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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.

Removal, Grinding, Chipping, Trimming

605-725-WOOD

Mason Dinger: 605-216-6098

Trevor Zeck: 605-216-8910



**DAKOTA TREE
COMPANY**

Thursday, October 18, 2018

First Round of Football Playoffs - Groton Area hosts Mobridge-Pollock at 6 p.m.

LifeTouch Pictures

Friday, October 19, 2018

6:00pm: Volleyball at Milbank. C and JV matches at 6 p.m. followed by varsity match.

Saturday, October 20, 2018

State Cross Country at Sioux Falls.

Oral Interp at Florence

Robotics at Groton Area

Monday, October 22, 2018

Oral Interp at Brookings High School

6:00pm: Volleyball: Girls Varsity Match at Deuel High School. C & JV matches start at 6pm followed by varsity match.

Tuesday, October 23, 2018

End of 1st Quarter

5:30pm- 6:30pm: Title 1 Open House Groton Area Elementary School for parents and families in JK-5th.

Thursday, October 25, 2018

All State Chorus and Orchestra at the Rapid City Civic Center

Football: Boys Varsity Playoffs 2nd Round

Friday, October 26, 2018

All State Chorus and Orchestra at the Rapid City Civic Center

Saturday, October 27, 2018

ACT Test (Cancelled) Groton Area High School (This testing center has been closed for this test by ACT due to low registration numbers. Students will be notified by ACT of their new testing center assignment.)

All State Chorus and Orchestra at the Rapid City Civic Center

Oral Interp (Pumpkinstakes) at Watertown High School

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It's Football Action on GDILIVE.COM



Groton Area Tigers

VS

Mobridge-Pollock Tigers

First Round Play-offs

Thursday, Oct. 18, 6 p.m. at Doney Field, Groton

It's Volleyball Action on GDILIVE.COM



**Milbank
Bulldogs**

VS

Groton Area Tigers

Friday, Oct. 19, 2018

7:15 p.m. at Milbank High School

South Dakota Monarch Plan Available for Public Comment

PIERRE, S.D. – South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) is asking for public comment on a draft strategic plan for the monarch butterfly. The plan is available for review until 5 p.m. CDT on Oct. 26.

South Dakota and other Midwestern states have been working together to determine how to provide for the long-term needs of the monarch butterfly.

The state planning process began a year ago. Since then, a committee has helped GFP prepare a strategic plan to guide future activities.

"GFP is coordinating the planning effort, but many public and private partners have been working on pollinators for many years," said Eileen Dowd-Stukel, wildlife diversity coordinator for GFP. "This cooperative theme is critical for future success."

Following the finalization of the strategic plan, work will begin to identify specific tasks, schedules and commitments to carry the strategic plan to implementation.

The monarch is being considered for listing under the federal Endangered Species Act. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will announce a listing decision for the eastern population of the monarch butterfly in June 2019. South Dakota's commitment to this species will be one consideration in the decision.

The public can submit comments on the plan online at gfp.sd.gov/forms/positions.



Photo from Groton Tiger Football Facebook Page

Good Luck Tigers

1st Round Football Playoffs

**Groton Area vs.
Mobridge-Pollock**

6 p.m., Oct. 18 in Groton

Aberdeen Chrysler Center
Allied Climate Professionals
Bahr Spray Foam
Blocker Construction
DeHoet Trucking
Doug Abeln Seed Company
Greg Johnson Construction
Groton Chiropractic Clinic
Groton Daily Independent
Groton Dairy Queen
Groton Ford
Groton Legion Post #39
Hanlon Brothers
John Sieh Agency
Ken's Food Fair
Krueger Brothers
Lori's Pharmacy
Mike-N-Jo's Body-N-Glass
Northeast Chiropractic Clinic
Olson Development
Professional Management Services
S & S Lumber
Sanford Health



Doug **Fjeldheim** County Commission

**A devoted FAMILY MAN,
a FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE leader,
and a Commissioner who will make
decisions based on COMMON SENSE.**

My fellow taxpayers of Brown County:

I am seeking re-election to the Brown County Commission because I believe I can and have contributed to the greater good by spending our tax dollars wisely.

As a farmer I know how important it is to have good roads and to have a county government that works with the people of the area to protect their interests.

I would be honored to serve another 4 years as a commissioner and treat your tax dollars as my own because just like you, some of them are!

On November 6th, please cast your ballot for Doug Fjeldheim for Brown County Commission.

Doug Fjeldheim

Paid for by Fjeldheim for County Commission

Doug **Fjeldheim** County Commission

Doug Fjeldheim is seeking to be re-elected to the Brown County Commission. Having over 32 years of management experience in business, 30 years of farming experience, and as the Westport Township Clerk since 2003, Doug is familiar with the challenges each township faces.

As your County Commissioner, Doug Fjeldheim pledges to continue being prudent with how the tax dollars of Brown County are spent.

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Today in Weather History

October 18, 2012: An area of low pressure rapidly intensified once it moved east of the northern plains. This strengthening resulted in very strong northwest winds across the region. Some of the higher reported wind gusts include 77 mph at the Fort Pierre and Grand River RAWS sites, 74 mph at the Pierre airport, and 70 mph at Murdo, Presho, and Hayes public observation sites.

1906 - A hurricane struck South Florida drowning 124 persons stranded in the Florida Keys. (David Ludlum)

1910 - Northeasterly winds as high as 70 mph (from a hurricane moving northward up the Florida peninsula) carried water out of Tampa Bay and the Hillsboro River. The water level lowered to nine feet below mean low water. Forty ships were grounded. (The Weather Channel)

1916: A tropical depression organized to a tropical storm on October 11 in the western Caribbean. It moved westward, reaching hurricane strength on the 13th before hitting the Yucatán Peninsula on the 15th as an 110 mph hurricane. It weakened over land, and it emerged over the southern Gulf of Mexico as a tropical storm. It quickly re-strengthened to a Category 3 hurricane, hitting Pensacola on October 18. The maximum wind velocity at Mobile was 115 mph from the east at 8:25 am. Pensacola had winds of 120 mph at 10:13 am when the wind instrument tower was blown down.

1930 - A big early season lake effect snowburst on the lee shores of Lake Erie and Lake Ontario produced 47 inches at Gouverneur NY and 48 inches just south of Buffalo. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Thunderstorms in northeastern Texas produced golf ball size hail at Atlanta, along with wind gusts to 86 mph, and four inches of rain. Damage from the storm was estimated at more than a million dollars. Sunny and mild weather continued across much of the rest of the nation. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Eight cities in the southwestern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, including Red Bluff CA with a reading of 96 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Unseasonably cold air began to invade the central and eastern U.S. Light snow fell across northern Maine, and snow was also reported in the Great Lakes Region, including the Chicago area. Bismarck ND was the cold spot in the nation with a low of 9 degrees above zero. Five cities in Florida reported record high readings for the date, as temperatures warmed above 80 degrees. Miami FL reported a record high of 90 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

2005 - With the formation of Hurricane Wilma, the 2005 Atlantic hurricane season tied the record for the most named storms for any season (21 storms in 1933), and also tied the record for the most hurricanes in a single season (12 in 1969). Wilma peaked at category-5 intensity on the 19th, with a minimum central pressure falling to 882 millibars (26.05 inches of mercury), the lowest pressure ever recorded in the Atlantic Basin. Wilma also became the most rapidly-intensifying storm on record, with a maximum-sustained surface wind speed increase of 105 mph in a 24-hour period.

2007: A destructive fall tornado hit Nappanee, Indiana causing extensive damage along its 20-mile path across northeast Marshall, Northwest Kosciusko and southwest Elkhart Counties. High-end EF3 intensity winds near 165 mph were estimated based on the most severe damage over southeast Nappanee. Over 100 structures sustained significant damage or were destroyed in town alone. Despite the widespread damage and time of day, only minor injuries were reported.

Broton Daily Independent

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Today



Sunny

High: 70 °F

Tonight



Mostly Clear

Low: 42 °F

Friday



Sunny then
Sunny and
Breezy

High: 60 °F

Friday
Night



Mostly Clear

Low: 34 °F

Saturday



Sunny

High: 46 °F

WINDY

Above average temperatures today.

Highs Today:
Upper 60s to low 70s

Highs Friday:
Upper 50s to low 60s

National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD
www.weather.gov/abr

Created: 10/18/2018 4:08 AM

NWSAberdeen @NWSAberdeen

Published on: 10/18/2018 at 4:17AM

Breezy to windy conditions out of the southwest will develop today. This will usher in warmer temperatures ranging from the upper 60s to low 70s which is around 10-15 degrees above average for this time of year. Otherwise things remain dry through early next week.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 56 °F at 4:28 PM

Low Outside Temp: 24 °F at 7:22 AM

High Gust: 11 mph at 4:53 PM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 90° in 1910

Record Low: 12° in 1930

Average High: 57°F

Average Low: 32°F

Average Precip in Oct.: 1.23

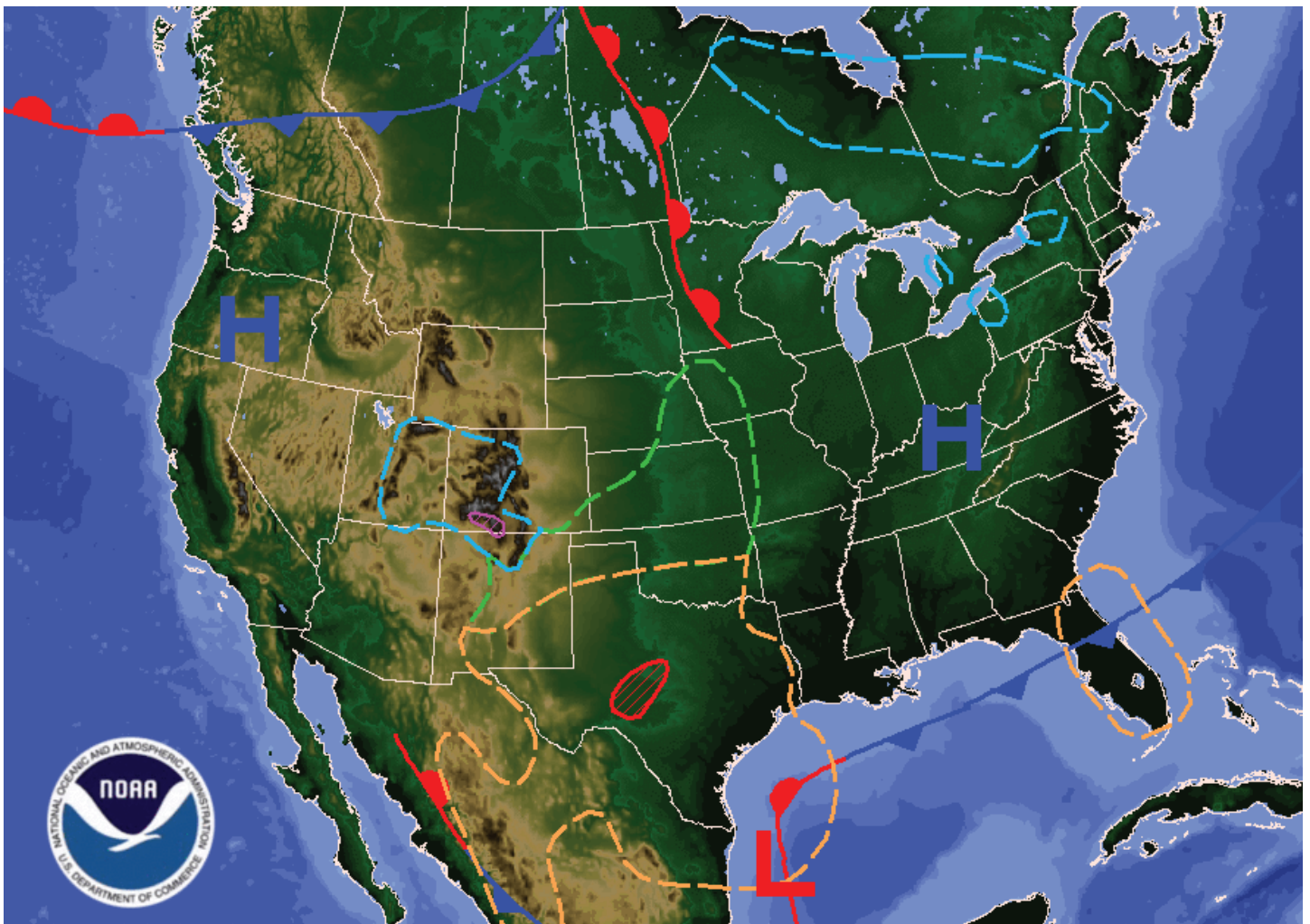
Precip to date in Oct.: 1.42

Average Precip to date: 19.71

Precip Year to Date: 15.03

Sunset Tonight: 6:43 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:55 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Thu, Oct 18, 2018, issued 4:33 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McCreynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

Rain
Rain and T'Storms
Rain and Snow
Snow

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

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FINDING BEAUTY

Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, is a very familiar saying. If we think about that saying for just a moment, it seems to suggest that there are two parts to beauty: the ones trying to make themselves beautiful and the ones who judge the outcome.

The latest information on the amount of money that is spent on beauty enhancing items is staggering:

Total cost of products worldwide: \$426 billion.

Total cost in America: \$33.3 billion.

Total cost per person in America: \$15,000.

Some might say, What a complete waste. Someone else would probably say, They should have spent much more. And a third might say, It didnt make any difference no matter what they spent, so whats the reason for spending the money to look better? Why the effort?

But the Psalmist said, He crowns, and beautifies, the humble with salvation.

God can take a heart that is stained and soiled with sin and cleanse it from all impurities and make it beautiful. Wash me, cried one Psalmist, and I will be whiter than snow.

God can take the damage caused by sin, and the marks left from discouragement and depression and erase their marks, remove every tear and bring hope to our eyes, erase lines of guilt and put the joy of salvation on our faces. Jesus made an important promise when He said, My peace I give unto you - not as the world gives peace through false promises, and praise.

God can take a sin-scarred life and fill it with His glory and radiance. "Set me free from my prison," said the Psalmist. And we respond, Let the beauty of Jesus be seen in me!

Prayer: Only You, Father, can save us from sin, ourselves and the insanity of this world. Come quickly and help us. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 149:4b He crowns, and beautifies, the humble with salvation.

2018 Groton SD Community Events

- Groton Lion's Club Bingo- Wednesday Nights 6:30pm at the Groton Legion (Year Round)
- Nov./Dec./Jan./Feb./Mar. 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)
- Transit Fundraiser (Middle Thursday in June)
- SDSU Golf at Olive Grove
- 6/15/2019 Triathlon (Saturday before Father's Day)
- 7/4/2019 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
- 7/14/2019 Summer Fest
- 9/7/2019 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 10/12/2019 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/11/2019 Lake Region Marching 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

Northern State freshman found dead in dorm room

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — Authorities say a college freshman from Minnesota has been found dead in his dorm room at Northern State University in South Dakota.

Police in Aberdeen say the death of Curtis LeMair remains under investigation, but that they do not suspect foul play. LeMair was found dead early Wednesday.

He graduated from Prior Lake High School earlier this year and was a three-time Minnesota state medalist in wrestling and a two-time Fargo All-American.

In a Facebook post his mother, Mona LeMair, says her son's roommate tried to wake him up for wrestling practice, but he had passed away in his sleep.

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Dakota Cash

07-23-24-26-27

(seven, twenty-three, twenty-four, twenty-six, twenty-seven)

Estimated jackpot: \$26,000

Lotto America

03-08-15-21-37, Star Ball: 5, ASB: 3

(three, eight, fifteen, twenty-one, thirty-seven; Star Ball: five; ASB: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$9.6 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$868 million

Powerball

03-57-64-68-69, Powerball: 15, Power Play: 3

(three, fifty-seven, sixty-four, sixty-eight, sixty-nine; Powerball: fifteen; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$345 million

Mother accused of trying to kill self, baby in car crash

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A woman tried to kill her baby and herself by crashing her car into a ditch off an interstate in Sioux Falls because she believed the infant was sick and she was an unfit mother, according to court documents.

Julia Alzoubaidi, 34, has been charged with attempted first-degree murder and felony child abuse in the crash early Tuesday off Interstate 229 near the Big Sioux River.

Alzoubaidi left a suicide note in her car stating she decided to kill her six-month-old child because he was showing signs of having an attachment disorder, a condition in which infants are detached and don't like to be held, the affidavit said.

Troopers responding to the 3:30 a.m. crash found Alzoubaidi face down in the river and her infant along the bank.

Sioux Falls police spokesman Sam Clemens says the mother and her baby remained hospitalized Wednesday and that Alzoubaidi would be booked into the jail once she recovers, if she does not post bond set

at \$250,000.

Avera Health confirmed Alzoubaidi is an employee. Avera's website identified her as a psychologist. Investigators said Alzoubaidi told medical staff she planned to kill her baby and herself because she was an unfit mother.

According to the court document, Alzoubaidi's husband told detectives that his wife suffered from anxiety and depression and had not been taking her medication during her pregnancy and while breastfeeding. He said he didn't know she would attempt to harm the baby or herself.

Alzoubaidi told detectives that she woke up early on Tuesday, put her baby in the car and drove on the interstate before intentionally driving into a ditch, the affidavit said.

When she came to after the crash, authorities say Alzoubaidi carried the baby to the river and placed him along the bank before jumping into the water, from which she was rescued by troopers. It was not clear if Alzoubaidi has hired an attorney who can speak on her behalf.

This story has been corrected to show that Alzoubaidi is a current Avera Health employee, not former employee.

AP FACT CHECK: Noem lacks proof Sutton supports income tax

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — U.S. Rep. Kristi Noem is considered a favorite to become South Dakota's first female governor after she easily won the deep red state's June Republican primary. But Billie Sutton, a state senator and former professional rodeo cowboy who was paralyzed in a 2007 rodeo accident, has mounted a spirited challenge to be the state's first Democratic governor elected in over 40 years.

Noem has tried to thwart Sutton's campaign by reminding voters he's a Democrat — Sutton has downplayed his party and cast himself as a moderate. He denies a claim in a Noem television ad that he supports a state income tax. That's a sensitive subject in South Dakota, one of only seven states without such a tax.

A look at the claim:

NOEM ad: "Democrat Billie Sutton wants a new state income tax." - TV ad text, Oct. 13.

THE FACTS: The claim is mostly false. The Noem campaign based the ad on audio from a state education funding task force meeting on Oct. 1, 2015. During a discussion about raising taxes for South Dakota teacher pay, Sutton said, "Just out of curiosity, um, why no discussion about a personal income tax?"

After laughter among participants, the governor's chief of staff said: "We're happy to put that down as your idea, though."

"Now, wait a minute," Sutton replied. "Just a curious question."

Sutton's campaign manager, Suzanne Jones Pranger, said in a statement that the laughter in the audio shows people in the room knew Sutton's comment was "intended to bring some bipartisan levity to a five hour task force meeting on getting schools the resources they need" because the concept wouldn't be accepted in South Dakota. Pranger said it was a case of Sutton using humor to connect with his colleagues.

State lawmakers, including Sutton and many Republicans, did later vote in 2016 for a half-cent sales tax hike to boost the state's teacher pay. But Sutton said in a July 2018 interview and in a new TV ad that he's against a state income tax.

If elected, Sutton said he wouldn't propose tax increases, but didn't promise to reject tax hikes that make it to his desk, according to the Argus Leader .

Noem's campaign hasn't provided evidence of any time when Sutton publicly endorsed an income tax.

Noem's campaign has cited the state Democratic Party's platform to bolster its case, saying in an earlier TV advertisement that Sutton's "own state Democrat Party wants to create a new state income tax."

The party's 2018 platform contains a section saying it supports a "tax system which taxes all income levels fairly as allowed" by the state constitution. Party Chairwoman Ann Tornberg said it isn't advocacy for an income tax, but instead a statement about fair taxes. Tornberg also noted Sutton wasn't a voting convention delegate when the platform was adopted.

Gregory gears up for South Dakota's booming pheasant season

By JEREMY FUGLEBERG, The Argus Leader

GREGORY, S.D. (AP) — You would have to start pretty early in the year to get a jump on Chad Stevicks. The manager of the Runnings farm and fleet store in Gregory, Stevicks runs "the circus," the store on opening day of ring-necked pheasant hunting season, Oct. 20 this year.

He starts the preparations in February. Now, his racks of blaze-orange clothes are ready. He's got pallets of shotgun shells in the back, ready for a deluge of hunters. It's nearly go time.

The town of Gregory, like Stevicks, is no stranger to the yearly ritual of getting ready to host pheasant season. But during the season, Stevicks might be the busiest man in town.

Black Friday is usually the biggest sales event of the year for most retailers. But not here. Not at Runnings. "Ours is pheasant season," said Stevicks.

Welcome to Gregory, "the ground-zero of pheasantdom," according to a sign under a large pheasant statue at a town crossroads (so dubbed by Fortune magazine in 1992). It's a town that works hard to defend the title as South Dakota enters its 100th year of offering a pheasant hunting season.

The state has earned its reputation as home to a bounty of pheasants. The annual harvest in the state regularly averages more than 1 million birds, according to the state Department of Game, Fish & Parks.

Gregory is a bull's-eye inside the bull's-eye. It is one point in South Dakota's "Golden Triangle," an area defined by the prime pheasant hunting country between Gregory, Winner and Chamberlain.

Here, the color of money is orange — blaze orange. Here, in just a few months, hunters — mostly out-of-state hunters — will infuse millions of dollars into what would otherwise be an economy struggling with all the current woes of farm country. Here for many, hosting hunters is no longer a supplement to farming. Farming is now the side gig.

Hunters are allowed to start downing birds on private preserves seven weeks prior, on Sept. 1. While the hunting season may last to Jan. 6, and preserve hunting stretches to the end of March, weather usually dictates a shorter hunting season that runs from September to November.

These are the area's golden months, and with this year's pheasant count indicating good hunting, Gregory aims to cash in.

"Needless to say, it's a pretty good boom for the area, and it trickles down to everybody," said Scott Anshutz, mayor of Gregory.

Just outside of town is Biggins Hunting Lodge, where the Biggins family runs a busy hospitality, game preserve and hunting service.

It's one of about three dozen lodges in Gregory County. Hunting lodges here have not only multiplied in the last few decades, they've gotten more ornate, their offerings more swank and full service.

Pheasant season in South Dakota is now far more than it used to be — a family hunting event, a place for old friends to meet up again for a day or two of hunting. Now you're more likely to see families running the local hunting businesses than out themselves, in the fields for fun.

Gregg Biggins and his wife, Be, own Biggins Hunting Service. Biggins can trace the evolution of the hunt just by relating his own story. For years he hosted acquaintances at his home. But those friends brought more friends, and soon, Biggins found himself being more of a guide and hotelier than a fellow hunter.

And then, the gift that changed everything. A so-called friend left Biggins a present to thank him for his tireless work on their behalf.

"He left me a cheap box of candy," Biggins said.

No more. The next season, Biggins was charging to guide and lodge hunters. This was the early 1980s. Hunting lodges were still a new concept in the area, but one that proved to be a good cash business for what otherwise was primarily an agricultural economy.

Those pheasants weren't just fun to hunt. They were money in the bank, especially if you could build a lodge.

"You can have all the best hunting in the world, and people will come one day and leave," said Jeff John-

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son, a Gregory County commissioner who also runs a pheasant hunting lodge. "But you have to build it and they will come. You have to have those lodges for them to stay. That brought the onset of all those lodges. And there are some pretty nice lodges around."

Soon, out-of-state hunters weren't just coming by themselves or in small groups. More and more large groups would come to hunt pheasant in South Dakota and relax in those nice lodges. More celebrities started showing up for the hunt: Kevin Costner, Peyton Manning, Kent Hrbek.

Pheasant hunting became a hot destination for a business retreat for companies or colleagues eager for bonding time away from daily life, the Argus Leader reported.

Last year, about 2,800 non-residents hunted pheasant in Gregory County, outnumbering resident hunters nearly 4 to 1.

Johnson told of one local farmer turned pheasant-season entrepreneur.

"He used to hunt to supplement his farming," Johnson said. "Now he says, 'I farm to supplement my hunting.' That's true for a whole bunch of these guys."

Biggins added another, separate lodge to his property in 2005 to handle the growth in large hunting parties.

"We just kept getting companies and groups," Biggins said.

In the open garage of the Biggins' new lodge, hunter Judd Baker sipped his beer and talked about the day. Baker, who works in the construction industry out of McKinney, Texas, near Dallas, has been coming back to hunt pheasants in South Dakota for 19 years.

Baker first came with his dad, nearly two decades ago. Now, he's here with his brother, Cole, and people he knows through work. This is a great place to strengthen relationships with some of his biggest customers, he said.

"You bring them here, you get away," he said. "You take your top customers, you bring them away from the cellphone and the laptop."

Hunting pheasants on the preserves is not necessarily a daylong affair. Maybe a couple of hours between breakfast and lunch, with plenty of time before and after to relax or chase other pursuits.

For many of these hunters, pheasant season is less about the birds and more about the buds.

"It's a fun event, it's not that, 'gotta hunt all day, gotta shoot all day, gotta kill all day,'" said Anshutz, Gregory's mayor. "It's evolved out of that. More of a social event, truly. You get done hunting for a couple of hours and you sit around a fire and have a couple of cocktails and hors d'oeuvres and reminisce."

Entertainment doesn't just mean target shooting, golf, hitting up Sissy's Cafe in downtown Gregory or visiting Pete's Taxidermy in nearby Burke. Entertainment means Dallas, population 152, just a 10-minute drive west of Gregory on U.S. Highway 18.

When people say "Dallas," they mean Frank Day's Bar and Restaurant.

The rest of the year, Frank Day's is a local fixture, a bar and restaurant, serving beers and burgers surrounded by a museum's trove of framed photos and boots of past visitors and denizens — famous, infamous and unknown. It's been a local staple for decades.

But during the pheasant season, Frank Day's adds a new, popular feature: It also opens a strip club in the back, with nude dancers.

Frank Day's night side is a pheasant hunting season institution all its own.

Proprietor Shelly Day, daughter of founder Frank Day, runs the place. She houses the dancers, including many who come back year after year.

They're a big draw. During the season, Frank Day's sees between 200-500 customers every day, many from the 90 lodges Day estimates are within 20 miles of the bar and look to Frank Day's for evening entertainment.

"To go from our regular state to that, it's an adjustment," Day said.

But, she emphasizes, people tend to behave. A pheasant hunter "is your dream hunter," she said.

"We don't even have bouncers," she said.

Many local lodges bus their customers to and from Frank Day's, but Day also runs a Topsy Taxi service to make sure other patrons don't drink and drive.

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The crowds don't just swarm Frank Day's. They hit other businesses too, pumping cash into the town and the surrounding area.

Just ask Al Cerny, Gregory's city administrator and finance officer, who has his own seat at the bar in the Gregory bowling alley. Or at least, he has a seat when it's not pheasant season, he says with a laugh.

"It's good for the establishments, but there's times you walk in and say, 'Boy, am I in the right place?' Because I am the stranger and all these other hunters, they're taking over my spot," he said.

The orange crush is crucial to keep Gregory growing and its city budget strong. Cerny said the Gregory airport sells about 70 percent of its annual fuel sales just in the first several months of hunting season. Sales tax more than doubles in September through November.

The town had about 1,300 residents in the last count by the Census Bureau — roughly flat over the past decade. But compared to many struggling rural towns in South Dakota, it's thriving.

Suzanne Braun, director of the Gregory/Dallas Chamber of Commerce, notes that five businesses have opened just this year. One, a boutique downtown, has already expanded and its owner could grow even more.

"She said, 'If I won the lottery, I'd expand my business. It's not big enough for me,'" Braun said.

The hunting business doesn't just buoy the local economy, it keeps young people working here, or encourages them to move back. It fuels a town that is sustaining a critical mass of new blood and a core of professionals.

These are elements that would give the town hope even if hunting went away, said Gregg Drees. He's a retired long-time manager of a local grocery and Gregory's business and industrial development (BID) co-director.

Drees describes himself as one of what he describes as a "progressive group" of residents always looking for opportunities to grow a town already economically blessed by the pheasant season's harvest.

"Would we die without it? It would make a big difference, absolutely. We would be just pretty much like any other town" except for that progressive group of local residents, Drees said. But "we're not sitting still. We're constantly looking."

Back at Runnings, Stevicks, the store manager, is joking with staff and customers. It's a few weeks before the traditional opening day and the store feels like a locker room before a big game — charged with energy and a knowledge of the fray to come.

The rest of the year, Runnings might be a farm and fleet store. But during pheasant season, especially at the opener, it becomes something else.

"It's like old home week," Stevicks said. "We are part of the tradition."

And while the tradition of pheasant season might have evolved over the last several decades, Gregory aims to be ready for what the season still means: big money, with a side of thrill.

"There's just this excitement in town," Drees said. "It's lively again. It brings everybody back in."

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

Report: Fatal Tilford fire caused by smoking while on oxygen

TILFORD, S.D. (AP) — Authorities say smoking caused last month's fire that killed an 82-year-old man and a firefighter in western South Dakota.

Meade County Sheriff Ron Merwin told the Rapid City Journal in an email Wednesday that the fire was caused by "a cigarette being smoked in bed while on oxygen."

The fire started in the home of Raymond Joseph Bachmeier in the small town of Tilford on Sept. 7. Bachmeier died along with 43-year-old firefighter David Fischer of Sturgis, who was hit by a piece of propane tank that exploded.

The fire was investigated by the South Dakota State Fire Marshal and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

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

Report: Sutton in-laws donate to SD GOP gov. opponent Noem

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Two women related by marriage to South Dakota Democratic governor candidate Billie Sutton gave a combined \$2,500 to support Republican nominee Kristi Noem, which Sutton's campaign manager says is not surprising given the family's GOP roots.

According to a federal campaign finance report filed Monday, Linda Lillibridge, of Burke, gave \$500 to a Noem fundraiser featuring President Donald Trump in Sioux Falls last month. Lillibridge is the grandmother of Sutton's wife, Kelsea Sutton.

The report also shows that Kelsea Sutton's great aunt Cindy Lillibridge, of Bonesteel, gave \$2,000 to Noem's fundraiser.

Noem's campaign tells the Rapid City Journal that the two women have since given a combined \$17,000 in additional contributions. Linda Lillibridge gave an additional \$9,000, while Cindy Lillibridge contributed an additional \$8,000, which will show up in a future finance report.

Cindy Lillibridge said Tuesday she will vote for Noem, currently South Dakota's lone U.S. House member.

"We love Billie and Kelsea dearly, but we can't support the Democratic Party," she said.

In a statement, Sutton's campaign manager, Suzanne Jones Pranger, said the Lillibridge family "has supported Republican candidates for decades," so it's no surprise they would attend when the U.S. president visits South Dakota.

"Sutton marrying into a well-known conservative family shows how truly bipartisan Billie is and how he has never put politics before personal relationships," the statement said.

Noem's campaign manager, Justin Brasell, said in a statement that Noem "is grateful for the support she's received from those who know Billie Sutton best."

The Sept. 7 fundraiser featuring Trump raised about \$520,000.

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

Methodist group ex-treasurer pleads innocent to embezzlement

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The former treasurer of Rapid City religious group has pleaded not guilty in state court to embezzling money from the organization.

Fifty-four-year-old Madeline Arnold is charged with embezzling \$5,650 from United Methodist Women. Arnold began working as the organization's treasurer in June 2017.

The Rapid City Journal reports prosecutors say Arnold's embezzlement scheme began three months after she was hired and lasted through February.

She's charged with a felony that carries a maximum sentence of up to 10 years in prison and a \$20,000 fine.

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

Silver carp population holding steady in North Dakota

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — The North Dakota Game and Fish Department says the invasive silver carp population is holding steady in the state and doesn't appear to be growing.

The leaping fish was first detected in North Dakota in the James River in 2011, moving upstream from South Dakota when water levels were high during record summer flooding.

Invasive Species Coordinator Jessica Howell tells KFGO silver carp are surviving in North Dakota, but don't appear to be reproducing. The carp are considered a significant threat to local aquatic species because they attack the food chain and the leaping fish have been known to injure boaters.

Information from: KFGO-AM, <http://www.kfgo.com>

Man linked to Saudi prince at consulate when writer vanished

By SUZAN FRASER, SARAH EL DEEB and JON GAMBRELL, Associated Press

ISTANBUL (AP) — A man who previously traveled with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's entourage to the United States entered the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul just before writer Jamal Khashoggi vanished there, according to images published Thursday by a pro-government Turkish newspaper.

The Sabah newspaper's report showed the man also later outside the Saudi consul general's home, checking out of a Turkish hotel as a large suitcase stood by his side, and leaving Turkey on Oct. 2.

The report came as Turkish crime-scene investigators finished an overnight search of both the consul general's residence and a second search of the consulate itself amid Ankara's fears that Saudi authorities had Khashoggi killed and dismembered inside the diplomatic mission in Istanbul.

Saudi Arabia, which initially called the allegations "baseless," has not responded to repeated requests for comment from The Associated Press over recent days, including on Thursday.

The Sabah report showed the man walking past police barricades at the consulate at 9:55 a.m. with several men trailing behind him. Khashoggi arrived at the consulate several hours later at 1:14 p.m., then disappeared while his fiancée waited outside for him.

A report Wednesday by the pro-government newspaper Yeni Safak, citing what it described as an audio recording of Khashoggi's slaying, said a Saudi team immediately accosted the 60-year-old journalist after he entered the consulate, cutting off his fingers and later decapitating him.

Previously leaked surveillance footage showed consular vehicles moving from the consulate to the consul general's official residence, some 2 kilometers (1.2 miles) away, a little under two hours after Khashoggi walked inside. The Sabah newspaper showed an image of the man at 4:53 p.m. at the consul's home, then at 5:15 p.m. checking out of a hotel. He later cleared airport security at 5:58 p.m.

Security services in Turkey have used pro-government media to leak details of Khashoggi's case, adding to the pressure on the kingdom.

The AP could not immediately verify the man's identity, though he's one of the individuals previously identified by Turkish authorities as being involved in the 15-man Saudi team that targeted Khashoggi.

Images shot by the Houston Chronicle and later distributed by the AP show the same man was in Prince Mohammed's entourage when he visited a Houston subdivision in April to see rebuilding efforts after Hurricane Harvey. The same man wore lapel pins, including one of the flags of Saudi Arabia and America intertwined, that other bodyguards accompanying Prince Mohammed wore on the trip.

The three-week trip across the U.S. saw Prince Mohammed meet with business leaders and celebrities, including Amazon billionaire Jeff Bezos, who now owns the Post.

The searches and the leaks in Turkish media have ensured the world's attention remains focused on what happened to Khashoggi, a Washington Post columnist who went into a self-imposed exile in the United States over the rise of Prince Mohammed. It also put further strains on the relationship between the kingdom, the world's largest oil exporter, and its main security guarantor, the U.S., as tensions with Iran and elsewhere in the Middle East remain high.

Flying back home after a visit to both Saudi Arabia and Turkey, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo remained positive Wednesday about an ongoing Saudi probe into Khashoggi's disappearance, but he stressed that answers are needed.

"Sooner's better than later for everyone," Pompeo said.

President Donald Trump, who initially came out hard on the Saudis over the disappearance but since has backed off, said Wednesday that the U.S. wanted Turkey to turn over any audio or video recording it had of Khashoggi's alleged killing "if it exists."

On Thursday, the Post published what it described as Khashoggi's last column in honor of the missing journalist.

In it, Khashoggi pointed to the muted international response to ongoing abuses against journalists by governments in the Middle East.

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"As a result, Arab governments have been given free rein to continue silencing the media at an increasing rate," Khashoggi wrote. He added: "The Arab world is facing its own version of an Iron Curtain, imposed not by external actors but through domestic forces vying for power."

Fraser reported from Ankara, Turkey, while Gambrell reported from Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

Farm-rich Salinas exemplifies California's housing struggles

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE, Associated Press

SALINAS, Calif. (AP) — Middle-school English teacher Maryam Powers doesn't take vacations. To earn additional money, she picks up an extra period of teaching when she can and mentors new hires. But to afford the mortgage on a \$330,000 three-bedroom home she purchased in Salinas in 2015, Powers still must rent out the master bedroom for \$800 a month.

"I work, work, work, work, work. I take every extra pay job I can do, and I never quite get ahead," said Powers, who shares the home with her boyfriend and their two young children.

Powers' family is reflective of many in this California city just inland from the tourism-rich Monterey Peninsula and an hour's drive south of Silicon Valley. It's surrounded by farmland that produces most of the world's lettuce and inspired hometown author John Steinbeck's "The Grapes of Wrath."

Salinas — known as "Salad Bowl of the World" — is one of America's least affordable places to live, exemplifying a housing crisis that plagues California's rural and urban areas alike. Salinas families earn a median income of \$69,000, while the region's 90,000 farmworkers bring in far less. They face a median home price of nearly \$550,000 and two-bedroom apartments costing roughly \$1,800 a month, according to Zillow.

Frustration is mounting over expensive housing, and some Californians hope a November ballot measure on rent control provides relief.

California politicians can't ignore the issue as they try to balance people's needs in a state that's home to extreme riches and the world's fifth-largest economy but also places like Salinas, where multiple generations pack single-family homes, people turn backyard sheds into illegal bedrooms and families worry over how to pay their bills.

Residents know rent control isn't the best long-term solution — economists widely agree it cuts down on building — but they're eager to help their struggling neighbors.

"Our rents are too high. Something needs to be done," said Noelia Verwulf, a Salinas resident who helped form a group called Viviendas Para Todx or "Housing for All" that's holding community forums, registering people to vote and advocating for housing-related ballot measures. "It's a temporary fix."

Four of the 11 ballot measures facing California voters, including rent control, relate to housing. One would authorize \$4 billion in bonds for affordable housing.

The Salinas metro area is one of seven in California that ranks in the top 10 least affordable in the U.S., according to an analysis of 2016 census data by Harvard's Joint Center for Housing Studies. Sprawling Los Angeles, wealthy Santa Barbara and rural Redding also make the list, highlighting the near inescapability of the crisis.

The federal government considers housing unaffordable if it eats up more than a third of a family's income. More than half of California renters and nearly a third of homeowners spend that much or more.

Salinas residents call the divide between the inland city of 157,000 and wealthier coastal cities such as Monterey the "lettuce curtain." More than 70 percent of Salinas is Hispanic or Latino, according to census data, and about 80 percent of the region's farmworkers live there year-round.

To save money, Powers, 39, and her boyfriend, Jean-Paul Varagnat, rented out the master bedroom of someone else's home — an arrangement she repeated at her own house to afford her \$2,300 monthly mortgage.

Varagnat watches their 2- and 3-year-old daughters to avoid \$1,000 in monthly child-care costs and takes classes at night toward an engineering degree.

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"I knew I was never going to be wealthy, but I didn't think it was going to be quite this difficult," Powers said.

There are mixed reactions in Salinas to Proposition 10, the ballot measure that would scrap a law restricting rent control on single-family homes and properties built after 1995 and open the door for new local rules about how much landlords can increase rents.

Democrat Anna Caballero, who represents Salinas in the state Assembly, opposes the measure but said she understands why the city's angry residents support it.

It feels like "the only thing you can do to get the attention of people who own rental housing units is to do something drastic," she said. "It's the wrong solution, but I understand why they grabbed it because it looks like a solution."

Caballero is running for the state Senate this November in the top swing district, a seat now held by a Republican who's reached term limits. If Caballero wins, Democrats could get back a supermajority that gives them power to raise taxes without Republican support and furthers the party's grip on power in California.

Interviews with roughly two dozen Salinas residents reveal a general belief that local, state and national politicians lack a grip on the reality of the region's housing crisis. Few said it would motivate them to vote for a different party, instead calling it one of many issues that revealed a need for fresh voices.

Verwulf's 20-year-old daughter, Victoria, said housing — not the midterm election — drove her to activism.

"We don't get to go to school and get involved in community organizing and activism because it's interesting and it's trendy," she said. "We have to do it now to survive because this is our life. This is our reality."

Carissa Purnell, director of the Alisal Family Resource Center that helps Salinas' low-income and farm-worker families navigate housing struggles, say children sleep on crates that their parents use to pick strawberries because they don't have beds.

"The things that are happening in our families are all stemming from these housing situations that we've created for each other, and the fact that no one is calling it out is frustrating," Purnell said.

Purnell's center is in east Salinas, a neighborhood of tightly packed, ranch-style homes. Cars overflow driveways and spread onto lawns, while garages brim with boxes that can't fit in cramped living areas.

Across town, three generations and 15 members of the Nunez family are jammed into a four-bedroom home. The patriarch, Jose Nunez, worked two jobs to afford the property in the 1980s.

Nunez and his wife share the home with three of their six children and their spouses and seven grandchildren. Each family has a bedroom.

Nunez didn't expect his children to be back at home but wouldn't turn them away when two lost their houses to foreclosure. His son Miguel now is struggling to find an affordable house for his family that won't require them to live paycheck to paycheck or restrict themselves from "outings, from wants from the baby, from vacations," Miguel's wife, Sasha, said.

"You get comfortable and you're happy here," she said one evening while feeding their nearly 2-year-old son in the noisy, bustling kitchen. "But there's nothing like having your own place."

One of Nunez's daughters, Araceli, also lives there with her husband and three children while they expand their small house down the street to fit their growing family. Buying a bigger home is too expensive, she said.

So her family of five shares a bedroom stuffed with two queen beds, a television and makeshift dressers for clothes that won't fit in the closet. A wooden chest for her infant son's clothes sits in the hallway.

Salinas soon hopes to build more than 10,000 homes on the northeast edge of town now covered by fields. Repurposing farmland, which abuts many neighborhoods, is seen as the best option for finding new space even as it takes away part of the city's lifeblood.

Still, some are concerned it won't be enough. A plan to bring commuter rail from the heart of Silicon Valley into Salinas could make the new homes a cheaper alternative for tech workers priced out of neighborhoods closer to work.

"We have an insatiable need for housing," City Councilman Scott Davis said. "No matter how much

housing we build, we'll never have enough."

This report is part of a series on how California's struggles with soaring housing costs, job displacement and a divide over liberal policies are affecting the November election. See full coverage at: <https://apnews.com/CaliforniaataCrossroads>

Their money worthless, Venezuela's desperate flee by foot

By CHRISTINE ARMARIO, Associated Press

PAMPLONA, Colombia (AP) — As night approached, Sandra Cadiz wrapped her shivering daughter in a blanket and prayed for a ride up the frigid Colombian mountaintop known as "the icebox."

Ten-year-old Angelis already had on nearly all of the clothes she'd brought for the 2,700-mile trek through four countries — two pairs of leggings, several T-shirts and a light jacket. They did little to shield the girl's thin frame from a biting wind.

The mother and daughter had fled Venezuela on foot, joining more than 650 migrants who walk away from the collapsing nation each day because they cannot afford a plane or bus ticket. Cadiz knew not everyone survived the trek across dangerous borders and an unforgiving terrain, but she feared staying in Venezuela would mean her already malnourished daughter going hungry.

Cadiz had less than \$6 tucked into her bra, all that was left of her life savings. An hour passed, and no one picked them up. Two hours passed, then three, as the temperature steadily edged toward freezing. Only one woman stopped in a beat-up silver Toyota, but she wanted \$12 for the two of them, which Cadiz couldn't pay.

After five hours, Cadiz and her daughter closed their eyes and braced for a long night on the ground outside a gas station. Cadiz, 51, had left behind a grown daughter who was pregnant, and the only world she knew. Now, faced with the bone-chilling tundra ahead where migrants are said to perish, she was terrified.

Quietly, she began to weep.

In one of the biggest migrations in the world today, more than 1.9 million people have fled poverty, hunger, crime and hyperinflation in Venezuela since 2015 — rivaling the flow of Middle Eastern and African refugees to Europe. President Nicolas Maduro denies any mass migration, calling it a media campaign against the government, even while his countrymen fill public parks and shelters throughout South America.

The toll of the Venezuelan migration has been largely invisible, with few keeping track of the dead and missing. United Nations figures show just two dozen migrant deaths or disappearances along routes Venezuelans frequent. But data collected by AP from various agencies in three countries found that deaths and disappearances could reach a few thousand, depending on how they are counted.

At least 235 Venezuelans were reported missing in Colombia, Peru and Ecuador over the last two years. Some 334 in Colombia were killed in homicides and accidents, and an unknown number are believed to have drowned aboard shoddy boats in the Caribbean. Another 2,841 died in Colombia from illnesses on the rise in Venezuela, like malaria and malnutrition. Although it's difficult to know exactly what role migration played, Carlos Valdes, the head of Colombia's forensic services office, said many arrive weakened by the exodus.

"They can't withstand a trip that hard, because the journey is very long," he said. "They don't eat and they die."

Cadiz had survived a lifetime of hardship and was determined not to become another casualty now. The daughter of a housewife and a cemetery worker, Cadiz got pregnant at 15 and dropped out of school to earn a living and raise her child. One of her husbands was killed in a robbery, another in a motorcycle accident. The eldest of her four children died at 25 in a hail of 20 bullets by an unknown assassin.

When Venezuela's oil-rich economy was booming, her small stand selling candy, cigarettes and cellphone minutes paid for meat on the dinner table. And when a charismatic socialist named Hugo Chavez became

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president in 1999, she enthusiastically added Venezuelan flags and hats to her sales racks.

In those early years, she bought chicken, sugar, milk, even Kraft mayonnaise. After she won a seat on a new local council, the government rewarded her with a free two-bedroom apartment, where she marveled at the clear water that came out of the faucets.

Her revolutionary fervor struck a nerve with an older sister, who was among the first wave of migrants to leave Venezuela as socialism took root.

"You poor thing," Cadiz remembers her saying before departing. "Keep believing in your chavismo."

It's hard for Cadiz to pinpoint exactly when she lost faith in the revolution, maybe because there are too many moments to count.

As Venezuela's economy soured, food became harder to find. Cadiz and her daughter frequently slept outside supermarkets to grab whatever was available when doors opened in the morning.

When Cadiz's pregnant daughter-in-law came down with a urinary infection, they couldn't find an antibiotic. Then the newborn got diaper rash because they couldn't afford diapers or detergent good enough to clean makeshift cloth ones. Cadiz worried the young family could be one illness away from disaster.

"Go or your child will die," Cadiz told her son.

They fled by foot to Peru this summer, a trek nearly equivalent to trekking from Los Angeles to New York City.

In the meantime, customers no longer had cash to spend at Cadiz's store, and she struggled to feed Angelis, who a doctor said was at least 10 pounds underweight. She wrote repeatedly to government ministers begging for help as a single mother, starting her letters with, "A revolutionary hello!" She got no response.

When Maduro went on television in August to announce a special bonus to help Venezuelans transition to a new currency with five fewer zeroes, Cadiz saw her chance. The money would be just enough for two bus tickets to the border with Colombia.

That night she approached Angelis with the idea. They could spend the money on something like a new pair of tennis shoes to replace her old blue ones with a hole in them. Or they could try to reunite with her brother in Peru.

A half-dozen of Angelis' friends already had left. Angelis missed foods like yogurt and ice cream, and saw the photographs of what her brother and his family were eating in Peru.

"Let's go, mama," Angelis told her. "I'll walk in my broken shoes."

The trek from Venezuela typically starts on one of hundreds of illegal dirt trails that snake across the nation's border with Colombia, because many Venezuelan migrants do not have passports to go through official crossings.

The illegal pathways are ruled by armed men who charge migrants about \$10 to be let through, frequently robbing or assaulting those who can't pay. Three days before Cadiz and Angelis embarked on their journey, police found the corpse of a 44-year-old father who had been shot five times.

The migrants then cross the murky Tachira River, where the current can be strong enough to pull them under.

Cadiz had a passport, but Angelis didn't. She decided to try the journey with one passport and the handwritten death certificate for Angelis' father. She bid goodbye to her older daughter, who accused her mother of abandoning her, and boarded the bus to the border with deepening trepidation.

At the Colombian border, Angelis and her mother got separated amid a swarm of migrants. A frantic Cadiz finally spotted her daughter on the other side; Angelis had walked quickly through in a group of children without anyone asking her for a passport.

They spent their first night in Colombia at the Cucuta bus terminal, where they watched in horror as an angry Colombian chased a Venezuelan migrant with a machete. The next day they set off walking toward the mountain.

Some 142 Venezuelans have been reported missing in Colombia so far this year — up from 85 in all of

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2017, according to Colombia's forensic services office. Facebook groups are filled with posts from Venezuelans looking for friends and family members who took off walking and haven't been seen again.

"I have no other choice but to look here for help," a woman wrote recently, sharing a photo of a young man who crossed illegally and hadn't been heard from again. "His relatives are in complete despair not knowing what happened."

The numbers for the dead are also growing. In Cucuta alone, there are 37 bodies believed to belong to Venezuelans that authorities have been unable to identify. Valdes, the forensic medicine chief, said investigators can typically piece together enough information to know if someone is Venezuelan, but not their name.

"They die and we don't know who they are," Valdes said.

As midnight approached, Cadiz rested a cheek against her daughter's head and closed her eyes, but sleep in an ice-cold gas station parking lot surrounded by strangers was next to impossible.

The next morning, most of the migrants waited to hitch a ride rather than walk, too afraid of getting stranded in the lonely mountain plateau. But Cadiz didn't want to spend another night there. As soon as the sun rose, she set off with Angelis and another migrant.

Within a few miles, the man's feet began to blister. He took off his shoes, tore the plastic from a soda bottle into the shape of two soles and ripped up a T-shirt to tie the makeshift flip flops onto his feet. As they walked, the sound of the plastic creaking against the concrete echoed across the barren landscape.

Angelis stuck her thumb out to passing trucks. They were easily identified as Venezuelans because of their tricolor backpacks, handed out en masse by the socialist government to public school children. Families in SUVs, farmers and truckers with empty payloads all passed them by.

"They don't stop," Angelis sighed.

Along the narrow shoulder of the road were traces of the migrants who'd come before: Tennis shoes with broken soles, a ripped-up black suitcase, the wheels missing, and a rock wall with carvings of names of people and places.

Lara. Merida. David from Valencia.

Five hours later, they dropped their bags on the floor of another gas station. They were three days into their journey and barely a fifth of the way to Peru. Now they had to cross the coldest part of the mountain.

The mountain plateau known in Colombia as the Berlin paramo is one of the most feared parts of the journey, with temperatures that can dip to 10 degrees below freezing. Cadiz and Angelis heard multiple stories of death from fellow migrants. In some accounts, it was a mother and daughter who had fallen asleep and frozen; in others, an entire family.

Anny Uribe, a woman who runs a refuge for migrant walkers, said she has heard direct witness accounts of at least 17 people dying in the paramo. A Red Cross coordinator for the region said they have no bodies or other evidence that anyone has died. But officials concede the deaths may never have been reported by migrants who entered Colombia illegally.

Migrant Isaia Alberto Munoz, 34, said he saw a family digging a hole and crying along the side of the road, as they buried someone wrapped in a white blanket with red flowers. His group decided they could not stop.

"We couldn't withstand the cold," he said.

As Cadiz and Angelis walked steadily onward, Alba Camacho and a friend spotted them along the side of the road. At first she drove by. They only had room in the car for two people, and Angelis and her mother were walking with three other migrants.

"But the girl and the woman?" her friend asked.

The 27-year-old teacher feared none of the migrants would make it out of the paramo before night fell if they had to walk the entire way, especially the girl. They turned around for Angelis and Cadiz.

Camacho wrapped Angelis in her own thick blue coat and bought them empanadas. They drove over the mountaintop inside a warm SUV. When they arrived at the city of Bucaramanga, Camacho and her friend took them home rather than dropping them off at a public park with hundreds of other homeless

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Venezuelans.

That night, snug together in the kind stranger's living room, Cadiz suddenly heard Angelis talking in her sleep.

"I don't want to walk anymore!" she cried out.

Back on the road early the next morning, Cadiz quickly lost her orientation. She knew only what her son had told her: Take the Ruta del Sol — the Sun Route — through Cali to Ecuador. She approached an elderly man and asked, "Which way to Cali?", eliciting a confused response. Her question was the equivalent of standing on a New York street and asking, "Which way to Cleveland?"

She and Angelis took their best guess and soldiered on, stopping a mile later to make a sign on a discarded box of Zev tomato sauce. Angelis, tired and frustrated, instructed her mom on what to write.

"Blessed driver, please help us with a ride," Cadiz wrote in magic marker, misspelling the word "blessed."

Angelis bobbed the sign up and down at every passing vehicle. Only a bicyclist bothered to stop, handing them the equivalent of a dollar in pesos. Two hours and almost three miles later, Angelis demanded to stop walking.

"Don't you want to get home?" her mother asked, urging her to get up from the curb.

"What home?" she shot back angrily.

Angelis reluctantly kept walking. About a mile ahead, with the help of a police officer, they got a lift from a passing motorist to Lebrija, the pineapple capital of Colombia, where the scent of the sweet fruit filled the air.

They stopped at another gas station where a Venezuelan woman with her husband and nine-year-old son was desperately trying to cool down her feverish baby in the shade of a tree. Cadiz and her daughter were also trying to escape the suffocating heat when a man in a black sombrero gave them 50,000 Colombian pesos — the equivalent of \$16.

"I hope you never vote for Maduro again," he told them.

They walked and hitched more rides, but the progress was agonizingly slow. By the next evening, they were barely a quarter of the way through Colombia to Ecuador, the next country on their route. As the sun began to set in a place known only as "Kilometer 17," Angelis and her mom bickered.

"Which is the Sun Route?" the girl asked.

"Oh, Angelis," Cadiz said, flustered. "I don't know!"

They made a small bed of blankets under the tin roof of a mechanic's workshop. The two moved repeatedly all night trying to keep dry as a fierce storm blew in.

"We're trapped," Cadiz told her son in a WhatsApp voice message. But she had no cell signal, so the cry for help didn't go through.

As on almost every night on the trip, Cadiz wept. That night, Angelis sobbed, too.

The road leading to the Sun Route was long and empty. But Cadiz found a small coffee shack and an oil trucker who, despite fears of being fined by police for transporting migrants, took them to the main drag of a small town called San Pedro de la Paz. It was there that Cadiz decided to switch her strategy: She had collected 250,000 pesos — about \$82 — from generous Colombians and would use the money for buses.

That day Cadiz and her daughter made their way onto three buses, often working out a two-for-one price as long as Angelis sat on her lap. When they finally arrived in Cali, the two were fast asleep.

"Cali! Cali terminal!" the driver cried out, trying to rustle them awake. When they emerged several minutes later, their worn bags were the last ones waiting on the sidewalk.

The Cali bus station was filled with Venezuelan migrants sleeping outside on flattened cardboard boxes in a crime-riddled area. Cadiz quickly bought two bus tickets to Ecuador. Ecuador's government had recently started requiring passports, but a court had temporarily suspended the policy. Aware of this, the passengers were in a desperate quest to enter Ecuador while they still had a shot.

Cranky children cried throughout the 12-hour ride. At the border, Cadiz and Angelis once again anxiously

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made their way toward the migration line for families.

As they waited, a man with a stack of Venezuelan bills said he'd buy any she might have. Cadiz took out all that was left of her life savings. The man counted the notes and offered her fifty cents.

She refused. She couldn't stand taking so little for all she'd earned.

As her mom snaked through four hours of lines, Angelis fell asleep on the floor, her head lying awkwardly on a pile of bags. When Cadiz finally reached a migration agent, she handed over her passport, her husband's death certificate and her daughter's national identity card. The agent stared at the card, handed it back without a word and signed off on a special document that would let Angelis enter without a passport.

Cadiz's relief was visible as she and her daughter posed for photos below a "Thanks for Visiting Ecuador" sign. But minutes later they realized that amid the frenzy of crossing, they'd lost Angelis' national ID card.

It was the only photo identification they had for Angelis. They still had one more border and 1,288 miles (2,073 kilometers) to cross.

In Ecuador, Cadiz and Angelis headed toward a Red Cross tent already sheltering dozens of migrants. They learned a bus would be leaving for the Peruvian border that night — provided for free by the Ecuadorean government in an apparent bid to both help the migrants and get them out of the country.

Cadiz added their names to the long list of Venezuelans hoping for a seat. Women and children were instructed to board first, sparking tensions among a group of men.

"There are people who have been waiting for six days!" cried a man who said he'd spent 18 days walking to Ecuador.

"There are also people who should be given a priority," a man carrying a clipboard quipped back.

Twenty hours later, the mother and daughter emerged hungry and suffering from nausea and indigestion. A Red Cross doctor stationed near the border diagnosed Angelis with gastroenteritis and gave her a bottle of Bactrim.

Eight days after fleeing Caracas, Angelis and her mother had reached their final border. Cadiz didn't know what Peruvian migration officials would say when they found out Angelis didn't have a single photo ID, let alone a passport. But having made it this far, she felt confident God would guide her.

The next morning they set out walking to the Peruvian migration checkpoint several miles away. Several thousand migrants waited, but they were again put in a special line for families with children. When they got to the front about an hour later, Cadiz pulled her documents out of a crinkled Hello Kitty folder.

"First time you're in Peru?" a migration officer asked Cadiz.

"Yes," she replied.

She instructed Cadiz to place her fingers on a digital scanner. Angelis impatiently showed her how. When it was her turn, the girl grinned ear to ear at the camera.

"Calm down," the agent told her coldly. "Don't smile."

Angelis pursed her lips together into a straight line.

On board a double-decker bus filled with Venezuelans for the 18-hour ride to Lima, Cadiz and her daughter feasted on two hamburgers and a Peruvian drink. At one stop, Cadiz saw her daughter staring at a food stand with fried chicken and soda and bought her some. By the time they reached Lima, they didn't have a cent in their pockets.

"I arrived by a miracle," Cadiz said.

Angelis' older brother, Leonardo Araujo, his wife and their 1-year-old daughter welcomed them with an embrace. Cadiz saw they had gained weight, and Angelis admired the toddler's sparkly silver shoes.

They picked up their bags for the final walk to the Lima neighborhood they hoped to call home.

EPILOGUE:

A month after arriving in Peru, Angelis and her mom are back on the move. The landlord kicked them out of the tiny room where Cadiz's son lives when they couldn't pay more rent.

In one desperate moment, Cadiz considered going back to Venezuela, but relatives there told her things had only gotten worse.

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They now live in a shelter and walk the streets each day selling knick-knacks. Still, there have been glimmers of the life they hoped for in Peru.

Angelis has gained 11 pounds.

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

Your daily look at late-breaking news, upcoming events and the stories that will be talked about today:

1. MAN LINKED TO SAUDI PRINCE AT CONSULATE WHEN WRITER VANISHED

A man who previously traveled with Mohammed bin Salman's entourage to the U.S. entered the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul just before writer Jamal Khashoggi vanished there, published images show.

2. CRIMEA SCHOOL ATTACK PROBE WIDENS

Authorities are searching for a possible accomplice of the student who carried out a shooting and bomb attack on a vocational school, killing 20.

3. 'I'LL WALK IN MY BROKEN SHOES'

AP chronicles Sandra Cadiz and her 10-year-old daughter's 2,700-mile trek from Venezuela to Peru, the two among nearly 2 million migrants to attempt the perilous journey in the past three years.

4. MARIJUANA INDUSTRY EYES GLOBAL PROSPECTS

Canada's decision to legalize marijuana could influence other countries — namely Mexico and New Zealand — as they mull whether to end their own bans on the drug.

5. WHERE IT'S LEAST AFFORDABLE TO LIVE

The city of Salinas is one of America's most expensive places to live and some Californians hope a November ballot measure on rent control provides relief, AP learns.

6. 'BASICALLY, WE LOST 'OLD FLORIDA.' IT'S ALL GONE'

Stunned and teary-eyed, residents of Mexico Beach return home for the first time since Hurricane Michael and are finding very little.

7. JOB GROWTH NO CURE FOR POVERTY

New research suggests that poor Americans are frequently left behind even when their cities or communities benefit from hiring booms.

8. 'THIS IS WHY I STRUGGLE'

Hameeda Danesh, a candidate in Afghanistan's parliamentary elections, says the outcome is critical to bring about change for women in the ultraconservative country.

9. RED SOX OUTFIELDER SAVES THE DAY FOR BOSTON

Andrew Benintendi makes a diving catch in left field with the bases loaded for the final out, and Boston holds off Houston 8-6 to take a 3-1 lead in the ALCS.

10. THIS ONE'S FOR THE GIRLS

CMT honors all female stars, from Loretta Lynn to Carrie Underwood and Kelsea Ballerini, at their annual Artists of the Year show in an empowering night of lifting up each other.

Analysis: With 'America First,' where do human rights rank?

By ZEKE MILLER, JONATHAN LEMIRE and CATHERINE LUCEY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — If it's an "America First" presidency, where does that rank human rights?

President Donald Trump's refusal to put public pressure on Saudi Arabia over the disappearance of journalist Jamal Khashoggi is raising a question that has dogged his foreign policy. In dealing with Russia, across Asia and, this week, in the Mideast, Trump has often appeared comfortable downplaying concerns about rights abuses and dismissing the importance of U.S. moral leadership. The onetime real estate mogul is as likely to let U.S. financial or security interests guide his choices and his words.

In an Associated Press interview Tuesday, Trump repeated the Saudi royals' denials of any involvement in Khashoggi's apparent killing and suggested he trusted them.

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"I spoke to the crown prince, so you have that. He said he and his father knew nothing about it. And that was very important," Trump said. He compared blame directed at the Saudis over Khashoggi, who Turkish officials have said was killed in the Saudis' Istanbul consulate, to the allegations of sexual assault leveled against Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh during his confirmation hearing. Both, he suggested, had been considered "guilty until proven innocent."

Not many U.S. leaders would cast Saudi Arabia as innocent. Saudi Arabia is engaged in a bloody civil war in Yemen that has killed thousands of civilians and exacerbated a famine that has killed many more. Domestically, the absolute monarchy strictly regulates speech and dress, and its security services have been accused of torture.

Trump has shown no interest in calling out the kingdom over Khashoggi — or calling out Russian President Vladimir Putin on assassinations or North Korea's Kim Jong Un on political prisoners. Where past presidents in both parties used their office to promote U.S. values and ideals — even when their action didn't align — Trump has rarely seized the chance. Instead, he says what others would not, openly embracing the compromises he justifies as best for the American bottom line.

"We're not going to walk away from Saudi Arabia. I don't want to do that," he told Fox Business News on Wednesday.

Trump made clear that he was prioritizing the nation's economy, not morality.

"I don't like stopping massive amounts of money that is being poured into our country," Trump said last week. "I know they are talking about different kinds of sanctions, but (the Saudis) are spending \$110 billion on military equipment and on things that create jobs for this country. I don't like the concept of stopping an investment of \$110 billion into the United States."

White House aides have suggested that while Trump is reluctant to criticize certain world leaders publicly — most notably when he did not upbraid Putin at their Helsinki summit — he has been willing to deliver tough messages behind closed doors. They have pointed to his discipline with Kim and Egypt's Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, two authoritarian leaders who eventually released Americans held in their custody.

Still, Trump's transactional approach isn't sitting well with some of his Republican allies in Congress. His party for years championed the idea that the U.S. had a duty to promote U.S. values and human rights and even to intervene when they are challenged. Some Republicans have urged Trump not to abandon that view.

"I'm open to having Congress sit down with the president if this all turns out to be true, and it looks like it is, ... and saying, 'How can we express our condemnation without blowing up the Middle East?'" Sen. John Kennedy, R-La., said. "Our foreign policy has to be anchored in values."

Trump dismisses the notion that he buddies up to dictators, but he does not express a sense that U.S. leadership extends beyond the U.S. border.

In an interview with CBS' "60 Minutes" that aired Sunday, he brushed aside his own assessment that Putin was "probably" involved in assassinations and poisonings.

"But I rely on them," he said. "It's not in our country."

Relations between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia are complex. The two nations are entwined on energy, military, economic and intelligence issues. The Trump administration has aggressively courted the Saudis for support of its Middle East agenda to counter Iranian influence, fight extremism and try to forge peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

One key for the U.S. administration has been the bond between two young princes. Trump son-in-law Jared Kushner and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman are frequently in contact, and their relationship played a role in Riyadh being the unlikely first stop on the new American president's maiden international trip in 2017. Trump, despite endorsing a travel ban on many Muslim-majority countries, became the first U.S. president to make his official first trip to an Islamic nation.

The over-the-top greeting Trump received in Riyadh — complete with sword dances, gleaming palaces and images of him on the sides of buildings and highway signs — set the template for how he would be received on future foreign trips, with hosts leaning on flattery and pageantry.

"If you look at Saudi Arabia, they're an ally, and they're a tremendous purchaser of, not only military

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equipment, but other things," Trump said Wednesday. "When I went there, they committed to purchase \$450 billion worth of things and \$110 billion worth of military. Those are the biggest orders in the history of this country, probably the history of the world. ... And you remember that day in Saudi Arabia where that commitment was made."

In Mexico Beach after Michael, some coming home find no home

By JAY REEVES, Associated Press

MEXICO BEACH, Fla. (AP) — With stunned faces and tears, residents of hard-hit Mexico Beach returned home for the first time Wednesday about a week after Hurricane Michael hit to find pieces of their lives scattered across the sand and a community altered.

Nancy Register sobbed uncontrollably after finding no trace of the large camper where she'd lived with her husband. She was particularly distraught over the loss of an old, black-and-white photo of her mother, who died of cancer.

Husband Taylor Register said he found nothing but a stool that he uses for cutting his hair, a hose and a keepsake rock that was given to him by a friend 40 years ago.

"That's my belongings," he said, pointing to a small pile beside his red pickup truck. Choking up, he said: "I appreciate God humbling me. Everybody needs it."

Just up the road, tears ran down Lanie Eden's face as she and husband Ron Eden sifted through sand in search of items they left before evacuating from the small beach house they've rented each October for years. They didn't find much - just a large pack of toilet paper that somehow stayed dry and a son's camp chair.

The Edens, who are from Fort Knox, Kentucky, and are temporarily staying in Alabama, were stunned to see mountains of debris and countless destroyed buildings as they drove into town for the first time. In a state of condominium towers, Mexico Beach was one of the few remaining places with small houses and a 1950s feel.

"Basically, we lost 'old Florida.' It's all gone," said Lanie Eden.

Residents among the community of about 1,200 people who rode out the storm at home have been in Mexico Beach since Michael hit. But officials used the city's Facebook page to tell others to stay away for a week after the Category 4 storm ravaged the beach town with 155 mph (250 kph) winds and a strong storm surge.

State emergency management officials said some 124,500 customers across the Panhandle were still without power Wednesday morning and 1,157 remained in shelters.

In Bay County, home to Mexico Beach and Panama City, more than half of the households and businesses remained without electricity. Inland, in Calhoun County, 98 percent of the customers didn't have power Wednesday morning, according to the emergency management website. And in Jackson County, which borders Alabama and Georgia, about 83 percent were without power.

In the meantime, in many areas devastated by the hurricane, law enforcement officials are battling looting of homes and businesses.

Bay County Sheriff's Maj. Jimmy Stanford said deputies have arrested about 10 looters each night since the storm hit. In some parts of the county, residents have spray-painted signs warning that "looters will be shot."

Panama City resident Wes Allen said looters have been a constant problem at the badly damaged motel where he is staying with his wife and three children. Residents have formed a nighttime patrol to keep an eye out for thieves.

"We've got looters breaking in and stealing whatever they can," he said. Allen said he hasn't reported the thefts to police because authorities seem so busy with other things.

Often the looters have been armed, Stanford said.

"Most of our officers lost their homes, have been working 16- to 18-hour shifts with no sleep, no shower, and now they're encountering armed individuals," he said. "It's a stressful time for everyone in Bay County."

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The storm killed at least 16 people in Florida, most of them in the coastal county that took a direct hit from the storm, state emergency authorities announced Tuesday. That's in addition to at least 10 deaths in Georgia, North Carolina and Virginia.

The state's tally did not provide details of how the victims' deaths were storm-related, and The Associated Press was not immediately able to confirm those details for all of them. The AP's tally of deaths, in which authorities have confirmed details of how people died, stood at eight in Florida, and 18 overall including other states.

In Mexico Beach, what had been a town of about 1,200, residents don't expect power or anything else anytime soon.

Carlton Hundley, 25, returned to the house he rented with his girlfriend Connie Huff to find nothing but a long pile of shattered wood. What few possessions they found, including one of his shoes, were scattered across the ground.

"I knew it was bad, I'd already seen the pictures. But it's a lot more than I thought," he said.

Roxie Cline, 65, was overcome with emotion as she tried to describe the destruction in Mexico Beach, where she and her husband had lived for three years.

"I can't, I can't," she said, tearing up. "It's devastating. You lose everything. Everybody has."

Associated Press writers Brendan Farrington in Tallahassee, Florida, and Freida Frisaro in Miami contributed to this report.

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

Benintendi, Red Sox hold off Astros 8-6 for 3-1 ALCS lead

By KRISTIE RIEKEN, AP Sports Writer

HOUSTON (AP) — Andrew Benintendi charged in hard and left his feet.

Make the catch, Boston wins.

If not ... no telling.

On this night, though, even a ball the Red Sox didn't grab went their way.

Benintendi made a diving play in left field with the bases loaded for the final out, and Boston held off the Houston Astros 8-6 Wednesday to take a 3-1 lead in the AL Championship Series.

"I thought I could catch it and timed it up well," Benintendi said. "At that point, it was either do or die."

Boosted by a questionable fan interference call and another home run from Jackie Bradley Jr. in a gripping, back-and-forth game, the Red Sox moved within one victory of their first World Series trip since winning the 2013 title.

Craig Kimbrel earned a shaky six-out save, helped by a rocket throw from right fielder Mookie Betts and Benintendi's daring grab of Alex Bregman's sinking liner. Had the ball scooted past Benintendi, it easily could have scored three runs and won the game for Houston.

"Beni took a shot. Had a great jump. And he got it," Boston manager Alex Cora said.

With that, the Red Sox improved to 4-0 on the road in these playoffs and inched closer to eliminating the defending World Series champions.

"This game was incredibly good on both sides — great at-bats, great plays," Astros manager AJ Hinch said. "The difference in that game literally was a couple inches."

Game 5 is Thursday night in Houston, where ace Justin Verlander will pitch for the Astros with their season on the line. David Price, who was warming up in the bullpen late in Game 4, will start for Boston on three days' rest after Chris Sale was ruled out Wednesday while recovering from a stomach illness.

Bradley hit a go-ahead homer in the sixth inning, his latest huge swing for a Red Sox team that got knocked out of last year's playoffs by Houston in the Division Series.

Boston has won three straight after a Game 1 loss, and this one came with some controversy.

Astros star Jose Altuve was denied a potential two-run homer in the first inning and called out after fans

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reaching for the ball interfered with Betts' attempt at a leaping catch.

"Jose pays the biggest price, because the trajectory of the ball looked like it was going to leave the ballpark," Hinch said. "Changed that whole inning."

Boston trailed by one with two outs in the sixth when Christian Vazquez doubled to deep right-center. Center fielder George Springer nearly made a jumping grab, but the ball glanced off his glove.

Bradley, who hit a grand slam in Game 3 and a three-run double in Game 2, put the Red Sox on top 6-5 with his soaring shot to right field on the next pitch from rookie Josh James.

"I'm very proud of him, what he's done in the second part of the season and what he's done tonight and in this series. It's amazing," Cora said about Bradley.

Boston got some insurance in the seventh when Lance McCullers walked in a run after taking over for Ryan Pressly with the bases loaded and two outs. J.D. Martinez added an RBI single in the eighth.

Houston cut the margin to two on an RBI groundout by Altuve in the eighth. Right fielder Josh Reddick made a diving catch of Betts' liner with the bases loaded to end the top of the ninth.

Red Sox starter Rick Porcello allowed seven hits and four runs over four innings in a wild game that took 4 hours, 33 minutes. Joe Kelly was the winner after giving up a run in the fifth.

Rafael Devers and Xander Bogaerts had two RBIs apiece for the Red Sox, who have outscored their opponents 36-12 on the road this postseason.

Houston's Carlos Correa, who has struggled with back problems for months, had three hits and two RBIs for his first multihit game this postseason. Springer and Tony Kemp each hit a solo homer for the Astros, who left 13 runners on base.

A rusty Charlie Morton gave up three hits, three runs and two walks in just 2 1/3 innings. He also threw two wild pitches in his first outing for the Astros since the regular-season finale on Sept. 30.

James took over and yielded three runs while striking out five in 3 2/3 innings during his second post-season appearance.

Devers' two-run single gave the Red Sox two runs in the first inning for the third straight game.

The disputed call came in the bottom of the inning when umpires ruled a fan interfered with Betts as he tried to snag Altuve's drive above the right-field wall.

"I'm 100 percent positive I was going to be able to catch that one," Betts said. "I jumped and went over, reached my hand up, I felt like somebody was kind of pushing my glove out of the way or something."

Crew chief Joe West, working the right-field line, signaled fan interference after the ball ricocheted back onto the field.

"The spectator reached out of the stands and hit him over the playing field and closed his glove," West said. "That's why I called spectator interference."

The call stood after a replay review that lasted 3 minutes, 13 seconds.

"The replay official said I was right," West explained. "That's all. He said I have nothing that can change it."

Altuve was ruled out and Springer was sent back to first base.

Cora, for one, wasn't surprised.

"Joe calls it right away and I saw the replay," he said. "And I said, no way they're going to overturn this. I was pretty sure."

Altuve was disappointed with the call but not mad at the fan.

"I don't have anything against him," he said. "He's another Astros fan rooting for us. Appreciate he was trying to help me."

Kemp gave Houston its first lead at 4-3 in the fourth when he knocked a slider from Porcello over the wall in the right-field corner.

Benintendi's second double came in the fifth and he scored on a two-out single by Bogaerts to tie it at 4.

Correa's run-scoring single made it 5-4 in the bottom of the inning.

SMALL FRATERNITY

Bradley joined Nomar Garciaparra (1998) as the only Red Sox players to have at least three RBIs in three straight postseason games.

FLIPPING OUT

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Red Sox first baseman Steve Pearce flipped head over heels into the Astros dugout chasing a foul ball hit by Reddick in the seventh. Pearce's legs crashed into a bench but he didn't hit his head. Several Astros then aided Pearce, with Verlander grabbing him by the hand and helping him up after the spill.

UP NEXT

Verlander is 6-1 with a 2.44 ERA in eight postseason appearances for the Astros. He allowed two hits and two runs over six innings for the win in Houston's 7-2 victory in Game 1 at Fenway Park.

More AP MLB: <https://apnews.com/tag/MLB> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Follow the trek of Venezuelan migrants fleeing on foot

By **CHRISTINE ARMARIO, Associated Press**

About 1.9 million Venezuelans have fled their collapsing nation since 2015 in one of the largest migrations in the world in recent years. The most desperate cannot afford a bus or plane ticket, and so they risk their lives to escape on foot.

Every day, more than 650 migrants start on the walk out of Venezuela. They rush illegally across the border with Colombia, frequently encountering armed criminals. They walk for miles along roads, carrying their belongings. They wrap themselves in blankets, bracing against the cold of frigid mountains.

For nine days, a team of Associated Press journalists followed a Venezuelan mother and daughter as they crossed three borders and nearly 2,700 miles (3,460 kilometers) — about the distance from Los Angeles to New York City.

This is an account of the people, places and dangers migrants encounter along the way.

A PERILOUS CROSSING

VILLA DEL ROSARIO, Colombia — Most Venezuelans buy a bus ticket to the border with Colombia but cannot cross through an official checkpoint because they lack the proper documents, such as a passport.

Instead they traverse one of hundreds of illegal dirt road crossings that are ruled by armed criminals dressed in green fatigues. These illegal groups frequently rob and assault migrants who can't pay the equivalent of \$10 in Colombian pesos or Venezuelan bolivars, or about half what a Venezuelan earning the minimum wage might make in a month.

Aurelix Lira, 20, and her boyfriend were robbed of their cellphone after being unable to hand over any cash.

"You'll have to pay!" said an armed man who rummaged through their belongings.

Authorities have struggled to wrestle control of the no-man's land between both nations. In the meantime, Venezuelans are being recruited into illegal activities such as drug trafficking.

"They are very much in the wind," said Jeremy McDermott, executive director of InSight Crime, a group that studies organized crime in Latin America, "which makes them extremely vulnerable to exploitation and recruitment by organized crime."

THE WAILING WALL

LOS PATIOS, Colombia — The small stand where Martha Elena Alarcon, 54, sells soda, chips and sugarcane juice is where many migrants fleeing by foot stop for a moment's rest. When Venezuelans began arriving at her doorstep about a year ago, she'd give them water and bread.

As the numbers skyrocketed, she asked them to write a message.

The walls of the tin roof building are now covered in hundreds of messages written on nearly worthless Venezuelan bolivars and bright colored sheets of paper.

Five travelers writing in black ink said they were "walking to a better life thanks to our president, who is either blind or a brute and making everyone in Venezuela flee." One pregnant woman traveling with her 3-year-old old daughter, Sofia, said the journey had been trying and wrote, "God please protect us."

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The list of names in each note is one of the only written records documenting who is walking and where. Alarcon recalled how one woman came across the name of a cousin she had not heard from in one of the messages.

"She's OK!" the migrant told her in relief.

A FRIGID PARAMO

TONA, Colombia — The road leading to the city of Bucaramanga passes through a frigid paramo known as "the icebox" that has struck fear into the hearts of migrants unprepared for temperatures down to 10 degrees below freezing.

Marta Duque, 55, welcomes upward of 300 migrants a day into her home in Pamplona, where she gives them food and warm clothes and warns against sleeping outside.

"They are risking their lives and those of their children," she said.

Carlos Valdes, the head of Colombia's forensic medicine office, said he believes walkers have died from the cold but was unable to provide a number. One migrant told the AP he saw a family burying someone on the side of the road. Others have described seeing crosses and stones bearing names and death dates.

Jonathan Suarez, 23, sat with tears streaming down his cheeks as he tried to get a ride. The previous day he had walked 25 hours and slept on the side of the roadway. The thought of his two girls back home - ages 3 and 8 months - kept him going.

"I must press on, for them," he said.

PARQUE DEL AGUA

BUCARAMANGA, Colombia — Public parks across Colombia have turned into makeshift shelters for migrants with nowhere else to go.

On any given day, about 400 Venezuelans convene in the Parque del Agua in Bucaramanga, many fresh from long walks and eager to rest. Pastors deliver sermons and hand out Bibles. Charity groups come with hot meals in Styrofoam containers. And Venezuelans who are complete strangers sleep side by side on top of flattened cardboard boxes.

In some parts of the country, authorities have forcibly removed migrants who convene in public spaces. But many Venezuelans say they are unable to afford even the simplest lodging.

Geraldine Aguilera, 22, a former architecture student, arrived at the park after walking and hitching rides from the border with her sister.

"It's hard sleeping next to people you don't know," she said. "You don't know if they're going to hurt you. But necessity forces you."

ISLANDS OF REFUGE

PEROLES, Colombia — Migrants traverse through extreme temperature changes as they travel through frigid mountaintops and scorching, flat valleys.

As they walk through remote country roads, freighter trucks barrel by, coming within a few feet of Venezuelans trekking along the narrow shoulder.

Much of the journey through Colombia takes them through isolated farmland where gas stations have turned into small islands of refuge for hot, exhausted migrants.

Gas station attendant Manuel Velasquez has seen the migration crisis up close from where he fills up trucks in rural Peroles. Many of the migrants he sees come with their feet blistered and knees swollen, on the verge of collapse from hunger and dehydration. The woman who stands out to him the most was being pushed in a wheelchair to Ecuador for cancer treatment.

"I'm terrified by what is happening," he said.

GETTING A RIDE

LA DORADA, Colombia — When they get lucky, migrants hitch rides or collect enough money to buy bus tickets to reach their next destination.

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One of the first rides for migrant Sandra Cadiz and her daughter came on the back of a caravan-style truck, where they clung to the side wooden panels every time the vehicle braked and swerved.

On another long, hot day, a Venezuelan man took them on the back of his motorcycle to a gas station. And about halfway through Colombia, generous bikers, drivers and others who spotted Cadiz and her daughter on the side of the road had given them enough money to purchase bus tickets.

But the vast majority of trucks and cars don't stop for the Venezuelans they see walking. Many have heard stories about migrants committing crimes. Truckers say they'd be fired if bosses found out they were carrying migrants and that their every move is tracked by GPS devices. Others fear incurring heavy fines from police.

DESPERATE MESSAGES

CALI, Colombia — A cellphone is a luxury most poor migrant walkers don't have, so those interviewed by the AP often asked to use their phones to send messages to relatives.

One woman cried into a reporter's cellphone as she sent a message to her mother and toddler son back in Caracas after two days of walking.

"All of this is for you both, mami," she sobbed. "I love you so much."

Another young man arriving by bus in Cali sold his phone to get money for the journey. He used an AP phone to contact the only person he knew in the crime-ridden city — his friend's sister.

"It's Jesus," he wrote her.

"Jesus who?" she responded.

She eventually recognized his name and gave him her address. In a few subsequent messages with his friend, he said his stomach was in knots.

"I've gone about two days without eating," he said.

HOPING TO CROSS

RUMICHACA INTERNATIONAL BRIDGE. Colombia/Ecuador border — The bus ride from Cali to Ipiales was full of Venezuelan families with young children crossing into Ecuador.

When they reached the Rumichaca International Bridge, the migrants filed into long lines and stood at least four hours in the cold. Some wore socks for mittens and used bath towels as blankets.

Many women with kids were turned back because they did not have written authorization from their children's father.

Those who did make it across found refugee-style Red Cross tents on the other side. Women and children were quickly escorted onto buses paid for by the Ecuadorean government that would take them all the way to the border with Peru.

Many men would have to wait several days longer.

A LONG WAIT

AGUAS VERDES, Peru — At the crowded Peru-Ecuador border, many young migrants who had walked for weeks complained they'd been waiting days for authorities to process their entry request — and in the meantime weren't given any food or water.

As 21-year-old Jean Paul Flores spoke of his shared frustration to the AP, dozens cheered and applauded in agreement. Flores worked at an international call center in Venezuela and left behind his five-months-pregnant wife. He knew if he stayed, he wouldn't be able to buy diapers for his baby.

"Staying and accompanying her during nine months of pregnancy would mean sacrificing the childhood of my baby," he said. "It's not worth it."

He urged Peruvian officials to let them through swiftly.

"We just want to obtain our objective: To save our families from what is happening there," he said.

SEARCHING FOR A NEW HOME

LIMA, Peru — The capital city of Peru — some 2,700 miles from where migrants start out on foot — is

the final destination for growing numbers of migrants.

Over 400,000 Venezuelans now live in the Andean nation, most arriving over the last year. Many are drawn by Peru's economy, which is expected to grow nearly 4 percent this year, faster than other countries in the region.

While some migrants hope they'll return to Venezuela, most interviewed by the AP believed their move would be permanent. Their only hope was to earn enough money so they could bring the rest of their family, too.

Migrant Sandra Cadiz and her daughter initially stayed with her older son and his family, but the landlord of the tiny room didn't want so many people living there. In the week since they've lived in two different shelters.

"I have a home in Venezuela," Cadiz says. "But I don't have one here."

Baby born after Michael starts life in Walmart parking lot

By DAVID GOLDMAN and JAY REEVES, Associated Press

PANAMA CITY, Fla. (AP) — Their home full of soggy furniture and mosquitoes, Wilmer Capps was desperate to find shelter for his wife and their son Luke, born just three days after Hurricane Michael ravaged the Florida Panhandle.

So Capps, wife Lorraine Smith and little Luke settled in for the longest of nights in the best spot they could find: The parking lot of a Walmart store shut down by the storm.

On a starry night, mother sat in the bed of the family's pickup truck; her child sat in a car seat beside her. Dad sat in the dark and pondered how it could be that his son's first night out of a hospital could be spent outside a big-box retailer because of a lack of help.

"It really upset me, man, because I've always been the type of person who would help anyone," Capps said in an interview with The Associated Press, which found the family outside the store Monday night. An AP photographer accompanied them on a journey from the lot to a hospital and met them again at a hotel where donors later provided them a room.

Luke is healthy and so is Smith, his mom. But she said her newborn deserves better than the stormy life he's had so far.

"We had everything. Full-time job, a place to live. One day we had it all, the next we had nothing," said Smith. "This is not what I thought I'd be bringing him back to."

The story of Luke's birth is just one amid the chaos that life has become in areas of the Florida Panhandle hit hardest by Michael.

With the hurricane bearing down on their native home of Panama City, Capps and Smith sent their three other children to stay with relatives. Doctors had planned to induce labor on Oct. 11, the day after Michael made landfall between here and Mexico Beach, wiping out a wide expanse of buildings and timber.

Smith went to the hospital as planned that day, courtesy of a ride in a police car along streets crisscrossed with downed trees and powerlines. Smith said workers at Gulf Coast Regional Medical Center told her they couldn't deliver a baby that day, so she walked several miles (kilometers) home after being unable to find a ride back.

Anya Mayr, a Gulf Coast Regional spokeswoman, said the hospital has operated only as an emergency room and hasn't admitted patients since Michael. About 560 people have been treated for injuries ranging from storm wounds to heart attack and chainsaw cuts, she said, and more than 170 have been transferred to other hospitals by ambulances and helicopters.

Labor pains started the next day, so Capps drove Smith to a hospital about 80 miles (130 kilometers) to the north in Dothan, Alabama, which was flooded with coastal refugees from Michael. She gave birth at 1 a.m. last Saturday, three days after Michael's landfall.

Discharged from the hospital and unable to find a hotel room nearby, the couple drove back to Florida, where conditions had improved only slightly since Michael.

Still unable to stay at their storm-damaged home amid oppressive heat and bugs, Capps settled on the

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Walmart parking lot because they were low on gas and were fearful of driving at night with a curfew in place. The store has a reputation for letting travelers sleep in the parking lot overnight, and Capps knew it.

"I had no choice, (Luke) would have had a heatstroke. When he started acting like he was getting sick from the heat and wouldn't eat, that's when we went to Walmart," Capps said. "There was kind of a breeze there, there was no bugs biting us. I said 'We're all right now.'"

Police officers who showed up after the AP photographer realized the couple's plight and escorted them back to Gulf Coast Regional, where workers checked out Luke but couldn't provide a bed for the night, frustrating Capps. Fearful of safety and sanitation problems at a shelter suggested by workers from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the family returned to the Walmart lot.

There, they met a security guard who helped secure them a hotel room in nearby Panama City Beach with air conditioning, water and power Tuesday night. Capps doesn't know how long the aid will last, but he intends to repay the donation.

Pulled back from the brink after doubting the kindness of humanity on that night in the parking lot, Capps still has little money and no permanent home. But things are looking up because of the kindness of strangers.

"These people have been a godsend, because otherwise we'd be back in the parking lot tonight," he said.

Orange County, California's diversity emboldens Democrats

By MICHAEL R. BLOOD, Associated Press

FULLERTON, Calif. (AP) — Pushy midday shoppers nose their carts through the Korean market, stocking up on bottled kimchi and seaweed spring rolls. A few doors away, customers grab pho to go at a Vietnamese takeout counter. Across the street, lunchtime diners line up for tacos "al pastor" — spit-roasted pork — at a Mexican-style taqueria.

It's a snapshot of how much Orange County, California, has changed.

For decades, the county southeast of Los Angeles represented an archetype of middle-class America, a place whose name evoked a "Brady Bunch" conformity set amid freeways, megachurches and Disneyland's spires. The mostly white, conservative homeowners voted with time-clock regularity for Republican candidates like Richard Nixon, whose getaway from Washington, the Western White House, sat on the coast.

The Korean barbecue shops and Mexican bakeries along Orangethorpe Avenue in Fullerton are a signpost of the shifting demographics and politics that have emboldened Democrats eager to flip four Republican-held U.S. House seats in Orange County. The districts, partly or completely within the county, went to Hillary Clinton in the 2016 presidential election and have become closely watched national battlegrounds as part of Democrats' strategy to retake the House in November.

In an election season shaped by divisions over President Donald Trump and the #MeToo movement against sexual misconduct, perhaps the most telling evidence of the changing county is in the 39th Congressional District.

The seat is held by long-serving Republican Rep. Ed Royce, a pillar of the Washington establishment who, like most of his party's nearly all-male leadership in Congress, is older and white.

The contest to succeed the retiring congressman is between two very different candidates: Young Kim, a South Korean immigrant, woman and Republican, and Gil Cisneros, a Hispanic Democratic man.

The racially mixed ballot has opened questions about the relevance of party labels, race and the inclination to embrace one's own. It comes as Hispanics and Asians together now make up the majority of Orange County's 3.2 million people. In 1980, about 80 percent of the population was white.

The once-dominant Republican Party also is clinging to a tissue-thin edge over Democrats in voter registration numbers — a drop-off that reflects not just the arrival of new faces but their more liberal politics.

Kim is trying to become the first Korean-American woman elected to Congress. She represents the kind of candidate the state GOP has been trying to cultivate for years to reflect a more diverse population.

Kim, 55, was born in South Korea and grew up in Guam, then later came to California for college. She became a small-business owner and got elected to the state Assembly.

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She's running as Royce's preferred successor after working for him for years, but her path is complicated by Trump, who is unpopular in a state where Democrats hold every statewide office and a 39-14 advantage in House seats.

Kim talked up the robust economy at a recent campaign stop, but she's also emphasizing her independence from the White House on issues like trade. She's not in favor of increased tariffs imposed by the administration.

She never mentioned the president in a brief speech.

"I'm a different kind of candidate," she said.

As a Democrat, Cisneros, 47, knows he's the face of change in the long-held GOP district, anchored in northern Orange County and running through slices of neighboring Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties. He sees shifting demographics as an asset: the district has grown about equally divided between Republicans, Democrats and independents, as it is with Asians, Hispanics and whites.

Cisneros, a Navy veteran and one-time Republican who won a \$266 million lottery jackpot with his wife, describes his candidacy as the next step in a life committed to public service, which started with his time in the military. He has said he left the GOP because it became deeply conservative, adding in a recent interview that voters are eager to see a change in gridlocked Washington.

"This is not the same district that it was 15, or even 10 years ago," he said.

Orange County might seem like an unlikely battleground in the fight to control Congress. In popular culture, it is a place often reduced to initials, "the O.C.," and a stereotype: a wealthy enclave of buff residents living in conspicuous excess on hillsides overlooking the Pacific Ocean.

Overlooked is the county's political pedigree: Its Republican-rich suburbs are seen as a foundation block in the modern conservative movement and the rise of the Reagan revolution.

Fullerton, like Orange County, was once known for groves of Valencia oranges that blanketed its landscape and oil fields that lay beneath it. That changed with the development of California's freeway system, which created the transportation arteries that gave rise to a vast Sunbelt suburbia.

After World War II, jobs in defense and manufacturing were plentiful. The population boomed, and many of the new arrivals were from the Midwest, and conservative in their outlook.

Those voters, alienated by the rise of national liberalism, "ended up building the Ronald Reagan movement," said Raphael Sonenshein, executive director of the Pat Brown Institute for Public Affairs at California State University, Los Angeles.

Several trends have been making the county more favorable for Democrats over time, said Paul Mitchell of Political Data Inc., a nonpartisan research firm. Among them: more Latinos and Asians are registering as independents and fewer as Republicans.

Much of that can be attributed to the preferences of younger Californians, who have been eschewing major-party labels.

Another big change is with the voting habits of Asians. A surge in immigration from Southeast Asia in the post-Vietnam War years brought in a wave of strongly anti-communist voters. But younger Asians grew up in a different era.

Millennial Asians "are some of the most liberal voters in the state," Mitchell said.

On a recent afternoon outside a library in Yorba Linda — the city where Nixon was born and where his presidential library was built — 76-year-old retired computer programmer Don Jacques of Brea said he welcomes the diversity on the ballot. The registered Democrat and Cisneros supporter has lived in the county since childhood.

"It's about time for this kind of change," Jacques said.

This report is part of a series on how California's struggles with soaring housing costs, job displacement and a divide over liberal policies are affecting the November election. See full coverage at: <https://apnews.com/CaliforniaataCrossroads>

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You've won the Mega Millions jackpot. Now what?

By **SCOTT McFETRIDGE, Associated Press**

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Despite the terrible odds — one in 302.5 million for those keeping score at home — someone will eventually match all six numbers and win the Mega Millions jackpot, now at \$900 million. It could happen as soon as Friday night, when the next drawing is held, leaving most of us disappointed but some lucky winner beset by a host of questions.

Here are some answers for someone holding that prized lottery ticket.

I'VE WON. NOW WHAT?

Lottery officials recommend winners take a deep breath, put their winning ticket in a safe spot and consult with a reputable financial planner before popping over to the lottery headquarters. Their first decision is whether to take the cash option, which would now be \$513 million, or an annuity, with one initial payment and annual installments over 29 years. Nearly all winners opt for cash, but the annuity has advantages, as it reduces the tax bill a little and offers a stable flow of income that climbs by 5 percent annually.

HOW LONG DO I HAVE TO CLAIM THE JACKPOT?

States have different rules, so depending on where you purchased the ticket, you have from 180 days to a year.

DO I GET MY MONEY INSTANTLY?

No, you can't just cash one of those oversized checks shown in all the winner photos. Payment speed also varies by state, but a week or two is common. Carole Gentry, a spokeswoman for the Maryland lottery, said the requirement is seven to 10 days in that state.

CAN I KEEP MY NAME SECRET?

Winners can remain anonymous in six states — Delaware, Kansas, Maryland, North Dakota, Ohio and South Carolina. In Arizona, people who win more than \$600 can keep their names secret for 90 days after claiming prizes, but after that names are public record. In Michigan, winners are anonymous unless they win Mega Millions or Powerball prizes.

WHAT ABOUT TAXES?

For winners of \$5,000 or more, all states automatically deduct 24 percent in federal taxes but state taxes vary widely. Some big states, including California, don't withhold taxes from lottery winnings, and some like Texas don't have individual income taxes at all. For the others, the state takes a bite, especially in New York, where a winner would need to pay a state tax of 8.8 percent. Residents of New York City would pay an additional tax of 3.9 percent. In general, taxes eat up nearly half of winnings.

Melissa Labant, a tax policy expert at the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, said winners should realize that while taxes are initially withheld when prizes are awarded, more money will likely be due at tax time as people suddenly are in up to a 37 percent tax bracket.

"That catches people off guard," she said. "You have to be prepared to write another check to the IRS in April."

WHAT ARE MY TAXES IF I DON'T LIVE IN THE STATE WHERE I BOUGHT THE TICKET?

This can get complicated, but for the most part winners pay taxes where they bought the ticket and then can get a credit on their taxes in their home state. The final tax bill can depend on if the state where you live taxes at a higher or lower rate than where you purchased the ticket. Rules vary by state, so this is a good topic for that financial planner.

Khashoggi warns in last column of free rein to silence media

By **ASHLEY THOMAS, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Washington Post has published a new column by missing Saudi writer Jamal Khashoggi in which he warns that governments in the Middle East "have been given free rein to continue silencing the media at an increasing rate."

The Post published the column Wednesday, more than two weeks after Khashoggi was last seen entering

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the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul and only hours after a gruesome account in Turkey's Yeni Safak newspaper alleged that Saudi officials cut off Khashoggi's fingers and then decapitated him inside the consulate while his fiancée waited outside. The Saudi government, including Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, has denied any involvement.

In a note affixed to the top of the column, Post Global Opinions editor Karen Attiah said she received the essay from Khashoggi's translator and assistant a day after he was reported missing. Khashoggi first began writing for the Post's opinion section in September 2017, and his columns criticized the prince and the direction of the Saudi kingdom.

In the op-ed, titled "Jamal Khashoggi: What the Arab world needs most is free expression," Khashoggi recounted the imprisonment of a prominent writer who spoke against the Saudi establishment, and cited an incident in which the Egyptian government seized control of a newspaper.

"These actions no longer carry the consequence of a backlash from the international community. Instead, these actions may trigger condemnation quickly followed by silence," he wrote.

"As a result, Arab governments have been given free rein to continue silencing the media at an increasing rate," Khashoggi wrote.

President Donald Trump, who initially came out hard on the Saudis over the disappearance but since has backed off, said Wednesday that the U.S. wanted Turkey to turn over any audio or video recording it had of Khashoggi's alleged killing "if it exists." He has recently suggested that the global community had jumped to conclusions that Saudi Arabia was behind Khashoggi's disappearance.

In the column, Khashoggi, a Saudi citizen who went into self-imposed exile in the U.S. over the rise of the crown prince, also discussed the practice of Middle Eastern governments blocking internet access to control tightly the information their citizens can see.

"The Arab world is facing its own version of an Iron Curtain, imposed not by external actors but through domestic forces vying for power," Khashoggi wrote.

He praised the Post for translating many of his columns from English into Arabic and said it's important for Middle Easterners to be able to read about democracy in the West. He also said it's critical that Arab voices have a platform on which to be heard.

"We suffer from poverty, mismanagement and poor education," Khashoggi wrote. "Through the creation of an independent international forum, isolated from the influence of nationalist governments spreading hate through propaganda, ordinary people in the Arab world would be able to address the structural problems their societies face."

The Post initially held off on publishing the column amid hope for Khashoggi's return, Attiah said. But, she wrote, "Now I have to accept: That is not going to happen."

She ended her note: "This column perfectly captures his commitment and passion for freedom in the Arab world. A freedom he apparently gave his life for. I will be forever grateful he chose The Post as his final journalistic home one year ago and gave us the chance to work together."

Police search Saudi consul's home in Khashoggi case

By **SUZAN FRASER, FAY ABUELGASIM and JON GAMBRELL, Associated Press**

ISTANBUL (AP) — Turkish crime-scene investigators searched the home of the Saudi consul general in Istanbul on Wednesday in the disappearance of Saudi writer Jamal Khashoggi, and a pro-government newspaper published a gruesome account of the journalist's alleged slaying.

As Saudi Arabia's green national flag flapped overhead, forensics teams entered the residence, only 2 kilometers (1.2 miles) from the consulate where Khashoggi vanished Oct. 2 while trying to pick up paperwork to get married. It was the second-such extraordinary search of a site considered under international law to be sovereign Saudi territory after investigators spent hours in the consulate earlier this week.

The account published in the Yeni Safak newspaper alleged that Saudi officials cut off Khashoggi's fingers and then decapitated him at the consulate as his fiancée waited outside.

Hours later, The Washington Post published a column by Khashoggi it said it received after he was

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reported missing, in which he pointed to the muted international response to ongoing abuses against journalists by governments in the Middle East.

"As a result, Arab governments have been given free rein to continue silencing the media at an increasing rate," Khashoggi wrote. He added: "The Arab world is facing its own version of an Iron Curtain, imposed not by external actors but through domestic forces vying for power."

The searches and the leaks in Turkish media have ensured the world's attention remains focused on what happened to Khashoggi, who went into a self-imposed exile in the U.S. over the rise of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman. It also put further strains on the relationship between the kingdom, the world's largest oil exporter, and its main security guarantor, the United States, as tensions with Iran and elsewhere in the Middle East remain high.

Flying back home after a visit to both Saudi Arabia and Turkey, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo remained positive about an ongoing Saudi probe into Khashoggi's disappearance, but he stressed that answers are needed.

"Sooner's better than later for everyone," Pompeo said.

The search of the consul's residence came 15 days after Khashoggi's disappearance — and after police apparently thought they would be able to conduct the search on Tuesday. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said Saudi officials had halted the earlier search, claiming that Consul General Mohammed al-Otaibi's family was still there.

Crime-scene technicians wore white coveralls, gloves and shoe covers entering the residence. It wasn't immediately clear what they hoped to find there, although surveillance video had showed diplomatic cars moving between the consulate and the residence nearly two hours after Khashoggi walked into the diplomatic post.

Turkey's private DHA news agency, without citing a source, said police wanted to inspect a "water well" in the garden of the residence.

Investigators also re-entered the consulate Wednesday night.

A high-level Turkish official previously told The Associated Press that police found "certain evidence" of Khashoggi's slaying at the consulate, without elaborating. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because the investigation was ongoing.

The report by the newspaper Yeni Safak cited what it described as an audio recording of Khashoggi's slaying. It described the recording as offering evidence that a Saudi team immediately accosted the 60-year-old journalist after he entered the consulate.

Al-Otaibi could be heard on the tape, telling those allegedly torturing Khashoggi: "Do this outside; you're going to get me in trouble," the newspaper reported.

One of the Saudis reportedly replied: "Shut up if you want to live when you return to (Saudi) Arabia."

Security services in Turkey have used pro-government media to leak details of Khashoggi's case, adding to the pressure on the kingdom. President Donald Trump, who initially came out hard on the Saudis over the disappearance but since has backed off, said Wednesday that the U.S. wanted Turkey to turn over any audio or video recording it had of Khashoggi's alleged killing "if it exists."

Saudi officials have not responded to repeated requests for comment from the AP in recent days, including Wednesday. Al-Otaibi left Turkey on Tuesday, Turkish state media reported.

Trump's previous warnings over the case drew an angry response Sunday from Saudi Arabia and its state-linked media, including a suggestion that Riyadh could wield its oil production as a weapon. The U.S. president wants King Salman and OPEC to boost production to drive down high oil prices, caused in part by the coming re-imposition of oil sanctions on Iran in November.

Pompeo, wrapping up a trip to Saudi Arabia and Turkey to discuss the crisis over the missing journalist, made a point to stress areas where the kingdom and America cooperate.

"We have lots of important relationships — financial relationships between U.S. and Saudi companies, governmental relationships, ... the efforts to reduce the risk to the United States of America from the world's largest state sponsor of terror, Iran," he said. "We just need to make sure that we are mindful of that when we approach decisions that the United States government will take when we learn all the facts

associated with whatever may have taken place.”

However, Pompeo said there were clear lines that America would not stand to see crossed.

“If a country engages in activity that is unlawful it’s unacceptable,” he said. “No one is going to defend activity of that nature. We just need to simply say what happened.”

Prominent U.S. newspapers have reported, citing anonymous sources, that Saudi officials may soon acknowledge Khashoggi’s slaying at the consulate but blame it on a botched intelligence operation. That could, like Trump’s softening comments, seek to give the kingdom a way out of the global firestorm of criticism over Khashoggi’s fate.

However, no major decisions in Saudi Arabia are made outside of the ultraconservative kingdom’s ruling Al Saud family.

Fraser reported from Ankara, Turkey, and Gambrell reported from Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Associated Press writers Matthew Lee and Zeke Miller in Washington contributed.

Migrants moving again in Guatemala, Trump targets Democrats

By SONIA PEREZ D., Associated Press

CHIQUIMULA, Guatemala (AP) — More than 2,000 Honduran migrants traveling en masse through Guatemala resumed their journey toward the United States on Wednesday as U.S. President Donald Trump sought to turn the caravan into a political issue three weeks before midterm elections.

A day after warning Central American governments they risk losing U.S. aid if they don’t do something and saying that anyone entering the U.S. illegally would be arrested and deported, Trump turned his sights on Democrats and urged Republican allies to campaign on border security.

“Hard to believe that with thousands of people from South of the Border, walking unimpeded toward our country in the form of large Caravans, that the Democrats won’t approve legislation that will allow laws for the protection of our country. Great Midterm issue for Republicans!” Trump said in a Wednesday morning tweet.

“Republicans must make the horrendous, weak and outdated immigration laws, and the Border, a part of the Midterms!” he continued.

In Guatemala, the migrants rose early and many left without eating breakfast, bound for Zacapa, the next city on their route. Overcast skies and a light drizzle took the edge off the sweltering heat and humidity, making the trek more bearable.

Luis Navarreto, a 32-year-old migrant in the caravan, said he had read about Trump’s threats to his country but was undeterred.

“We are going to continue,” Navarreto said. “It is God who decides here. We have no other option but to move ahead.”

The migrants are fleeing widespread poverty and gangland violence in one of the world’s most murderous countries, and many blame Honduran President Juan Orlando Hernandez for what they call unlivable conditions back home.

“We are here because of Juan Orlando,” said Nelson Zavala, a 36-year-old laborer.

The previous day the migrants advanced about 30 miles (40 kilometers) from the Honduras-Guatemala border to arrive at the city of Chiquimula.

That is a tiny portion of the almost 1,350 miles (2,200 kilometers) they would have to travel to reach the closest U.S. border.

Some were able to hitch rides, packing the flatbeds of pickups and farm trucks, and even cargo holds of semis, while many more continued on foot with backpacks, strollers and Honduran flags. Hundreds advanced farther and faster than the main group to reach the Guatemalan capital, according to the Casa del Migrante shelter there.

The caravan has snowballed since about 160 migrants departed Friday from the Honduran city of San Pedro Sula, with many people joining spontaneously while carrying just a few belongings. Estimates of

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their numbers ranged up to 3,000.

Three weeks before the U.S. elections, the caravan was bound to draw Trump's ire. But he did not follow through on a similar threat to cut aid to Honduras in April over an earlier caravan, which eventually petered out in Mexico.

On Tuesday, Honduras' president accused unnamed "political groups" organizing the caravan based on lies in order to cause problems in Honduras.

"There are sectors that want to destabilize the country, but we will be decisive and we will not allow it," Hernandez told reporters.

Earlier the Foreign Ministry alleged that people had been lured to join the migration with "false promises" of a transit visa through Mexico and the opportunity to seek asylum in the United States.

In a joint statement Wednesday, Mexico's Foreign Relations and Interior departments said anyone in the caravan with travel documents and a proper visa will be allowed to enter, and anyone who wants to apply for refugee status can do so.

But the statement said all cases must be processed individually, suggesting that authorities have no intention of letting the migrants simply cross the border en masse without going through standard immigration procedures.

It warned that anyone who enters Mexico in an "irregular manner" faces detention and deportation.

None of the migrants The Associated Press spoke to on the road was carrying a passport. When agents in Guatemala near the Honduran border asked a crowd of them what documentation they were carrying, they held up national personal ID cards, which allow them to move through most countries in Central America — but not Mexico, which requires foreigners to present a passport for entry.

Late Tuesday, Trump said via Twitter that Washington had told Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador that the U.S. will stop aid "if they allow their citizens, or others, to journey through their borders and up to the United States, with the intention of entering our country illegally."

Guatemalan President Jimmy Morales said Wednesday that he had spoken twice with U.S. President Mike Pence.

As for Guatemala's government, Morales said, "We do not accept conditions; we do not impose conditions. What we do is accept our responsibilities and we are going to prioritize what our laws say."

He added that he had also discussed with Honduras' Hernandez the facilitation of "the most comfortable, feasible and humane return possible for any who wish to go back."

Morales said that while Central Americans are legally free to transit from country to country, a "massive ingress of people without registering" puts Guatemala in a difficult position because it's impossible to know who the people are and what may be the intentions of any of their leaders.

Luis Arreaga, the U.S. ambassador to Guatemala, posted a video message on Twitter to migrants thinking of entering the United States illegally.

"If you try to enter the United States, you will be detained and deported," Arreaga said in Spanish. Addressing those already en route, he added: "Return to your country. Your attempt to migrate will fail."

Also Wednesday, some 300 Hondurans arrived at the El Salvador border hoping to make it to join the caravan in Guatemala.

A Salvadoran government statement and the country's migration director, Herbert Hernandez, said about 100 of the Hondurans tried to enter "without going through the obligatory migration control" and soldiers and police took control of a border bridge between the two countries.

Some from the group went through the standard migration processing and were allowed to enter El Salvador. Others who refused were partially impeding the crossing.

"Transit at the El Amatillo border is blocked by these people, not by ... the government," Hernandez said.

Associated Press writers Marcos Aleman in San Salvador, El Salvador, and Peter Orsi in Mexico City contributed to this report.

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Analysis: With 'America First,' where do human rights rank?

By ZEKE MILLER, JONATHAN LEMIRE and CATHERINE LUCEY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — If it's an "America First" presidency, where does that rank human rights?

President Donald Trump's refusal to put public pressure on Saudi Arabia over the disappearance of journalist Jamal Khashoggi is raising a question that has dogged his foreign policy. In dealing with Russia, across Asia and, this week, in the Mideast, Trump has often appeared comfortable downplaying concerns about rights abuses and dismissing the importance of U.S. moral leadership. The onetime real estate mogul is as likely to let U.S. financial or security interests guide his choices and his words.

In an Associated Press interview Tuesday, Trump repeated the Saudi royals' denials of any involvement in Khashoggi's apparent killing and suggested he trusted them.

"I spoke to the crown prince, so you have that. He said he and his father knew nothing about it. And that was very important," Trump said. He compared blame directed at the Saudis over Khashoggi, who Turkish officials have said was killed in the Saudis' Istanbul consulate, to the allegations of sexual assault leveled against Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh during his confirmation hearing. Both, he suggested, had been considered "guilty until proven innocent."

Not many U.S. leaders would cast Saudi Arabia as innocent. Saudi Arabia is engaged in a bloody civil war in Yemen that has killed thousands of civilians and exacerbated a famine that has killed many more. Domestically, the absolute monarchy strictly regulates speech and dress, and its security services have been accused of torture.

Trump has shown no interest in calling out the kingdom over Khashoggi — or calling out Russian President Vladimir Putin on assassinations or North Korea's Kim Jong Un on political prisoners. Where past presidents in both parties used their office to promote U.S. values and ideals — even when their action didn't align — Trump has rarely seized the chance. Instead, he says what others would not, openly embracing the compromises he justifies as best for the American bottom line.

"We're not going to walk away from Saudi Arabia. I don't want to do that," he told Fox Business News on Wednesday.

Trump made clear that he was prioritizing the nation's economy, not morality.

"I don't like stopping massive amounts of money that is being poured into our country," Trump said last week. "I know they are talking about different kinds of sanctions, but (the Saudis) are spending \$110 billion on military equipment and on things that create jobs for this country. I don't like the concept of stopping an investment of \$110 billion into the United States."

White House aides have suggested that while Trump is reluctant to criticize certain world leaders publicly — most notably when he did not upbraid Putin at their Helsinki summit — he has been willing to deliver tough messages behind closed doors. They have pointed to his discipline with Kim and Egypt's Abdel Fattah el-Sisi, two authoritarian leaders who eventually released Americans held in their custody.

Still, Trump's transactional approach isn't sitting well with some of his Republican allies in Congress. His party for years championed the idea that the U.S. had a duty to promote U.S. values and human rights and even to intervene when they are challenged. Some Republicans have urged Trump not to abandon that view.

"I'm open to having Congress sit down with the president if this all turns out to be true, and it looks like it is, ... and saying, 'How can we express our condemnation without blowing up the Middle East?'" said Sen. John Kennedy, R-La. "Our foreign policy has to be anchored in values."

Trump dismisses the notion that he buddies up to dictators, but he does not express a sense that U.S. leadership extends beyond the U.S. border.

In an interview with CBS' "60 Minutes" that aired Sunday, he brushed aside his own assessment that Putin was "probably" involved in assassinations and poisonings.

"But I rely on them," he said. "It's not in our country."

Relations between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia are complex. The two nations are entwined on energy, military, economic and intelligence issues. The Trump administration has aggressively courted the Saudis

for support of its Middle East agenda to counter Iranian influence, fight extremism and try to forge peace between Israel and the Palestinians.

One key for the U.S. administration has been the bond between two young princes. Trump son-in-law Jared Kushner and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman are frequently in contact, and their relationship played a role in Riyadh being the unlikely first stop on the new American president's maiden international trip in 2017. Trump, despite endorsing a travel ban on many Muslim-majority countries, became the first U.S. president to make his official first trip to an Islamic nation.

The over-the-top greeting Trump received in Riyadh — complete with sword dances, gleaming palaces and images of him on the sides of buildings and highway signs — set the template for how he would be received on future foreign trips, with hosts leaning on flattery and pageantry.

"If you look at Saudi Arabia, they're an ally, and they're a tremendous purchaser of, not only military equipment, but other things," Trump said Wednesday. "When I went there, they committed to purchase \$450 billion worth of things and \$110 billion worth of military. Those are the biggest orders in the history of this country, probably the history of the world. ... And you remember that day in Saudi Arabia where that commitment was made."

Mexico Beach residents return home again _ some to no home

By JAY REEVES, Associated Press

MEXICO BEACH, Fla. (AP) — With stunned faces and tears, residents of hard-hit Mexico Beach returned home for the first time Wednesday about a week after Hurricane Michael hit to find pieces of their lives scattered across the sand and a community altered.

Nancy Register sobbed uncontrollably after finding no trace of the large camper where she'd lived with her husband. She was particularly distraught over the loss of an old, black-and-white photo of her mother, who died of cancer.

Husband Taylor Register said he found nothing but a stool that he uses for cutting his hair, a hose and a keepsake rock that was given to him by a friend 40 years ago.

"That's my belongings," he said, pointing to a small pile beside his red pickup truck. Choking up, he said: "I appreciate God humbling me. Everybody needs it."

Just up the road, tears ran down Lanie Eden's face as she and husband Ron Eden sifted through sand in search of items they left before evacuating from the small beach house they've rented each October for years. They didn't find much - just a large pack of toilet paper that somehow stayed dry and a son's camp chair.

The Edens, who are from Fort Knox, Kentucky, and are temporarily staying in Alabama, were stunned to see mountains of debris and countless destroyed buildings as they drove into town for the first time. In a state of condominium towers, Mexico Beach was one of the few remaining places with small houses and a 1950s feel.

"Basically, we lost 'old Florida.' It's all gone," said Lanie Eden.

Residents among the community of about 1,200 people who rode out the storm at home have been in Mexico Beach since Michael hit. But officials used the city's Facebook page to tell others to stay away for a week after the Category 4 storm ravaged the beach town with 155 mph (250 kph) winds and a strong storm surge.

State emergency management officials said some 124,500 customers across the Panhandle were still without power Wednesday morning and 1,157 remained in shelters.

In Bay County, home to Mexico Beach and Panama City, more than half of the households and businesses remained without electricity. Inland, in Calhoun County, 98 percent of the customers didn't have power Wednesday morning, according to the emergency management website. And in Jackson County, which borders Alabama and Georgia, about 83 percent were without power.

In the meantime, in many areas devastated by the hurricane, law enforcement officials are battling looting of homes and businesses.

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Bay County Sheriff's Maj. Jimmy Stanford said deputies have arrested about 10 looters each night since the storm hit. In some parts of the county, residents have spray-painted signs warning that "looters will be shot."

Panama City resident Wes Allen said looters have been a constant problem at the badly damaged motel where he is staying with his wife and three children. Residents have formed a nighttime patrol to keep an eye out for thieves.

"We've got looters breaking in and stealing whatever they can," he said. Allen said he hasn't reported the thefts to police because authorities seem so busy with other things.

Often the looters have been armed, Stanford said.

"Most of our officers lost their homes, have been working 16- to 18-hour shifts with no sleep, no shower, and now they're encountering armed individuals," he said. "It's a stressful time for everyone in Bay County."

The storm killed at least 16 people in Florida, most of them in the coastal county that took a direct hit from the storm, state emergency authorities announced Tuesday. That's in addition to at least 10 deaths in Georgia, North Carolina and Virginia.

The state's tally did not provide details of how the victims' deaths were storm-related, and The Associated Press was not immediately able to confirm those details for all of them. The AP's tally of deaths, in which authorities have confirmed details of how people died, stood at eight in Florida, and 18 overall including other states.

In Mexico Beach, what had been a town of about 1,200, residents don't expect power or anything else anytime soon.

Carlton Hundley, 25, returned to the house he rented with his girlfriend Connie Huff to find nothing but a long pile of shattered wood. What few possessions they found, including one of his shoes, were scattered across the ground.

"I knew it was bad, I'd already seen the pictures. But it's a lot more than I thought," he said.

Roxie Cline, 65, was overcome with emotion as she tried to describe the destruction in Mexico Beach, where she and her husband had lived for three years.

"I can't, I can't," she said, tearing up. "It's devastating. You lose everything. Everybody has."

Associated Press writers Brendan Farrington in Tallahassee, Florida, and Freida Frisaro in Miami contributed to this report.

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

Jubilant customers light up as pot sales begin in Canada

By **ROB GILLIES, GENE JOHNSON and TRACEY LINDEMAN, Associated Press**

MONTREAL (AP) — Jubilant customers stood in long lines for hours then lit up and celebrated on sidewalks Wednesday as Canada became the world's largest legal marijuana marketplace.

In Toronto, people smoked joints as soon as they rolled out of bed in a big "wake and bake" celebration. In Alberta, a government website that sells pot crashed when too many people tried to place orders.

And in Montreal, Graeme Campbell welcomed the day he could easily buy all the pot he wanted.

In the past, it was "hard to find people to sell to me because I look like a cop," the clean-cut, 43-year-old computer programmer said outside a newly opened pot store.

He and his friend Alex Lacrosse were smoking when two police officers walked by. "I passed you a joint right in front of them and they didn't even bat an eye," Lacrosse told his friend.

Festivities erupted throughout the nation as Canada became the largest country on the planet with legal marijuana sales. At least 111 pot shops were expected to open Wednesday across the nation of 37 million people, with many more to come, according to an Associated Press survey of the provinces. Uruguay was the first country to legalize marijuana.

Ian Power was first in line at a store in St. John's, Newfoundland but didn't plan to smoke the one gram

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he bought after midnight.

"I am going to frame it and hang it on my wall," the 46-year-old Power said. "I'm going to save it forever."

Tom Clarke, an illegal pot dealer for three decades, opened a pot store in Portugal Cove, Newfoundland, and made his first sale to his dad. He was cheered by the crowd waiting in line.

"This is awesome. I've been waiting my whole life for this," Clarke said. "I am so happy to be living in Canada right now instead of south of the border."

By afternoon, Clarke had sold his entire cannabis supply and had to turn away customers.

The start of legal sales wasn't the only good news for pot aficionados. Canada said it intends to pardon everyone with convictions for possessing up to 30 grams of marijuana, the newly legal threshold.

"I don't need to be a criminal anymore, and that's a great feeling," singer Ashley MacIsaac said outside a government run shop in Nova Scotia. "And my new dealer is the prime minister!"

Medical marijuana has been legal since 2001 in Canada, and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government has spent the past two years working toward legalizing recreational pot to better reflect society's changing opinion about marijuana and to bring black market operators into a regulated system.

Corey Stone and a friend got to one of the 12 stores that opened in Quebec at 3:45 a.m. to be among the first to buy pot. Hundreds later lined up.

"It's a once-in-a-lifetime thing — you're never ever going to be one of the first people able to buy legal recreational cannabis in Canada ever again," said Stone, a 32-year restaurant and bar manager.

The stores have a sterile look, like a modern clinic, with a security desk to check identification. The products are displayed in plastic or cardboard packages behind counters. Buyers can't touch or smell the products before they buy. A small team of employees answer questions but don't make recommendations.

"It's a candy store, I like the experience," said Vincent Desjardins, a 20-year-old student who plans to apply for a job at the Montreal shop.

Canadians can also order marijuana products through websites run by provinces or private retailers and have it delivered to their home by mail.

At 12:07 a.m., the Alberta Liquor and Gaming Commission tweeted: "You like us! Our website is experiencing some heavy traffic. We are working hard to get it up and running."

Alberta and Quebec have set the minimum age for purchase at 18, while other provinces have made it 19. Rules vary in different jurisdictions about whether people can smoke pot outside.

Fire and Flower Chief Executive Trevor Fencott brought his wife and three children — 16, 13 and 6 — for the opening of a company pot shop in Edmonton, even though the law forbid his children from going inside.

"Legalization is about daylighting a lot of stuff that used to be in the shadows," he said. "Our kids are going to inherit this system, for better or worse, and I thought it was important for them to see this sea change in Canadian society."

No stores will open in Ontario, which includes Toronto. The nation's most populous province is working on its regulations and doesn't expect stores to operate until spring. The Pacific Coast province of British Columbia has just one store open, but it's not in Vancouver, one of Canada's largest cities.

A patchwork of regulations has spread in Canada as each province takes its own approach within the framework established by the federal government. Some provinces have government-run stores, others allow private retailers, and some have both.

Canada's national approach allows unfettered banking for the pot industry, inter-province shipments of cannabis and billions of dollars in investment — a sharp contrast with prohibitions in the United States, where nine states have legalized recreational sales of pot and more than 30 have approved medical marijuana.

Many Americans are likely to cross into Canada to buy and use pot, but they can't take it back. U.S. border authorities have issued reminders that travelers could face arrest if caught with it.

Bruce Linton, CEO of marijuana producer and retailer Canopy Growth, claims he made the first sale in Canada — less than a second after midnight in Newfoundland.

"It was extremely emotional," he said. "Several people who work for us have been working on this for their entire adult life and several of them were in tears."

Cam Battley, chief corporate officer of Aurora Cannabis, also one of Canada's largest cannabis companies,

said it's not every day you get to be involved in the start of a new industry.

"The world trusts Canada to be a leader in this," he said. "We're not known as wild and crazy. We're known for good public policy and I think they will follow our lead."

Rob Gillies reported from Toronto. Tracey Lindeman reported from Montreal. Gene Johnson reported from Seattle. Johnson is a member of AP's marijuana beat team. Follow him at <https://twitter.com/GenAPseattle>. Find complete AP marijuana coverage at <http://apnews.com/tag/LegalMarijuana>

New accusation of police wrongdoing in Weinstein case

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and TOM HAYS, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The sexual assault case against Harvey Weinstein was roiled Wednesday for the second time in a week by what New York City prosecutors said was a police detective's improper conduct.

Det. Nicholas DiGaudio, whose alleged witness coaching prompted the dismissal of part of the case last week, is now accused of urging one of Weinstein's accusers to delete material from her cellphones before she handed them over to prosecutors.

The Manhattan district attorney's office detailed the alleged misconduct in a letter to Weinstein's lawyer that was made public Wednesday. The new allegations involve the detective's interactions with an unidentified woman who says Weinstein raped her in his Manhattan hotel room in 2013.

Weinstein's lawyer, Benjamin Brafman, pounced on the revelation, saying it "even further undermines the integrity of this already deeply flawed indictment of Mr. Weinstein."

In her letter, Assistant District Attorney Joan Illuzzi-Orbon said that during the investigation, prosecutors asked the woman to hand in any mobile phones she might have used during the time when she interacted with Weinstein.

The woman was willing to do so, Illuzzi-Orbon wrote, but was worried that the phones contained, "in addition to communications with the defendant, data of a personal nature that she regarded as private."

She asked DiGaudio what to do. He advised her to delete anything she didn't want anyone else to see before handing over the phone, the prosecutors said.

"We just won't tell Joan," DiGaudio allegedly said.

Illuzzi-Orbon said the woman didn't delete any information and instead asked a lawyer for advice. The phones were turned over "without any deletions" Illuzzi-Orbon wrote.

The lawyer hired by the woman contacted the district attorney's office about the detective's conduct on Oct. 10.

Weinstein was initially charged in New York with attacking three women. The part of the case involving one of those alleged victims, Lucia Evans, was dismissed last week after prosecutors said that DiGaudio had advised a witness to keep quiet about doubts whether Evans' alleged sexual encounter with Weinstein was consensual.

DiGaudio's union defended his conduct.

"A woman should not have to surrender confidential intimate information that's immaterial to the case to defend herself against a sexual predator. That's being victimized twice. Detective DeGaudio was sensitive to that," Detectives' Endowment Association President Michael Palladino said in a statement. "This appears to be just another smear campaign against Detective DeGaudio to cover up the Manhattan DA's own incompetence."

Three of the five remaining criminal charges against Weinstein stem from the alleged rape. Two other charges allege he performed a forcible sex act on a different woman in 2006.

Weinstein denies all allegations of nonconsensual sex.

NYPD Deputy Commissioner Phil Walzak said: "The evidence against Mr. Weinstein is compelling and strong. The NYPD will continue its work with the prosecution to deliver justice for the courageous survivors who have bravely come forward."

DiGaudio was one of two investigators who escorted Weinstein out of a police station and into court

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after his May arrest. Before that, he and other police officials poured on the pressure for prosecutors to bring charges, saying publicly that they believed they had gathered ample evidence to make an arrest.

Brafman is seeking a dismissal of all charges against Weinstein.

He has argued that the 2013 rape allegation is contradicted by warm emails the accuser sent Weinstein after the date of the alleged attack. The lawyer says they show an intimate, consensual relationship.

Follow Sisak at <https://twitter.com/mikesisak> and Hays at <https://twitter.com/APtomhays>

Nevada's famous pimp expected to win election despite death

By MICHELLE L. PRICE, Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Nevada's most famous pimp tried to bring the state's legal brothel industry into the mainstream by mingling with celebrities, showcasing his business on HBO and staging outlandish publicity stunts.

Dennis Hof's fame made him an attention-grabbing figure in an otherwise quiet industry. And, despite being found dead on Tuesday, he's poised to win an election to the state Legislature in less than three weeks.

Hof, who starred in the HBO reality series "Cathouse," marketed himself as a Donald Trump-style Republican in his race for a heavily GOP Assembly district that includes wide stretches of desert where nuclear bombs were once tested.

His body was found at his Love Ranch brothel outside Las Vegas following a weekend of parties celebrating his 72nd birthday. Guests included porn actor Ron Jeremy, "Hollywood Madam" Heidi Fleiss, former Arizona sheriff Joe Arpaio and a mix of local politicians and friends.

No foul play is suspected, and it could be six weeks before a cause of death is determined, authorities said.

In the meantime, it's too late to change the ballots, which have been printed and mailed. Voting begins Saturday. Even though officials will post notices at the polls that Hof died, he seems likely to get elected.

"Just when I thought that there was nothing else in this race that could possibly shock me, here we are," Hof's campaign consultant, Chuck Muth, said Wednesday.

While waging a no-holds-barred campaign, Hof's incendiary style drew fans and well-known supporters such as Trump adviser Roger Stone and Arpaio. But it also brought scrutiny to Hof's businesses and alienated him from the state's GOP establishment.

Nevada is the only state to allow legal prostitution, which occurs at about 20 licensed brothels in mostly rural areas.

Most brothel owners keep a low profile, offering few interviews and buying only subtle advertising. But Hof had a penchant for splashy billboards and stunts that included helping several women "auction" their virginity.

Hof made an unsuccessful run for the Statehouse in 2016 as a Libertarian. Then this past summer, he ousted a three-term incumbent Republican in the primary after putting up billboards advertising his rival's arrest for disorderly conduct three decades prior and sending campaign emails with a candid picture of the man slumped and asleep in a chair.

After Hof's win, establishment Republicans refused to back him, including U.S. Sen. Dean Heller, who is in a tight re-election race, and Nevada Attorney General Adam Laxalt, who is in a close battle for the governor's mansion.

Hof then put up a billboard that declared "Laxalt-Hof-Heller" as "the winning team" and said that, if elected, he would set up a luxury motor coach in front of the Carson City Capitol building offering liquor and "free shoulder massages."

"It's too bad that he didn't get to see this through," Fleiss told reporters Tuesday. "He saw it as going all the way to governor one day."

If Hof wins on Nov. 6, county officials will nominate another Republican to fill the vacancy.

The Assembly district Hof was running in has long been held by Republicans. His Democratic opponent,

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Las Vegas educator Lesia Romanov, has little visible presence in Nye County, where most of the district is.

Billing himself as "the Trump of Pahrump," Hof wrote a memoir in 2015 titled "The Art of the Pimp," akin to Trump's book "The Art of the Deal." After winning the primary, he credited the president with paving the way by proving a candidate could upend establishment politics and win.

Trump "was the Christopher Columbus for me," Hof told The Associated Press. "He found the way and I jumped on it."

Hof, who was born in Phoenix in 1946, owned several gas stations and other small businesses before moving to Nevada in the 1970s.

He had two daughters, who are both adults and were estranged from him for years, Muth said. Hof also had an ex-wife, but Muth did not know her whereabouts or details about her.

In 1992, Hof bought his first brothel and eventually grew his empire to six, including an Area 51-themed brothel. He began selling some of the properties this year as he faced regulatory problems in southern Nevada and a push to outlaw licensed bordellos in the two counties where he operated.

Hof said he was downsizing to focus on politics, which he called "a dirty business." He said the anti-brothel push, the regulatory problems and multiple allegations of sexual assault against him were politically motivated.

Three of the allegations from prostitutes never resulted in charges. Few details have been released about a fourth allegation that the Nevada Department of Public Safety was investigating. It was made in September by a woman who reported at a hospital that Hof had raped her.

Hof denied all of the accusations.

Sheriff's deputies removed the license from the brothel where his body was found. Because Hof was the only person listed on the license, the brothel cannot operate until a new owner applies for the permit, Nye County spokesman Arnold Knightly said Wednesday.

Hof's longtime madam and company financial officer were expected to seek the license, Muth said. The madam, Suzette Cole, did not respond to a text message seeking comment Wednesday.

As for his four northern Nevada brothels, they had other names on the business licenses and were still operating Wednesday, Lyon County Manager Jeff Page said.

Associated Press writers Ken Ritter and Regina Garcia Cano in Las Vegas, photographer John Locher in Pahrump, Nevada, and Jacques Billeaud in Phoenix contributed to this report.

Student gunman kills 19, wounds 50 at school in Crimea

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV and NATALIYA VASILYEVA, Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — An 18-year-old student strode into his vocational school in Crimea, a hoodie covering his blond hair, then pulled out a shotgun and opened fire on Wednesday, killing 19 students and wounding more than 50 others before killing himself.

It wasn't clear what prompted Vladislav Roslyakov, described as a shy loner, to go on the rampage. A security camera image carried by Russian media showed him calmly walking down the stairs of the school in the Black Sea city of Kerch, the shotgun in his gloved hand.

"He was walking around and shooting students and teachers in cold blood," said Sergei Aksyonov, the regional leader in Crimea.

Officials said the fourth-year student killed himself in the library of the Kerch Polytechnic College after the attack. His mother, a nurse, was helping to treat victims at a local hospital after the shootings, unaware yet that her son was accused of the rampage and was already dead.

Such school shootings are rare, and Wednesday's attack was by far the worst by a disgruntled student in Russia, which annexed the Crimean Peninsula from Ukraine in 2014. The bloodbath raised questions about school security in the country; the Kerch Polytechnic College had only a front desk with no security guards.

By the end of the day, Crimean authorities said the death toll stood at 19, apparently not including the shooter. Fifty-three people were wounded, including 12 in serious condition.

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It was the greatest loss of life in school violence in Russia since the Beslan terrorist attack by Chechen separatists in 2004, in which 333 people were killed during a three-day siege, many of them children, and hundreds were wounded.

The announcement that the shooter in Wednesday's attack was a student who acted alone came after hours of rapidly shifting explanations as to what exactly happened at the school.

Officials at first reported a gas explosion, then said an explosive device had ripped through the cafeteria during lunchtime in a suspected terrorist attack.

Witnesses, however, reported that victims were being killed by gunfire. The Investigative Committee, Russia's top crime investigation agency, eventually said all the victims died of gunshot wounds.

Reflecting the daylong confusion, Russian President Vladimir Putin said the victims were killed by an explosion just as the Investigative Committee was announcing they were fatally shot.

A somber-faced Putin deplored the attack as a "tragic event" and offered his condolences to the victims' families at a news conference in the southern city of Sochi, where he was meeting with Egyptian President Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi.

The Investigative Committee said the explosive device rigged with shrapnel went off in the school lunchroom and Sergei Melikov, a deputy chief of the Russian National Guard, said it was homemade. Officials later found a second explosive device and destroyed it.

It was not clear what the explosive was, if the attacker detonated it, or how many people it wounded.

Guns are tightly restricted in Russia. Civilians can own only hunting rifles and smooth-bore shotguns and must undergo significant background checks. Roslyakov had only recently received a permit to own a shotgun and bought 150 cartridges just a few days ago, according to local officials.

Aksyonov, the regional leader in Crimea, said the gunman had been described as a shy boy who had no conflicts.

"He wasn't aggressive, he was rather timid," Aksyonov said, speculating that Roslyakov might have "watched some movies" that inspired him to go on the shooting spree.

Some Russian news reports said the shooter had left his backpack containing the explosive device in the cafeteria and remotely detonated it before he started shooting.

"I heard an explosion and saw glass shards and window frames falling down," student Roman Voitenko said in remarks broadcast on Russian state television.

Another student, Semyon Gavrilov, said he had fallen asleep during a lecture and was awakened by the sound of shooting. He looked around and saw a young man shooting at people, he said.

"I locked the door, hoping he wouldn't hear me," Gavrilov told the Komsomolskaya Pravda newspaper.

He said police arrived about 10 minutes later to evacuate people and he saw dead bodies on the floor and charred walls.

Another student, Yuri Kerpek, told the state RIA Novosti news agency that the shooting went on for about 15 minutes.

Russia has seen several violent attacks by students in recent years, but none of them were even remotely as brutal as the Kerch rampage.

Early this year, a teenager armed with an ax attacked fellow students at a school in Buryatia in southern Siberia, wounding five students and a teacher. The attacker also ignited a firebomb in the class and tried to kill himself before being apprehended.

In another attack in January, two teenagers stabbed children and their teacher with knives, wounding 15 people, and then attempted to kill each other before being detained.

After Wednesday's attack, local officials declared a state of emergency on the Black Sea peninsula and cordons of Russia's National Guard circled the school. Security was also increased at a new 19-kilometer (12-mile) bridge linking the peninsula with Russia, which opened earlier this year. Military units were deployed near the college to help emergency agencies.

Russia's 2014 annexation of Crimea triggered Western sanctions. Russia has also supported separatists fighting the Ukrainian government in eastern Ukraine, a conflict that has left at least 10,000 people dead

since 2014.

Over the past few years, Russian security agencies have arrested several Ukrainians accused of plotting terror attacks in Crimea, but no attacks have occurred.

Amid squalor and debris, Michael's survivors cling to motel

By JAY REEVES, Associated Press

PANAMA CITY, Fla. (AP) — Simply getting through the day is a struggle at the American Quality Lodge, a low-rent motel where dozens of people are living in squalor amid destruction left by Hurricane Michael.

Families huddle under makeshift tents and in breezeways strewn with broken glass and roofing fragments, seeking escape from Florida's midday sun. They line up in a parking lot for food and water whenever volunteers and church groups stop by. There's been no power in a week, and the water has been out for days.

Nighttime means relief from the heat, but also brings the threat of looters. Residents say people have stolen money, jewelry, food and even rain-soaked clothes from rooms ripped apart and left open to the elements by Michael.

"Basically, if you were living here before the storm you were homeless. This was our last resort," said Jeannie Holcombe, who has been at the motel a few months with her husband, Jason. "It's worse now."

Michael's winds of as much as 155 mph (250 kph) ripped much of the roof off the two-story red-brick motel, which is just miles from the white sands of Panama City Beach. Rain flooded the upper level and dripped down to the first floor. The place looks absolutely shattered, with tarps strung from the second-floor balcony providing some shade.

Rooms reek with the pungent smell of wet clothes and perspiration; windows are missing from many.

Long-term residents, who pay out about \$180 a week per room, abandoned blown-out rooms for ones with fewer leaks or doors that will shut. Other people simply showed up from surrounding areas and settled in. Some asked permission, others didn't.

Joe Donahue, who works for a company that was taking over management of the motel as Michael struck, has been driving store-to-store in search of supplies, including water and feminine products for the women. He said he doesn't mind people staying there for now.

"I have no place to send them because everything is booked," he said. "It's a nightmare."

Vicki and her husband Wes Allen are stuck at the 135-room motel with their three children, including 17-year-old Allison Allen, who is seven months pregnant. Someone pilfered \$21 that was set aside for her unborn daughter, they said.

"It's not like it's a huge amount of money, but that would have been a couple outfits for her," said Allison, whose twin sister Kristin is also at the motel along with their older brother, Wes Allen Jr.

Residents credit their father with risking his life to rescue 10 people during the worst of the storm, helping them leave rooms torn to shreds by the wind.

Four family members sometimes use wheelchairs because of back problems. The sidewalks and walkways littered with storm debris make it hard for them to get around. The grassy courtyard is filled with sticky tarpaper from the roof, shattered lumber, empty drink cans and bed linens blown outside by Michael.

After getting permission from the Holcombe couple, Bill Youn resorted to salvaging pennies from the floors and drawers of their shattered rooms. He had to climb through a broken window and walk across a soggy floor littered with shards of glass and personal items like deodorant, hair care products and clothes.

"Life's not great," he said after eating lunch: a can of tuna scooped with a borrowed spoon.

The water came back on a couple of days ago, providing a morale boost, and utility crews are installing new power poles just across the street. But Donahue said the motel is so badly damaged, it wouldn't be safe to turn on the power even if electricity were available.

Residents say police and firefighters have been by to make sure the people are safe, but these survivors say they didn't bother to report any of the looting at the motel, because the first-responders seem so busy.

Someone from FEMA also visited, they said, but no one has offered them any better alternatives yet.

And so they sit, most without transportation and many without phones for communication, waiting for a

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fresh delivery of food and water. Some trade cigarettes for other items. One man filled an inflatable kiddie pool, shaped like a pirate ship, to provide a place for youngsters to play.

From her wheelchair, Vicki Allen considered their fate.

"Six days after Michael came through and tore up everything, we're still here," she said.

The hero of the American Quality Lodge, the man who plucked vulnerable residents to safety during Michael, chimed in.

"We can't stay here like this too much longer," said Wes Allen, 48.

'Horseface': Does it matter that Trump ridicules women?

By LAURIE KELLMAN, Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Suffice it to say that "Horseface" and porn actress Stormy Daniels aren't what Republicans want to talk about three weeks from the midterm elections — or ever. A record number of women are running, most of them Democrats, in the first balloting of the #MeToo era.

No matter. President Donald Trump this week added "Horseface" to a long list of unflattering references to women, including: Fat, ugly, disgusting, "that dog," "a 10," "no longer a 10," a slob, "Miss Piggy," "Miss Housekeeping," wacky and crazy.

A look at how Trump's approach is playing out as Republicans defend their House and Senate majorities:

'HORSEFACE'

Trump's tweet about Daniels came after a federal judge dismissed the adult film actress' defamation lawsuit against the president.

Trump tweeted: "Great, now I can go after Horseface and her 3rd rate lawyer." He added, "She knows nothing about me, a total con!"

That appeared to be a reference to Daniels' detailed and unflattering description of Trump, with whom she says she engaged in an affair in 2006, from her recent book. (He's denied that.)

"Game on, Tiny," Daniels tweeted back Tuesday.

REPUBLICANS WISH HE WOULDN'T

Being asked to "respond" to Trump's words is one of the least-favorite pastimes of members of his party. Asked about "horseface," they tried to stay as bland as possible.

"There's no place for that kind of language," said House Speaker Paul Ryan on CBS "This Morning," a little over two months away from leaving Congress at the end of the year. "He should not have said that."

"I wish the president hadn't done it," said Sen. John Kennedy, R-La., said on CNN. "I've made my feelings known, to the president, that tweeting a little less wouldn't cause brain damage. I mean you don't have to express every one of your thoughts."

Rep. Elise Stefanik, R-N.Y., on CBS called the president's "horseface" tweet "unacceptable."

"I disagree with the president's rhetoric numerous times with regard to how he addresses women," she said.

DAMAGE?

By now, Trump's infamous talk about women is embedded in American political lore.

But through the campaign and his presidency, there's been little evidence that Trump's habit has done damage among his most passionate supporters. One question in the 2018 midterms is whether Democratic voters will be particularly likely to cast ballots this year.

In Gallup's latest tracking poll, 34 percent of women say they approve of Trump, which is about where it's been throughout his presidency. Republican women are still overwhelmingly likely to support him.

Women are typically far more likely than men to support Democratic candidates, and this year is no exception. In a recent poll by the Washington Post and ABC News, 59 percent of women said they would be voting for Democratic House candidates, while just 46 percent of men said the same.

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On the turnout question, the Post/ABC poll found that women under 40 were significantly more likely than they were in 2014 to say they were certain to vote.

WHAT TRUMP SAYS

In an interview Tuesday with The Associated Press a few hours after the "horseface" tweet, Trump was asked whether it is appropriate to insult a woman's appearance.

"You can take it any way you want," he replied.

The president, who has a packed schedule of rallies lately for Republican candidates, did refuse to take any blame if Republicans lose control of Congress.

"No, I think I'm helping people," he said in the AP interview.

WHAT WOMEN CLOSE TO TRUMP SAY

As the controversy over Justice Brett Kavanaugh's confirmation raged, Trump counselor Kellyanne Conway bristled at the backlash she gets for working for Trump, who is accused of sexual misconduct by more than a dozen women — all liars, he says.

Conway told CNN that she, too, is a victim of sexual assault.

"I work for President Trump because he's so good to the women who work for him," Conway said.

IN CASE YOU MISSED IT

Here's a far-from-complete selection of Trump's descriptions of women who bother him:

—Trump unloaded on former aide Omarosa Manigault Newman, praising White House Chief of Staff John Kelly "for quickly firing that dog!"

—Trump mocked GOP rival Carly Fiorina's appearance. "Look at that face," he said of Fiorina, according to Rolling Stone in 2015. "Would anyone vote for that? Can you imagine that, the face of our next president?"

—Trump said 1996 Miss Universe Alicia Machado had gained a "massive amount of weight and it was a real problem." Trump did not deny Machado's charge that Trump called her "Miss Piggy" and "Miss Housekeeping."

Associated Press Polling Editor Emily Swanson contributed to this report.

Follow Kellman on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/APLaurieKellman>

Puppeteer who played Big Bird on 'Sesame Street' retiring

WOODSTOCK, Conn. (AP) — The puppeteer who has played Big Bird on "Sesame Street" is retiring after nearly 50 years on the show.

Caroll Spinney announced in a statement Wednesday that he's handing over Big Bird and his other character, Oscar the Grouch, to younger performers. The 84-year-old joined "Sesame Street" at its inception in 1969.

Spinney says he didn't feel like his work was important until Big Bird helped him find his purpose.

Spinney says the physical requirements of performing the characters had become difficult and he developed problems with his balance. He stopped doing the puppeteering for Big Bird in 2015 and now only provides the voices for him and Oscar.

His apprentice, Matt Vogel, will succeed him in the Big Bird role. Vogel also plays Kermit the Frog.

New deal keeps open facility that detains immigrant families

By NOMAAN MERCHANT, Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — The U.S. government has quietly reached a new agreement to keep open a 2,400-bed detention facility used to detain immigrant mothers and children, in a lucrative arrangement for a private

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prison company and the tiny South Texas town where it's located.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement last month signed a contract with the city of Dilley, where the South Texas Family Residential Center opened in 2014. Dilley signed a contract at the same time with CoreCivic, the private prison operator that runs the detention center, the largest facility of its kind in the U.S. The city released both contracts to The Associated Press last week in response to an open records request.

ICE said it was replacing an arrangement dating to President Barack Obama's administration that the Department of Homeland Security's inspector general criticized this year as violating budget guidelines and wasting money. But the new arrangement has some of the same features the inspector general criticized.

When it opened the facility in 2014, the U.S. was seeing a surge of women and children immigrating from Central America. ICE argued it had an urgent need for family bed space and had to circumvent government standards for contracting, which require a bidding process and extensive reviews.

ICE modified an existing detention agreement with the city of Eloy, Arizona, to include the Dilley facility, 900 miles (1,450 kilometers) away. Eloy technically ran the facility, but routed ICE money to CoreCivic, then known as the Corrections Corporation of America.

The inspector general said in a February audit that ICE improperly modified the Eloy contract and that it should have avoided creating a "middleman" and reached an agreement directly with the company operating the facility. Also, not conducting a bidding process may have led ICE to overpay for services at the detention facility, the audit said.

ICE spokeswoman Nina Pruneda said Tuesday that the agency created the agreement with Dilley in response to the inspector general's concerns about Eloy, and that all other terms of the contract will remain the same.

ICE will pay Dilley about \$13 million a month for the cost of detaining immigrants at the facility. Dilley will then send almost all of that money to CoreCivic, minus administrative fees that add up to an estimated \$438,000 a year.

That's a significant windfall for a city with a population of about 4,000 people that has an annual budget of \$2.1 million. Dilley already collects annual revenue-sharing payments from CoreCivic, with \$200,000 due in December.

CoreCivic will continue operating a facility that generated \$171 million in revenue last year.

ICE retains use of a facility that provides most of the 3,000 beds it has in family detention. That space is particularly critical as President Donald Trump's administration tries to detain immigrant families for longer and waive restrictions on the detention of children.

But immigrant advocacy groups say the contracts preserve an arrangement in which a local city's oversight is a technicality that lets ICE and CoreCivic to operate without public scrutiny.

Claudia Valenzuela, director of the National Immigrant Justice Center's detention project, said the city, ICE and CoreCivic should explain how they reached the agreement. She questioned whether Dilley would actually be overseeing the facility given the money it is receiving from CoreCivic.

"I don't have too much faith ... that there's going to be a whole lot of pushback," she said.

Neither ICE nor CoreCivic announced the new agreement. The Dilley City Council met in closed session on Sept. 17 to discuss the two contracts, and interim city administrator David Jordan signed them one day later.

Both Jordan and Dilley Mayor Mary Ann Obregon, declined to comment on the agreement. CoreCivic also declined to comment.

Bob Libal, executive director of the group Grassroots Leadership, said ICE may have wanted to avoid the attention that other detention contracts have gotten. One county in Central Texas this year terminated its agreement with ICE and CoreCivic for a 500-bed facility long protested by Grassroots Leadership and others.

"It's an agency that tends to play by its own rules," Libal said.

Located on the site of a former "man camp" for oilfield workers, the family residential center is a major engine of jobs and taxes in Dilley. CoreCivic runs ads in the local newspaper advertising positions that

start as high as \$20 an hour, and Obregon wrote a public letter last year lauding the facility.

ICE says detainees at Dilley are well cared for, with access to medical care and legal help.

But legal groups say immigrants are often traumatized by detention at Dilley and that some struggle to get health care.

There are 1,975 people currently detained there. Some of the families at Dilley were reunited in detention after being separated under the Trump administration's "zero-tolerance" policy that was halted in June.

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

Egyptian mediators race to restore calm in Gaza

By FARES AKRAM and JOSEF FEDERMAN, Associated Press

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) — A high-level Egyptian delegation on Wednesday held urgent talks with Gaza's Hamas rulers, seeking to restore calm after a rocket from the Palestinian area slammed into a home in southern Israel and the Israeli military responded with airstrikes on Hamas targets.

The pre-dawn flare-up in violence appeared to be pushing the region toward another conflagration between the bitter enemies. But by late Wednesday, there were signs that the situation was calming down.

As the Egyptian mediators arrived, Hamas and a second militant group, Islamic Jihad, issued a joint statement that made rare criticism of the rocket attack, suggesting that they were trying to defuse the situation.

"We reject all irresponsible attempts that try to change the direction and sabotage the Egyptian efforts, including the overnight firing of the rocket," they said. "At the same time, we emphasize we are ready to confront the Israeli aggression."

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu traveled to the Gaza border area to meet with senior security officials, and planned a meeting of his decision-making Security Cabinet later in the evening.

"If these attacks will not stop, we will stop them. And I want to tell you today, Israel will act with great force," he said.

Israel and Hamas, an Islamic group that seeks Israel's destruction, have fought three wars since Hamas seized control of Gaza since 2007. Israel and Egypt have also maintained a blockade over the territory since the Hamas takeover. The restrictions, aimed at weakening Hamas, have ravaged Gaza's economy.

Hamas has led mass protests along the border with Israel for the past six months, seeking to put pressure on Israel to lift the blockade. Those protests have intensified in recent weeks as Egyptian and U.N. attempts to broker a truce have faltered.

There was no immediate claim for Wednesday's rocket attack, which struck a home in the southern city of Beersheba, some 50 kilometers (30 miles) from Gaza.

The military said another rocket from Gaza landed in the sea, just off the coast of central Israel.

No injuries were reported in either strike, but the long-range attacks with powerful rockets signaled an escalation out of Gaza. Lt. Col. Jonathan Conricus, a military spokesman, dismissed Hamas and Islamic Jihad's criticism of the rocket strikes, saying they were the only groups with the expertise to fire such a weapon.

Beersheba is the largest city in southern Israel, with about 200,000 residents.

Israeli officials said a woman and her three children whose home was hit evaded harm by rushing to a bomb shelter after warning sirens woke them up shortly before 4 a.m.

The mother's swift response likely saved their lives. The home was destroyed, and debris was scattered throughout the street, damaging parked cars and adjacent structures.

Next-door neighbor Segev Naveh said he did not hear the warning sirens and was awoken by the massive blast.

"It was very scary," he said. "If it was falling on my house, I would be dead for sure."

The medical service said two other Beersheba residents were injured during the panic to seek cover.

Following the attacks, schools in Beersheba were closed and Israel's military chief cut short a visit to the U.S. to come back and manage the crisis.

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As a first response, Israeli military jets pounded Hamas targets across the Gaza Strip. The Gaza Health Ministry said a 25-year-old militant was killed inside one of the posts targeted. Three other people were wounded.

Lt. Col. Jonathan Conricus, a military spokesman, said 20 Hamas targets were struck, including offensive tunnels and weapons workshops. The military released video purportedly showing militants preparing to fire another rocket toward Israel before they were targeted.

Fighting has flared up on several occasions in recent months, though neither Israel nor Hamas appears to be interested in another full-blown war. Egypt and the U.N. have been trying to mediate a long-term cease-fire.

It was unclear whether the Egyptians were making any progress. Late Wednesday, the Egyptian delegation abruptly left Gaza and entered Israel.

Meanwhile, Hamas announced that the head of Egyptian intelligence, Abbas Kamel, had called off a planned visit to Gaza on Thursday.

"We are sorry that minister Abbas Kamel has canceled his visit to Gaza and Ramallah," Moussa Abu Marzouk, a top Hamas official, wrote on Twitter.

U.N. Mideast envoy Nickolay Mladenov said the situation was "particularly complicated" after the rocket attacks.

"Unfortunately, they fit a pattern of provocations that seek to bring Israel and Gaza into another deadly conflict and confrontation," he said at a meeting with Israeli President Reuven Rivlin. "It is our responsibility to do everything possible to avoid that confrontation."

He said steps need to be taken to avoid war, alleviate the humanitarian situation in Gaza and to bring the internationally backed Palestinian Authority, ousted by Hamas in 2007, back in control of Gaza.

"This is the only path forward and we need to make sure that in the next 48 hours we really see a de-escalation on the ground so that these efforts can continue," he said.

The Israel-Egyptian blockade has restricted Hamas' ability to govern and made life extremely difficult for Gaza's 2 million residents. Electricity is supplied for roughly four hours a day, unemployment stands at more than 50 percent and tap water is undrinkable.

The Hamas-led protests have intensified as Egyptian-mediated cease-fire efforts faltered. Last week, some 14,000 Palestinians thronged to the perimeter fence, burning tires and throwing rocks, firebombs and grenades at soldiers stationed atop earth mounds on the other side. Some 20 Palestinians breached the border last Friday, and seven Palestinians were killed, including four who the military said had entered Israel and approached a military position.

In response, Israel has halted Qatari-donated fuel shipments to Gaza's power plant that were meant to ease the electricity crisis.

Since March, 155 Palestinians have been killed during the protests. One Israeli soldier was killed by sniper fire in July.

Hamas seeks a cease-fire with Israel to secure an easing of the blockade but accuses its West Bank rivals, Fatah, of thwarting the effort. Repeated attempts to reconcile Hamas and the West Bank-based administration of Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas have failed, adding to the desperation fueling the demonstrations.

Driver opens fire on North Carolina trooper, killing him

WHITEVILLE, N.C. (AP) — A driver opened fire on a North Carolina state trooper during a traffic stop early Wednesday, killing the 11-year Highway Patrol veteran, authorities said. The suspect was arrested after a chase.

Around 12:15 a.m., the trooper stopped the white pickup truck on suspicion of speeding on a highway in rural Columbus County southwest of Whiteville, said Highway Patrol First Sgt. Michael Baker. Baker said the driver shot Trooper Kevin Conner as he approached.

"The driver of that vehicle fired several shots, striking the trooper," Baker told reporters.

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The suspect fled and Conner was taken to a hospital, where he died.

Baker said the driver then headed about 20 miles west (32 kilometers) to Fair Bluff near the South Carolina state line, where authorities pursued him in a chase. The truck became disabled on railroad tracks in the town, and the suspect fled on foot. Authorities said the suspect was arrested around 4 a.m. after an extensive search.

Baker said the man, whose name wasn't immediately released, was being held in the Columbus County jail pending charges.

The Highway Patrol said the Columbus County-based trooper was an 11-year veteran of the organization. Patrol commander Col. Glenn McNeill said the organization was "mourning the loss of a hero" as condolences poured in from law enforcement agencies on social media.

"Many will say he was the nicest guy you would ever meet and the ones that knew Kevin and family would agree," the nearby Bladen County Sheriff's Office said on Facebook.

WRAL-TV reported that Conner helped save lives after a 2011 fiery head-on crash in Columbus County. A WRAL article from that year said Conner used an extinguisher to put out flames, and he and another trooper provided first aid before paramedics arrived.

Trailing in polls, O'Rourke lays into Cruz in Texas debate

By WILL WEISSERT, Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Democrat Beto O'Rourke abandoned his usual message of unity and optimism and laid into Ted Cruz, hoping to reverse polls that show him fading against the Republican incumbent during the second debate of a Texas Senate race that has become one of the nation's most closely watched.

During the opening moments of the debate Tuesday night, Cruz criticized O'Rourke for past votes supporting a never-enacted oil production tax that might have hit oil-rich Texas hard. O'Rourke responded by evoking a moniker President Donald Trump bestowed on the senator when the pair were bitter rivals during the 2016 Republican presidential primary, saying, "Senator Cruz is not going to be honest with you. He's going to make up positions and votes that I've never held."

"It's why the president called him Lyin' Ted," O'Rourke said, "and it's why the nickname stuck, because it's true."

A former Ivy League debate champion, Cruz shot back, "It's clear Congressman O'Rourke's pollsters have told him to come out on the attack."

Democrats have long dreamed about a growing Hispanic population helping to flip Texas from red to blue and shaking up the electoral map. But polls that once showed O'Rourke within striking distance of a monumental upset now suggest Cruz may be edging further ahead. No Democrat has won any of Texas' nearly 30 statewide offices since 1994, the country's longest political losing streak.

On Wednesday morning, Trump tweeted that he watched the debate and reaffirmed his support of his one-time GOP rival. During the 2016 presidential race, Trump re-tweeted an unflattering photo of Cruz's wife and suggested that his Cuban-born father had a hand in John F. Kennedy's assassination.

"Ted is strong on Crime, Border & 2nd A, loves our Military, Vets, Low Taxes. Beto is a Flake!" Trump tweeted Wednesday.

With Election Day just three weeks away, Tuesday might have been one of O'Rourke's last shots to gain ground. It was the race's last scheduled debate after one in Houston was canceled amid Senate floor votes on Brett Kavanaugh's confirmation to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Cruz wants to participate in a previously scheduled townhall featuring just O'Rourke in the U.S.-Mexico border city of McAllen on Thursday night, but it's unclear if that will come together in time.

The pair used this matchup to clash on abortion regulations, climate change, the nomination of Kavanaugh and a border wall backed by the Trump administration. Things never got nasty or overly personal — the borrowed "Lyin' Ted" was the only name-calling, but both candidates tried to impress voters by criticizing their opponent's records.

When O'Rourke said he wanted to expand federally funded health care to more Americans, Cruz said the congressman agreed with Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders and supported socialized medicine that would

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cost trillions and require sky-high tax increases. O'Rourke accused Cruz of not doing enough to stand up to Trump when it came to Russia and that the state needs a "full-time senator" rather than someone who concentrates on running for president.

Even when Cruz tried to say that he and O'Rourke were somewhat in agreement on opposing the Trump administration's higher tariffs on foreign-made goods, O'Rourke drew laughs by replying, "Really interesting to hear you talk about the partisan circus after your six years in the Senate," a reference to Cruz's days as a tea party insurgent who battled President Barack Obama at every turn.

O'Rourke, who is giving up his El Paso congressional seat to challenge Cruz, shattered Senate fundraising records with any eye-popping \$38-plus million in the three-month period through September. The Democrat has a campaign war chest worth \$22.9 million, more than double Cruz's about \$11.3 million in cash on-hand.

Cruz kept O'Rourke on the defensive when they debated last month in Dallas, and O'Rourke — who had stuck to a bipartisan, feel-good message for months — kept a promise to sharpen his tone during Tuesday night's debate in front of a live audience of 120 people hosted by KENS-5, the CBS affiliate.

He also noted that his monster fundraising has come without accepting donations from outside political groups, but Cruz said O'Rourke still "goes with the left-wing national activists and left-wing national donors."

In response to a question about the #MeToo movement, O'Rourke said Cruz "inexplicably" voted against the Violence Against Women Act, saying the senator was "all talk and no action." Cruz countered that the movement "had done an incredible amount of good for this country" and that people of both sexes need to be protected from harassment and abuse.

Even though Cruz looks to be in a better position than earlier in the race, Trump is taking the once unthinkable step of staging a rally in a state that's so reliably conservative, heading Monday to an 8,000-seat Houston arena. The president carried Texas by a relatively small nine points in 2016. Still, Cruz has been a full-throated supporter of Trump's since they battled during the presidential race — and hopes that the joint appearance will assuage some conservatives around the state who were angered by the past animosity.

AP FACT CHECK: <https://bit.ly/2QWvFkW>

Even tech execs fret about their kids' smartphone addictions

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE, AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Like a lot of parents, Mike Herrick occasionally sees his 13-year-old daughter getting lost in her smartphone and wonders: Is technology messing with children's brains, even as it enlightens and empowers them in ways that weren't possible when his generation grew up?

What sets Herrick apart is his job. He is a product and engineering executive at Urban Airship, a company in Portland, Oregon, that makes online tools that send the kind of relentless notifications that can make people act like bears near a honey pot.

The tensions between the pride Herrick takes in his profession and his parental qualms about technology tug particularly hard when he sees his daughter, Lauren, and her friends texting each other instead of talking — when they're sitting 5 feet apart. Or when he hears a friend jokingly describe him as a "mobile arms dealer."

At times like those, Herrick worries that technology may be having a corrosive effect on society, even though he feels no regrets about his job because he unequivocally believes that Urban Airship's tools are a net benefit to people.

"You can't help but feel the juxtaposition," says Herrick, 44. "The power of this age we live in is that it has given everyone access to all this information and the ability to stay connected to people, but how do we manage it better?"

It's a question besetting other technology executives, too. Many say they're trying to reconcile their fulfillment from working in a financially rewarding industry that they say has made life more efficient, enjoyable and affordable for people with their misgivings as parents about the addictiveness of devices and social media that now define much of daily life.

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Technology “can be like opening your refrigerator door when you are hungry and just staring into the abyss,” says Keith Messick, chief marketing officer for Dialpad, a specialist in phone systems that incorporate voice controls and other artificial intelligence. “That’s when I recoil just a little bit.”

He is especially troubled when he sees his own 13-year-old son mindlessly thumb at his screen. Messick also worries that the ease of texting and posting on social media is turning kids into poor communicators who write things they’d never say in person or in a phone conversation — on the rare occasion when they use their devices to make a call.

“This is the world we live in,” Messick says. He says he still believes that technology’s “positives far outweigh the negatives.”

Most parents have similarly mixed feelings about technology, whether or not they work in the industry. About two-thirds of U.S. parents worry that their teenage children spend too much time immersed in a screen, according to a survey released in late August by the Pew Research Center. Nearly three-fourths of parents said they thought their teenagers were sometimes distracted by their phones during conversations with them.

Yet 86 percent of the parents say they’re very or somewhat confident that they have determined an appropriate amount of screen time for their teens. Slightly more than one-third of parents acknowledged spending too much time on their phones themselves, the survey said.

The concerns about children’s rising dependence on technology extend beyond parents. They sometimes also vex other relatives, like aunts and uncles. One of them is Apple CEO Tim Cook, who revealed in a public appearance this year that he tries to keep his nephew off social networks.

Apple is trying to address some of the problems it helped create with the 2007 introduction of the iPhone by offering more features for parents to monitor and control how much time they and their kids spend on the devices.

The new tools, part of the latest version of an iPhone operating system released last month, can even be deployed to keep kids off distracting apps like Facebook, Snap and Instagram completely — or just at certain times of day. Google included similar controls in its latest version of the Android operating system, which powers most of the world’s smartphones.

Instagram co-founder Kevin Systrom thinks that is a good idea. He is already vowing to limit his now-10-month-old daughter’s eventual exposure to devices and social media as she grows up.

At the same time, Systrom, 34, is hoping his daughter will embrace technology as he did when he began using computers and surfing the internet as a boy. He credits his own early fascination with technology for inspiring him to create Instagram — an app with more than 1 billion users whose success has rewarded him with an estimated personal fortune of \$1.5 billion.

“Obviously, like anything — whether it’s food, or drink — moderation is key,” Systrom says. “I think we are in a world where we have to develop opinions on what that moderation is and how to do it.”

Brian Peterson, Dialpad’s co-founder and vice president of engineering, loves his job and technology, too — so much so that gave both his daughters iPads around the time they were 2.

It seemed fine at first, because they were using the tablets on instructional apps that helped them learn things like playing a virtual piano. But then he started to notice that the girls, who are now 6 and 4, seemed to be spending most of their iPad time watching YouTube videos of other kids playing with toys or doing something else that he and their mother wished they weren’t.

“That is when we had our freak-out moment and said, ‘Hold on a moment, no more of this drug,’ Peterson says.

Now, he has decided to hold off on getting his daughters smartphones until they reach middle-school age — or, even better, as presents when they graduate from high school and are ready to head off to college.

“I am just praying by the time that my kids really need a smartphone, they have really good parental controls, Peterson said.

Democrats' not-so-secret plan to fight midterm malaise

By JUANA SUMMERS, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — They're asking pastors to text their congregants about the importance of voting. They're connecting with thousands of Puerto Ricans displaced by Hurricane Maria. And they're relying on groups like the NAACP, which has tripled its spending from 2016 to energize black voters.

Less than three weeks before Election Day, Democrats are sparing nothing to make sure their voters head to the polls. It's all part of an effort to avoid the disappointment of previous elections when low turnout dashed high expectations.

"2016 was a low point for a lot of us," said Jamal Watkins, vice president of engagement at the NAACP. "People have awakened and said, 'Wait a minute, we can't lose, and we can't lose like this.' Folks are fired up to reinvest in turnout."

Younger voters and voters of color tend to stay home in non-presidential elections, making the midterm electorate older, whiter and more Republican-tilting. But that could change this year, Democrats and outside groups say, if unprecedented efforts to reach so-called infrequent voters galvanize people who previously sat on the sidelines.

Democrats have reason for optimism: The party saw strong turnout in nearly a dozen federal special elections ahead of the midterms, with Democratic candidates consistently outperforming Republicans.

But the organizing flurry comes amid concerns over ballot access and election security, which have become a flashpoint in the high-profile gubernatorial race in Georgia. There is also mounting anxiety about whether efforts to mobilize Latino voters will translate into votes, particularly in several key races in heavily Latino districts.

The party is spending big to ward against such threats.

The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee, the party's arm focused on House races, is spending more than \$25 million in 45 battleground districts to mobilize female voters, millennials, African-Americans and Hispanics, officials said. That's a far more significant investment than past cycles.

The committee is putting an emphasis on turning out African-American women, including running advertising focused on black women ages 18-39 in more than 40 districts. The DCCC has also run Spanish-language TV and radio ads across the country.

Between field efforts and paid media, voters of color in targeted swing districts will have heard from the DCCC more than 100 times in the closing 60 days of the election. And in a twist, some of the outreach this year will be facilitated by local community leaders instead of anonymous politicians.

"As an example of the local voter contact and text messaging program that we are doing, we are partnering with a series of pastors and local validators across the country," said DCCC Executive Director Dan Sena. "When you're getting a text message saying 'hey - early vote's starting,' you're not getting it from someone in Washington D.C. You're actually getting it from somebody in Georgia that has a big delegation, or you're getting it from someone on campus that you know."

The Democratic National Committee also beefed up its voter database, purchasing 94 million cellphone numbers, according to a DNC official who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss internal strategy. The official said the additional cell phone numbers have helped with voter contact in key races across the country, including encouraging sporadic voters to participate.

Republicans say they have their own well-organized, well-funded turnout machine that dwarfs Democrats' efforts.

A Republican National Committee aide said the organization has raised more than \$270 million this cycle, invested in 28 states, more than 540 paid staffers and thousands of volunteers focused on turning out Republicans who don't vote often and swing voters who participate more frequently. The committee raised more than \$163 million during roughly the same period ahead of the 2014 midterms. The aide said the RNC has made more than 50 million voter contacts, either over the phone or by going door-to-door.

The Democratic organization effort goes beyond the traditional party structure.

NextGen America, the advocacy group backed by billionaire environmentalist and donor Tom Steyer, is

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injecting more money into a closing push to rally young voters. The group will spend more than \$4 million on digital ads across 11 states, targeting more than 4.3 million young voters. NextGen is also running the first political ads on Twitch, a popular video streaming service, as well as places like Reddit, Spotify and Pandora.

"Young people in general feel like they've really been shut out of the system," said Aleigha Cavalier, a spokeswoman for NextGen America. "Our goal with digital is to find a message that works for them and actually put it where their eyeballs will see it."

The Human Rights Campaign's Equality Votes PAC launched a more than \$2 million campaign across eight key races spanning digital, direct mail, text and phone voter contact.

The NAACP's campaign is targeting more than 5 million "infrequent" black voters, including in the key states of Florida, Georgia and North Carolina, in a \$6 million voter mobilization push, up from \$2 million spent on mobilization in 2016. The push includes upward of 20 staffers focused on mobilizing black voters, the majority of those, according to Watkins, working in key states with thousands of on-the-ground volunteers.

In Georgia, the organization is targeting more than 700,000 "infrequent" voters. In Florida, the number swells to more than 900,000.

The NAACP is not the only group that's boosting its turnout effort. The AFL-CIO, the nation's largest labor federation, also shifted its strategy. Julie Greene, who is leading the union's mobilization efforts, said that in 2014 and 2016, the union experimented with an independent expenditure program that had more of a focus on the general public, rather than the union's member-to-member program. The union found that its members had not turned out in support of labor-endorsed candidates at the same levels as in the past.

The union now hopes to increase turnout among its members by 5 percent, up from 57 percent in 2014. But it is also investing significantly in mobilizing Hispanic and African-American voters. Last week, the union announced plans to air ads on African-American and Spanish-language radio in 26 media markets. The buy is in the high six figures, according to an AFL-CIO official, and will air in English and Spanish through the November election.

"With so many seats being up, what we knew was every vote was going to count," Greene said. "As a person of color, a young African-American woman, it was important for me to make sure with the resources we were putting out there, we were also reaching out to those communities who are our strongest allies: Those were brown and black communities."

Analysis: Trump's Saudi bet has become much riskier

By MATTHEW LEE, AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump put a big and risky bet on Saudi Arabia and its 33-year-old crown prince. It's now become much riskier.

From the early days of his presidency, Trump and his foreign policy team embraced the kingdom and Mohammed bin Salman as the anchors of their entire Middle East strategy. From Iran and Iraq to Syria, Yemen and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the administration gambled that Saudi Arabia, effectively run by the prince, could credibly lead, and willingly pay for, a "Pax Arabica" in a part of the world from which Trump is keen to disengage.

For nearly two years, through an ongoing crisis with Qatar and international outrage over civilian casualties in the Saudi-led campaign against Yemeni rebels, the prince has managed to keep Washington's confidence. But now, the tide is turning amid growing outrage over the disappearance and likely death of a U.S.-based journalist inside a Saudi Consulate in Turkey, and that confidence appears to be waning. The Trump administration's grand strategy may be upended with far-reaching ramifications that extend well outside the region.

Even if an investigation into what happened to Washington Post contributor Jamal Khashoggi in Istanbul exonerates the prince and the top Saudi leadership, the administration's deep reliance on him will be severely tested not least because of broad bipartisan revulsion in Congress to as-yet unconfirmed accounts of Khashoggi's fate. Already, prominent lawmakers from both parties are questioning his fitness to lead

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the country and suggesting it might be time to re-think U.S.-Saudi relations and sharply curb arms sales.

Trump ally Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., and other influential politicians warned of dire consequences on Tuesday, saying the prince, often known as MBS for short, should be removed from his post.

"This guy is a wrecking ball, he had this guy murdered in a consulate in Turkey, and to expect me to ignore it, I feel used and abused," Graham said on "Fox and Friends." "Saudi Arabia, if you're listening, there are a lot of good people you could choose, but MBS has tainted your country and tainted himself."

Trump foe Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., said the Khashoggi case "should trigger a fundamental review of the nature of the United States' alliance with the Saudis."

"As the new crown prince engages in increasingly reckless behavior, more and more of us are wondering whether our ally's actions are in our own best interests," he wrote in The Washington Post.

And Trump ally Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., called the situation a "catastrophe" for the Saudis that will "alter the relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia for the foreseeable future."

"This is a fear we've had for a long time is that the crown prince is a young and aggressive guy that would overestimate how much room he had to do things, would get over aggressive and overestimate his own capabilities and create a problem such as this," he said. He added that the situation was one that "would really blow apart our Middle Eastern strategy."

The impact of a U.S.-Saudi rift, however remote the possibility, could send shockwaves around the world, destabilizing oil markets and the global investment climate, not to mention dealing a blow to the Trump administration's own plans in the Middle East.

Trump's son-in-law and senior adviser Jared Kushner has made Saudi Arabia a centerpiece of his yet to be revealed Israeli-Palestinian peace plan, which is expected to call for massive Saudi and Gulf Arab contributions to fund reconstruction and development projects in the West Bank and Gaza.

Saudi support will also be key to the political elements of the plan that Israel insists put its security on par with Palestinian statehood. That means that Israel will likely seek assurances that any deal with the Palestinians be followed by a broader agreement that normalizes its relations with the rest of the Arab world, particularly Saudi Arabia.

In Syria, the administration relied almost entirely on Saudi Arabia, along with the closely allied United Arab Emirates, to make up for steep cuts in U.S. stabilization assistance to areas liberated from Islamic militants. Next door in Iraq, the current secretary of state, Mike Pompeo, and his predecessor, Rex Tillerson, have leaned heavily on the Saudis to make large financial pledges for reconstruction of war-shattered communities.

But it is the administration's policy of isolating Iran that may suffer the most from Saudi-U.S. estrangement.

Trump is counting on the Saudis to shore up and complement its Iran policy on several fronts.

In Yemen, where the U.S.-backed Saudi-led coalition is fighting Iran-backed Houthi Shiite rebel insurgency, the effort to blunt Tehran's increasing assertiveness would be hurt by any reduction in American help.

In Syria, where Saudi stabilization funds are being used in part to prevent Iranian proxies from encroaching on communities previously held by the Islamic State group, a reduction in Saudi cooperation would allow Iran a freer hand. The same holds true in Iraq, where Saudi investment is seen as critical to prevent Iran from gaining more of a foothold than it has in the Shia majority state.

More importantly, the administration has been counting on Saudi Arabia to step in to prevent oil prices from skyrocketing once it re-imposes energy-related sanctions on Iran that had been lifted under the 2015 nuclear deal from which Trump withdrew. Those sanctions require countries to halt Iranian oil imports unless they receive a waiver or face penalties. Frosty relations with Washington may tempt Riyadh to cut back on any increase in oil supply to make up for the loss of Iranian crude.

Of course, Trump's bet could still pay off in the event the Khashoggi investigation is found to be credible and those responsible for his fate are held accountable, as Trump, Vice President Mike Pence and Pompeo have all demanded. But with anti-Saudi sentiment running high in the corridors of power, Trump may find that going all in on the prince was a loser.

EDITOR'S NOTE — AP Diplomatic Writer Matthew Lee has been covering U.S. foreign policy and inter-

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national affairs since 1999.

This story has been corrected to show the senator's surname is Murphy, not Porter, and that Rubio is a Republican, not a Democrat.

Trump starts leaving postal union in latest anti-China move

By ZEKE MILLER and PAUL WISEMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States announced Wednesday that it is preparing to pull out of an international postal treaty that allows China to ship packages to America at discounted rates. The move would escalate a trade dispute with China.

President Donald Trump argues that the 144-year-old Universal Post Union benefits China and other countries at the expense of U.S. businesses — making it cheaper to ship packages from Beijing to New York than from San Francisco to the U.S. East coast, which particularly benefits Chinese manufacturers. The officials say the treaty is used by shippers of the narcotic fentanyl to the U.S. from China.

The U.S. is willing to renegotiate the treaty over the next year but will leave the union if no agreement can be reached, the officials said.

Bishar Hussein, director of the Universal Postal Union, said he regrets the U.S. decision and will seek a meeting with American officials.

The move was welcomed by the U.S National Association of Manufacturers, which called the exiting postal pact "outdated" in the age of e-commerce and at a time of Chinese manufacturing dominance.

"Manufacturers and manufacturing workers in the United States will greatly benefit from a modernized and far more fair arrangement with China," Jay Timmons, president of the manufacturers association, said in a statement.

The U.S. and China are already locked in a trade war. The United States has imposed tariffs on about \$250 billion in Chinese goods, and Beijing has responded by targeting about \$110 billion in U.S. products.

The world's two biggest economies are clashing over U.S. allegations that China is using predatory practices to challenge American technological dominance. These include hacking into U.S. companies' computers to steal trade secrets and forcing American firms to hand over technology to China in exchange for access to the Chinese market.

Trump has made a point of cutting America's international ties. His first week in office he pulled the United States out of a trade pact with 11 Pacific Rim countries. He also has left UNESCO and the United Nations Human Rights Council and pulled U.S. funding for the UN agency for Palestinian refugees.

AP writer Matthew Lee contributed to this report.

Asia shares sag after retreat on Wall St, weaker Japan data

By ELAINE KURTENBACH, AP Business Writer

BANGKOK (AP) — Shares fell Thursday in Asia after a retreat on Wall Street driven by sell-offs of technology shares, homebuilders and retailers. A report of weaker Japanese exports in September underscored uncertainties over the outlook for trade.

KEEPING SCORE: Japan's Nikkei 225 index sank 0.7 percent to 22,687.66 and the Kospi in South Korea lost 0.7 percent to 2,151.55. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index edged 0.1 percent lower to 25,436.62 and the Shanghai Composite index tumbled 2 percent to 2,510.62. Australia's S&P ASX 200 shed 0.1 percent to 5,933.20. Shares fell in Southeast Asia and Taiwan.

WALL STREET: U.S. shares ended with moderate losses after an early slide. A Commerce Department report on falling new home starts hit homebuilders and retailers. Technology stocks fell after IBM reported its biggest loss in five and a half years. It sank 7.6 percent. The S&P 500 index fell 0.71 points to 2,809.21. The Dow Jones Industrial Average slumped 0.4 percent to 25,706.68. The Nasdaq composite slid 2.79 points to 7,642.70. The Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks skidded 0.5 percent to 1,589.60.

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JAPAN TRADE: Japan recorded a trade surplus for September of 139.6 billion yen (\$1.2 billion), but exports fell 1.2 percent from the previous year in the first decline for the world's third largest economy since 2016. A series of natural disasters took a toll, but the lag in exports also reflects uncertainties over trade tensions after President Donald Trump imposed penalty tariffs on billions of dollars' worth of Chinese exports.

FED TALK: The Federal Reserve's minutes from its meeting in late September, when it raised interest rates for the third time this year showed some participants thought the Fed's key interest rate would eventually need to "become modestly restrictive" to ensure inflation doesn't climb too high. Other officials felt the Fed shouldn't take that step unless there are signs the economy is overheating and inflation is rising quickly.

ENERGY: The price of U.S. crude oil slipped 7 cents to \$69.78 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It dropped 3 percent to \$69.75 a barrel in New York, its first close below \$70 a barrel in a month, after the U.S. government said energy stockpiles jumped last week. Brent crude, the international standard, lost 8 cents to \$79.97 per barrel. It fell 1.7 percent to \$80.05 a barrel in London.

CURRENCIES: The dollar fell to 112.52 yen from 112.66 yen. The euro fell to \$1.1507 from \$1.1578.

AP Markets Writer Marley Jay contributed to this report. He can be reached at <http://twitter.com/MarleyJayAP>

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Thursday, Oct. 18, the 291st day of 2018. There are 74 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 18, 1892, the first long-distance telephone line between New York and Chicago was officially opened (it could only handle one call at a time).

On this date:

In 1648, Boston shoemakers were authorized to form a guild to protect their interests; it's the first American labor organization on record.

In 1767, the Mason-Dixon line, the boundary between colonial Pennsylvania, Maryland and Delaware, was set as astronomers Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon completed their survey.

In 1898, the American flag was raised in Puerto Rico shortly before Spain formally relinquished control of the island to the U-S.

In 1931, inventor Thomas Alva Edison died in West Orange, New Jersey, at age 84.

In 1944, Soviet troops invaded Czechoslovakia during World War II.

In 1962, James D. Watson, Francis Crick and Maurice Wilkins were honored with the Nobel Prize for Medicine and Physiology for determining the double-helix molecular structure of DNA.

In 1968, the U-S Olympic Committee suspended Tommie Smith and John Carlos for giving a "black power" salute as a protest during a victory ceremony in Mexico City.

In 1969, the federal government banned artificial sweeteners known as cyclamates (SY'-kluh-maytz) because of evidence they caused cancer in laboratory rats.

In 1977, West German commandos stormed a hijacked Lufthansa jetliner on the ground in Mogadishu, Somalia, freeing all 86 hostages and killing three of the four hijackers.

In 1982, former first lady Bess Truman died at her home in Independence, Missouri, at age 97.

In 1997, a monument honoring American servicewomen, past and present, was dedicated at Arlington National Cemetery.

In 2001, CBS News announced that an employee in anchorman Dan Rather's office had tested positive for skin anthrax. Four disciples of Osama bin Laden were sentenced in New York to life without parole for their roles in the deadly 1998 bombings of two U.S. embassies in Africa.

Ten years ago: President George W. Bush, speaking at Camp David, said he would host an international summit in response to the global financial crisis, but did not set a date or place for the meeting. Anti-

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American Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr urged Iraq's parliament to reject a pact that would extend U.S. presence in Iraq for three years. Soul singer Dee Dee Warwick died in Essex County, N.J. at age 63.

Five years ago: People in the San Francisco Bay area faced a frustrating Friday commute as workers for the region's largest transit system walked off the job for the second time in four months. President Barack Obama nominated the Pentagon's former top lawyer, Jeh (Jay) C. Johnson, to be the next Secretary of Homeland Security. In a stunning about-face, Saudi Arabia rejected a coveted seat on the U.N. Security Council, denouncing the body for failing to resolve world conflicts such as Syria's civil war. The St. Louis Cardinals advanced to their second World Series in three seasons by roughing up the Los Angeles Dodgers 9-0 in Game 6 of the NL championship series.

One year ago: President Donald Trump rejected claims that he had been disrespectful to the grieving family of a slain U.S. soldier in a phone call to the family. Instead of accepting awards at the CMT Artists of the Year show in Nashville, singer Jason Aldean and other stars honored the victims of the mass shooting at a country music festival in Las Vegas. At a meeting of NFL owners in New York, Commissioner Roger Goodell said there was no discussion of changing the league's national anthem policy to require players to stand. After a day of modest gains on Wall Street, the Dow industrials finished above 23,000 for the first time.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Dawn Wells is 80. College and Pro Football Hall of Famer Mike Ditka is 79. Singer-musician Russ Giguere is 75. Actor Joe Morton is 71. Actress Pam Dawber is 68. Author Terry McMillan is 67. Writer-producer Chuck Lorre is 66. Gospel singer Vickie Winans is 65. Director-screenwriter David Twohy (TOO'-ee) is 63. International Tennis Hall of Famer Martina Navratilova is 62. International Hall of Fame boxer Thomas Hearns is 60. Actor Jean-Claude Van Damme is 58. Jazz musician Wynton Marsalis is 57. Actor Vincent Spano is 56. Rock musician Tim Cross is 52. Former tennis player Michael Stich (shteeek) is 50. Singer Nonchalant is 45. Actress Joy Bryant is 44. Rock musician Peter Svensson (The Cardigans) is 44. Actor Wesley Jonathan is 40. Rhythm-and-blues singer-actor Ne-Yo is 39. Country singer Josh Gracin is 38. Country musician Jesse Littleton (Marshall Dyllon) is 37. Olympic gold medal skier Lindsey Vonn is 34. Jazz singer-musician Esperanza Spalding is 34. Actress-model Freida Pinto is 34. Actor Zac Efron is 31. Actress Joy Lauren is 29. TV personality Bristol Palin is 28. Actor Tyler Posey is 27. Actor Toby Regbo is 27.

Thought for Today: "The strongest are those who renounce their own times and become a living part of those yet to come. The strongest, and the rarest." — Milovan Djilas (1911-1995), Yugoslav author and politician.