

Groton Daily Independent

Thursday, Sept. 13, 2018 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 066 ~ 1 of 42

"Being honest may not get you many friends but it'll always get you the right ones."

-John Lennon



Chicken Soup
for the Soul

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

Dakota Outdoors

Erik Dean

402 N Main St
Aberdeen, SD 57401
605.229.0123

dakoutdoors@midconetwork.com

Thursday, September 13, 2018

4:00pm: Cross Country: Varsity Meet vs. Aberdeen Roncalli @ Lee Park Golf Course

4:00pm: Football: Boys 7th Game vs. Aberdeen Central @ Groton Area High School

4:00pm: Volleyball: Girls 7th/8th Match vs. Sisseton @ Sisseton High School (7th Grade; 4:00 PM 8th Grade; 4:00 PM)

6:00pm: Volleyball: Girls Varsity Match vs. Sisseton @ Sisseton High School (C & JV matches start at 6pm)

Friday, September 14, 2018

7:00pm: Football: Boys Varsity Game vs. Chamberlain @ Chamberlain High School

Saturday, September 15, 2018

1:00pm: Soccer: Girls Varsity Match vs. Garretson @ Groton Area High School

3:00pm: Soccer: Boys Varsity Match vs. Freeman Academy @ Freeman Academy

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Kiwanis has best chili

Chuck Padfield (left) assisted his son in the Brown County Chili Contest in August, representing the Groton Kiwanis Club. Their chili was awarded Best Service Club. Pictured with him is the club president Reed Litch. (Photo from Groton Kiwanis Facebook Page)



Pharis served for 29 years

Brown County Farm Bureau recently recognized board member Harry Pharis Jr. of Groton for serving on the Brown County Farm Bureau Board of Directors for 29 years. Pharis is pictured with BCFB Pres. Mike Elsen. (Photo from Farm Bureau Facebook Page)

BATES TOWNSHIP WEED NOTICE

OWNERS & TENANTS of Bates Township are hereby notified and required, according to law, to cut all weeds and grass in road ditches adjacent to their property or tenanted by them within Bates township on or before October 1, 2018 or same will be hired done by the township board and assessed property taxes at the rate of \$300 per half mile.

Bates Township Board of Supervisors reminds all landowners and tenants that the road right-of-way extends 33 feet from the center of the township road. This ditch is to be maintained and mowed. Any crops planted in the road right-of-way will be mowed and charged to the landowner. Landowner is responsible for spraying all noxious weeds.

Bates Township Board of Supervisors
Betty Geist
Township Clerk

Please Come to a Meet & Greet & Campaign Fundraiser

with



Monday, Sept. 17, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.
Groton American Legion Hall

Hors d'oeuvres and walking tacos will be served

Co-Hosted by:

Mike & JoAnn Nehls ~ Doug & Mel Sombke
Dennis & Shirley Larson ~ Dale & Susan Kurth

Gov. Daugaard Signs Special Session Bills

PIERRE, S.D. – After leading the U.S. Supreme Court victory in taxation of remote sales, South Dakota will soon be among the states benefiting from the Wayfair decision.

Gov. Dennis Daugaard this afternoon signed into law a measure which removes the imposition of an injunction against collection of sales tax on remote sales. Senate Bill 1 will go into effect on Nov. 1, 2018, allowing the state of South Dakota to enforce sales tax collections from those who meet the \$100,000 in sales or 200 transaction threshold.

"This has been more than 50 years in the making. Today is the culmination of efforts by many South Dakotans over the years and I thank all who have played a part," said Gov. Daugaard. "We have finally succeeded in leveling the playing field for all who do business in our state – and we have paved the way for any other state that wishes to pursue tax uniformity."

Gov. Daugaard convened the Legislature today for a special session to consider Senate Bill 1 as well as Senate Bill 2 and House Bill 1001. All three bills received legislative approval and were signed by the Governor this afternoon. SB 2 requires marketplace providers to attain a sales tax license and remit sales tax on behalf of sellers utilizing their services. HB 1001 clarifies the start date of the next governor to allow for a clear transfer of authority in January.

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Foundation receives BSSE \$2,000 Grant

Finance Officer, Hope Block recently applied for a grant through Big Stone South to Ellendale for the Groton Baseball/Softball Foundation.

The Foundation received \$2,000 to build a new archway at the entrance to the Baseball fields!!

Pictured left to right are Area Manager Kevin Kouba, Otter Tail Power Company; Matt Locke, Jarod Flihs, Lars Hanson, Groton Baseball/Softball Foundation; BSSE Project Manager Al Koeckeritz, Otter Tail Power Company; Hope Block, Groton City Finance Officer; BSSE Administrative Assistant Karen Jensen, Senior Land Specialist Vicki Severson, Otter Tail Power Company. (Groton SD Community Facebook Page)

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St. John's Soup, Sandwich, and Pie Luncheon

September 13, 2018, 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

\$2.00 per item

For take-out orders, call 397-2386 at
10:30 a.m. or after.

We Are Hiring! Housekeeping Laundry Stop in or call

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



1106 N 2nd Street ~ Groton, SD ~ 605-397-2365

Robert B. Johnson Estate Auction

Saturday, Sept. 15, 2018 10AM

Location: 204 Hickory St., Langford, SD

Selling an amazing assortment of Guns, 1972 Harley Davidson, Cushman, Vehicles, Fish House & Sporting, Collectibles, Collectible Coins, Metal Signs. Something here to fit all your needs!

Pictures & Full Sale Bill at voldrealty.com

Owner: Robert B. Johnson Estate

www.voldrealty.com

**VOLD AUCTIONEERS & REALTY
BRITTON, SD • 605-448-0048**

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Today in Weather History

September 13, 1928: An estimated F4 tornado traveled across Yankton and Turner County. An entire farm was swept away just as the family was about to enter the storm cellar. A man and his daughter were killed. A woman was killed in the town of Davis, in Turner County. Nine homes were destroyed, 52 were damaged, and 13 people were injured in Davis.

1922 - The temperature at El Azizia in Libya soared to 136 degrees to establish a world record. To make matters worse, a severe ghibi (dust storm) was in progress. (The Weather Channel)

1928 - Hurricane San Felipe crossed Puerto Rico resulting in the highest winds, the heaviest rains, and the greatest destruction in years. The hurricane produced much damage in the Virgin Islands, and later hit the Bahamas and Florida. (David Ludlum)

1944: The destroyer USS Warrington was sunk by the Great Atlantic Hurricane 300 miles east of Cape Canaveral, Florida. 247 men were lost in the tragedy.

1984 - Hurricane Diana, after making a complete loop off the Carolina coast, made landfall and moved across eastern North Carolina. Diana deluged Cape Fear with more than eighteen inches of rain, and caused 78 million dollars damage in North Carolina. (Storm Data)

1987 - Showers and thunderstorms produced heavy rain in the northeastern U.S. Flooding was reported in Vermont, New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Greenwood NY received 6.37 inches of rain. A dike along a creek at Prattsburg NY gave way and a two million dollar onion crop left on the ground to dry was washed away. The prolonged rains in the eastern U.S. finally came to an end late in the day as a cold front began to push the warm and humid airmass out to sea. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Hurricane Gilbert smashed into the Cayman Islands, and as it headed for the Yucatan peninsula of Mexico strengthened into a monster hurricane, packing winds of 175 mph. The barometric pressure at the center of Gilbert reached 26.13 inches (888 mb), an all-time record for any hurricane in the Caribbean, Gulf of Mexico, or the Atlantic Ocean. Gilbert covered much of the Gulf of Mexico, producing rain as far away as the Florida Keys. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Unseasonably cool weather prevailed over the Central Plains Region, with a record low of 29 degrees at North Platte NE. Unseasonably warm weather prevailed across the Pacific Northwest, with a record high of 96 degrees at Eugene OR. Thunderstorms over south Texas produced wind gusts to 69 mph at Del Rio, and two inches of rain in two hours. (National Weather Summary)

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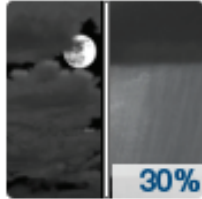
Today



Mostly Sunny

High: 86 °F

Tonight



Mostly Cloudy
then Chance
Showers

Low: 61 °F

Friday



Slight Chance
Showers then
Partly Sunny

High: 75 °F

Friday
Night



Slight Chance
T-storms

Low: 61 °F

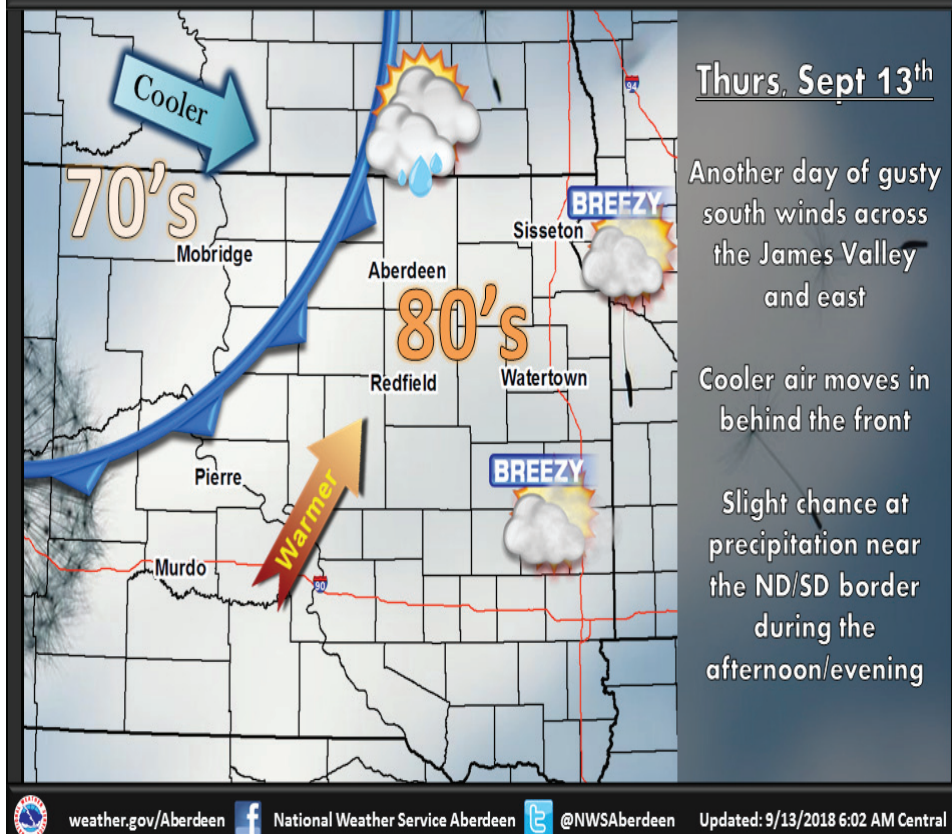
Saturday



Hot

High: 90 °F

Front Determines Weather Today



Published on: 09/13/2018 at 6:10AM

Expect another breezy day as a frontal boundary tracks east across the area, with warm air ahead and cooler air behind. Latest forecast, as always, at www.weather.gov/abr.

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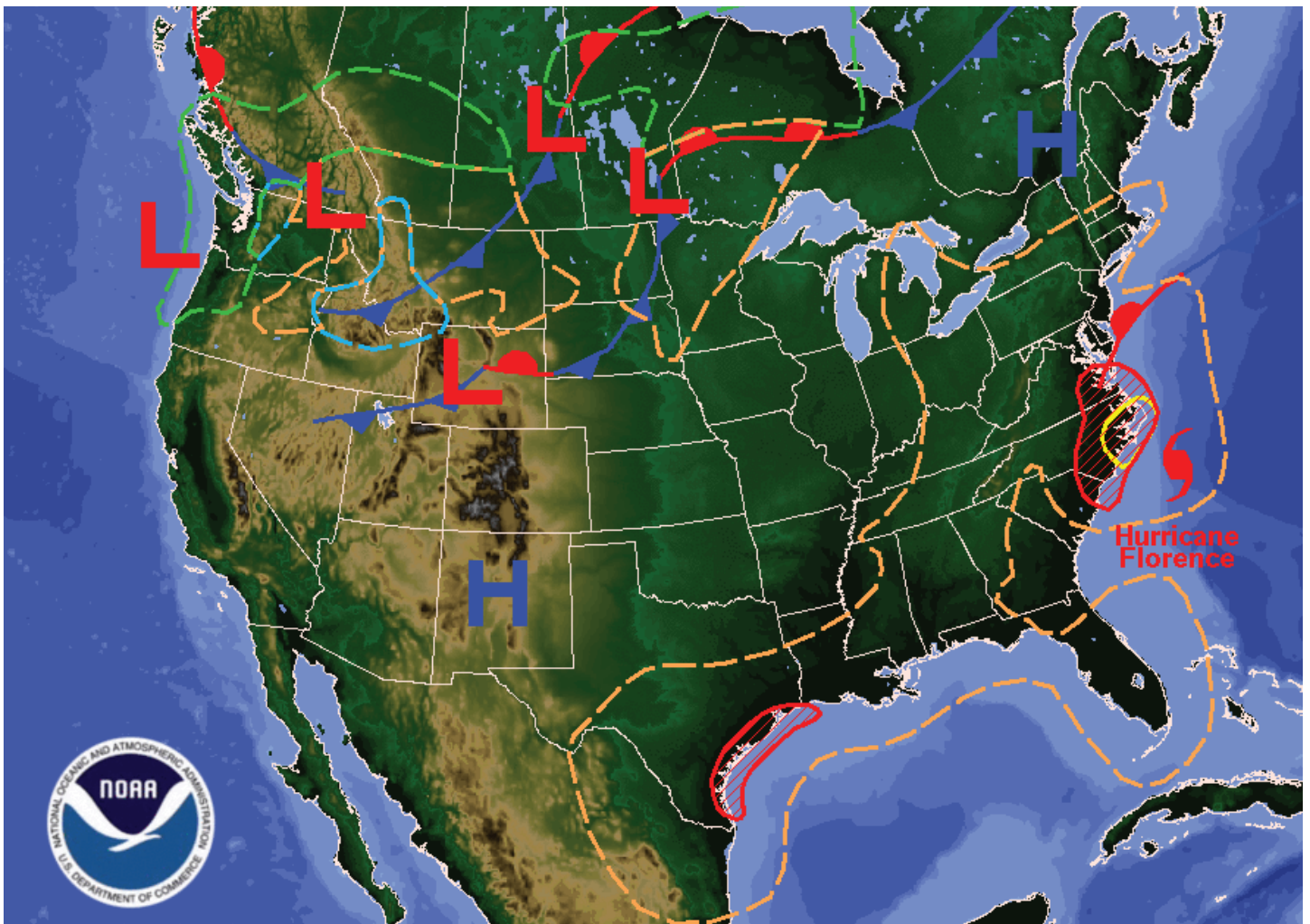
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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 89.8 F at 4:13 PM
Low Outside Temp: 58.4 F at 6:59 AM
High Gust: 36.0 Mph at 3:49 PM
Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 97° in 1927
Record Low: 26° in 1902
Average High: 73°F
Average Low: 47°F
Average Precip in Sept.: 0.91
Precip to date in Sept.: 0.10
Average Precip to date: 17.20
Precip Year to Date: 11.36
Sunset Tonight: 7:49 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:11 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Thu, Sep 13, 2018, issued 4:51 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McCreynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

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

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DOES GOD ACTUALLY CARE FOR US?

Most of us are rather strange. We want to live long lives but develop habits that shorten them. We want to be free, yet we make ourselves slaves to sin. We could be saints, but we choose to be sinners. We desire immortality but refuse it because we reject Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord - the only path to eternal life.

Long ago, David the Psalmist asked, O Lord, what is man that You care for him, the son of man that You think of him?

Often we neglect to think about the fact that God created us in His image. We did not evolve from nor ascend from some lower life. We are different from all animals in many ways - physically, mentally, socially - but most of all we have a spiritual nature that no living animal has.

We are what we are because God made us the way we are. If God wanted us to be different from the way we are, we would be. So what we do matters to God. What happens to each of us matters to God. We are created in His image, and that of itself makes us uniquely different and special - especially to God.

The fact that we are created in the image of God puzzled the Psalmist. So he decided to ask God, Why are you concerned with the human race?

Years later the question was answered: because He loves us. Remember what Jesus said: God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.

Man: different by design. Different because of Gods love.

Prayer: Thank You, Father, for a love that is eternal and the opportunity to enjoy a life that is eternal. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 144:3 O Lord, what is man that You care for him, the son of man that You think of him?

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2018 Groton SD Community Events

- Groton Lion's Club Bingo- Wednesday Nights 6:30pm at the Groton Legion (Year Round)
- 11/18/2017-3/31/2018 Groton Lion's Club Wheel of Meat- Saturday Nights 7pm at the Groton Legion (Fall/Winter Months)
- 1/27/2019 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm
- 4/13/2019 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 5/4/2019 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)
- 5/27/2019 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Program at the Cemetery, Lunch to follow at the American Legion (Memorial Day)
- 6/14/2018 Transit Fundraiser (Middle Thursday in June)
- 6/15/2018 SDSU Golf at Olive Grove
- 6/16/2018 Triathlon (Saturday before Father's Day)
- 7/4/2019 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
- 7/14/2019 Summer Fest
- 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

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News from the Associated Press

Arrest warrant issued for driver in fatal crash

SISSETON, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Highway Patrol says an arrest warrant has been issued for Watertown man suspected of causing a crash that killed one man and injured another.

The patrol says evidence shows the 52-year-old man was driving an SUV that went into a ditch and rolled over near Sisseton on Sept. 4. The driver has not been seen since the crash that killed 73-year-old Dennis Brant of Peever and injured 50-year-old David Keeble of Sisseton.

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Dakota Cash

04-16-22-26-31

(four, sixteen, twenty-two, twenty-six, thirty-one)

Estimated jackpot: \$281,000

Lotto America

01-23-24-42-51, Star Ball: 6, ASB: 2

(one, twenty-three, twenty-four, forty-two, fifty-one; Star Ball: six; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$7.67 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$227 million

Powerball

06-28-48-63-64, Powerball: 24, Power Play: 2

(six, twenty-eight, forty-eight, sixty-three, sixty-four; Powerball: twenty-four; Power Play: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$132 million

Another initiation for Vikes QB Cousins: Lambeau Field trip

By DAVE CAMPBELL, AP Pro Football Writer

EAGAN, Minn. (AP) — With his first real game for the Minnesota Vikings in the books, Kirk Cousins has another initiation coming this weekend: a visit to Lambeau Field.

Cousins and the Vikings play in Green Bay on Sunday, an earlier than usual contest for control of the NFC North. The only other times since 2000 that the Vikings have faced the Packers on the road in September were the season openers in 2003 and 2008.

For Cousins, well, talk about diving right in.

"It's a great opportunity to join this rivalry and hopefully put my best foot forward and get off to a great start," said Cousins, who grew up in the Chicago area and then western Michigan and, thus, has been immersed in one of the NFL's most storied divisions his whole life as a football follower.

This will be his first playing experience at Green Bay, too. When Washington traveled there in 2013, he was the backup to Robert Griffin III. Now he'll be the fifth Vikings quarterback to start in the last five visits to Lambeau Field.

"You realize how important it is for this organization, for our fans," Cousins said Wednesday.

Cousins passed for 244 yards and two touchdowns without a turnover in a smooth Minnesota debut,

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a 24-16 victory over San Francisco. The downside? All seven of his pass attempts in the fourth quarter, including one throwaway on the final play, were incomplete. That's uncharacteristic for a quarterback who's had a strong track record of success late in games, since he became a full-time starter in 2015. He directed two fourth-quarter comeback victories that year, four in 2016 and one in 2017.

"Some quarterbacks have a reputation of doing them," Vikings coach Mike Zimmer said. "Some quarterbacks make it so that they don't really have to do it in the fourth quarter, too. A lot of times it's opportunities. A lot of times it's the team around you. There are so many variables."

All eyes will be on Green Bay's Aaron Rodgers, whose status for Sunday will be a mystery until pregame warmups. So Cousins could fly a little lower on the radar for this one than his normal front-and-center situation after signing his \$84 million, fully guaranteed contract with the Vikings this year. The circumstances were different, but Cousins already has two strong performances against the Packers on his resume.

Though Washington lost that playoff game at home on Jan. 10, 2016, Cousins completed 29 of 46 passes for 329 yards, one touchdown and no interceptions. The following season when Green Bay returned to FedEx Field, Cousins went 21 for 30 for 375 yards, three touchdowns and no interceptions in a victory.

"I've taken a lot of steps as a player and in my confidence," Cousins said, reflecting on his progress since those matchups. "So I think that's true of all of us in the league. The longer we play, the more we're out there, the more we're able to be in the fire and playing through mistakes and learning, it helps us be that much better the next time we go out."

The Vikings are pleased to be the beneficiaries.

"The last two years, we've had a new quarterback by Week 2," tight end Kyle Rudolph said. "The last few years we've been in a situation with a new quarterback that we didn't get many reps with during the offseason. It is nice to be out there with a guy we've been working with since the middle of April and build a rapport with."

For more AP NFL coverage: <https://apnews.com/tag/NFL> and https://twitter.com/AP_NFL

South Dakota to start collecting online sales taxes in fall

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota will start collecting sales taxes from many out-of-state online retailers this fall under a law signed Wednesday after a special legislative session.

Lawmakers gathered at the state Capitol for the special session and overwhelmingly approved Gov. Dennis Daugaard's legislation, which will allow the collections to start Nov. 1. A second measure that passed will require marketplaces that handle payments, such as eBay, to collect sales taxes for sellers on their platforms.

Daugaard later signed the measures into law. Before the votes, he urged legislators to support the measures, which he said were the "culmination of the decades-long fight South Dakota has led for tax fairness."

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 made it tougher for states to collect sales taxes for certain purchases online. Daugaard said that a lot has changed since the Supreme Court's 1992 ruling that retailers had to have a physical presence in a state before officials could make them collect sales tax.

"Back then, we all thought of Amazon as a river in South America," Daugaard said. "The internet was in its infancy back in the early '90s."

But even after this year's court victory, South Dakota hasn't been able to enforce its online sales tax requirement because of an injunction in place under state law.

That injunction will be lifted under the new law that allows the state to start collecting the sales taxes, with the companies involved in the state's case exempted as court proceedings continue.

The state's sales tax 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 under a law passed in 2016.

The law addressing marketplaces such as eBay will make sales tax collections more efficient for online

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sellers and the state, Daugaard said. Republican state Sen. Stace Nelson, who opposed the bills, said South Dakotans are taxed enough already.

"For those of us that claim to be limited government, this is the exact antithesis of that," Nelson said.

South Dakota has estimated that it loses about \$50 million annually to e-commerce. But any future sales tax windfall may not result in major new state spending because current state law aims to give gains from the new collections back to taxpayers.

The special session didn't address a provision in state law that requires a 2016 sales tax hike for teacher pay to be scaled back if the state is able to collect tax on 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.

Decisions on changing or enforcing that law will fall to a new governor and set of state lawmakers after Daugaard leaves office in January 2019. Department of Revenue Secretary Andy Gerlach said he believes new legislation would be required for the tax reductions to take effect.

Lawmakers also approved an unrelated third bill on the timing of the new governor's inauguration in January. The state's last special session was held in 2017 to create rules governing the use of lakes on private land for recreation.

Follow James Nord on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/Jvnord>

Sign up for "Politics in Focus," a weekly newsletter showcasing the AP's best political reporting from around the country leading up to the midterm elections: <https://bit.ly/2ICER3D>

Record corn, soybean harvest forecast for South Dakota

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A record corn crop is forecast for South Dakota.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, South Dakota's 2018 corn harvest is forecast at a record high 839 million bushels, based on Sept. 1 conditions. That's up 14 percent from last year's production.

Acreage harvested for grain is estimated at 4.85 million acres, down 5 percent from a year ago. Average yield is forecast at a record high 173 bushels of per acre, up 28 bushels from last year.

South Dakota farmers also are expected to harvest a record soybean crop.

Soybean production is forecast at a record high 277 million bushels, up 15 percent from last year. Acres for harvest is forecast at 5.66 million acres, up 1 percent from 2017. Yield is forecast at 49 bushels per acre, up 6 bushels from last year.

Governor hopeful Noem airing first TV ad of general campaign

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Republican governor candidate Kristi Noem's first television advertisement of the general election campaign features testimonials about her values, experience and work ethic.

Noem's campaign says the statewide spot includes "some of the South Dakotans who know Noem best." Her lieutenant governor candidate, Rep. Larry Rhoden, tells voters that Noem's experiences have prepared her to be an extremely effective governor.

Noem's husband, Bryon Noem, says that "nobody will outwork her." The ad also touts Kristi Noem's agricultural background and small business experience.

Noem's campaign didn't disclose the size of the statewide buy, but publicly available records show she's reserved more than \$44,000 in ad time at South Dakota television stations.

Noem is running against Democratic state Sen. Billie Sutton and Libertarian Kurt Evans in November. Sutton is also running TV ads.

Firefighters stand watch at Sturgis funeral home

TILFORD, S.D. (AP) — Firefighters stand watch around the clock at a funeral home in Sturgis where the body of a fallen comrade has been taken.

Forty-three-year-old David Fischer died while fighting a house fire in Tilford last Friday. The homeowner, 82-year-old Raymond Bachmeier, also died.

KOTA-TV says firefighters will stay with Fischer's body at Kinkade Funeral Chapel until his funeral service on Saturday at Sturgis Brown High School.

Fischer served as an assistant fire chief of the Sturgis Volunteer Fire Department and was a 22-year veteran of the department. He was also a member of the Rapid City-based 82nd Civil Support team with the South Dakota National Guard.

Information from: KOTA-TV, <http://www.kotatv.com>

Philippines starts massive evacuations as huge typhoon nears

By JIM GOMEZ, Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — Philippine authorities began evacuating thousands of people Thursday from the path of the most powerful typhoon this year, closing schools, readying bulldozers for landslides and placing rescuers and troops on full alert in the country's north.

More than 4 million people live in areas at most risk from the storm, which the Joint Typhoon Warning Center in Hawaii categorized as a super typhoon with powerful winds and gusts.

Typhoon Mangkhut could hit northeastern Cagayan province on Saturday. It was tracked on Thursday about 725 kilometers (450 miles) away in the Pacific with sustained winds of 205 kilometers (127 miles) per hour and gusts of up to 255 kph (158 mph), Philippine forecasters said.

With a massive raincloud band 900 kilometers (560 miles) wide, combined with seasonal monsoon rains, the typhoon could bring heavy to intense rains that could set off landslides and flash floods, the forecasters said. Storm warnings have been raised in 25 provinces across the main northern island of Luzon, restricting sea and air travel.

Office of Civil Defense chief Ricardo Jalad told an emergency meeting led by President Rodrigo Duterte that about 4.2 million people in Cagayan, nearby Isabela province and outlying provincial regions are vulnerable to the most destructive effects near the typhoon's 125-kilometer (77-mile) -wide eye. Nearly 48,000 houses in those high-risk areas are made of light materials and vulnerable to Mangkhut's ferocious winds.

Across the north on Thursday, residents covered glass windows with wooden boards, strengthened houses with rope and braces and moved fishing boats to safety.

Cagayan Gov. Manuel Mamba said by telephone that evacuations of residents from risky coastal villages and island municipalities north of the rice-and-corn-producing province of 1.2 million people have started and school classes at all levels have been canceled.

"The weather here is still good but we're moving them now because it's very important that when it comes, people will be away from peril," Mamba said.

A change in the typhoon's track prompted authorities to rapidly reassess where to redeploy emergency teams and supplies, Mamba said.

Duterte asked Cabinet officials from the north to help oversee disaster-response work if needed, and told reporters it was too early to consider seeking foreign aid.

"It would depend on the severity of the crisis," Duterte said. "If it flattens everything, maybe we need to have some help."

The typhoon is approaching at the start of the rice and corn harvesting season in Cagayan, a major agricultural producer, and farmers were scrambling to save what they could of their crops, Mamba said. The threat to agriculture comes as the Philippines tries to cope with rice shortages.

Officials said other northern provinces started evacuating residents Thursday from high-risk areas, including in northern mountain provinces prone to landslides.

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Duterte canceled his appearance at a missile test firing aboard a navy ship off northern Bataan province due to the approaching typhoon.

On Guam, where Mangkhut already passed, residents dealt with flooded streets, downed trees and widespread power outages. Government agencies were conducting damage assessments and clearing roads, according to the Pacific Daily News.

About 80 percent of the U.S. territory was without power but it was restored by Thursday morning.

Mangkhut, a Thai word for the mangosteen fruit, is the 15th storm this year to batter the Philippines, which is hit by about 20 a year and is considered one of the world's most disaster-prone countries. Typhoon Haiyan left more than 7,300 people dead or missing and displaced over 5 million in the central Philippines in 2013.

Rhode Island governor defeats liberal primary challenger

By JENNIFER McDERMOTT and MICHELLE R. SMITH, Associated Press

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — Democratic Gov. Gina Raimondo of Rhode Island, who made a case for a second term by highlighting the state's improving economic fortunes, has survived a grassroots challenge from the left to win her party's nomination for re-election.

She will now face Republican Allan Fung, mayor of the state's second largest city, who came in 4.5 points behind Raimondo in a three-way race in 2014.

Wednesday's primary winners will have to contend with another three-way contest Nov. 6, with former Republican lawmaker Joe Trillo, who chaired President Donald Trump's 2016 campaign in Rhode Island, running as an independent.

Rhode Island also selected nominees for U.S. Senate, U.S. House, lieutenant governor and other offices in the rare Wednesday vote. About 145,000 people cast ballots, or nearly 20 percent of voters, according to the state Board of Elections. The turnout in recent midterm primaries has hovered around 20 percent.

In the campaign, Raimondo cited a falling unemployment rate in the state, as well as new job training programs and free community college tuition started during her tenure.

She defeated Matt Brown, a former Rhode Island secretary of state. Brown, who last held office over a decade ago, pushed himself as the grassroots alternative and hammered Raimondo for her close corporate ties.

Raimondo raised \$7.7 million, 20 times Brown's total. She took aim at Fung in her victory speech, saying he won't stand up to Trump and he opposes her administration's job creation policies. Her supporters chanted "four more years."

Malcolm Griggs headed to the polls in Warwick to vote in the Democratic primary for Raimondo, who he feels has done a good job helping the state's economy, attracting businesses and augmenting businesses already in Rhode Island.

"She put people to work and that matters," said Griggs, 58, who works in the banking industry.

On the Republican side, Fung, the mayor of Cranston, defeated Patricia Morgan, who leads the tiny House minority caucus in the overwhelmingly Democratic General Assembly.

Fung tried to keep a low profile in the primary, putting out few detailed policy proposals, dodging questions about where he stands on various issues and agreeing to just one debate on a small radio station with limited reach. Raimondo also did not participate in debates.

Fung said his victory is a sign that Rhode Islanders are ready to take back the state from insiders and "big shots" and reject the status quo. He said he's ready to "lead this revolution."

In congressional races, Democratic Sen. Sheldon Whitehouse and Rep. David Cicilline easily won their primaries. Rep. Jim Langevin was unopposed in the Democratic primary.

The 62-year-old Whitehouse is a leading voice in the Senate pushing to do more to address climate change. He has also been critical of Trump on a number of issues, including by pushing to protect special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation.

The most closely watched down-ticket race was for lieutenant governor. Incumbent Democrat Dan McKee

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narrowly beat self-described progressive state lawmaker Aaron Regunberg. The position has few official duties, but officeholders have used it as a way to advance certain causes on a statewide level. McKee wants to expand the position's powers.

McKee campaigned on his experience as the incumbent and a former six-term mayor. The 67-year-old politician painted Regunberg as too inexperienced. Regunberg, 28, had wanted to use the office to advocate for reform at the Statehouse.

Former U.S. Attorney Peter Neronha was unopposed for the Democratic nomination for Rhode Island attorney general, virtually guaranteeing him the job. Republicans didn't put forward a candidate and Neronha faces no significant opposition in November.

Time nearly up: Fierce Hurricane Florence aims at Southeast

By JEFFREY COLLINS, Associated Press

MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. (AP) — Time is running short to flee Hurricane Florence, a monster of a storm zeroing in on the Southeastern coast with more than 10 million people in its potentially devastating sights.

Florence's top sustained wind speeds dropped from a high of 140 mph (225 kph) to 110 mph (175 kph) as its outer rain bands approached the North Carolina coast early Thursday, reducing the storm from Category 4 to Category 2, but forecasters warned that the enormous wind field has been growing larger, raising the risk of the ocean surging on to land.

"Do you want to get hit with a train or do you want to get hit with a cement truck?" said Jeff Byard, an administrator with the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

As of 5 a.m. EDT it was centered about 205 miles (325 kilometers) east-southeast of Wilmington, North Carolina and about 250 miles (450 kilometers) east-southeast of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, moving northwest at 15 mph (24 kph).

The National Hurricane Center's best guess was that Florence's eye would blow ashore as early as Friday afternoon around the North Carolina-South Carolina line. Then, it will likely hover along the coast Saturday, pushing up to 13 feet (nearly 4 meters) of storm surge and dumping 20 to 30 inches (50 to 75 centimeters) of rain on both states, before slogging over the Appalachian Mountains.

The result: catastrophic inland flooding that could swamp homes, businesses, farm fields and industrial sites.

About 5.25 million people live in areas under hurricane warnings or watches, and 4.9 million more live in places covered by tropical storm warnings or watches, the National Weather Service said.

Weather Underground meteorology director Jeff Masters said Florence eventually could strike as a Category 1 with winds less than 100 mph (160 kph), but that's still enough to cause at least \$1 billion in damage. Water kills more people in hurricanes than wind, and the rain and storm surge will make Florence extremely dangerous.

President Donald Trump both touted the government's readiness and urged people to get out of the way. "Don't play games with it. It's a big one," he said at the White House.

It's unclear exactly how many people fled, but more than 1.7 million people in the Carolinas and Virginia were warned to clear out. Airlines canceled nearly 1,000 flights and counting. Home Depot and Lowe's activated emergency response centers to get generators, trash bags and bottled water to stores before and after the storm. The two hardware chains said they sent in a total of around 1,100 trucks.

Duke Energy, the nation's No. 2 power company, said Florence could knock out electricity to three-quarters of its 4 million customers in the Carolinas, and outages could last for weeks. Workers are being brought in from the Midwest and Florida to help in the storm's aftermath, it said.

Boarding up his home in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, Chris Pennington watched the forecasts and tried to decide when to leave.

"In 12 or 18 hours, they may be saying different things all over again," he said.

Computer models of exactly what the storm might do varied, adding to the uncertainty. Reacting to the possibility of a more southerly track, Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal declared an emergency but did not im-

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mediately order any evacuations.

"I ask all Georgians to join me in praying for the safety of our people and all those in the path of Hurricane Florence," Deal said.

In Virginia, where about 245,000 residents were ordered to evacuate low-lying areas, officials urged them to stay in safer locations despite forecast changes showing Florence's path largely missing the state.

With their entire neighborhood evacuated in Wilmington, North Carolina, David and Janelle Garrigus planned to ride out Florence at their daughter's one-bedroom apartment in Charlotte. Unsure of what they might find when they return home, the couple went shopping for a recreational vehicle.

"We're just trying to plan for the future here, not having a house for an extended period of time," David Garrigus said.

Melody Rawson evacuated her first-floor apartment in Myrtle Beach and arrived at Atlanta Motor Speedway in Hampton, Georgia, to camp for free with three other adults, her disabled son, two dogs and a pet bird.

"We hope to have something left when we get home," she said. Three other Southern raceways also opened campgrounds to evacuees.

Forecasters worried the storm's damage will be all the worse if it lingers on the coast. The trend is "exceptionally bad news," said University of Miami hurricane researcher Brian McNoldy, since it "smears a landfall out over hundreds of miles of coastline, most notably the storm surge."

With South Carolina's beach towns now more in the bull's-eye because of the shifting forecast, Ohio vacationers Chris and Nicole Roland put off their departure from North Myrtle Beach to get the maximum amount of time on the sand. Most other beachgoers were long gone.

"It's been really nice," Nicole Roland said. "Also, a little creepy. You feel like you should have already left."

Associated Press writers Seth Borenstein in Washington; Jonathan Drew in Wilmington, North Carolina; Jennifer Kay in Miami; Gary Robertson in Raleigh, North Carolina; Sarah Rankin and Denise Lavoie in Richmond, Virginia; Meg Kinnard in Columbia, South Carolina; Skip Foreman in Charlotte, North Carolina; Jeff Martin in Hampton, Georgia; David Koeing in Dallas; and Jay Reeves in Atlanta contributed to this report.

For the latest on Hurricane Florence, visit <https://www.apnews.com/tag/Hurricanes>

WHAT'S HAPPENING: Hurricane Florence looms over East Coast

MIAMI (AP) — A big one. A monster. A once-in-a-lifetime storm. Hurricane Florence deserves all the names it's being called as it threatens to cause historic flooding, blow catastrophic winds and idle for days over the Carolinas and the Mid-Atlantic. Adding to the storm stress is uncertainty about where exactly Florence will make landfall, after a shift in its track put more of the Southeast in danger.

BY THE NUMBERS

—Get out: 1.7 million people under mandatory and voluntary evacuation orders, and more than 10 million people live in places currently under storm watches or warnings

—Grounded: Nearly 1,000 flights canceled through Friday

—Gas stations running on empty: 5 percent in North Carolina were out, plus one in 10 gas stations in Wilmington and Raleigh-Durham, 2.1 percent in South Carolina, and 1 percent in Virginia

—Going dark: Duke Energy anticipates 1 million to 3 million homes and businesses losing power

FACES OF FLORENCE

Images captured by Associated Press journalists show the angst of evacuation and solitary beachgoers finding moments of calm before the storm.

HOW TO MAKE A MONSTER STORM

Florence has it all : Hot ocean temperatures that fuel hurricanes. Favorable wind patterns. Higher sea levels that exacerbate storm surge. Cloud cover that could encompass multiple states. And an unusual combination of other weather systems that likely will stall Florence when it hits land, allowing it to sit for days and dump huge amounts of rain.

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WHAT TRUMP SAID

Worried about how the government will respond to Hurricane Florence's devastation? President Donald Trump said there was nothing to fear because his administration did such good work responding to last year's storms - including Hurricane Maria, which killed 3,000 people in Puerto Rico. In a series of tweets Wednesday morning, Trump said the government "got A Pluses" for storm recovery in Texas and Florida and "did an unappreciated great job in Puerto Rico." His remarks fell flat in Puerto Rico where islanders are continuing to struggle to recover a year after the Category 4 storm.

MILITARY SAFEGUARDS

Florence is headed straight for some of the most well-known military bases in the country. The Navy, Air Force and Army have been moving people, ships and aircrafts out of harm's way, though evacuations were not mandatory at bases such as Camp Lejeune. The commanding general says anyone remaining on base will have food, water and protection despite being in the projected path of the storm.

ECONOMIC HIT

Businesses across the Carolinas, Virginia and Georgia will likely suffer financial losses from the approaching storm, with ports closing, farmers moving their livestock and expected power outages that could last for weeks. The losses won't be easily or quickly overcome. But it could have been worse: Labor Day marked the end of the peak tourism season in the Outer Banks of North Carolina and other coastal getaways. There are now fewer tourists to send away.

TOXIC WATERS

North Carolina has roughly 2,100 industrial-scale pork farms containing more than 9 million hogs. Florence's heavy rains could cause an environmental disaster if waste from hog manure pits, coal ash dumps and other industrial sites wash into homes or threaten drinking water supplies. When Hurricane Floyd made landfall near Cape Fear in 1999 as a Category 2 storm, bloated carcasses of hundreds of thousands of hogs, chickens and other drowned livestock bobbed in a nose-stinging soup of fecal matter, pesticides, fertilizer and gasoline so toxic that fish flopped helplessly to escape it.

GULLAH-GEECHEE

Elder relatives carry as much weight as meteorologists in a tight-knit community of slave descendants on the South Carolina coast. St. Helena Island near the South Carolina-Georgia line is used to riding out big storms — from one that killed an estimated 2,000 people in 1893 to Tropical Storm Irma last year. But barber Josh Dais says the island's 5,000 residents now are trying to decide whether to flee ahead of Hurricane Florence. He says: "If Mama and Grandma are going, then a lot of people are leaving." Smaller enclaves of Gullah, referred to as Geechee in some areas, are scattered along the Southeast coast from North Carolina to Florida.

SPEEDWAY CAMPING

Some Florence evacuees are steering toward Bristol Motor Speedway near the Tennessee-Virginia border and Atlanta Motor Speedway, where campgrounds have been opened for people fleeing the storm. At least two dozen utility trucks gathered near Charlotte Motor Speedway to prepare to move in and start restoring power as soon as conditions are safe.

VALUABLE POSSESSIONS

What would you take if a major hurricane was threatening to inundate or pull apart your home? One North Carolina woman packed flowers to leave on her son's grave. Evacuees also loaded up their vehicles with extra gas cans, their pets — mostly dogs, and one cockatoo — coolers filled with sandwich meat, family photographs and blankets. The shopping list for people who have decided to ride out the storm at home: plywood to board up their windows, sandbags, bilge pumps, generators, trash bags, potato chips, bottled water and wine.

COLLEGE FOOTBALL

Aside from safety concerns, Atlantic Coast Conference schools face scheduling obstacles, monetary implications and bowl considerations. The list of canceled football games included No. 13 Virginia Tech's home game against East Carolina, No. 14 West Virginia's trip to North Carolina State and No. 18 UCF's visit to North Carolina. Virginia has moved its Saturday home game against Ohio to Nashville, Tennessee.

For the latest on Hurricane Florence, visit <https://www.apnews.com/tag/Hurricanes>

5 slain in Southern California shootings; gunman kills self

BAKERSFIELD, Calif. (AP) — A gunman killed five people, including his wife, before turning the gun on himself as a Kern County sheriff's deputy closed in Wednesday, authorities said.

There was no immediate word on what sparked the shootings that took place at a home and a business in Bakersfield, which is some 90 miles (145 kilometers) north of Los Angeles.

"Obviously, these are not random shootings," Kern County Sheriff Donny Youngblood told KERO-TV. Six people died in a short amount of time, he added.

The man first showed up at a trucking business with his wife shortly before 5:30 p.m. where he confronted another man.

"The suspect, the husband, shot the person at the trucking company and then turned and shot his wife," then chased and shot another man who showed up, Youngblood said.

The gunman then went to a home where he shot and killed a man and a woman, the sheriff said.

He then carjacked a woman who was driving her child. The woman and child escaped and the man drove to a highway where a sheriff's deputy saw him, Youngblood said.

The gunman saw the deputy and pulled into a lot. When the deputy confronted him at gunpoint the man shot himself in the chest, the sheriff said.

His identity was not immediately released.

Except for the gunman's wife, there was no immediate word on how the victims might have been related.

About 30 people saw the shootings and were being interviewed by deputies, Youngblood said.

US, Cuba to meet on mystery 'health attacks' in Havana

By MATTHEW LEE, AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. and Cuban officials will meet later today in an effort to determine the method and motive behind mystery incidents in Havana that have injured American diplomats.

The meeting comes amid widespread frustration among national security agencies and in Congress at the lack of answers about what the U.S. describes as "health attacks" that began nearly two years ago and affected some two dozen people, including some diagnosed with brain damage. It also comes amid a flurry of reports suggesting investigators have narrowed their suspicions as to the cause and culprit.

The department said Thursday's meeting is "part of our ongoing effort to investigate and better understand the health conditions of our diplomats." It said the Cuban delegation would "receive a general medical briefing about the injuries experienced by U.S. personnel who served in Havana."

The State Department has downplayed or denied reports that investigators have focused on a microwave device as the source of the attacks and that Russia is the leading suspect. The reports have also raised protests from Cuba, which does not dispute the symptoms but insists there is no evidence to support any assertion that they were caused by premeditated attacks on its soil.

Twenty-five U.S. Embassy workers in Cuba — as well as one at the U.S. consulate in Guangzhou, China — have been affected by mysterious health incidents, suffering a range of symptoms and diagnoses including mild traumatic brain injury, also known as concussion, that began in the fall of 2016.

The last case from Havana was confirmed in June, when the department said two embassy staffers had been affected in a single occurrence in late May in a diplomatic residence at which both officers were present. Those were the first confirmed cases in Havana since August 2017.

One U.S. official said Thursday's meeting was organized after Cuba complained that Washington has been withholding key details about the affected Americans' medical conditions. The official was not authorized to speak publicly about the matter and spoke on condition of anonymity. But, in congressional testimony last week, State Department medical personnel suggested they had shared more information with China

about the incident in Guangzhou than they had with the Cubans about the incidents in Havana.

Officials at the Cuban Embassy in Washington, who have repeatedly denounced the U.S. accusations as politically motivated and unproven, has no immediate comment.

Several officials from the State Department and other agencies involved in the U.S. investigation last week testified before a House Foreign Affairs Committee panel but were unable to provide any new information about the probe and its potential findings. In two closed-door, classified briefings with congressional aides and lawmakers, the officials repeated that they had not come to any conclusions about what caused the injuries or who might be responsible for them.

Initial speculation had centered on some type of sonic attack, owing to strange sounds heard by those affected, but an interim FBI report in January found no evidence that sound waves could have caused the damage.

The Apple Watch is inching toward becoming a medical device

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE, AP Technology Writer

CUPERTINO, Calif. (AP) — Apple is trying to turn its smartwatch from a niche gadget into a lifeline to better health by slowly evolving it into a medical device.

In its fourth incarnation, called the Series 4 and due out later this month, the Apple Watch will add features that allow it to take high-quality heart readings and detect falls. It's part of Apple's long-in-the-making strategy to give people a distinct reason to buy a wrist gadget that largely does things smartphones already do.

Since the Apple Watch launched in April 2015, most people haven't figured out why they need to buy one. Apple doesn't release sales figures, but estimates from two analysts suggest the company shipped roughly 18 million of the gadgets in 2017. Apple sold almost twelve times as many iPhones — 216 million — that year. Apple shipped another 7.3 million during the first half of this year, according to Canalys Research, compared to more than 93 million iPhones.

Worldwide, about 48 million smartwatches are expected to be sold this year compared to nearly 1.9 billion phones, according to the research firm Gartner.

Apple CEO Tim Cook has long aimed to emphasize the health- and fitness-tracking abilities of the smartwatch. The original version featured a heart-rate sensor that fed data into fitness and workout apps so they could suggest new goals and offer digital "rewards" for fitness accomplishments.

Two years later, Apple called its watch "the ultimate device for a healthy life," emphasizing water resistance for swimmers and built-in GPS for tracking runs or cycling workouts. In February, the company announced that the watch would track skiing and snowboarding runs, including data on speed and vertical descent.

The latest Apple Watch version unveiled Wednesday is pushing the health envelope even further — in particular by taking electrocardiograms, or EKGs, on the device, a feature given clearance by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, Apple said. The watch will also watch for irregular heartbeats and can detect when the wearer has fallen, the company said.

EKGs are important tests of heart health that typically require a doctor visit. The feature gained an on-stage endorsement from Ivor Benjamin, a cardiologist who heads the American Heart Association, who said such real-time data would change the way doctors work.

"This is enormous," Gartner analyst Tuong Nguyen said of the Apple Watch's EKG feature. It could turn smartwatches "from something people buy for prestige into something they buy for more practical reasons," he said.

It could also lead some health insurance plans to subsidize the cost of an Apple Watch, Nguyen said. That would help defray the \$400 starting price for a device that still requires a companion iPhone that can now cost more than \$1,000.

The watch will use new sensors on the back and on the watch dial. A new app will say whether each reading is normal or shows signs of atrial fibrillation. Atrial fibrillation is an irregular heart rate that increases the risk of heart complications, such as stroke and heart failure.

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Apple says the heart data can be shared with doctors through a PDF file, though it's not yet clear how ready doctors are to receive a possible flood of new EKG data from patients — nor how useful they will find the electronic files.

This new features will be available to U.S. customers later this year, Apple said — an indication that it may not be ready for launch.

Fall detection could also be significant, especially for elderly users. The new Apple Watch claims to be able to tell the difference between a trip and a fall — and when the latter occurs, it will suggest calling 911. If it receives no response within a minute, the watch will automatically place an emergency call and message friends and family designated as emergency contacts.

Only certain Apple Watch models support cellular calls, but those that don't can still make emergency calls when near a paired iPhone or Wi-Fi service.

Apple says it monitored some 2,500 people — measuring how they fell off ladders, missed a step while walking or got their legs caught in their pants while getting dressed. It used that data to separate real falls from other heavy wrist movements, such as clapping and hammering.

The feature will turn on automatically for users 65 and over; younger people can activate it in the settings. "I can see kids buying one for their parents and grandparents," said analyst Patrick Moorhead of Moor Insights.

But the Apple Watch still lacks one feature found in rival wrist gadgets: the ability to analyze sleep quality. Battery life in the new watch remains at 18 hours, meaning it needs a daily — or nightly — recharge.

Suu Kyi says handling of Rohingya could have been better

By ELAINE KURTENBACH, Associated Press

HANOI, Vietnam (AP) — In the face of global condemnation, Myanmar's leader and Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi on Thursday said that the handling of Rohingya Muslims, 700,000 of whom have fled to Bangladesh amid a brutal military campaign, could have been better, but still defended security forces from charges of civilian atrocities.

Myanmar's army is accused of mass rape, killings and setting fire to thousands of homes in the aftermath of an August 2017 attack by Rohingya militants on security outposts. A report issued two weeks ago by a specially appointed U.N. human rights team recommended prosecuting senior Myanmar commanders for genocide and other crimes.

"There are of course ways in which with hindsight I think the situation could have been handled better," Suu Kyi said, responding to questions during a one-on-one discussion at the World Economic Forum's regional meeting in Hanoi.

She still defended Myanmar security forces, saying that all groups in western Rakhine state had to be protected.

"We have to be fair to all sides," Suu Kyi said. "The rule of law must apply to everyone. We cannot choose and pick."

Suu Kyi said the situation was complicated by the myriad ethnic minorities in the area, some of which are at risk of disappearing entirely and which include not just the Muslims and Rakhine Buddhists.

Although the violence in Rakhine state has eased, Myanmar has to deal with its aftermath, especially the repatriation of the Muslim Rohingya who fled and the underlying causes of tension that makes them targets of discrimination and repression in overwhelmingly Buddhist Myanmar.

Suu Kyi said that Myanmar is prepared to take those who fled back, but their return has been complicated by the fact that two governments are involved.

Aid workers say conditions for a safe and orderly return of the refugees have not been met.

Suu Kyi also rejected criticism over the show-trial conviction last week of two Reuters news agency reporters who helped expose extrajudicial killings of 10 Rohingya men and boys.

The reporters were both sentenced to seven years' imprisonment on charges of possessing state secrets. U.S. Vice President Mike Pence is among those who have condemned the verdicts and called for the

journalists' release.

"The case has been held in open court," Suu Kyi said. "If anyone feels there has been a miscarriage of justice I would like them to point it out."

"They were not jailed because they were journalists. They were jailed because ... the court has decided they have broken the Official Secrets Act," she said.

Suu Kyi noted that the two can appeal their sentences.

The lawyers for the journalists have said they will do whatever they can to get their clients freed. The two men testified that they had been framed by the police. The case has drawn worldwide attention as an example of how democratic reforms in long-isolated Myanmar have stalled under Suu Kyi's civilian government, which took power in 2016.

Phil Robertson, deputy Asia director for Human Rights Watch, said that Suu Kyi was mistaken in saying the case was handled in accordance with the "rule of law."

"She fails to understand that real 'rule of law' means respect for evidence presented in court, actions brought based on clearly defined and proportionate laws, and independence of the judiciary from influence by the government or security forces," he said in a statement. "On all these counts, the trial of the Reuters journalists failed the test."

Speedways, makeshift shelters offer rest to storm evacuees

By JEFF MARTIN, Associated Press

HAMPTON, Ga. (AP) — Some of the Southerners escaping Hurricane Florence have found refuge in makeshift shelters, including campgrounds at three of the nation's largest motor speedways.

But gas shortages and jammed freeways loomed for evacuees seeking safety from the storm.

In North Carolina, 1 in 10 gas stations in Wilmington and Raleigh-Durham had no gas by midday Wednesday.

At Atlanta Motor Speedway in Hampton, Georgia, personal belongings were spread across an open field where the first few evacuees arrived Wednesday.

Melody Rawson left her first-floor apartment in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, arriving at the Georgia speedway with two dogs and a cockatoo, and a couple of coolers holding some sandwich meat.

Bristol Motor Speedway, near the Tennessee-Virginia line, and Charlotte Motor Speedway in North Carolina also opened their campgrounds to evacuees.

'Miraculous': Boy survives after meat skewer pierces skull

HARRISONVILLE, Mo. (AP) — A 10-year-old Missouri boy is recovering after he was attacked by insects and tumbled from a tree, landing on a meat skewer that penetrated his skull from his face to the back of his head.

But miraculously, that's where Xavier Cunningham's bad luck ended. The skewer had completely missed Xavier's eye, brain, spinal cord and major blood vessels, The Kansas City Star reports .

Xavier's harrowing experience began Saturday afternoon when yellow jackets attacked him in a tree house at his home in Harrisonville, about 35 miles (56 kilometers) south of Kansas City. He fell to the ground and started to scream. His mother, Gabrielle Miller, ran to help him. His skull was pierced from front-to-back with half a foot of skewer still sticking out of his face.

Miller tried to reassure her son, who told her "I'm dying, Mom" as they rushed to the hospital. He eventually was transferred to the University of Kansas Hospital, where endovascular neurosurgery director Koji Ebersole evaluated the wound.

"You couldn't draw it up any better," Ebersole said. "It was one in a million for it to pass 5 or 6 inches through the front of the face to the back and not have hit these things."

There was no active bleeding, allowing the hospital time to get personnel in place for a removal surgery on Sunday morning that was complicated by the fact that the skewer wasn't round. Because it was

square, with sharp edges, it would have to come out perfectly straight. Twisting it could cause additional severe injury.

"Miraculous" would be an appropriate word to describe what happened, Ebersole said.

Doctors think Xavier could recover completely.

"I have not seen anything passed to that depth in a situation that was survivable, let alone one where we think the recovery will be near complete if not complete," he said.

Information from: The Kansas City Star, <http://www.kcstar.com>

Storm's uncertain track sows fear; 10 million in crosshairs

By JEFFREY COLLINS, Associated Press

MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. (AP) — Hurricane Florence put a corridor of more than 10 million people in the crosshairs Wednesday as the monster storm closed in on the Carolinas, uncertainty over its projected path spreading worry across a widening swath of the Southeast.

Faced with new forecasts that showed a more southerly threat, Georgia's governor joined his counterparts in Virginia and North and South Carolina in declaring a state of emergency, and some residents who had thought they were safely out of range boarded up their homes.

The National Hurricane Center's best guess was that Florence would blow ashore as early as Friday afternoon around the North Carolina-South Carolina line, then push its rainy way westward with a potential for catastrophic inland flooding.

Florence's nighttime winds were down to 110 mph (175 kph) from a high of 140 mph (225 kph), and the Category 3 storm fell to a Category 2, with a further slow weakening expected as the storm nears the coast. But authorities warned it will still be an extremely dangerous hurricane.

"Do you want to get hit with a train or do you want to get hit with a cement truck?" said Jeff Byard, an administrator with the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Tropical storm-force winds extended 195 miles (315 kilometers) from Florence's center, and hurricane-force winds reached out 70 miles (110 kilometers).

The National Weather Service said 5.25 million people live in areas under hurricane warnings or watches, and 4.9 million live in places covered by tropical storm warnings or watches.

At the White House, President Donald Trump both touted the government's readiness and urged people to get out of the way of Florence.

"Don't play games with it. It's a big one," he said.

As of 11 p.m., the storm was centered 280 miles (455 kilometers) southeast of Wilmington, North Carolina, moving northwest at 17 mph (28 kph). The hurricane center said Florence will approach the coast Friday and linger for a while before rolling ashore.

As of Tuesday, more than 1.7 million people in the Carolinas and Virginia were warned to clear out. Airlines had canceled nearly 1,000 flights and counting. Home Depot and Lowe's activated emergency response centers to get generators, trash bags and bottled water to stores before and after the storm. The two hardware chains said they sent in a total of around 1,100 trucks.

Duke Energy, the nation's No. 2 power company, said Florence could knock out electricity to three-quarters of its 4 million customers in the Carolinas, and outages could last for weeks. Workers are being brought in from the Midwest and Florida to help in the storm's aftermath, it said.

Boarding up his home in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, Chris Pennington watched the forecasts and tried to decide when to leave.

"In 12 or 18 hours, they may be saying different things all over again," he said.

Computer models of exactly what the storm might do varied, adding to the uncertainty. In contrast to the hurricane center's official projection, a highly regarded European model had the storm turning southward off the North Carolina coast and coming ashore near the Georgia-South Carolina line.

Reacting to the possibility of a more southerly track, Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal declared an emergency

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but did not immediately order any evacuations.

"I ask all Georgians to join me in praying for the safety of our people and all those in the path of Hurricane Florence," Deal said.

The shift in the projected track spread concern to areas that once thought they were relatively safe. In South Carolina, close to the Georgia line, Beaufort County emergency chief Neil Baxley told residents they need to prepare again for the worst just in case.

"We've had our lessons. Now it might be time for the exam," he said.

In Virginia, where about 245,000 residents were ordered to evacuate low-lying areas, officials urged people to remain away from home despite forecast changes showing Florence's path largely missing the state.

Their entire neighborhood evacuated in Wilmington, North Carolina, David and Janelle Garrigus planned to ride out Florence at their daughter's one-bedroom apartment in Charlotte. Unsure of what they might find when they return home, the couple went shopping for a recreational vehicle.

"We're just trying to plan for the future here, not having a house for an extended period of time," David Garrigus said.

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Associated Press writers Seth Borenstein in Washington; Jonathan Drew in Wilmington, North Carolina; Jennifer Kay in Miami; Gary Robertson in Raleigh, North Carolina; Sarah Rankin and Denise Lavoie in Richmond, Virginia; Meg Kinnard in Columbia, South Carolina; Skip Foreman in Charlotte, North Carolina; Jeff Martin in Hampton, Georgia; David Koenig in Dallas; and Jay Reeves in Atlanta contributed to this report.

For the latest on Hurricane Florence, visit <https://www.apnews.com/tag/Hurricanes> .

Got \$1,100? Apple shows off its most expensive iPhone yet

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE, AP Technology Writer

CUPERTINO, Calif. (AP) — Apple unveiled three new iPhones on Wednesday, including its biggest and most expensive model yet, as the company seeks to widen the product's appeal amid slowing sales.

CEO Tim Cook showed off the iPhone XS Max, which has a bigger screen than the one on last year's dramatically designed model, the iPhone X. It'll cost about \$1,100, topping the iPhone X, which at \$1,000 seemed jaw-dropping at the time. An updated iPhone X, now called the XS, stays at \$1,000.

As with the iPhone X, both new phones have screens that run from edge to edge, an effort to maximize the display without making the phone too awkward to hold. The screen needs no backlight, so black would appear as truly black rather than simply dark. The Max model looks to be about the size of the iPhone 8 Plus, though the screen size is much larger.

The iPhone XS Max, which will be available on Sept. 21 — with orders open the week before — represents Apple's attempt to feed consumers' appetite for increasingly larger screens as they rely on smartphones to watch and record video and to take photos wherever they are.

By making more expensive iPhones, Apple has been able to boost its profits despite waning demand as people upgrade phones less frequently. iPhones fetched an average price of \$724 during the April-June period, a nearly 20 percent increase from a year earlier.

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Apple also showed off a cheaper iPhone, called the iPhone XR. It has a traditional, lower-quality screen and an aluminum body; it's physically smaller than the iPhone 8 Plus but has a bigger screen. It'll cost roughly \$750 and come out on Oct. 26.

All three new models join the iPhone X in getting rid of the home button to make room for more screen. They will have facial-recognition technology to unlock the device.

Although it didn't sell quite as analysts anticipated, the iPhone X still emerged as the most popular in Apple's line-up, according to Cook. That emboldened the company to aim an even more expensive device at the affluent households that tend to gravitate to its products, especially in the U.S. and Europe.

For everyone else, many of whom are still using iPhones they purchased several years ago, there's the XR. "I am going to go out on a limb and say the XR is going to become Apple's top-selling iPhone," said analyst Patrick Moorhead of Moor Insights. "It is a smart strategy to keep more people in the Apple ecosystem and get even more people to come into it."

The next major update to the iOS will be released next Tuesday, followed a week later by a Mac software update. Both will be free to install.

Apple also announced updates that push its Apple Watch further into medical device territory. It has a larger screen and a built-in heart sensor that the company said can detect irregular heart rates and perform an electrocardiogram. The latter feature has been cleared by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, the company said.

Ben Wood of CCS Insight said getting U.S. regulatory clearance for that is a milestone that underscores the company's leadership in health and fitness. Typically, smartwatches are marketed as consumer devices, not medical ones needing clearance.

These features will be available to U.S. customers later this year, but Apple did not say when it would make it to the rest of the world.

In addition, Apple said the Series 4 Apple Watch will also be able to detect when someone falls — and can tell the difference between a trip and a fall. If it detects a fall and the user doesn't respond in a minute, it'll automatically call for help. This feature may be especially attractive to older people or those with elderly parents worried about falling when no one is around to help.

AP Technology Writer Barbara Ortutay contributed from New York.

This story has been corrected to refer to the larger iPhone as the iPhone XS Max.

'60 Minutes' chief Jeff Fager fired over policy violation

By DAVID BAUDER, AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — CBS News on Wednesday fired "60 Minutes" top executive Jeff Fager, who has been under investigation following reports that he groped women at parties and tolerated an abusive workplace.

The network news president, David Rhodes, said Fager's firing was "not directly related" to the allegations against him, but came because he violated company policy. A CBS News reporter working on a story about Fager revealed that he had sent her a text message urging her to "be careful."

Fager is the third major figure at CBS to lose his job in the past year over misconduct allegations, following news anchor Charlie Rose last November and CBS Corp. CEO Leslie Moonves on Sunday.

CBS News reporter Jericka Duncan said she received Fager's message after she started to work on a story about him on Sunday, following the posting of a New Yorker story with fresh allegations that were denied by Fager.

"There are people who lost their jobs trying to harm me and if you pass on these damaging claims without your own reporting to back them up that will become a serious problem," Fager wrote, according to Duncan.

Fager said in a statement Wednesday that "my language was harsh, and despite the fact that journalists receive harsh demands for fairness all the time, CBS did not like it."

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He said he didn't think one note would have resulted in a dismissal after 36 years at the network, "but it did." Rhodes was not made available for comment, and he didn't comment for the "CBS Evening News," either.

Following her report, evening news anchor Jeff Glor told Duncan that Fager's message was "unacceptable," and that everyone at the broadcast supported her.

Veteran "60 Minutes" correspondent Steve Kroft called Fager's message to Duncan threatening and inappropriate.

"It's unfortunate," Kroft said, "and everything about this situation saddens me."

The investigation into Fager by an outside law firm is not complete.

In two New Yorker articles, the latest posted on Saturday, some women described the "60 Minutes" culture as a boy's club that's rough on women. "I really felt like this was one of the most sexist places I've ever worked," Sarah Johansen, who worked as an intern in the 2000s and alleged Fager groped her, told the New Yorker.

But Fager has said that women have made significant advances at the broadcast, to the point where a majority its producers and associate producers are now women.

"60 Minutes" is the most popular and powerful news broadcast on television, and Fager is only the second person to lead it during its 50 years of history. He was appointed in 2004 to succeed founding executive Don Hewitt.

It's a rough-and-tumble place populated by some of the best journalists in television, and they aren't shy about letting you know it. The broadcast's offices are physically removed from the main CBS News office across 57th Street in Manhattan, and Rhodes held a tense meeting there with staff members on Wednesday about Fager's dismissal.

Fager once kept on his office wall a framed remnant of a curtain stained by a cup of coffee thrown at him by the late correspondent Morley Safer when the two worked together.

Fager worked to modernize the broadcast and uphold its standards during a changing of the guard from the show's original cast of figures like Mike Wallace, Andy Rooney and Safer. He recently wrote a book to commemorate the broadcast's 50th anniversary.

Fager and Rhodes had worked for several years as a team, when Fager was appointed CBS News chairman by Moonves. Rhodes was then brought in as news president, taking over full management of the news division when Fager went back to solely running "60 Minutes."

Fager's second in command at "60 Minutes," Bill Owens, will run the show while a search is conducted for a permanent replacement, Rhodes said. The show debuts a new season on Sept. 30.

Kavanaugh: I didn't recognize Parkland dad seeking handshake

By LISA MASCARO, AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh says he would have shaken the hand of a school shooting victim's father during a break in last week's Senate hearing had he recognized him before being whisked away by security detail.

Kavanaugh's explanation for the encounter with Fred Guttenberg— captured in an Associated Press photo that went viral on social media — was among a 263-page response to written questions from senators on a range of issues including abortion, executive power and his personal finances.

Kavanaugh wrote that he assumed the man who approached him "and touched my arm" during a break at the Senate Judiciary Committee proceedings had been one of the many protesters in the hearing room. Guttenberg's 14-year-old daughter, Jaime, was among 17 people killed on Feb. 14 at Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida.

"It had been a chaotic morning," Kavanaugh wrote. "I unfortunately did not realize that the man was the father of a shooting victim from Parkland, Florida. Mr. Guttenberg has suffered an incalculable loss. If I had known who he was, I would have shaken his hand, talked to him, and expressed my sympathy. And I would have listened to him."

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Kavanaugh's security detail ushered him out in a "split second," according to the judge's response to a written question from Sen. Chuck Grassley, R-Iowa, the chairman of the Judiciary Committee. It was among 1,287 questions from senators, almost all from Democrats.

Pressed by Sen. Richard Blumenthal, D-Conn., if he had asked police to intervene, Kavanaugh wrote, "No."

The flood of new documents comes as the Judiciary Committee is set to meet Thursday to consider Kavanaugh's confirmation, a vote that is expected to take place later this month.

Democrats are fighting Kavanaugh's nomination and decrying the process that Republicans used to compile his government records for review. Sen. Cory Booker, D-N.J., on Wednesday night released a new batch of committee confidential documents about Kavanaugh, repeating a tactic that could prompt a review from the Senate Ethics Committee.

The 28 new "committee confidential" documents from Booker are from Kavanaugh's time in the White House counsel's office during the George W. Bush administration and show his involvement in judicial nominations, including for some of the more controversial judges of the era.

Booker is being criticized by his GOP colleagues and outside groups for releasing the documents, which the Judiciary Committee is holding back on a confidential basis that makes them accessible only to senators. Last week, he released some documents that were later made public by the committee, but also others that weren't. Wednesday's disclosure brings the total to 75.

Booker said the documents about Kavanaugh's work "raise more serious and concerning questions" about his honesty during his testimony before the committee.

The documents show Kavanaugh's involvement in Bush's nomination of Charles Pickering to an appellate court in the South amid questions about his views on race relations. Kavanaugh had indicated he was not substantially involved in the nomination.

At the same time, the conservative group Judicial Watch delivered a letter Wednesday to the Senate Ethics Committee seeking an investigation. It says Booker violated Senate rules against disclosing confidential documents and could face Senate expulsion.

Booker "explicitly invited his expulsion from the Senate in his egregious violation of the rules and contempt for the rule of law and the Constitution," said Judicial Watch President Tom Fitton.

At issue has been the unprecedented process the Senate Judiciary Committee used for gathering documents on Kavanaugh, an appellate court judge who is President Donald Trump's nominee to replace retired Justice Anthony Kennedy on the court. The Senate is expected to vote on his confirmation by the end of the month.

The committee was hoping to quickly process Kavanaugh's unusually long paper trail and relied on Bush's lawyer, Bill Burck, to compile the documents, first estimated to be 900,000 pages from Kavanaugh's time in the counsel's office. Eventually, some 267,000 pages were made public and 174,000 were held as committee confidential.

Democrats have complained the process was a "sham," as Booker put it. It also excluded any documents Democrats wanted to see from Kavanaugh's time as Bush's staff secretary.

But Burck's team stood by the process, according to a letter to the committee Wednesday obtained by The Associated Press. They remain willing to review documents and consent to senators' requests for disclosure, "when appropriate," the letter said. Despite those commitments, the letter said one member of the committee has released more than 40 documents without consent, referring to Booker.

"Had we been consulted on these universally released documents, we would have consented to their public disclosure," the letter said.

White House spokesman Raj Shah said, "Despite the endless complaints from critics, the committee has received more material regarding Judge Kavanaugh's nomination than any nominee in history." He said senators have "more than enough information" to consider Kavanaugh's nomination.

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Video shows Weinstein's hands-on encounter with rape accuser

By MICHAEL SISAK

NEW YORK (AP) — A video of Harvey Weinstein aired on television Wednesday showing him boldly propositioning a woman who later accused him of rape and repeatedly touching her and stroking her arm and back during what was supposed to have been a business meeting.

Melissa Thompson, who sued Weinstein in June, said she made the recording, shown by Sky News, while demonstrating video technology for the movie mogul-turned-#MeToo villain at his New York City office in 2011.

Weinstein is seen on the video rejecting a handshake from Thompson and then hugging her instead and rubbing her back.

He then caresses her shoulder as they sit side-by-side in front of her laptop computer.

At one point he tells her: "Let me have a little part of you. Can you give it to me?"

After quickly agreeing to use the technology to promote his movies, Thompson said Weinstein put his hand up her dress.

The video, which only captures the two from the waist up, doesn't show Weinstein's hands at that point, but does show Thompson reacting with discomfort and telling Weinstein, "That's too high. That's too high."

It also shows her joking about his advances, saying that "data is hot."

Sky News aired only portions of the video. Thompson's lawyers declined to share it with The Associated Press.

Weinstein's lawyer said the full video "demonstrates that there is nothing forceful" and shows "casual, if not awkward, flirting from both parties."

"Anything short of that is intended to make Mr. Weinstein appear inappropriate and even exploitative," lawyer Ben Brafman said. "It was produced by Ms. Thompson to bolster her position in a civil lawsuit seeking money. This is a further attempt to publicly disgrace Mr. Weinstein for financial gain and we will not stand for it. Facts do matter."

In an interview with Sky News, Thompson said Weinstein's behavior was distracting and she struggled to stay "on script" with the product pitch. She said his affect changed from the start of the meeting, that his eyes had darkened and he "looked like a predator."

Thompson said she later met Weinstein at a nearby hotel bar, where she said she expected to close the technology deal. She said Weinstein led her to a hotel room and raped her.

Along the way, she said, he rebuffed her attempts to fight or get away.

"If I would try to fight myself away from him, he would then move around to where he could block me in somewhere, and he's a big individual," Thompson told Sky News. "I constantly felt trapped, no matter where I turned."

Weinstein has been charged in New York with sexually assaulting three women. Thompson is not among them.

Thompson, who had previously worked on Wall Street, rejected suggestions that she encouraged Weinstein's behavior.

She told Sky News she wanted to keep the conversation professional and politely pushed back at his advances while also trying to preserve the deal.

"I never met anyone that I couldn't handle until Harvey Weinstein," she said. "We don't have to live with being raped when we think we're going to a business meeting."

Meantime, prosecutors in the criminal case filed papers Wednesday challenging defense claims that they withheld evidence from a grand jury that could have helped Weinstein deny the allegations, including emails proving he had a consensual relationship with one of the alleged victims. In one she wrote, "I love you, always do. But I hate feeling like a booty call," according to a defense motion to dismiss the case.

Prosecutors argued they had no obligation to turn over the emails because Weinstein could have testified about the relationship himself, but decided against it. They added that secret grand jury minutes provided to the judge showed they presented evidence "fairly and in a manner that was not misleading."

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Separately on Wednesday, a federal judge in Manhattan heard arguments over whether a civil lawsuit brought by six women against both Weinstein and men on the board of his film company should go forward.

U.S. District Judge Alvin K. Hellerstein expressed skepticism about the strength of allegations the men conspired to cover-up Weinstein's misdeeds by intimidating the women, and gave their lawyer until Oct. 31 to revise the complaint. He said the most viable claim was that Weinstein abused his power to make or break acting careers to get sex.

Weinstein "was not attractive in such a way that Paul Newman was," he said.

Associated Press writer Tom Hays contributed to this report.

Tropical storm fades but still douses Hawaii with rain

By JENNIFER SINCO KELLEHER and AUDREY McAVOY, Associated Press

HONOLULU (AP) — A gradually weakening tropical storm hit Hawaii on Wednesday, soaking a part of Maui and sending gusts of wind that toppled trees and cancelled flights at a number of airports in the state.

Maui Mayor Alan Arakawa urged residents and visitors to stay off the road until the Tropical Storm Olivia passed, but he was hopeful the effects of the storm on his county would be limited.

"It's been an ordeal but we're coming through this fairly well," Arakawa said. "I'm not seeing any really large areas of damage, no homes destroyed or flooded to any kind of extreme measures as we did in previous storms."

The Central Pacific Hurricane Center said Olivia was about 45 miles (75 kilometers) south of Honolulu on Oahu, the state's most heavily populated island. The storm had maximum sustained winds of 40 mph (65 kph).

The storm made landfall twice: once in the west Maui mountains and again on Lanai before continuing to move further west.

Lori-Lei Rawlins-Crivello, owner of one of the two gas stations on the small island of Molokai, said she was watching a nearby river rise.

She closed her Texaco service station in the afternoon. Most stores in Kaunakakai, the island's largest town, were closed, she said.

A flash flood warning was issued for Molokai island and Maui. A wind gust of 51 mph (82 kph) was recorded at the airport on the island of Lanai.

A rain gauge recorded 7.72 inches (20 centimeters) of rain in 24 hours at West Wailua Iki on Maui.

The storm, which was a hurricane earlier in the week, slowly lost power as it neared and crossed the state.

Matthew Foster, a meteorologist with the hurricane center, said strong winds will likely continue on Maui through early afternoon and then start to die off. They'll linger on Oahu through the early evening.

Tropical storm warnings were canceled overnight for the Big Island and Kauai, but remain in place for Oahu, Maui and small islands surrounding Maui.

Schools, courts and government offices were closed in Maui County in preparation for the storm.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency sent emergency teams and supplies to Maui ahead of the storm. The National Guard has mobilized personnel and trucks to the east side of Maui.

President Donald Trump has signed a disaster declaration for Hawaii, which will help FEMA respond, Gov. David Ige said.

Hawaiian Airlines cancelled flights by its commuter airline, Ohana by Hawaiian.

Public schools on the Big Island, Oahu and Kauai were open.

Tourists, like Randy McQuay from Texas, weren't letting the storm dampen their vacations. "No, coming from Houston we're used to storms and hurricanes," he said. "Didn't expect to find one in Hawaii, but yeah we're used to it."

Solana Miller, who lives on Oahu's North Shore, said she wasn't too worried about Olivia.

"I feel like it's mainly just going to be some rain and wind, but we'll see. The last storm was supposed to be a category 5 hurricane and it was just a couple hours of rain," she said.

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Miller said she has leftover preparations from when Hurricane Lane passed near the state last month. "We kind of just kept all the water and the cans of food and stuff," she said, "so if anything really hits we'll be fine."

Associated Press writers Caleb Jones in Honolulu and Mark Thiessen in Anchorage, Alaska, contributed to this report.

Trump comments sting in Puerto Rico amid slow storm recovery

By **DANICA COTO** and **ANGELIKI KASTANIS**, Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP) — President Donald Trump's assertion that the federal government's response to Hurricane Maria was "an incredible, unsung success" fell flat in Puerto Rico, where islanders are still struggling to recover from the devastating storm a year later.

"I was indignant," said Gloria Rosado, a 62-year-old college professor who watched the president's news conference on TV late Tuesday from San Juan and was still fuming the next day. "The image of my dead husband immediately came to my mind ... as well as all the lives that were lost."

Rosado's husband, who was hospitalized for respiratory and renal complications and ultimately suffered a heart attack, was one of the estimated 2,975 people who died in the Category 4 storm's aftermath when medical resources were strained beyond the breaking point.

For many, Trump's boast about "one of the best jobs that's ever been done" was hard to square with their daily reality: Blackouts remain common; nearly 60,000 homes are covered by only a makeshift roof not capable of withstanding a Category 1 hurricane; and 13 percent of municipalities lack stable phone or internet service.

"Nobody is singing his praises because we all saw what happened," San Juan Mayor Carmen Yulin Cruz told The Associated Press. "He wasn't up to the task...and the way that he neglected our lives gave permission to other people in his administration to look the other way."

Cruz criticized Trump in a series of tweets, including one that said, "If he thinks the death of 3,000 people (is) a success God help us all."

That reignited a longstanding feud between the mayor and Trump, who fired back calling her "totally incompetent" and saying the U.S. government "did an unappreciated great job in Puerto Rico."

A July report by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, or FEMA, noted several shortcomings in its response, including that it underestimated how much food and water would be needed after the storm and that not enough Spanish-speaking aid workers were deployed to the island.

At the same time, the agency also faced challenges that were arguably beyond its control such as the sheer force of the monster storm and the logistical difficulties of reaching the Caribbean island over a thousand miles (1,600 kilometers) away from the mainland.

And many residents say local officials share much of the blame. Puerto Rico's government has acknowledged that its emergency plans were designed for a Category 1 hurricane, as well as failures to follow those plans and communications breakdowns.

Ramon Ruiz, a 56-year-old business owner whose father died from heart problems on Thanksgiving after riding out the hurricane alone at home, pressed up against the door to keep it from caving in, is among those who say both local and federal authorities were slow to act.

"If it wasn't for the churches and private organizations, we truly would not have received help from anyone," Ruiz said. "They are treating us like second-class citizens. ... If we were another state, the response would have been much faster."

In Maria's aftermath, according to FEMA data analyzed by the AP, approvals for individual assistance checks in Puerto Rico were slower compared with what happened with large storms last year. From Sept. 30 to Oct. 7, not one of those checks was approved. On Oct. 8 the approvals began rolling again, but with a large spike suggesting a backlog.

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In addition, data from the U.S. Small Business Administration indicate that approvals for disaster loans in Puerto Rico were slow — the first one was not approved until 15 days after the storm was declared, four times as long as with Hurricane Harvey.

For Maria, there was a large gap between when the first loan was approved and when loans started ramping up. While 25 percent of Harvey loans were OKed within 42 days, for Maria, that didn't happen until Jan. 9, more than three months after the storm hit.

Overall, compared with Harvey and Irma, Maria saw more funds loaned to homeowners rather than business owners.

Islanders have also been angered by recent discoveries of supplies that never got delivered. A photo that emerged Tuesday of thousands of water bottles abandoned on a runway in eastern Puerto Rico prompted local officials to say Wednesday that they were opening an investigation.

Ottmar Chavez, the new secretary of the island's General Services Administration, said at a news conference that Puerto Rican officials requested the water from the U.S. government and were supposed to pick it up in late May. He said some of it was distributed but people complained that it smelled bad. He added that it was unclear why the remainder sat on the runway for nearly four months.

Shortly after Maria hit last year, Trump visited Puerto Rico and was widely criticized for tossing paper towels to storm victims in a manner seen by many as insensitive to the scope of the disaster.

His latest remarks once again dredged up those same hurt feelings.

"I ignore them because none of them make sense," said Michelle Cruz, a 48-year-old airline worker whose mother died in December from septicemia after contracting an infection in a hospital during surgery after Maria. "It bothers me and it hurts. But I don't pay attention to him."

Data journalist Angeliki Kastanis reported from Los Angeles. Videographer Chris Gillette contributed to this report.

Abuse scandal hits diocese of cardinal set to meet with pope

By NOMAAN MERCHANT, Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — As U.S. Catholic leaders head to the Vatican to meet with Pope Francis about a growing church abuse crisis, the cardinal leading the delegation has been accused by two people of not doing enough to stop a priest who was arrested this week on sexual abuse charges.

The two people told The Associated Press that they reported the priest and met with Cardinal Daniel DiNardo of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston. One of them says she was promised in a meeting with DiNardo, several years after she first reported abuse, that the priest would be removed from any contact with children, only to discover that the priest remained in active ministry at another parish 70 miles away.

The priest, Manuel LaRosa-Lopez, was arrested Tuesday by police in Conroe, Texas. Both people who spoke to the AP are cooperating with police.

The priest's arrest and allegations that DiNardo kept an abusive priest around children cast a shadow over a Thursday summit at the Vatican between Pope Francis and American bishops and cardinals. DiNardo is leading the delegation, putting him in the position of having to fend off abuse allegations in his own diocese while at the same time calling on the pope to get tougher on clergy abuse.

In addition to his responsibilities in Houston, DiNardo is head of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, a position that has made him a prominent figure in the church's response to a new wave of allegations that Catholic leaders covered up sexual abuse. He has been outspoken in his calls for Pope Francis to investigate ex-Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, who was removed from his post in July after a credible accusation that he groped a teenager.

DiNardo himself is now facing criticism for his role in handling a priest accused of abusing children.

LaRosa-Lopez, 60, is accused of fondling both people when they were teenagers and he was a priest at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Conroe. He is charged with four counts of indecency with a child. Each count carries a maximum possible sentence of 20 years in prison.

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LaRosa-Lopez is now the pastor at St. John Fisher Catholic Church in Richmond while also serving as the archdiocese's episcopal vicar for Hispanics.

The archdiocese issued a statement Wednesday confirming that both people had come forward to report abuse by LaRosa-Lopez, one of them in 2001. The archdiocese said it reported both allegations to the state Child Protective Services, and said it was unaware of any other "allegations of inappropriate conduct involving minors" against the priest. A spokesman for CPS on Wednesday declined to comment, citing confidentiality of the reports. LaRosa-Lopez did not immediately return a phone message left Wednesday.

"To anyone affected by any form of abuse by anyone who represents the Church, the Archdiocese deeply regrets such a fundamental violation of trust, and commits itself to eliminating such unacceptable actions," the archdiocese said.

Both accusers who say they went to DiNardo are now in their 30s. The Associated Press typically does not identify victims in sexual abuse cases, and both people asked that their names be withheld.

One was flown by the church from the West Coast to Houston to meet with DiNardo and the victims' assistance coordinator for the archdiocese. They met at the archdiocese on the afternoon of Aug. 10, just as he was taking on a greater role nationally in responding to the McCarrick saga.

The man wrote down notes from the meeting quickly after leaving, and shared a copy of the notes with AP. "Cardinal seemed dismissive of situation," the notes read. He also wrote down what he says is a quote from DiNardo: "You should have told us sooner."

"It was a dismissive tone," he recalled. "In the back of my head, I was thinking about his comment. I was so mad afterward."

Both said they had believed their cases would be too old to prosecute under statute of limitations laws. But the Texas Legislature in 2007 removed the statute of limitations for indecency with a child cases. Montgomery County prosecutors say that change means their cases remain eligible to be prosecuted now.

The group Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests, or SNAP, has called for the Texas attorney general to investigate the Houston archdiocese and others for whether they covered up sexual abuse in their ranks.

"DiNardo needs to come clean on what he knows," said Michael Norris, a member of SNAP.

Both victims say they were teenagers when LaRosa-Lopez tried to befriend them over a period before initiating physical contact.

The male victim said he became interested as a teenager in joining the clergy and going to seminary. He started to attend Mass and got to know LaRosa-Lopez. Eventually, he got a job where he worked nights at Sacred Heart as an assistant.

He remembered LaRosa-Lopez being known as "touchy-feely," and that the priest's contact with him became more physical over time: first touching on the arm, then hugging, then a kiss on the cheek.

One night, he said, the priest showed him pictures of young seminarians that "he had a lot of fun with," and tried to take the teenager's clothes off and put his hands down his pants. He pushed back and quickly left the residence. He said he reported the incident to church authorities last year. The archdiocese said Wednesday it was "formally presented" with the allegation in August.

The female accuser said LaRosa-Lopez befriended her during her weekly confession at Sacred Heart. "He basically was my only friend," she said.

The female victim declined to detail what LaRosa-Lopez did, saying only that he touched her inappropriately shortly before Easter, after she had turned 16.

She says her father found out what had happened and the family reported it to the church. Church officials told her that LaRosa-Lopez would be moved.

The archdiocese confirmed Wednesday that LaRosa-Lopez was re-assigned in 2001 to another church, St. Francis de Sales, and then moved in 2004 to St. John Fisher, his current assignment. It would not confirm he was moved due to an abuse complaint.

She eventually resumed going to her church with LaRosa-Lopez transferred to a new location.

But in 2010, she saw a copy of the archdiocese's internal newsletter, which announced LaRosa-Lopez's appointment as vicar of Hispanic ministry. She thought there was a chance DiNardo didn't know about

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her complaint because it had predated his time in Houston.

She contacted the church and started to meet with a therapist paid for by the archdiocese. Eventually, she met with DiNardo and other top clergy in the diocese. She says they told her that after she had come forward, LaRosa-Lopez was sent to a hospital for psychiatric treatment twice and that would no longer be allowed to work with children.

Then LaRosa-Lopez was brought in for about 10 minutes, she confronted him about the abuse and he apologized.

She says she later discovered that LaRosa-Lopez remained at St. John Fisher, in the presence of children.

Of DiNardo, the woman said, "I'm tired of all of his empty words."

"If he's going to go meet with the Pope and pretend that all of this is OK and his diocese is clean, I can't stand it," she said. "I can't be quiet."

The Associated Press asked Tuesday to interview DiNardo and other top leaders at the archdiocese. It also submitted a list of questions about both victims' allegations.

A spokesman for the archdiocese declined the interview requests or to address specific allegations about what DiNardo told the victims.

LaRosa-Lopez was not present at Mass in St. John Fisher on Saturday night or Sunday. A reporter who visited both days saw that a parking spot, marked with a sign reserving the space for "Father Manuel," was empty.

Parishioners were told on Sunday morning Mass that LaRosa-Lopez was "at a retreat."

Unique Gullah communities have ridden out many hurricanes

By **RUSS BYNUM, Associated Press**

ST. HELENA ISLAND, S.C. (AP) — As a potentially catastrophic Hurricane Florence steamed toward the Carolinas, Josh Dais watched the weather reports on the TV in his barber shop and listened for updates from emergency officials.

But when it comes to deciding whether to flee this island where thousands of black residents trace their ancestry back to enslaved West Africans who once toiled in the fields nearby, the opinions of family elders can carry as much weight as those of professional meteorologists.

"If Mama won't leave, most folks aren't going to leave," Dais, 29, said Tuesday, recalling how he rode out Tropical Storm Irma last year and Hurricane Matthew in 2016 with relatives at his mother's home. "If Mama and Grandma are going, then a lot of people are leaving."

Respect for tradition and deep cultural roots have persisted for generations on St. Helena Island, the largest Gullah community on the South Carolina coast. An estimated 5,000 or more people living here are descended from slaves who worked rice plantations in the area before they were freed by the Civil War.

Smaller enclaves of Gullah, referred to as Geechee in some areas, are scattered along the Southeast coast from North Carolina to Florida. Scholars say separation from the mainland caused the Gullah to retain much of their African heritage, including a unique dialect and skills such as cast-net fishing and basket weaving.

Destructive hurricanes haven't been too frequent in St. Helena Island's past. But the so-called Sea Islands Hurricane of 1893 devastated the area after rolling ashore in Savannah, Georgia, and killed an estimated 2,000 people.

Emory Campbell, a Gullah descendant and scholar, recalled riding as a boy in a neighbor's old cart on Hilton Head Island as Hurricane Gracie struck in 1959 and tore the roof off a hotel.

"We saw some remnants of hurricanes here when I was growing up," Campbell said. "The wind would blow, you'd put some tin up against the window, but you wouldn't know that much except for the scratchy sounds on the radio coming out of Savannah."

Hurricane Matthew smashed and toppled trees across surrounding Beaufort County in 2016 but largely spared the modest ranch houses, bungalows and mobile homes of St. Helena Island.

John Brown, 54, said he spent two weeks after Matthew cutting up fallen trees with a chain saw in his job for a municipal public works department. A giant live oak uprooted by the storm remains intact across

the street from Brown's home.

"If my job didn't require me to stay, I'd be out of here in a heartbeat," Brown said after giving fresh water to his four cows Tuesday. "I think most of the older ones, they're kind of stubborn. But the younger ones, not so much."

St. Helena residents said people started filling up gas cans and buying supplies Monday when the governor ordered evacuations for the entire South Carolina coast. Things calmed down Tuesday when the order was lifted for Beaufort County, though some local restaurants and businesses stayed closed.

Florence's track remained uncertain Wednesday. The National Hurricane Center said the storm is expected to slow as it moves toward the Carolinas and could even change direction before coming ashore.

Bertha Bradley wasn't worrying. She and her husband grew up on St. Helena Island and own Bradley's Seafood, a small cinderblock shop where they sell shrimp, flounder and whiting, all caught by their son.

Bradley said she has never favored evacuating ahead of hurricanes, in part because her great-grandmother never did. Bradley and her husband missed Gracie in 1959 because they were in Savannah after getting married. One subsequent storm, she's not sure which one, scared them enough to get them to leave the island.

But the traffic, she said, was awful.

"I said, 'Why get on the road like this? I'm going to get killed on the road,'" Bradley said. "I should stay in my house, where I have water and food. If God's coming for you, you can't run from him."

For the latest on Hurricane Florence, visit www.apnews.com/tag/Hurricanes .

Deviating from McCain, Sen. Graham goes all in on Team Trump

By MEG KINNARD and LISA MASCARO, Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — By the end, Sen. John McCain had rejected President Donald Trump. The president was so infuriated by McCain he put a biting reference to the dying Republican senator in his stump speech. Yet one man in Washington still had hope for bridging the gap between the two.

"I regret that he didn't have more time with President Trump," Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham told The Associated Press this week about McCain, his late friend and mentor. Graham noted McCain was able to forgive his captors during the Vietnam War. "Who knows what would have happened over time?"

Graham's unexplained optimism, his eager attempts to soften Trump's rough edges, have confused colleagues and caused double-takes across Washington. The South Carolina Republican was McCain's best friend in the Senate, a self-described student of his politics and personal integrity. But he has deviated dramatically in his approach to the tempestuous and divisive president. While others stayed their distance — McCain perhaps most of all — Graham has gone all in, transforming himself into liaison, translator and, critics say, enabler of the president.

When establishment Republicans recently nodded knowingly at an anonymous editorial criticizing Trump's run of the White House, Graham was on Fox calling it a left-wing strategy to show Trump as "crazy" and echoed the president's unproven charge that the Russia probe "is falling apart."

The senator explains the shift from Never Trump to Team Trump largely in terms of responsibility. In an interview with the AP, Graham said McCain, who lost two bids for the White House, taught him that the country must move forward after elections. That means "you have an obligation" to help the president, especially a fellow Republican, he said. Graham says he's warmed to the president and suggests he's using that relationship to shape decisions — though he does not cite specifics.

"And I've tried to be helpful where I could because I think he needs all the help he can get," Graham said. "You can be a better critic when people understand that you're trying to help them be successful."

Graham has his own political motivations. His pivot comes as he is gearing up for his own re-election in 2020. The senator is popular in his deeply conservative state, but opposition to the president could mean risking a primary challenge.

"There's no doubt in my mind that the people of South Carolina, not just Republicans and independents,

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want to give this country a chance," Graham said. "The president won the state decisively. He's very popular among Republicans, and people want him to succeed."

Graham is hardly alone in facing a choice about how best to navigate the politics of the Trump era.

Some GOP lawmakers, like Sen. Jeff Flake and Sen. Bob Corker, have openly criticized Trump, to their own political detriment. Both are retiring. Others have been unabashed advocates of the president.

Then there are the former presidential rivals, Kentucky Sen. Rand Paul, Florida Sen. Marco Rubio — and now Graham — who have cozied up to Trump despite their campaign trail criticism, giving them a calling card to try to influence policy.

Like his mentor, McCain, Graham is the rare senator on Capitol Hill who likes to be in the mix on many issues, brokering deals with his quick wit and biting humor whether he's the expert or not.

Trump seems to agree. Graham has settled into the role of Trump whisperer, golfing regularly with the president and talking with him by phone. Graham's sphere of influence seems broad. When journalist Bob Woodward wanted to interview the president, he asked Graham to relay the message.

When Trump wanted to vent about Woodward's work, and leaks about a "resistance" within his administration, he talked to Graham about it.

"He's pissed off, he feels betrayed, and I don't blame him," Graham said.

Particularly in the national security realm, Graham, a defense hawk, provides an alternative to Trump's noninterventionist streak. In that way, Graham is upholding McCain's approach and countering another Trump whisperer, the libertarian-leaning senator Paul.

Because of Graham's relationship with Trump, the political world was jolted last month when he said the president may dismiss Attorney General Jeff Sessions after the election. It seemed as if Graham had inside knowledge of the decision, and it was an about-face from just last year, when Graham said Trump would have "holy hell to pay" if he fired Sessions.

There was a time when the Trump-Graham nexus of golf outings and White House lunches was inconceivable. Shortly after Trump launched his presidential bid in mid-2015, Graham called him a "jackass" who "shouldn't be commander-in-chief" for making disparaging remarks about McCain. Campaigning in Graham's home state a day later, Trump opened a rally by calling Graham a "lightweight" and "idiot" before reading out the senator's private cellphone number to the delight and disbelief of the crowd.

Graham ultimately abandoned his own presidential campaign and, along with McCain, opted not to attend the 2016 GOP convention. He said he wouldn't back either Trump or Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton in the general election, saying the Republican Party had been "conned."

Graham acknowledged in the interview that Trump can "run hot" and "be a handful" at times. But he also says Trump listens and is more inquisitive than he gets credit for.

"Over time, through golf, I've actually gotten to know the person," Graham said, calling Trump both "charming and gracious."

Bob McAlister, a longtime South Carolina political communications strategist who has worked with Graham for decades, said Graham's approach to Trump reflects the senator's long-held beliefs about the consequences of elections, including McCain's 2008 loss to Barack Obama.

"Lindsey's message back then was, 'Elections have consequences,' and the Democrats cheered," McAlister said. "Today, Lindsey says, 'Elections have consequences,' and they try to cut his head off."

Brian Katulis, a senior fellow at the liberal Center for American Progress, says Graham has become "chameleon-like" as he courts Trump, trying to influence the president's thinking while getting little to show for it.

"So many people have tried to do that," Katulis said. "It simply doesn't happen."

Mascaro reported from Washington.

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Francis calls clergy abuse summit as issue imperils papacy

By NICOLE WINFIELD, Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Francis summoned the presidents of the world's bishops' conferences Wednesday to a summit on preventing clergy sex abuse and protecting children, responding to the greatest crisis of his papacy with the realization that Vatican inaction on the growing global scandal now threatens his legacy.

Francis' key cardinal advisers announced plans for the summit early next year the day before the pope meets with U.S. church leaders embroiled in their own credibility crisis from the latest accusations in the Catholic Church's decades-long sex abuse scandal.

The meeting, scheduled for Feb. 21-24, would assemble more than 100 churchmen to represent every bishops' conference. Its convening signals awareness at the highest levels of the Catholic Church that clergy sex abuse is a global problem, not restricted to some parts of the world or a few Western countries.

Victims' advocates immediately dismissed the event as belated damage control, an action publicized hastily as allegations regarding Francis' record of handling abuse cases — and accumulated outrage among rank-and-file Catholic faithful over covered-up crimes — jeopardize his papacy.

"There's absolutely no reason to think any good will come of such a meeting," given the church's decades of failure to reform, David Clohessy, former director of the victims' advocacy group SNAP, said.

"Criminal prosecutions, governmental investigations and journalistic exposes — stemming from brave victims and church whistleblowers — are the best way to protect kids, expose wrongdoers and end cover-ups," Clohessy said.

The summit was announced as Francis still works to recover from his botched handling of the sex abuse scandal in the Chilean church, sparked earlier this year when he repeatedly discredited victims of a notorious Chilean predator priest.

Francis eventually admitted to "grave errors in judgment" and took steps to make amends, including securing offers of resignation from every active member of Chile's bishops' conference.

Even as actions to address Chile were underway, Francis' papacy was jolted last month by accusations from a retired Vatican ambassador that Francis himself rehabilitated a top American cardinal accused of molesting and harassing adult seminarians.

The Vatican hasn't responded to Archbishop Carlo Maria Vigano's allegations against the pope and some two dozen other Vatican and U.S. officials, but has promised "clarifications" that could come after Francis' meeting Thursday with the U.S. delegation.

The U.S. delegation will be headed by Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, president of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, and includes Francis' top adviser on the clergy abuse issue, Cardinal Sean O'Malley.

DiNardo has said he wants Francis to authorize a full Vatican investigation of ex-Cardinal Theodore McCarrick, who was removed as cardinal in July following a credible accusation that he groped a teenager.

The Vatican has known since at least 2000 that McCarrick invited seminarians to his New Jersey beach house and into his bed, but was made a cardinal anyway.

DiNardo has also said Vigano's accusations deserve answers.

Amid such turmoil, a gathering of the global church leadership to discuss a specific problem — in the tradition of church synods and councils — is a good idea, but should take place sooner than February, said Christopher Bellitto, a church historian at Kean University in New Jersey.

Francis, he said, "has enormous amounts of what (German theologian) Hans Kung has called 'capital of credibility,' but he's losing it fast," Bellitto said. "This is an excellent action, but I think it should happen quicker than six months from now."

An open question in advance of the summit is whether the Vatican will issue a universal call for bishops and religious superiors to report suspected abuse to police; currently, it advises church leaders to report suspected abuse when it's required under local laws.

In 2011, as part of Pope Benedict XVI's attempts to take a tougher stand against sexual misconduct, the Vatican ordered the bishops' conferences to develop written guidelines on preventing abuse of minors and

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vulnerable adults. The guidelines were supposed to specify how bishops should tend to victims, punish offenders and keep pedophiles out of the priesthood.

While most conferences obliged, some have not. Vatican City itself has no such policy, even though the Holy See promised the United Nations five years ago it was developing a "safe environment program" to protect children inside the 110-acre (44-hectare) Vatican City State.

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a policy in 2002 that is regarded as the gold standard policy. It required accusations of abuse to be reported to police and the permanent removal from ministry of any priest found to have abused a minor.

But the U.S. plan has looked less like a model recently, given it exempted bishops like McCarrick. The McCarrick scandal and a Pennsylvania grand jury's allegations that some 300 priests had abused more than 1,000 children since the 1940s have left the credibility of U.S. church leaders in tatters. The grand jury. The report found that a string of bishops in six dioceses covered up for the predators, including the current archbishop of Washington, Cardinal Donald Wuerl.

The past of the Catholic Church is being dug up in other countries. German media reported Wednesday that a church-commissioned study detailed 3,677 abuse cases between 1946 and 2014. Every sixth case involved rape, more than half of the victims were 13-years-old or younger and at least 1,670 clergy were involved, Spiegel Online and Die Zeit said. The news outlets said the report was due to be released Sept. 25 and they obtained it in advance.

In their conclusions, the German researchers said there was evidence that some church files were manipulated or destroyed. Many cases were not brought to justice, and sometimes abuse suspects — primarily priests — were moved to other dioceses without new congregations being informed about the pastor's past, they said.

Bush boosting Republicans in places where Trump isn't strong

By LAURIE KELLMAN and GARY FINEOUT, Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — Former President George W. Bush is quietly helping boost Republican candidates in places where President Donald Trump has struggled. In so doing, the former two-term president is raising his profile, ever so slightly, in the national politics he eschewed for years.

On Wednesday, Bush held an event in Fort Worth, Texas, for Republican Rep. Will Hurd in a congressional district Trump lost in 2016. On Friday, Bush is set to appear in Florida, which Trump narrowly won, on behalf of Gov. Rick Scott in the state's expensive Senate race.

Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, who will also attend the Scott event, said in an email that his brother "is helping Senate candidates across the country."

These events are a focal part of Bush's re-emergence in national politics ahead before the Nov. 6 election that will help determine control of Congress.

Another former president, Barack Obama, also has come off the political sidelines for the upcoming midterms.

Both parties have much at stake. Democrats want to capitalize on Trump unpopularity and gain the 23 seats they need to regain a majority in the House and launch investigations of the administration and, potentially, impeachment hearings.

Republicans are increasingly concerned about their ability to fend off Democrats aiming to retake the Senate and win complete control of Congress.

The presence of Trump looms large over the elections. He has pledged to campaign as many days as possible to help Republicans defend their majorities, including in Texas, where Republican Sen. Ted Cruz is defending his seat against a strong challenge from Democratic Rep. Beto O'Rourke.

The president has demonstrated that with one tweet, he can sway the fortunes of Republicans who dare cross him. For Republican candidates in places where voters don't love Trump, that puts them in uncomfortable positions.

So Bush is stepping in, officials in Washington, Florida and Texas said. Doing so could help with voters

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such as independents and women who want Congress to stay in Republican hands.

Florida's GOP chairman, Blaise Ingoglia, said Bush will be a "plus" for Scott's bid to defeat the Democratic incumbent, Bill Nelson.

Marc Short, Trump's former legislative director and now a senior fellow at the Miller Center at the University of Virginia, said Bush and Trump "have more overlap than is often reported." Both, for example, are fans of Brett Kavanaugh, Trump's Supreme Court nominee whom Bush first put on the federal bench.

Short said Bush's time away from politics heightens his appeal.

"I'm not going to attempt to gloss over the differences" between Trump and Bush, Short said in a telephone interview Wednesday. "I think that there's enormous respect for President Bush and the class act that he's always been. I think he has significant appeal among not just donors but also voters."

It's not Bush's first move back toward national politics.

Bush re-emerged with a message that echoed with politics at the Sept. 1 funeral of Arizona Sen. John McCain in Washington. The late senator had asked Bush and Obama to give eulogies.

Trump wasn't invited to the service and his name was rarely mentioned in the speeches, but collectively the ceremony was seen as a rebuke by official Washington of his divisive approach to the presidency.

"John's voice will always come as a whisper over our shoulder: We are better than this. America is better than this," Bush said from the pulpit of Washington National Cathedral.

The Bush family has long had a complicated relationship with Trump.

During the 2016 Republican presidential nomination, Trump said Jeb Bush was "low energy" and argued that George W. Bush had failed to keep the nation safe after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Trump didn't attend the funeral this year of Barbara Bush, the wife and mother of former presidents. First lady Melania Trump attended.

Both Hurd and Scott have tried to distance themselves from Trump.

A former CIA agent, Hurd criticized Trump in a New York Times op-ed in July after the president's deferential news conference with Russian President Vladimir Putin after their meeting in Helsinki. Trump, Hurd wrote, was guilty of a "failure to defend the United States intelligence community's unanimous conclusions" that Russia meddled in the 2016 election.

"His standing idle on the world stage while a Russian dictator spouted lies confused many but should concern all Americans," Hurd wrote. "By playing into Vladimir Putin's hands, the leader of the free world actively participated in a Russian disinformation campaign that legitimized Russian denial and weakened the credibility of the United States to both our friends and foes abroad."

Trump urged Scott to run against Nelson, but Scott has publicly kept his distance from the president. In April, Scott skipped a Trump discussion of the tax-cut package in South Florida, heading out of state to raise money for his Senate campaign instead.

In late July, Scott traveled on Air Force One with the president when he visited Florida. But the governor skipped Trump's campaign rally held in Tampa, opting instead to hold a fundraiser in nearby Clearwater.

The governor split with Trump over the administration's policy of separating families at the border but did not sharply criticize the president. Instead, he sent a letter to federal authorities calling for an immediate end to the policy and demanded that state officials be told about children brought into Florida.

Kellman reported from Washington. Associated Press writer Jamie Stengle in Dallas contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected to reflect that Rick Scott, who is running for the U.S. Senate, is still Florida's governor.

Moon rock hunter closes in on tracking down missing stones

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST, Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — A strange thing happened after Neil Armstrong and the Apollo 11 crew returned from the moon with lunar rocks: Many of the mementos given to every U.S. state vanished. Now, after years of sleuthing, a former NASA investigator is closing in on his goal of locating the whereabouts of all 50.

In recent weeks, two of the rocks that disappeared after the 1969 mission were located in Louisiana and Utah, leaving only New York and Delaware with unaccounted-for souvenirs.

Attorney and moon rock hunter Joseph Gutheinz says it “blows his mind,” that the rocks were not carefully chronicled and saved by some of the states that received them. But he is hopeful the last two can be located before the 50th anniversary of the Apollo 11 mission next summer.

“It’s a tangible piece of history,” he said. “Neil Armstrong’s first mission ... was to reach down and grab some rocks and dust in case they needed to make an emergency takeoff.”

President Richard Nixon’s administration presented the tiny lunar samples to all 50 states and 135 countries, but few were officially recorded and most disappeared, Gutheinz said.

Each state got a tiny sample encased in acrylic and mounted on a wooden plaque, along with the state flag. Some were placed in museums, while others went on display in state capitols.

But almost no state entered the rocks collected by Armstrong and fellow astronaut Buzz Aldrin into archival records, and Gutheinz said many lost track of them.

When Gutheinz started leading the effort to find them in 2002, he estimates 40 states had lost track of the rocks.

“I think part of it was, we honestly believed that going back to the moon was going to be a regular occurrence,” Gutheinz said.

But there were only five more journeys before the last manned moon landing, Apollo 17, in 1972.

Of the Apollo 11 rocks given to other countries, about 70 percent remain unaccounted for, he said.

The U.S. government also sent out a second set of goodwill moon rocks to the states and other nations after the Apollo 17 mission, and many of those are missing as well, he said.

NASA did not track their whereabouts after giving them to the Nixon administration for distribution, said chief historian Bill Barry, but added the space agency would be happy to see them located.

Gutheinz began his career as an investigator for NASA, where he found illicit sellers asking millions for rocks on the black market. Authentic moon rocks are considered national treasures and cannot legally be sold in the U.S., he said.

He became aware while at NASA that the gifts to the states were missing, but only began his hunt after leaving the agency.

Now a lawyer in the Houston area, he’s also a college instructor who’s enlisted the help of his students. They record their findings of the whereabouts of the discovered moon gems in a database.

Many of the Apollo 11 rocks have turned up in unexpected places: with ex-governors in West Virginia and Colorado, in a military-artifact storage building in Minnesota and with a former crab boat captain from TV’s “Deadliest Catch” in Alaska.

In New York, officials who oversee the state museum have no record of that state’s Apollo 11 rock. In Delaware, the sample was stolen from its state museum on Sept. 22, 1977. Police were contacted, but it was never found.

The U.S. Virgin Islands territory, meanwhile, cannot confirm that they ever received a goodwill rock, though the University of the Virgin Islands later received Apollo 11 rocks for scientific research, said chief conservator Julio Encarnacion III.

In other states, though Gutheinz has recently hit paydirt. The Advocate newspaper in Baton Rouge located Louisiana’s Apollo 11 moon rock in early August after a call from Gutheinz.

In Utah, the division of state history had no record of the sample, but The Associated Press confirmed it was in storage at Salt Lake City’s Clark Planetarium.

Officials there may bring it out as part of celebrations recognizing the Apollo 11 anniversary next year,

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something Gutheinz hopes to see everywhere.

"The people of the world deserve this," he said. "They deserve to see something that our astronauts accomplished and be a part it."

Asian stocks rise on possible US-China talks amid tensions

By ANNABELLE LIANG, Associated Press

SINGAPORE (AP) — Asian markets were mostly higher on Thursday after a report that the U.S. had proposed a new round of trade negotiations with China quelled fears that a dispute between the world's two largest economies was spiraling out of control.

KEEPING SCORE: Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 added 0.8 percent to 22,787.33, and the Kospi in South Korea rose 0.1 percent to 2,284.74. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index jumped 1.4 percent to 26,711.07. The Shanghai Composite index gained 0.2 percent to 2,662.54. But Australia's S&P/ASX 200 shed 0.6 percent to 6,141.00. Stocks were higher in Taiwan and Southeast Asia.

WALL STREET: U.S. stocks were mixed on Wednesday as technology companies fell, cancelling out gains in the energy sector. The S&P 500 index was less than 0.1 higher at 2,888.92. The Dow Jones Industrial Average gained 0.1 percent to 25,998.92. The losses for technology companies weighed on the Nasdaq composite, which slid 0.2 percent to 7,954.23. The Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks lost 0.2 percent to 1,715.70.

US-CHINA RELATIONS: According to the Wall Street Journal, U.S. officials recently proposed a new round of trade negotiations with China. These would give the Chinese government another chance to address U.S. concerns before the Trump administration imposes bigger tariffs on goods imported from China, the report said. The two countries have already placed new taxes on \$50 billion in imports, and the U.S. is threatening higher tariffs on \$200 billion in goods and possibly more. China has vowed to retaliate and has put off accepting license applications from American companies hoping to operate in the country. It has also requested to be allowed to impose sanctions against the United States for failing to abide by a World Trade Organization ruling on anti-dumping measures. The case, which was recently taken up by WTO's dispute settlement body, centers on U.S. trade limits on Chinese products that the U.S. says are sold below market value. These include steel, coated paper, off-road tires, solar cells and diamond saw blades.

ANALYST'S TAKE: "The shifting of the balance of trade negotiations away from the U.S. and towards the rest of the world and particularly China is starting to pull up markets," Michael McCarthy, chief market strategist at CMC Markets in Sydney, said in an interview.

NEW IPHONE: Apple unveiled new iPhones with larger screens on Wednesday. The company also said new Apple Watches will have larger screens and new health-monitoring features. Its stocks, which tend to trade lower on the days it announces new products, fell 1.2 percent to \$221.07 on Wednesday. Apple is up 31 percent in 2018, however.

ENERGY: Oil prices eased after extending gains on the Energy Information Administration's announcement that U.S. crude stockpiles fell by more than 5 million barrels last week. Benchmark U.S. crude, which had reached its highest price in two months on Wednesday, dropped 50 cents to \$69.87 a barrel. The contract climbed 1.6 percent to settle at \$70.37 a barrel in New York. Brent crude, used to price international oils, shed 44 cents to \$79.30 a barrel. It added 0.9 percent to \$79.74 a barrel in London.

CURRENCIES: The dollar strengthened to 111.38 yen from 111.22 yen. The euro rose to \$1.1637 from \$1.1632.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Thursday, Sept. 13, the 256th day of 2018. There are 109 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

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On Sept. 13, 1971, a four-day inmates' rebellion at the Attica Correctional Facility in western New York ended as police and guards stormed the prison; the ordeal and final assault claimed the lives of 32 inmates and 11 hostages.

On this date:

In 1759, during the French and Indian War, the British defeated the French on the Plains of Abraham overlooking Quebec City.

In 1788, the Congress of the Confederation authorized the first national election, and declared New York City the temporary national capital.

In 1814, during the War of 1812, British naval forces began bombarding Fort McHenry in Baltimore but were driven back by American defenders in a battle that lasted until the following morning.

In 1948, Republican Margaret Chase Smith of Maine was elected to the U.S. Senate; she became the first woman to serve in both houses of Congress.

In 1959, Elvis Presley first met his future wife, 14-year-old Priscilla Beaulieu, while stationed in West Germany with the U.S. Army. (They married in 1967, but divorced in 1973.)

In 1962, Mississippi Gov. Ross Barnett rejected the U.S. Supreme Court's order for the University of Mississippi to admit James Meredith, a black student, declaring in a televised address, "We will not drink from the cup of genocide."

In 1970, the first New York City Marathon was held; winner Gary Muhrcke finished the 26.2-mile run, which took place entirely inside Central Park, in 2:31:38.

In 1989, Fay Vincent was elected commissioner of Major League Baseball, succeeding the late A. Bartlett Giamatti (juh-MAH'-tee).

In 1990, the combination police-courtroom drama "Law & Order" premiered on NBC.

In 1993, at the White House, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO chairman Yasser Arafat shook hands after signing an accord granting limited Palestinian autonomy.

In 1997, funeral services were held in Calcutta, India, for Nobel peace laureate Mother Teresa.

In 2001, two days after the 9/11 terror attacks, the first few jetliners returned to the nation's skies, but several major airports remained closed and others opened only briefly. President George W. Bush visited injured Pentagon workers and said he would carry the nation's prayers to New York.

Ten years ago: Rescue crews ventured out to pluck people from their homes in an all-out search for thousands of Texans who had stubbornly stayed behind overnight to face Hurricane Ike. After wild conjecture over who would play Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin on "Saturday Night Live," writer-performer Tina Fey returned to her old show for an opening sketch featuring her and Fey's former "Weekend Update" co-host Amy Poehler as Sen. Hillary Clinton.

Five years ago: By truck and helicopter, thousands of people stranded by floodwaters were brought down from the Colorado Rockies. A pre-dawn fire swept through a Russian psychiatric hospital, killing 37 people.

One year ago: Firefighters who were called to a sweltering nursing home in Hollywood, Florida, where air conditioning had been knocked out by Hurricane Irma found three people dead and evacuated 145 others to hospitals; five others died later in the day. Former Republican Sen. Pete Domenici (doh-MEN'-ih-chee), New Mexico's longest-serving senator, died in Albuquerque at the age of 85. The Cleveland Indians set an American League record with their 21st straight win, a 5-3 victory over the Detroit Tigers. (The streak would continue to 22 before the Indians were stopped.) The International Olympic Committee officially awarded the 2024 Summer Olympics to Paris and the 2028 games to Los Angeles.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Barbara Bain is 87. Actress Eileen Fulton (TV: "As the World Turns") is 85. Actor Joe E. Tata is 82. TV producer Fred Silverman is 81. Rock singer David Clayton-Thomas (Blood, Sweat & Tears) is 77. Actress Jacqueline Bisset is 74. Singer Peter Cetera is 74. Actress Christine Estabrook is 68. Actress Jean Smart is 67. Singer Randy Jones (The Village People) is 66. Record producer Don Was is 66. Actor Isiah Whitlock Jr. is 64. Actress-comedian Geri Jewell is 62. Country singer Bobbie Cryner is 57. Rock singer-musician Dave Mustaine (Megadeth) is 57. Radio-TV personality Tavis Smiley is 54. Rock musician Zak Starkey is 53. Actor Louis Mandylor is 52. Olympic gold medal runner Michael Johnson is

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51. Rock musician Steve Perkins is 51. Actor Roger Howarth is 50. Actor Dominic Fumusa is 49. Actress Louise Lombard is 48. Tennis player Goran Ivanisevic (ee-van-EE'-seh-vihch) is 47. Country singer Aaron Benward (Blue County) is 45. Country musician Joe Don Rooney (Rascal Flatts) is 43. Actor Scott Vickaryous is 43. Singer Fiona Apple is 41. Contemporary Christian musician Hector Cervantes (Casting Crowns) is 38. Former MLB pitcher Daisuke Matsuzaka is 38. Actor Ben Savage is 38. Rock singer Niall Horan (One Direction) is 25. Actor Mitch Holleman is 23. Actress Lili Reinhart (TV: "Riverdale") is 22.

Thought for Today: "Revolt and terror pay a price. Order and law have a cost." — Carl Sandburg, American poet and author (1878-1967).