.S. farmers specifically because "they know I love & respect" them.

ANALYST'S TAKE: "Despite positive moves in the U.S. market, the preliminary deal could be bad news for the Asia-Pacific region. The reality is that Beijing and Washington have made a number of moves suggesting they are preparing to up a trade dispute between them," Michael McCarthy, chief market strategist at CMC Markets in Sydney, said in a phone interview.

FACEBOOK REPORT: Facebook said its user base and revenue grew more slowly than expected in the second quarter as the company grappled with privacy issues, sending its stock tumbling nearly 18 percent to $178.77 in after-hours trading.

CURRENCIES: The dollar eased to 110.78 yen from 110.97 yen. The euro rose to $1.1738 from $1.1732.

OIL: Benchmark U.S. crude gained 8 cents to $69.38 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract added 78 cents to settle at $69.30 per barrel on Wednesday. Brent crude, used to price international oils, rose 44 cents to $74.37.

Today in History

By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Thursday, July 26, the 207th day of 2018. There are 158 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 26, 2002, the Republican-led House voted, 295-132, to create an enormous Homeland Security Department in the biggest government reorganization in decades.

On this date:

In 1775, the Continental Congress established a Post Office and appointed Benjamin Franklin its Postmaster-General.

In 1847, the western African country of Liberia, founded by freed American slaves, declared its independence.

In 1908, U.S. Attorney General Charles J. Bonaparte ordered creation of a force of special agents that was a forerunner of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

In 1945, the Potsdam Declaration warned Imperial Japan to unconditionally surrender, or face "prompt and utter destruction." Winston Churchill resigned as Britain's prime minister after his Conservatives were soundly defeated by the Labour Party; Clement Attlee succeeded him.

In 1947, President Harry S. Truman signed the National Security Act, which reorganized America's armed forces as the National Military Establishment and created the Central Intelligence Agency.

In 1952, Argentina's first lady, Eva Peron, died in Buenos Aires at age 33. King Farouk I of Egypt abdicated in the wake of a coup led by Gamal Abdel Nasser.

In 1953, Fidel Castro began his revolt against Fulgencio Batista (fool-HEN'-see-oh bah-TEES'-tah) with an unsuccessful attack on an army barracks in eastern Cuba. (Castro ousted Batista in 1959.)

In 1986, Islamic radicals in Lebanon released the Rev. Lawrence Martin Jenco, an American hostage held for nearly 19 months. American statesman W. Averell Harriman died in Yorktown Heights, New York, at age 94.

In 1990, President George H.W. Bush signed the Americans with Disabilities Act.

In 2006, in a dramatic turnaround from her first murder trial, Andrea Yates was found not guilty by reason of insanity by a Houston jury in the bathtub drownings of her five children; she was committed to a state mental hospital. (Yates had initially been found guilty of murder, but had her conviction overturned.)

In 2016, Hillary Clinton became the first woman to be nominated for president by a major political party at the Democratic National Convention in Philadelphia.

Ten years ago: At least 22 small bombs exploded in Ahmadabad (AH'-muh-duh-bahd) in the Indian state of Gujarat, killing 58 people.

Five years ago: Ariel Castro, the man who'd imprisoned three women in his Cleveland home, subjecting them to a decade of rapes and beatings, pleaded guilty to 937 counts in a deal to avoid the death penalty. (Castro later committed suicide in prison.) A gunman went on a rampage at a Hialeah, Florida, apartment complex, killing six people before being shot dead by police. Billionaire Texas oilman George P. Mitchell, considered the father of fracking, died at his home in Galveston; he was 94. JJ Cale, 74, whose best songs like "After Midnight" and "Cocaine" were towering hits for other artists, died in La Jolla, California.

One year ago: President Donald Trump announced on Twitter that he will not "accept or allow" transgender people to serve in the U.S. military. (The pronouncement was blocked by legal challenges, and the Pentagon began allowing transgender recruits to seek enlistment on January 1.) A thrill ride broke apart at the Ohio State Fair, killing an 18-year-old high school student and injuring seven others. Child killer Ronald Phillips was put to death in Ohio's first execution in 3½ years; they'd been put on hold amid an uproar over the reliability of the lethal injection drugs used by the state. Actress June Foray, the voice of Rocky the Flying Squirrel and hundreds of other cartoon characters, died in a Los Angeles hospital at the age of 99.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Robert Colbert is 87. Songwriter-music producer-label executive Fred Foster (co-writer of "Me and Bobby McGee") is 87. Actress-singer Darlene Love is 77. Singer Brenton Wood is 77. Rock star Mick Jagger is 75. Movie director Peter Hyams is 75. Actress Helen Mirren is 73. Rock musician Roger Taylor (Queen) is 69. Actress Susan George is 68. Olympic gold medal figure skater Dorothy Hamill is 62. Actor Kevin Spacey is 59. Rock singer Gary Cherone is 57. Actress Sandra Bullock is 54. Actor-comedian Danny Woodburn is 54. Rock singer Jim Lindberg (Pennywise) is 53. Actor Jeremy Piven is 53. Rapper-reggae singer Wayne Wonder is 52. Actor Jason Statham (STAY'-thum) is 51. Actor Cress Williams is 48. TV host Chris Harrison is 47. Actress Kate Beckinsale is 45. Actor Gary Owen is 45. Rock musician Dan Konopka (OK Go) is 44. Gospel/Contemporary Christian singer Rebecca St. James is 41. Actress Eve Myles is 40. Actress Juliet Rylance is 39. Actress Monica Raymund is 32. Actress Caitlin Gerard is 30. Actress Francia Raisa is 30. Christian rock musician Jamie Sharpe (Rush of Fools) is 29. Actress Bianca Santos is 28. Actress-singer Taylor Momsen is 25. Actress Elizabeth Gillies is 25.

Thought for Today: "A life spent making mistakes is not only more honorable, but more useful than a life spent doing nothing." — George Bernard Shaw (born this date in 1856, died 1950).