

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 1 of 59

- 1- Groton Care & Rehab Ad
- 1- Spring means (free) fishing
- 2- Colestock, Flihs place at Roncalli meet
- 2- Clay Target League Top 10
- 2- Harry Implement Ad
- 3- Community Events
- 3- FFA Awards Banquet
- 9- SD History & Heritage Column: "Lucky Lindy" visits South Dakota
- 11- Rummage Day in Groton
- 12- Truss Pros Ad
- 13- McInerney qualifies for state in Long Jump
- 14- Groton takes first in eight events at Milbank JH Track Meet
- 15- Today in Weather History
- 16- Weather Pages
- 18- Daily Devotional
- 19- 2019 Groton Events
- 20- News from the Associated Press

ACTIVITIES DIRECTOR WANTED

We are looking for someone with a creative mind and a passion for the elderly. If that is you, here is a great opportunity for YOU!

➤ Interview and assess all residents prior to the initial Care Plan Conference; document this information in the medical record, develop an individual recreation plan based on the assessment and participate in Interdisciplinary Care Plan meetings

➤ Update assessments and plans as needed and required by state or federal regulations

➤ Develop monthly recreation program calendars that reflect and meet the needs of facility residents

➤ Communicate facility programs to residents, staff, family and volunteers

➤ Manage facility Volunteer Program

➤ Maintain departmental documentation that reflects services provided and resident progress towards goals

➤ In coordination with social services facilitate the residents in the organization and continued development of a Resident's Council

➤ Make job assignments and set priorities

➤ Serve as member of QAA committee

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



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



Spring Means (Free) Fishing

Now that spring has (finally) sprung, maybe it's time to round up your family and friends and hit a local lake for some fishing!

Winter was long for South Dakota's fish too and this time of year they are close to shore and looking to bite!

Shore fishing can be good from sunup to sundown... and even after dark for some species!

Haven't been fishing in a while? Well we have some special days set aside to let you fish for free! GFP will host free fishing and free entrance to all of our state park and recreation areas on the following days:

May 12: Mother's Day Only

May 17-19: Traditional State Park Open House and Free Fishing Weekend

June 16: Father's Day Only

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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Colestock, Flihs place at Roncalli meet

Payton Colestock and Ashley Flihs were both medalists at the Aberdeen Roncalli Golf meet held Thursday. Colestock shot a 48 and a 51 to place sixth with a score of 99. Flihs shot a 51 and a 50 for a total score of 101 for ninth place. Also playing were Portia Kettering, who shot a 65 and a 66 for a score of 131 and Carly Guthmiller shot a 61 and a 69 for a score of 130.

Sioux Falls Christian won the meet with a score of 379, Mobridge-Pollock placed second with a 431, Milbank was third with a 446, Sisseton was fourth with a 450 and Groton Area was fifth with a 461.

Clay Target League Top 10

This week's "Top 10" in the Groton Area Clay Target League has been posted.

Kayde Stange	23-25	48
Danny Fiest	23-23	46
Jamesen Stange	21-25	46
Taryn Taylor	21-24	45
Korbin Blackmun	21-23	44
Paxton Bonn	19-24	43
Kaden Carda	23-20	43
Tina Zoellner	21-22	43
Adrian Knutson	18-24	42
Kaleb Antonsen	18-22	40
Trevor Harry	23-17	40

Kayde Stange and Jamesen Stange each had straight 25s this week.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 3 of 59

Saturday, May 4, 2019

8 a.m. to 3 p.m.: Groton City-wide Rummage Sale

Howard Wood Relays in Sioux Falls

Sunday, May 5, 2019

5:00 p.m. Groton Softball, Baseball and T-Ball parent meeting at the Legion

Monday, May 6, 2019

Cancelled: Groton Girls Varsity Golf Meet at Olive Grove Golf Course. (Aberdeen Roncalli, Milbank, Mobridge-Pollock Schools, Redfield-Doland, Sisseton)

Redfield-Doland to host Girls Varsity Golf Meet in place of the one in Groton.

4:00pm: Junior High Track Meet at Aberdeen Roncalli

Tuesday, May 7, 2019

2:00pm: Varsity Track Meet @ Britton-Hecla High School

7:00pm: City Council Meeting at the Groton Community Center

Upcoming
**COMMUNITY
EVENTS**

FFA Awards Banquet



Doing the year in review were Josie LaMee, Jillian Barton and Miranda Hanson.

(Photo by Paul Kosel)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 4 of 59



These are the FFA members that were present for the FFA Awards Banquet held Friday at the GHS Gym. Back row, left to right, are Lane Krueger, Kale Pharis, Jamesen Stange, Trey Gengerke, Steven Paulson, Tristan Traphagen and Kansas Kroll; in the middle row, left to right, are Sheyanne Richards, Alexis Simon, Jillian Barton, Cassandra Townsend, Tiara DeHoet, Sage Mortenson, Caitlynn Barse, Cassaundra Schultz, Christian Zoellner and Michal Tabke; in front, left to right, are Miranda Hanson, Tessa Erdmann, Josie LaMee, and Samantha Pappas.

(Photo by Paul Kosel)



Receiving the Greenhand FFA Degree Award were Christina Zoellner, Michal Tabke, Sage Mortenson, Cassaundra Schultz, Samantha Pappas, Kansas Kroll and Lane Krueger; not pictured are Pierce Kettering, Jackson Cogley, Jordan Bjerke, Lucas Simon, Chandler Larson and Lee Iverson. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 5 of 59



Receiving the Chapter FFA Degree Awards were Steven Paulson, Tristan Traphagen, Tessa Erdmann, Kale Pharis, Tiara DeHoet and Trey Gengerke; not pictured are Caleb Furney and Kannon Coats. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



The senior FFA members are Jillian Barton, Cassandra Townsend, Miranda Hanson, Josie LaMee and Alexis Simon. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 6 of 59



Earning the State Degree (they received the chain that is worn at the waist) were Jillian Barton, Cassandra Townsend, Miranda Hanson and Josie LaMee. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



The 2018-19 FFA Officers were Jillian Barton, student advisor; Cassandra Townsend, president; Sheyanne Richards, historian; Tiara DeHoet, reporter; Steven Paulson, sentinel; Tessa Erdmann, treasurer; Caitlynn Barse, secretary; and Josie LaMee, vice president. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 7 of 59



The FFA officers for the 2019-20 school year are **Samantha Pappas**, secretary; **Tiara DeHoet**, treasurer; **Sheyanne Richards**, parliamentarian; **Lane Krueger**, student advisor; **Tessa Erdmann**, vice president; **Sage Mortenson**, reporter; **Caitlynn Barse**, president; and **Kansas Kroll**, sentinel. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Adam Franken, FFA advisor (right) installs the new officers. Left to right are **Sheyanne Richards**, **Lane Krueger**, **Kansas Kroll**, **Sage Mortenson**, **Tiara DeHoet**, **Samantha Pappas**, **Tessa Erdmann** and **Caitlynn Barse**. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 8 of 59



Caitlynn Barse received the Star Chapter Farmer Award, Jamesen Stange received the Star Chapter Ag Placement Award, and Kansas Kroll earned the Star Greenhand Award. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



There was a good sized crowd at the annual FFA Awards Banquet. Some of the members were not able to make it due to the track meet held in Sisseton. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 9 of 59

"Lucky Lindy" visits South Dakota

"A president of the United States, the most adored movie star in filmdom, Babe Ruth, Jack Dempsey – all gathered here together could not have attracted half the crowd nor a millionth of the cheering that greeted Colonel Charles A. Lindbergh in South Dakota today," stated an article in the Sioux Falls Daily Argus-Leader on Saturday, Aug. 27, 1927.

An estimated 30,000 people packed together on an airfield near Renner to see the aviation legend and his airplane, the "Spirit of St. Louis." Lindbergh had left Fargo, N.D., that morning. En route to Sioux Falls, he circled Aberdeen, Redfield, Huron and Mitchell, allowing people in those communities a glimpse of the famous plane.

A canvas bag containing a message from Lindbergh was dropped from the plane in each community, expressing regret for not having the time to stop and encouraging public support for continued airmail service and the construction of airports.



The text of the message Lindbergh dropped over each community reads:

"Greetings:

"Because of the limited time and the extensive itinerary of the tour of the United States now in progress to encourage popular interest in aeronautics it is impossible for the 'Spirit of St. Louis' to land in your city.

"This message from the air, however, is sent to you to express our sincere appreciation of your interest in the tour and the promotion and expansion of commercial aeronautics in the United States.

"We feel that we will be amply repaid for all our efforts if each and every citizen in the United States cherishes an interest in flying and gives his earnest support to the air mail service and the establishment of airports and similar facilities. The concerted efforts of the citizens of the United States in this direction will result in America's taking its rightful place within a short time as the world leader in commercial flying.

(Signed)Charles A. Lindbergh"

At Aberdeen, the container carrying the message landed on the Brown County Courthouse lawn. The 11-year-old girl who retrieved the container was given it.

"For a long time to come, the lucky little miss will be the envy of her entire list of friends and playmates, for the reward she has now in her possession will someday prove a great rarity," stated an article in the Aberdeen Evening News.

The Redfield Press reported that Lindbergh passed over the community at 10 a.m. that Saturday. "The conqueror of the air and the idol of the world was greeted from the hills and house tops by people eager to view the hero and the Spirit of St. Louis."

Whistles at power plants opened a roar of welcome and the cheers of hundreds of Huron residents went up as the young Minnesota flier flew over the city, according to the Evening Huronite.

The mayor of Huron sent a telegram to Lindbergh that afternoon that read: "All Huron joins me in thanking you for the splendid demonstration over our city this morning. Accept our heartiest congratulations on

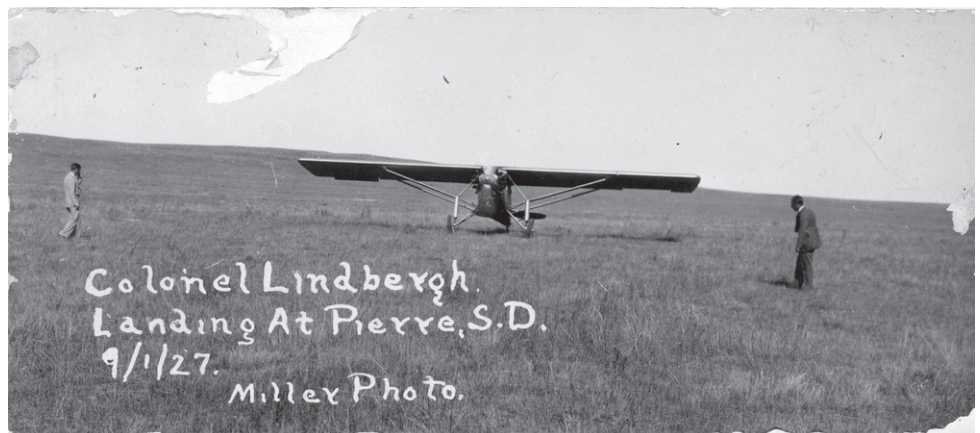


Photo of Lindbergh and the "Spirit of St. Louis" while in Pierre.

(South Dakota State Historical Society – State Archives)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 10 of 59

your great achievement and best wishes for your future.”

Lindbergh flew over Mitchell at 11:05 a.m. “He came out of the north directly over the center of the city and a message he dropped was picked up by a boy in a crowd of spectators at Third avenue and Main street. The message missed the top of the Republican building by inches.”

The “Spirit of St. Louis” landed at the Renner field precisely at noon as scheduled.

After a five-minute meeting with the reception committee, Lindbergh was driven around the fenced-off landing strip in a convertible, much to the delight of the crowd.

Lindbergh’s speech during the 30-minute program promoted commercial aviation throughout the United States.

Lindbergh’s non-stop flight from New York to Paris over the Atlantic Ocean on May 20-21, 1927, had rocketed him to stardom. Lindbergh departed from New York in the “Spirit of St. Louis” on a nationwide tour of the United States on July 20, 1927. The tour was the result of a meeting between Lindbergh and multimillionaire and aviation enthusiast Harry Guggenheim. They decided that Lindbergh would make a three-month tour of the United States, paid for by a fund Harry and his father, Daniel, had established earlier to encourage aviation-related research.

Lindbergh and the “Spirit of St. Louis,” together called “We,” were accompanied on the tour by a plane carrying a representative of the Daniel Guggenheim Fund of the Promotion of Aeronautics and the United States Department of Commerce.

From Renner, Lindbergh flew off in the “Spirit of St. Louis” at 1 p.m. to Sioux City, Iowa, where he spent the night.

Sept. 1 was intended to be a day of rest in Denver, Colo., for Lindbergh. Instead, Harry Guggenheim sent a telegram to Pierre Mayor John E. Hipple stating that Lindbergh had “expressed a personal desire to spend the day of September first in your city. Can you arrange to take care of his time.” Hipple consulted with others before accepting the request.

Pierre had no airfield where Lindbergh could land, according to “Pierre Since 1910” by Harold Schuler. A landing site was prepared about three miles north of Pierre, on the south slope of Snake Butte.

About 3,500 people were on hand when the “Spirit of St. Louis” touched down at 3:59 p.m. on Sept. 1, one minute ahead of schedule. The Capital City Band played, and cheers went up as Lucky Lindy stepped out of the plane. After a drive around the airfield, the car bearing Lindbergh headed to Pierre for a drive through the city’s main streets. Hipple and his wife, Ruth, hosted a supper for Lindbergh and other guests at their home.

About 5,000 people were waiting in front of the Capitol that evening to hear Lindbergh speak. He explained that he decided to come to Pierre because he wished to give people in that part of the country the opportunity to see the plane that flew across the Atlantic Ocean.

Lindbergh briefly attended a dance in the city auditorium before returning to the Hipple home to thank



Photo of Lindbergh and the “Spirit of St. Louis” while in Pierre.

(South Dakota State Historical Society – State Archives)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 11 of 59

the Hipples for their hospitality. He then went to the Saint Charles Hotel to retire for the evening.

Several hundred people were on hand the next morning to witness the 9:30 departure of the "Spirit of St. Louis" for Cheyenne, Wyo., where Lindbergh spent the night.

"Once in the air, Colonel Lindbergh banked his plane sharply and returned to give a short display of stunt flying ... Suddenly, the silver 'Spirit of St. Louis' headed toward Pierre to give a farewell greeting to the people here," stated an article in the Sept. 2, 1927, Pierre Daily Capital Journal.

En route to Cheyenne, the Lone Eagle, as Lindbergh was nicknamed, was seen by many people who were attending the Haakon County Fair in Philip.

The Deadwood Daily Pioneer-Times stated that the entire populace was on the streets watching as Lindbergh "circled and re-circled the city within the narrow confines of the gulch, at an amazingly low altitude."

People in Rapid City were watching for the "Spirit of St. Louis" when "a shadow like that of an eagle soaring before the sun moved slowly across the pavement ... and Colonel Lindbergh swooped down out of the cloudless sky."

Lindbergh did not fly over Lead, but the plane could be seen from the Ellison dumps, according to the Lead Daily Call.

After a swing over the State Game Lodge, the summer residence of President Calvin Coolidge, the "Spirit of St. Louis" passed over Spearfish before flying on to Cheyenne. Lindbergh dropped messages in the communities his plane flew over, again expressing regret for not having the time to land and encouraging aviation.

Historical markers both at Renner and Pierre commemorate Lindbergh's visit to South Dakota.

Flying the "Spirit of St. Louis," Lindbergh touched down in what at that time was all 48 states, visited 92 cities, gave 147 speeches and was seen by millions before the tour ended back in New York on Oct. 23, 1927, according to a website about Lindbergh operated by the Spirit of St. Louis 2 Project.

Airmail usage exploded as a result of the tour, and the public began to view airplanes as a viable means of travel, according to Air Force historian Richard P. Hallion.

This moment in South Dakota history is provided by the South Dakota Historical Society Foundation, the nonprofit fundraising partner of the South Dakota State Historical Society at the Cultural Heritage Center in Pierre. Find us on the web at www.sdhsf.org. Contact us at info@sdhsf.org to submit a story idea.



It is rummage day in Groton today and the Norman Anderson house at 809 N. 1st St. had people lined up prior to the 8 a.m. opening. (Photo by Tina Kosel)

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McInerney qualifies for state in Long Jump

Kenzie McInerney brought home first place in the long jump at the Sisseton Track Meet held Friday. Her jump of 16-3 was also a state qualifying jump, making her the second Groton Area trackster to qualify for the state. Jonathan Doeden prequalified in the 110m Hurdles in the first track meet held also in Sisseton.

Jennie Doeden placed second in both the discus and shot put. The leaders for the boys were the 400m Relay and the 800m Relay team run both by Darien Shabazz, Kaden Kurtz, Austin Jones and Thomas Cranford. The relay teams both finished in third.

Long Jump: 1, (State Qualifier), Kenzie McInerney, 16-3;

Team Standings: 1, Lisbon, 102; 2, Sisseton, 93.5; 3, Aberdeen Roncalli, 71.5; 4, Redfield/Doland, 67; 5, Milbank, 66; 6, Mobridge-Pollock, 55; 7, Dakota Hills, 43; 8, Ortonville, 41.5; 9, Herreid/Sleby Area, 32; 10, Flandreau Indian, 27; 11, Groton Area, 24; 12, Wakpala, 20; 13, Hankinson, 18; 13, Britton-Hecla, 18; 15, Waverley-South Shore, 17.5; 16, Frederick Area, 16; 17, Sri-State, 12; 18, Northwestern, 8; 19, Wheaton/Herman-Norcross, 4; 20, Langford Area, 3; 21, Clinton-Graceville-Beardsley, 2.

110m Hurdles: 7, Paxton Bonn, 19.44.

100m Dash: 11, Thomas Cranford, 12.05; 14, Kaden Kurtz, 12.34; 28, Wyatt Hearnen, 13.18.

200m Dash: 6, Kaden Kurtz, 24.78; 10, Darien Shabazz, 25.69; 30, Wyatt Hearnen, 28.38.

400m Dash: 20, Jackson Cogley, 1:00.23; 28, Jamie Ruiz de Medina, 1:04.10; 30, Wyatt Hearnen, 1:04.75.

800m Run: 19, Anthony Schinkel, 2:38.47; 25, Cyruss DeHoet, 2:53.66; Kannon Coats, 3:00.74.

1600m Run: 4, Isaac Smith, 5:08.15.

4x100m Relay: 3, Groton (Darien Shabazz, Kaden Kurtz, Austin Jones, Thomas Cranford), 46.90.

4x200m Relay: 3, Groton (Darien Shabazz, Kaden Kurtz, Austin Jones, Thomas Cranford), 1:37.99.

4x400m Relay: 8, Groton (Kaden Kurtz, Austin Jones, Jackson Cogley, Jamie Ruiz de Medina), 4:04.33.

4x800m Relay: 14, Groton (Anthony Schinkel, Cyruss DeHoet, Kannon Coats, Jamie Ruiz de Medina), 11:19.33.

High Jump: 8, Paxton Bonn, 5-2; 10, Jackson Cogley, 5-0.

Long Jump: 9, Darien Shabazz, 18-4; 24, Paxton Bonn, 16-5; 32, Wyatt Hearnen, 15-0.75.

Triple Jump: 14, Jackson Cogley, 35-6.5; 15, Austin Jones, 34-9.5; 18, Paxton Bonn, 33-4.25.

Discus: 12, Brodyn DeHoet, 114-3; 15, Grady O'Neill, 111-4; 27, Cole Larson, 97-9; 50, Caleb Furney, 78-10.

Shot Put: 14, Cole Larson, 37-8; 17, Grady O'Neill, 36-8.5; 20, Jackson Cogley, 35-7.5; 28, Brodyn DeHoet, 34-8.5.

Team Standings: 1, Roncalli, 163; 2, Lisbon, 76; 3, Milbank, 75; 4, Redfield/Doland, 67; 5, Dakota Hills, 56; 6, Groton Area, 53; 7, Langford Area, 45; 8, Mobridge-Pollock, 37.5; 9, Sri-State, 30.5; 10, Ortonville, 30; 11, Britton-Hecla, 19; 12, Wheaton/Herman-Norcross, 16; 13, Frederick Area, 15; 13, Sisseton, 15; 13, Northwestern, 15; 16, Herreid/Selby Area, 12; 17, Waverley-South Shore, 10; 18, Flandreau Indian, 4.

100m Hurdles: 2, Payton Maine, 18.22.

300m Hurdles: 6, Payton Maine, 54.64.

100m Dash: 35, Riley Leicht, 16.22; 36, Emilie Thurston, 16.23; 40, Trista Keith, 17.24.

200m Dash: 29, Riley Leicht, 34.58; 32, Trista Keith, 35.01.

400m Dash: 3, Kenzie McInerney, 1:05.77.

4x100m Relay: 9, Groton (Allyssa Locke, Trista Keith, Emilie Thurston, Riley Leicht), 1:01.99.

4x200m Relay: 7, Groton (Allyssa Locke, Payton Maine, Emilie Thurston, Riley Leicht), 2:07.55.

4x400m Relay: 7, Groton (Payton Maine, Allyssa Locke, Emilie Thurston, Kenzie McInerney), 4:53.85.

Long Jump: 1, (State Qualifier), Kenzie McInerney, 16-3; 21, Trista Keith, 12-7.5; 22, Allyssa Locke, 12-5.

Discus: 2, Jennie Doeden, 104.11; 5, Taylor Holm, 92-10; 14, Kaycie Hawkins, 85-9; Maddie Bjerke, 66-3.

Shot Put: 2, Jennie Doeden, 34-0.5; 8, Taylor Holm, 29-3; 9, Maddie Bjerke, 29-0.5; 17, Kaycie Hawkins, 25-11.5.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 14 of 59

Groton takes first in eight events at Milbank JH Track Meet

Several junior high tracksters took first at the Milbank Track Meet held April 25. Those taking first were the eighth grade boys 800m Sprint Medley Relay team, the seven grade boys 800m relay and 1600m relay teams, Logan Ringgenberg and Danny Feist in the discus, Jayla Jones and Bradin Althoff in the 100m dash, and Andrew Marzahn in the 110m hurdles.

Discus

7th Grade Girls: Faith Flihs, 35.

8th Grade Boys: 1, Danny Feist, 108-6; 3, Tate Larson, 92-5; 4, Kaleb Antonson, 65-7; 8, Caleb Hanten, 58-0.

7th Grade Boys: 1, Logan Ringgenberg, 79-0; Holden Sippel, 63-10.

8th Grade Girls: 5, Cadence Tullis, 44-7; 9, Ava Kramer, 39-5.

Shot Put

8th Grade Boys: 2, Danny Feist, 33.-6; 3, Tate Larson, 33-0; 4, Kaleb Antonson, 27-11; Caleb Hanten, 20-3.

8th Grade Girls: 5, Cadence Tullis, 20-9; 6, Ava Kramer, 20-6.

7th Grade Boys: 2, Logan Ringgenberg, 30-11; Holden Sippel, 21-11.

7th Grade Girls: 2, Faith Flihs, 25-0.

Long Jump

8th Grade Girls: 6, Aspen Johnson, 10-11; Shalyn Foertsch, 9-9.

100m Dash

7th Grade Girls: 1, Jayla Jones, 14.14; 14, Karsyn Jangula, 15.46; 24, Jaycie Lehr, 16.09; 26, Lydia Meier, 16.13; 27, Carlie Guthmiller, 16.22; 32, Sydney Leicht, 16.52.

8th Grade Girls: 12, Ashtyn Bahr, 15.85; 17, Jace Gleason, 17.38.

7th Grade Boys: 1, Bradin Althoff, 13.36; 10, Braxton Imrie, 14.72;

8th Grade Boys: 2, Andrew Marzahn, 12.46; 13, Ethan Gengerke, 13.85; 15, Cole Simon, 13.87;

200m Dash

7th Grade Girls: 8, Karsyn Jangula, 33.98; 9, Kamryn Kurtz, 34.07; 14, Lydia Meier, 35.17; 16, Emma Schinkel, 35.32; 19, Carlie Guthmiller, 35.99; 22, Sydney Leicht, 36.24; 27, Faith Flihs, 38.86.

8th Grade Girls: 18, Cadence Tullis, 39.44; 19, Ava Kramer, 39.60.

7th Grade Boys: 2, Lane Tietz, 28.50; 3, Colby Dunker, 28.56; 4, Bradin Althoff, 28.88.

8th Grade Boys: 6, Ethan Gengerke, 28.72.

400m Dash

7th Grade Girls: 4, Emma Schinkel, 1:18.57; 6, Anna Fjeldheim, 1:21.83; 9, Karsyn Jangula, 1:23.45; 10, Sydney Leicht, 1:24.85; 11, Carlie Guthmiller, 1:27.15.

7th Grade Boys: 3, Lane Tietz, 1:03.90; 4, Colby Dunker, 1:05.34; 6, Jacob Zak, 1:09.25.

8th Grade Boys: 10, Cole Bisbee, 1:15.14.

800m Run

7th Grade Girls: 7, Anna Fjeldheim, 3:17.20.

7th Grade Boys: 3, Jacob Zak, 2:47.58; 5, Dillon Abeln, 2:59.58.

8th Grade Boys: 3, Cole Simon, 2:49.48; 4, Cole Bisbee, 3:16.99.

100m Hurdles

7th Grade Girls: 4, Jayla Jones, 20.80; 16, Emma Schinkel, 25.35.

8th Grade Girls: 8, Ashtyn Bahr, 22.10.

110m Hurdles

8th Grade Boys: 1, Andrew Marzahn, 18.95.

200m Hurdles

8th Grade Girls: 11, Marlee Tollifson, 42.23.

7th Grade Girls: 3, Emma Schinkel, 39.78.

4x100m Relay

7th Grade Girls: 3, Groton, 1:05.10.

8th Grade Girls: 3, Groton, 1:03.03.

4x200m Relay

8th Grade Girls: 3, Groton, 2:18.07.

7th Grade Girls: 2, Groton, 2:16.53.

7th Grade Boys: 1, Groton, 2:00.10.

4x400m Relay

7th Grade Boys: 1, Groton, 4:56.90.

800m Sprint Medley Relay

8th Grade Girls: 3, Groton, 2:26.20.

7th Grade Girls: 4, Groton, 2:40.46.

8th Grade Boys: 1, Groton, 2:01.10.

1600m Run

7th Grade Boys: 5, Dillon Abeln, 6:29.69.

8th Grade Boys: 3, Jacob Lewandowski, 5:50.76.

- Paul Kosel

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 15 of 59

Today in Weather History

May 4, 1964: A tornado touched down southwest of Kadoka causing \$25,000 in damage.

1774: Snow was reported in the Williamsburg Gazette to have fallen in Dumfries, Virginia. George Washington's weather diary logged at Mount Vernon that it was a cold day with spits of snow and a hard wind from the northwest. Thomas Jefferson near Charlottesville recorded that the Blue Ridge Mountains was covered with snow. The late snow and frost killed most of the fruit crop in the northern part of the state. It also snowed north across Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York.

1922: The first of two tornadoes that formed over Austin, Texas was called the "western cloud." It was more visible, but caused much less damage than the "eastern cloud."

2003: The week of May 4th through the 10th was one of the busiest weeks for tornadoes in U.S. history. On this date through the 5th, the deadliest outbreak of severe weather since May 1999 produced 84 tornadoes, large hail and damaging winds across eight states. Several thunderstorms became tornadic with a total of five distinct tornado touchdowns in the Kansas City metropolitan area. Two of the tornadoes received a rating of F4, two a rating of F2, and the last was rated an F1. Total damage exceeded 144 million dollars. Several of the tornadoes tracked long distances ranging from 15 to 80 miles. More than 3000 homes and businesses were destroyed. At least 38 people were killed in Kansas, Missouri, and Tennessee.

2007: A devastating EF5 twister demolishes nearly every structure in Greensburg around 9:30 pm (CDT) and kills ten. The mammoth wedge tornado cuts a swath 1.7 miles (2.7 km) wide and 22 miles (35 km) long across the Kansas landscape. It is the worst single tornado to touch down in the US in eight years.

1812 - A storm produced snow from Philadelphia to Maine. A foot of snow fell near Keene NH, and in Massachusetts, nine inches fell at Waltham, located near Boston. (David Ludlum)

1917 - A late season snowstorm in northwest Texas produced up to eight inches of snow in Potter County and Armstrong County. (David Ludlum)

1922 - Austin, TX, was hit twice by tornadoes which struck within thirty minutes of each other. Twelve persons were killed in the tornadoes. (The Weather Channel)

1977 - A tornado 500 yards in width struck Pleasant Hill, MO, severely damaging the high school and grade school. Only minor injuries were reported among the more than 1000 teachers and students due to excellent warnings and prior tornado drills. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the southeastern U.S., with South Carolina hardest hit. Thunderstorm winds toppled trees seventy feet high in Spartanburg County SC, and knocked homes off their foundations near Bishopville SC. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced large hail in North Carolina, but brought welcome rains to much of the rest of the eastern U.S. Residents of New England finally saw sunshine after about a week of clouds and rain. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

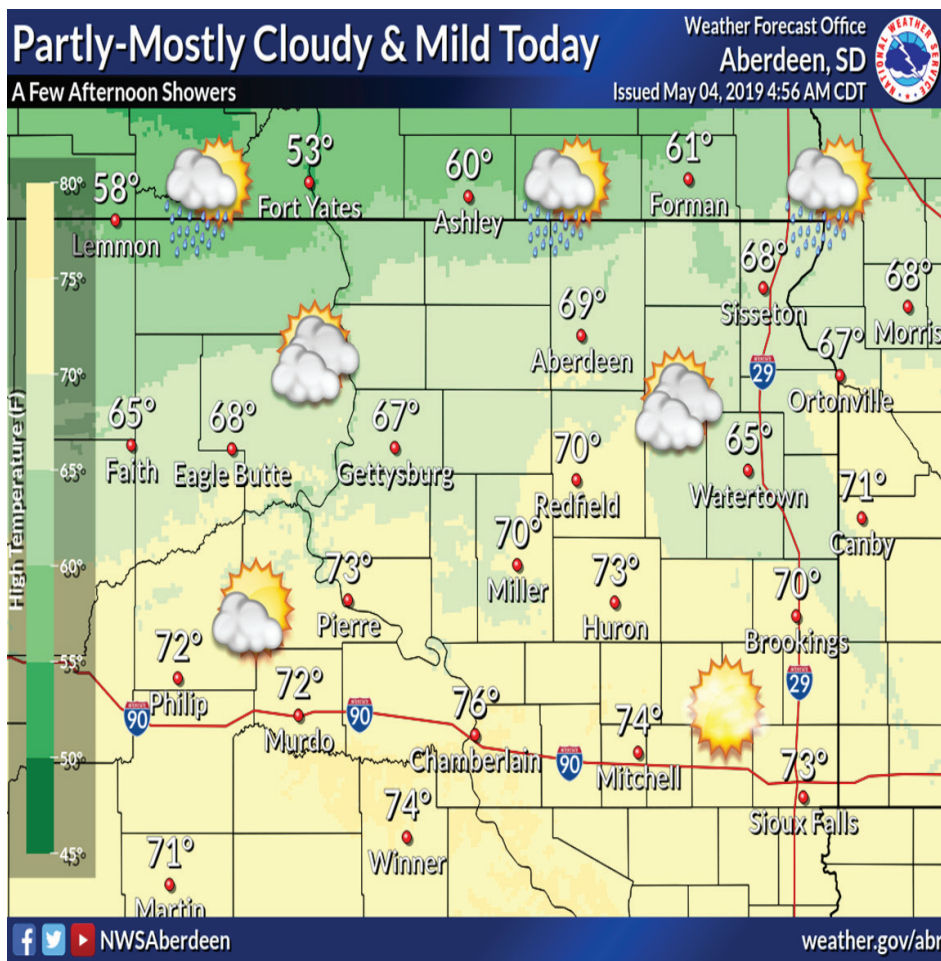
1989 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the Southern Plains Region and the Lower Mississippi Valley. Thunderstorms spawned fifteen tornadoes, and there were 340 reports of large hail and damaging winds. Hail three inches in diameter, and 9.39 inches of rain, resulted in more than 130 million dollars damage at Monroe LA. Thunderstorm winds gusted to 100 mph at Epps LA and Fort Worth TX. A thunderstorm north of Mineral Wells TX produced high winds which unroofed a nightclub, turning it into a "topless club." (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from the Lower Ohio Valley to Virginia and the Carolinas. A tornado at Augusta Springs VA killed two people and injured ten others, and another tornado caused 1.7 million dollars damage at Colonial Heights VA. Temperatures soared into the 90s in northern California. The high of 98 degrees in downtown Sacramento was their hottest reading of record for so early in the season. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 16 of 59

Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday
Partly Sunny and Breezy then Mostly Sunny	Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny	Chance Showers	Partly Sunny then Slight Chance Showers
High: 65 °F	Low: 41 °F	High: 67 °F	Low: 38 °F	High: 57 °F



A fair amount of sunshine this morning hours will give way to a mix of sun and clouds this afternoon. An approaching frontal boundary from the northwest could touch off a few showers by the late afternoon hours. Enjoy the mild temps today because cooler air and better chances for rain return to the forecast tonight and Sunday.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 17 of 59

Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 65 °F at 4:48 PM

Low Outside Temp: 44 °F at 3:46 AM

High Gust: 38 mph at 5:22 AM

Precip: 0.02

Today's Info

Record High: 98° in 1926

Record Low: 20° in 2005

Average High: 66°F

Average Low: 40°F

Average Precip in May.: 0.30

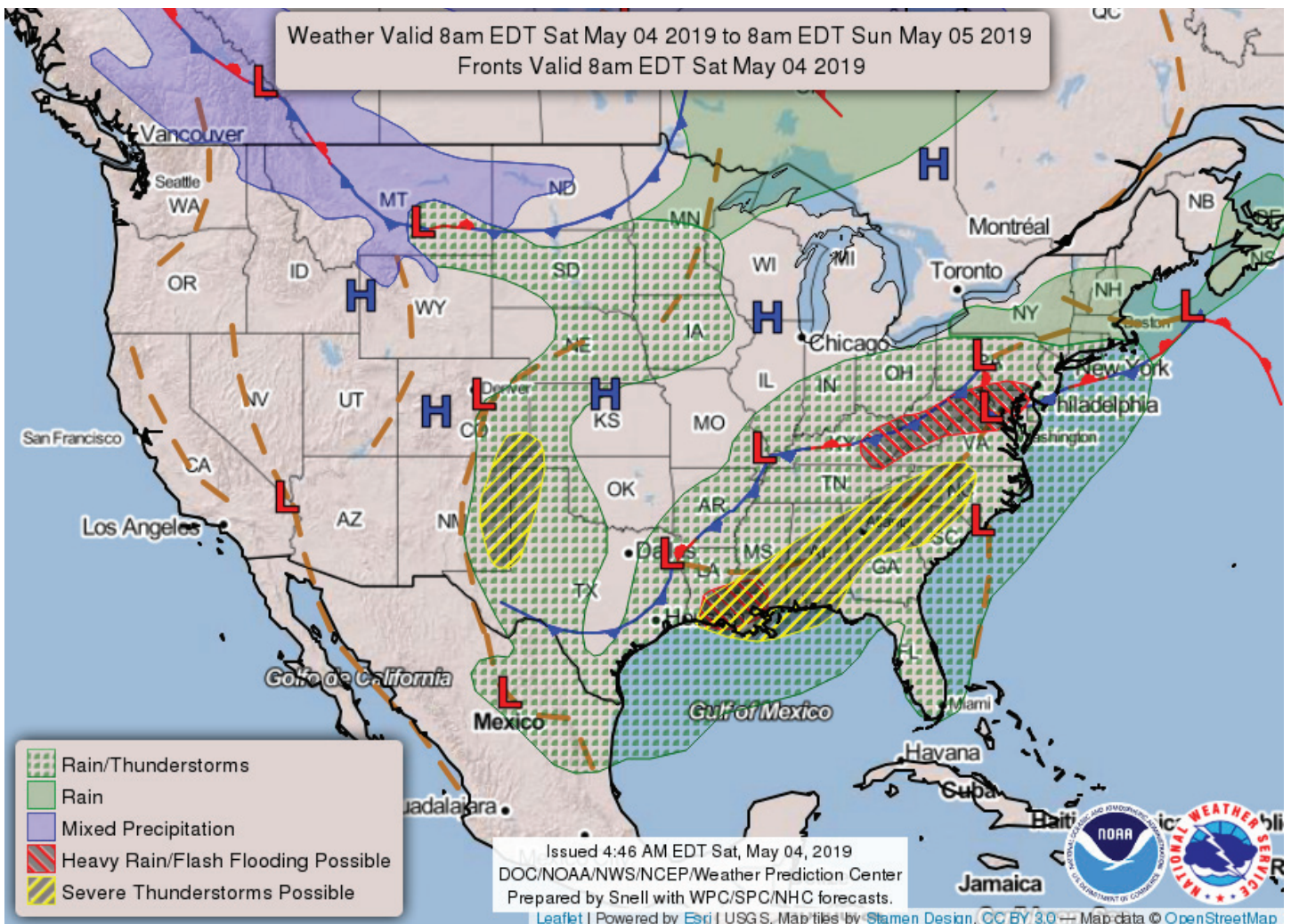
Precip to date in May.: 0.28

Average Precip to date: 4.33

Precip Year to Date: 4.97

Sunset Tonight: 8:44 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:16 a.m.



Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 18 of 59



A HUSBANDS CROWN

Crowns have a fascinating role in history. In the ancient world, crowns came in many shapes and forms and were made of the costliest materials available. They symbolized royalty and sovereignty. When David fought and conquered the King of the Amorites, he took his crown to celebrate his victory. It was made with precious stones and gold, and the gold in that crown weighed one hundred ten pounds. In today's market the gold in that crown would be worth \$3,004,870.00. The power and might of the king were represented by the size and value of his crown.

A wife of noble character is her husband's crown, wrote Solomon, but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones. We read in Genesis that God created woman to be man's helper. As God reviewed His creation, He realized that Adam could not do what He wanted him to do by himself. He needed help. So, God created a helper for him: Eve.

The word helper, however, does not capture the depth of the meaning of that word. A helper, as used in this verse is one who assists another to reach their full potential, to fill up or complement the other person. Eve, Adam's wife, was created to make him complete!

A wife of noble character can bring her husband esteem and honor, recognition and respect. But he must first earn it! If the husband does his part in becoming the man God created him to be, then the wife can do her part and represent him well. She will be able to complete and complement her husband and receive her crown.

Prayer: Bless, encourage, and empower those wives, Father, who compliment and complete their husbands calling. And, may husbands love, honor and respect their wives always. Amen.

Scripture For Today: Proverbs 12:4 A wife of noble character is her husband's crown but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 19 of 59

2019 Groton SD Community Events

- 01/27/2019 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
- 03/17/2019 Legion Post #39 Spring Fundraiser (Sunday closest to St. Patrick's Day, every other year)
- 04/13/2019 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 04/27/2019 Fireman's Stag (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 05/04/2019 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/27/2019 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Program (Memorial Day)
- 06/13/2019 Transit Fundraiser (Thursday Mid-June)
- 06/14/2019 SDSU Golf Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 06/15/2019 Triathlon (Saturday before Father's Day)
- 06/21/2019 Best Ball Golf Tourney
- 06/22-23/2019 Groton Junior Legion Tournament
- 06/29/2019 Groton U10/U12 Round Robin Tournament
- 07/04/2019 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
- 07/14/2019 Summer Fest/Car Show (Sunday Mid-July)
- 07/18/2019 Olive Grove Golf Course Pro Am Tournament
- 07/21/2019 Granary Ice Cream Social & Family Music Fest
- 08/02/2019 Olive Grove Golf Course Wine on Nine
- 08/09-11/2019 State Junior Legion Tournament in Groton
- 08/22/2019 First Day of School
- 09/07/2019 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 09/08/2019 Sunflower Classic at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 09/08/2019 Granary Living History Fall Festival
- 10/12/2019 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/11/2019 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/31/2019 Trunk or Treat/Halloween on Main (Halloween)
- 11/09/2019 Legion Post #39 Turkey Shoot (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
- 12/07/2019 Olive Grove Golf Course Holiday Party
- 12/07/2019 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services
- Bingo: every Wednesday at the Legion Post #39

2020 Groton SD Community Events

- 4/4/2020 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 4/25/2020 Fireman's Stag (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 5/2/2020 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)

News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Mega Millions

08-16-22-66-68, Mega Ball: 11, Megaplier: 2

(eight, sixteen, twenty-two, sixty-six, sixty-eight; Mega Ball: eleven; Megaplier: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$252 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$199 million

Man accused of trying to kill doctor faces new charges

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A Rapid City man accused of trying to kill a doctor who treated his wife is facing new charges for allegedly asking people to help him kill a witness and former judge in the case.

Sixty-three-year-old William Thoman was charged in September with attempted first-degree murder and criminal solicitation. He's accused of saying he wanted to kill the Rapid City doctor for incorrectly caring for his wife, who died of cancer. Prosecutors say Thoman tried to get a weapon.

The Rapid City Journal reports that a complaint filed Thursday charges Thoman with two counts of criminal solicitation by facilitating the aiding and abetting of first-degree murder. Prosecutors say Thoman asked people in jail how to arrange the killings.

Defense attorney John Fitzgerald did not immediately respond to a phone message.

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

Man who raped, killed South Dakota woman in 1980 paroled

MOBRIDGE, S.D. (AP) — A man who served more than two decades in prison for raping and killing an 18-year-old South Dakota woman in 1980 will soon be free.

The South Dakota Board of Pardons and Paroles on April 17 approved the release of Nicholas Scherr, 54, once a parole plan is ready in the upcoming weeks.

Scherr pleaded guilty to first-degree manslaughter for fatally shooting Candace Rough Surface, the mother of a 2-year-old boy, in Walworth County.

Her son, Homer Rough Surface, is now 41. He told the Aberdeen American News that he was unaware his mother's killer had been granted parole.

"Nobody contacted me about it, not even the court or anything," Rough Surface said. He believes he should have been given some kind of warning.

He said he was a teenager when he attended a previous parole hearing for Scherr, but that it felt at the time as if his mother's killer would never have a chance of being paroled.

He said coping with his loss and having to see Scherr in court were some of the most difficult things he's ever had to face.

"Growing up without parents, no sibling, that was like one of the worst things in the world, not having anyone to turn to," Rough Surface said.

Scherr was 15 when he and his 16-year-old cousin, James Stroh, met Rough Surface in Mobridge. The case was solved in 1995 when Stroh's former mother-in-law told authorities about how Stroh and Scherr raped and killed the woman.

Stroh pleaded guilty to lesser charges after cooperating with investigators. He was released in 2004.

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

Dakota State University is rebranding

MADISON, S.D. (AP) — Another South Dakota school system is rebranding.

Dakota State University, in a statement Friday, said the goal is to unite the university under a look and feel that authentically matches “the essence of Dakota State.” The university will change its logo to a single “D” surrounded by a hexagon and change its colors from blue and yellow to Trojan blue and gray.

The Argus Leader says the rebranding project took a year of research and planning and was initiated by President Jose-Marie Griffiths, who joined the college in 2015.

It’s the third school system in a month to do something similar, following in the steps of the University of South Dakota’s efforts to create a community college out of the University Center in Sioux Falls and the renaming of the Sioux Falls Catholic Schools to Bishop O’Gorman Catholic Schools this week.

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

Justice Clarence Thomas’ moment may finally have arrived

By JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Clarence Thomas has been a Supreme Court justice for nearly three decades. It may finally be his moment.

Many Americans know Thomas largely from his bruising 1991 confirmation hearing, when he was accused of sexual harassment charges by former employee Anita Hill — charges he denied. People may know he’s a conservative and has gone years without speaking during arguments at the court. But scholars say it would be wise to pay closer attention to Thomas.

Thomas is now the longest-serving member of a court that has recently gotten more conservative, putting him in a unique and potentially powerful position, and he’s said he doesn’t plan on retiring anytime soon. With President Donald Trump’s nominees Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh now on the court, conservatives are firmly in control as the justices take on divisive issues such as abortion, gun control and LGBT rights.

Thomas, for the first time, is on a court where there are at least four votes for some “pretty radical” decisions, said political science professor Corey Robin, the author of a Thomas book due out in September. Robin says the question will be whether the court’s more conservative justices — Thomas, Gorsuch, Kavanaugh and Samuel Alito — can get Chief Justice John Roberts, a more moderate conservative, to go along.

Thomas, 70, became the high court’s longest-serving justice, the “senior associate justice,” when Justice Anthony Kennedy retired last summer. But unlike Kennedy, who sat at the court’s ideological center and was most often the deciding vote when the court split 5-4, Thomas is consistently on the court’s far right.

That’s won him praise from Trump. As a presidential candidate, he called Thomas “highly underrated.” Trump said Thomas has “been so consistent for so long, and we should give him credit.”

More than 20 of the men and women Thomas mentored as law clerks have gone on to hold political appointments in the Trump administration or been nominated to judgeships by Trump. Thomas and his wife, Virginia, herself a well-known conservative activist, have dined with the president and first lady.

Elizabeth Wydra, president of the liberal Constitutional Accountability Center, acknowledged that Thomas’ views may now have more sway, something she described as “terrifying to many progressives.”

Still, Thomas’ views can be so far from his fellow justices that neither Roberts nor Chief Justice William Rehnquist before him have assigned Thomas big, landmark opinions on the belief that he won’t be able to keep together the votes of his colleagues, said Ralph Rossum, the author of a book on Thomas. Instead, Thomas often writes separately, speaking only for himself. Some critics dismiss those solo opinions as uninfluential, but Rossum disagrees.

“He stakes out a position more forthrightly or vigorously than other justices are willing to go, but they’re kind of sucked along in his wake,” Rossum said, adding that, like a magnet, “Thomas drags the court in his direction. They may not go as far as he goes, but they go further than they would have otherwise.”

Some of the areas of law where, over time, Thomas has pulled the court closer to his positions include voting rights, campaign finance, and the Second Amendment, Robin and Rossum said.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 22 of 59

If it were up to Thomas alone, the high court would be willing to make sweeping moves. While the court is typically cautious about overturning its past decisions, Thomas, who as an originalist believes in reading the Constitution as those who wrote it meant, feels less bound by precedent than other justices.

Just this term, Thomas called on the court to reconsider a landmark 1964 First Amendment case, describing it and later decisions extending it as "policy-driven decisions masquerading as constitutional law." He also criticized a 1963 Supreme Court decision that guarantees a lawyer for anyone too poor to hire one. And he equated the court's Roe v. Wade abortion decision with its Dred Scott decision, which said African Americans weren't citizens, labeling both "notoriously incorrect."

He also wrote an opinion rebuking his colleagues for declining to hear cases involving states' efforts to strip Medicaid money from Planned Parenthood, a decision Thomas described as "abdication of our judicial duty." Alito and Gorsuch agreed.

If Thomas' writing can be attention-getting, he personally keeps a low profile. Thomas shies away from public speaking, describing himself as an introvert. He once explained: "My personality is not such that I enjoy public appearances."

At the high court, Thomas rarely asks questions during arguments, a contrast with his vocal colleagues. When in March he asked a question during arguments for the first time in three years, it was headline news.

But colleagues and court staff know Thomas as gregarious.

"Clarence knows the name of every employee in the courthouse, from the lowest position to the highest ... with virtually all of them he knows their families, their happinesses and their tragedies," Justice Sonia Sotomayor told an audience in 2014 at Yale, where both she and Thomas attended law school.

Over the past year, speculation has intensified about whether Thomas might retire, letting Trump nominate a like-minded, conservative justice. But Thomas, who declined an Associated Press interview request, said in public comments recently that he's not retiring, not even in 20 or 30 years.

If so, Thomas is on track to be the longest-serving justice in history in 2028, when he'll celebrate his 80th birthday. He is currently the court's third-oldest member, behind Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, 86, and Justice Stephen Breyer, 80.

Yale law professor Akhil Amar said part of the appeal of staying on the court for Thomas has to include his increasing influence. Amar said he could see Thomas justify staying this way: "It's a pretty good job. I'm having fun, and I'm winning."

Follow Jessica Gresko on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/jessicagresko>

North Korea fires several short-range projectiles into sea

By FOSTER KLUG and HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea fired several unidentified short-range projectiles into the sea off its eastern coast on Saturday, the South Korean Joint Chiefs of Staff said, a likely sign of Pyongyang's growing frustration at stalled diplomatic talks with Washington meant to provide coveted sanctions relief in return for nuclear disarmament.

South Korea's military has bolstered its surveillance in case there are additional weapons launches, and South Korean and U.S. authorities are analyzing the details.

If it's confirmed that the North fired banned ballistic missiles, it would be the first such launch since the North's November 2017 test of an intercontinental ballistic missile. That year saw a string of increasingly powerful weapons tests from the North and a belligerent response from President Donald Trump that had many in the region fearing war.

The South initially reported Saturday that a single missile was fired, but later issued a statement that said "several projectiles" had been launched and that they flew up to 200 kilometers (125 miles) before splashing into the sea toward the northeast. Experts say the North may increase these sorts of low-level provocations to apply pressure on the United States to agree to reduce crushing international sanctions.

The launch comes amid a diplomatic breakdown that has followed the failed summit earlier this year

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 23 of 59

between Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un over the North's pursuit of nuclear bombs that can accurately target the U.S. mainland. The North probably has viable shorter range nuclear armed missiles but still needs more tests to perfect its longer-range weapons, according to outside analysts.

Trump said Saturday that he still believes a nuclear deal with North Korea will happen. He tweeted that Kim "fully realizes the great economic potential of North Korea, & will do nothing to interfere or end it."

Trump added: "He also knows that I am with him & does not want to break his promise to me. Deal will happen!"

White House Press Secretary Sarah Sanders said in a statement that the United States was aware of North Korea's actions and would continue to monitor the situation.

South Korea said in a statement it's "very concerned" about North Korea's weapons launches, calling them a violation of last year's inter-Korean agreements to reduce animosities between the countries. The statement, issued after an emergency meeting of top officials at the presidential Blue House in Seoul, also urged North Korea to stop committing acts that would raise military tensions and join efforts to resume nuclear diplomacy.

North Korea wants widespread sanctions relief in return for disarmament moves that the United States has rejected as insufficient. In a sign of Pyongyang's growing frustration, it has recently demanded that U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo be removed from nuclear negotiations and criticized national security adviser John Bolton. North Korea said last month that it had tested a new type of unspecified "tactical guided weapon."

North Korea could choose to fire more missiles with longer ranges in coming weeks to ramp up its pressure on the United States to come up with a roadmap for nuclear talks by the end of this year, said Nam Sung-wook, a professor at Korea University.

"North Korea wants to say, 'We have missiles and nuclear weapons to cope with (U.S.-led) sanctions,'" said Nam. "They can fire short-range missiles a couple more times this month, and there is no guarantee that they won't fire a medium-range missile next month."

During the diplomacy that followed the North's weapons tests of 2017, Kim said that the North would not test nuclear devices or ICBMs. These short-range projectiles don't appear to violate that self-imposed moratorium, and may instead be a way to register Kim's displeasure with Washington without having the diplomacy collapse.

South Korea's liberal president, Moon Jae-in, has doggedly pursued engagement with the North and is seen as a driving force behind the two summits between Trump and Kim.

South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha talked by phone with Pompeo about the North Korean launches, Kang's ministry said in a statement. The ministry also said that South Korea's chief nuclear envoy, Lee Do-hoon, had a telephone conversation with Stephen Biegun, the U.S. special representative for North Korea who is scheduled to travel to Seoul next week for talks.

Japan's Defense Ministry said the projectiles weren't a security threat and didn't reach anywhere near the country's coast. Japan will likely avoid any harsh response as Prime Minister Shinzo Abe seeks to secure his own summit with Kim.

Associated Press writer Mari Yamaguchi in Tokyo contributed to this report.

No deaths as plane carrying US military crashes into river

By DAVID FISCHER Associated Press

A chartered jet carrying 143 people from the U.S. military base in Cuba tried to land in a thunderstorm in north Florida and ended up in the river next to Naval Air Station Jacksonville. Authorities said everyone on board emerged without critical injuries, climbing onto the wings to be rescued.

The Boeing 737 arriving from Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, with 136 passengers and seven crew members came to a stop in shallow water in the St. Johns River. Everyone on board was alive and accounted for, the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office said, with 21 adults transported to local hospitals in good

condition.

Marine units from the sheriff's department and Jacksonville Fire Rescue along with first responders from the naval air station helped passengers and crew to safety.

Capt. Michael Connor, the commanding officer of NAS Jacksonville, said during a news conference that those on board were a mix of civilian and military personnel, and that while some were staying in the area, others planned to fly on to other parts of the country.

"I think it is a miracle," Connor said. "We could be talking about a different story this evening."

Several pets were on the plane as well, and their status wasn't immediately clear. A navy statement early Saturday offering "hearts and prayers" to their owners said safety issues prevented rescuers from immediately retrieving the animals.

It wasn't immediately clear what went wrong. Boeing said in a tweet Friday night that it was investigating: "We are aware of an incident in Jacksonville, Fla., and are gathering information." The Federal Aviation Administration was referring media inquiries to NAS Jacksonville. Air station officials said investigators from the National Transportation Safety Board have been dispatched to determine what happened.

A photo posted by deputies shows a Miami Air International logo on the plane. The company didn't immediately respond to messages from The Associated Press.

It wasn't known how long it would take to remove the plane from the river, but Connor said the landing gear appeared to be resting on the river bed, making it unlikely for the aircraft to float away. He said crews began working to contain any jet fuel leaks almost immediately after securing the passengers' safety.

Liz Torres told the Florida Times-Union that she heard what sounded like a gunshot Friday night from her home in Orange Park, about 5 miles (8 kilometers) south of NAS Jacksonville. She then drove down to a Target parking lot where police and firefighters were staging to find out more.

"I've never seen anything like this," she said.

The Jacksonville Fire and Rescue Department posted on Twitter that approximately 90 personnel responded to the scene, adding that the department's special operations team had trained with marine units for a similar incident earlier Friday. Navy security and emergency response personnel also were on the scene, the Navy release said.

Fines, jail time? Dems digging in as Trump resists oversight

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — They're talking about jailing people at the Capitol. Imposing steep fines. All sorts of extraordinary, if long-shot measures to force the White House to comply with Democratic lawmakers' request for information about President Donald Trump stemming from the special counsel's Russia investigation.

This is the remarkable state of affairs between the executive and legislative branches as Democrats try to break through Trump's blockade of investigations.

"One of the things that everybody in this country needs to think about is when the president denies the Congress documents and access to key witnesses, basically what they're doing is saying, Congress you don't count," said Rep. Elijah Cummings, chairman of the House Oversight and Reform Committee.

"We cannot — we simply cannot — have a presidency that is run as if it were a king or a dictator in charge," said Cummings, D-Md.

Trump's blanket refusal to engage in oversight — and Democrats' unrelenting demand that he do so — is testing the system of checks and balances with a deepening standoff in the aftermath of Robert Mueller's investigation.

Trump derides the oversight of his business dealings and his administration as "presidential harassment" and has the backing of most Republicans in Congress. With Mueller's work completed, Trump wants closure to what he has long complained was a "witch hunt."

"No more costly & time consuming investigations," Trump tweeted.

Stunned by the administration's refusal to allow officials to testify or respond to document requests,

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 25 of 59

lawmakers have been left to think aloud about their next steps against the White House.

Rep. Jerrold Nadler, the House Judiciary Committee chairman, has given Attorney General William Barr a Monday deadline to comply with a subpoena demanding a redacted version of Mueller's report, along with its underlying evidence, or face a contempt charge.

Barr could face another subpoena to appear before Nadler's committee after skipping a hearing Thursday in a dispute over the rules for questioning him. Nadler, D-N.Y., also has subpoenaed testimony from former White House counsel Don McGahn.

Cummings is considering what to do on several fronts, including about testimony from Carl Kline, the White House's personnel security director. Cummings said Kline declined last week to answer specific questions in a closed-session hearing about the security clearances granted for White House advisers Jared Kushner and Ivanka Trump, the president's son-in-law and daughter. Also, the House Ways and Means Committee is being refused access to Trump's tax returns.

Republicans are largely declining to join Democrats in pursuing the investigations any further.

"It is over," said Sen. Lindsey Graham, chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, as Barr testified last week before the committee. Graham, R-S.C., has asked Mueller to respond to Barr's testimony, particularly after the disclosure of a letter the special counsel sent Barr complaining about attorney general's summary of the 400-plus page Russia report.

The rejection of oversight is the latest and perhaps most high-profile example of the new normal in the Trump era. Gone are the daily White House press briefings, once a fixture in Washington. Administration vacancies go unfilled, leaving fewer officials to respond to congressional requests. Agencies across the government seem more insular than before.

Princeton professor Julian E. Zelizer said what's unfolding between the White House and Congress "fits in a long history of bad moments when the branches clash over vital information."

While other presidents, including Barack Obama, have resisted congressional oversight in certain situations, including during Attorney General Eric Holder's blockade of the "Fast and Furious" gun-running investigation, Zelizer said "Trump is going further by saying no to everything."

To Zelizer, "certainly there are echoes of Watergate when the administration did everything possible to stonewall Congress as they undertook legitimate investigations and hearings into presidential corruption."

He said presidents with "too much power" can easily make decisions that undermine government operations in everyday lives. "Should citizens care? Of course, the restraint of presidential power is an essential part of our Constitution and the health of our democracy," Zelizer said.

Impeachment is being shelved, for now. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and her leadership team are taking a step-by-step approach to the White House standoff, declining any rush to impeachment proceedings, as some in her party want, for a more incremental response.

Pelosi did note this past week that obstructing Congress was one of the articles of impeachment against President Richard Nixon.

"Impeachment is never off the table, but should we start there?" Pelosi said Friday. "I don't agree with that."

Short of that, lawmakers are considering options for Barr and others. There's a long history of lawmakers holding officials in contempt. They can sue for compliance with the threat of fines. Some lawmakers are suggesting censuring the attorney general or impeaching him. Others have called for Barr to resign.

And then there's talk of jail time.

Capitol Hill has been buzzing about the unlikely prospect of using a jail that some say exists somewhere in the Capitol and that was used in the past to detain those in contempt of Congress.

But the House and Senate say no such facility exists.

"No evidence suggests that any room in the Capitol was ever designated for use as a jail," says an entry on the House website's historical pages.

During the Civil War, some Confederate soldiers and others were held at a brick building on the site of what's now the Supreme Court, across the street from the Capitol, that was often referred as the "Capitol Prison" or "Old Capitol Jail," according to the history page.

Otherwise, those found in contempt “were almost certainly held temporarily in the offices of the Sergeant at Arms, locked in committee anterooms, or put under guard at local hotels,” it says.

Senate Historian Betty Koed said in the past, the District of Columbia’s jail facility has also been used for detentions. “There is no Senate jail,” she said.

Lawmakers remain undeterred. Rep. David Cicilline, D-R.I., a member of party leadership, said lawmakers have “a whole range of options.”

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

As prison looms, prosecutors refuse final meeting with Cohen

By **JIM MUSTIAN** and **MICHAEL R. SISK** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — For months, President Donald Trump’s former lawyer Michael Cohen tried — but failed — to position himself as a whistleblower in the vein of Watergate hero John Dean.

As the time ticked down toward his deadline to report to prison, Cohen also lost the interest of the one group of people who could help him out: the federal prosecutors he desperately hoped would ask a judge to shorten his sentence.

Since mid-March, prosecutors in New York have rebuffed Cohen’s repeated offers to provide more information about alleged wrongdoing by Trump and other people in his orbit, Cohen’s attorney Lanny Davis told The Associated Press.

“Why not see him?” Davis asked. “What’s the downside? He’s about to go to prison.”

Cohen’s legal team reached out to prosecutors in March asking for an opportunity to meet for a “frank discussion” about reducing his sentence, based on his cooperation. That meeting never happened.

That snub might be the best evidence yet that Cohen’s months-long campaign to sell himself as a potential witness hasn’t paid off.

Cohen is scheduled to report Monday to a federal prison 70 miles north of New York City to begin serving a three-year sentence for campaign-finance violations, tax evasion, bank fraud and lying to Congress.

He remains the only person charged in a scandal involving hush money payments to the porn star Stormy Daniels and Playboy model Karen McDougal, who were threatening during the presidential campaign to speak up about alleged affairs with Trump.

Cohen started to cast himself publicly as a whistleblower less than three months after the FBI raided his home and apartment.

He gave a series of tantalizing teases that there was “more to come,” starting with an interview last July in which he told ABC anchor George Stephanopoulos he was no longer loyal to Trump. More dribbled out over the next few weeks. Davis released a tape of Cohen and Trump discussing one of the hush-money payments.

That effort, though, has largely been met with an uncompromising approach by federal prosecutors.

New York investigators built their case for months without speaking with Cohen, then finally agreed to meet with him on a Saturday last August, just a few days before he would plead guilty.

At the meeting, they delivered an ultimatum: plead guilty or be indicted within days. Cohen also believed after the meeting that his wife could be charged with financial crimes if he didn’t cooperate.

“I love this woman, and I am not going to let her get dragged into the mud of this crap,” Cohen later told an acquaintance, the actor Tom Arnold, in a conversation that Arnold recorded and provided to The Wall Street Journal.

Cohen’s wife, Laura, filed taxes with her husband and made investments with Cohen in taxi medallions. She ultimately was not charged.

After pleading guilty in August, Cohen did meet with Manhattan-based prosecutors multiple times to discuss several issues. Those included Trump’s personal business dealings, the president’s personal involvement in attempts to pay off McDougal and Daniels, and his inaugural committee, which is now the subject of a criminal investigation centering on possible donations by foreign nationals and influence peddling.

Cohen also met with special counsel Robert Mueller's investigators several times, culminating with a session just days before the former FBI director turned his report over to the Justice Department.

Still, the U.S. Attorney's Office in Manhattan, in court filings before his sentencing, criticized what it described as Cohen's unwillingness to cooperate fully and be debriefed "on other uncharged criminal conduct, if any, in his past."

They didn't ask the judge for a lenient sentence and have given no sign that they intend to file a so-called Rule 35 motion—a legal filing that could reduce Cohen's punishment if his cooperation is deemed to be of substantial assistance. Cohen's attorneys say they believe Cohen's information supports several potential prosecutions.

A spokesman for the U.S. Attorney's Office declined to comment.

In February, Cohen testified before several Congressional panels about what he said was dishonesty by Trump in his business affairs. He also testified that a Trump Organization executive, Allen Weisselberg, and Trump's son Donald Jr. were involved in reimbursing him for one of the hush money payments.

During that testimony, Cohen said a number of Trump-related topics were still being probed by New York prosecutors.

"I am currently working with them right now on several other issues of investigation that concerns them, that they're looking at," Cohen said.

Yet, within weeks, prosecutors were through speaking with him.

Davis, in the interview Friday, said he believes Cohen has been treated unfairly.

"The Southern District of New York was disproportionate in the sentence it asked for and appears to have targeted just Michael Cohen for reasons that I can't understand," Davis said.

Sisak reported from New York.

AP FACT CHECK: Trump, Putin and the no-collusion chorus

By CALVIN WOODWARD and HOPE YEN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The "no-collusion" chorus sang loudly this past week, with President Donald Trump in full-throated roar and even Russian President Vladimir Putin chiming in.

The upshot: substantial misrepresentations of what the special counsel's Russia investigation actually found.

A review of recent rhetoric from Trump and his associates on Russia and more, with Putin in the mix:

RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

PUTIN on special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation: "A mountain gave birth to a mouse." — remarks Tuesday, echoed in a phone call with Trump on Friday.

THE FACTS: Some might say this is a mouse that roared.

The investigation produced charges against nearly three dozen people, among them senior Trump campaign operatives and 25 Russians, as it shed light on a brazen Russian assault on the American political system.

The investigation did not establish a criminal conspiracy between the Trump campaign and Russia and it reached no conclusion on whether Trump obstructed justice. Yet it described his campaign as eager to exploit the release of hacked Democratic emails to hurt rival Hillary Clinton and it exposed lies by Trump aides aimed at covering up their Russia-related contacts.

The Russians caught up in the investigation were charged either with hacking into Democratic accounts or orchestrating a social media campaign to spread disinformation on the internet.

TRUMP: "The Mueller Report strongly stated that there was No Collusion with Russia (of course) and, in fact, they were rebuffed ... at every turn in attempts to gain access." — tweets Thursday.

ATTORNEY GENERAL WILLIAM BARR: "The evidence is now that the president was falsely accused of colluding with the Russians and accused of being treasonous. ... Two years of his administration have been

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 28 of 59

dominated by allegations that have now been proven false.” — Senate hearing Wednesday.

SEN. LINDSEY GRAHAM, R-S.C., chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee: “Mr. Mueller and his team concluded there was no collusion.” — Senate hearing.

THE FACTS: This refrain about the Mueller report stating there was no collusion between Russia and the Trump campaign is wrong.

Trump’s assertion that his campaign denied all access to Russians is false. The Mueller report and other scrutiny revealed a multitude of meetings with Russians. Among them: Donald Trump Jr.’s meeting with a Russian lawyer who had promised dirt on Clinton.

On collusion, Mueller said he did not assess whether that occurred because it is not a legal term.

He looked into a potential criminal conspiracy between Russia and the Trump campaign and said the investigation did not collect sufficient evidence to establish criminal charges on that front.

Mueller noted some Trump campaign officials had declined to testify under the 5th Amendment or had provided false or incomplete testimony, making it difficult to get a complete picture of what happened during the 2016 campaign. The special counsel wrote that he “cannot rule out the possibility” that unavailable information could have cast a different light on the investigation’s findings.

BARR, speaking of Trump: “He fully cooperated.” — Senate hearing.

THE FACTS: It’s highly questionable to say Trump was fully cooperative in the Russia investigation.

Trump declined to sit for an interview with Mueller’s team, gave written answers that investigators described as “inadequate” and “incomplete,” said more than 30 times that he could not remember something he was asked about in writing, and — according to the report — tried to get aides to fire Mueller or otherwise shut or limit the inquiry.

In the end, the Mueller report found no criminal conspiracy between the Trump campaign and Russia but left open the question of whether Trump obstructed justice.

GRAHAM: “As to obstruction of justice, Mr. Mueller left it to Mr. Barr to decide after two years, and all this time. He said, ‘Mr. Barr, you decide.’ Mr. Barr did.” — Senate hearing.

THE FACTS: Not true. Mueller did not ask Barr to rule on whether Trump’s efforts to undermine the special counsel’s Russia investigation had obstructed justice.

According to the report, Mueller’s team declined to make a prosecutorial judgment on whether to charge partly because of a Justice Department legal opinion that said sitting presidents shouldn’t be indicted.

As a result, the report factually laid out instances in which Trump might have obstructed justice, specifically leaving it open for Congress to take up the matter or for prosecutors to do so once Trump leaves office.

Barr wrote in a March 24 letter that he ultimately decided, as attorney general, that the evidence developed by Mueller was “not sufficient” to establish, for the purposes of prosecution, that Trump committed obstruction of justice.

Barr subsequently acknowledged that he had not talked directly to Mueller about making that ruling and did not know whether Mueller agreed with him.

VENEZUELA

TRUMP says Putin “is not looking at all to get involved in Venezuela, other than he’d like to see something positive happen for Venezuela.” — remarks to reporters Friday after speaking with Putin on the phone.

THE FACTS: Putin is already deeply involved in Venezuela as U.S.-supported Juan Guaido, opposition leader of the National Assembly, challenges President Nicolas Maduro’s embattled government.

Russia has a political, military and economic alliance with Venezuela over many years and is helping to support Maduro’s hold on power.

The Russians have provided Venezuela with substantial assistance, including an air defense system and help circumventing U.S. sanctions on its oil industry.

“Russia is now so deeply invested in the Maduro regime that the only realistic option is to double down,”

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 29 of 59

said Alexander Gabuev of the Carnegie Moscow Center.

NATO

TRUMP: "We're getting ripped off on military, NATO. I'm all for NATO. But you know, we're paying for almost 100 percent of defending Europe." — Wisconsin rally on April 27.

THE FACTS: The U.S. is not paying "almost 100 percent" the cost of defending Europe.

NATO does have a shared budget to which each member makes contributions based on the size of its economy. The United States, with the biggest economy, pays the biggest share, about 22 percent.

Four European members — Germany, France, Britain and Italy — combined pay nearly 44 percent of the total. The money, about \$3 billion, runs NATO's headquarters and covers certain other civilian and military costs.

Defending Europe involves far more than that fund. The primary cost of doing so would come from each member country's military budget, as the alliance operates under a mutual defense treaty.

The U.S. is the largest military spender but others in the alliance obviously have armed forces, too. The notion that almost all costs would fall to the U.S. is false.

In fact, NATO's Article 5, calling for allies to act if one is attacked, has only been invoked once, and it was on behalf of the U.S., after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

ECONOMY

TRUMP: "We just did 3.2 ... 3.2 is a number that they haven't hit in 14 years." — interview Wednesday with Fox Business News.

THE FACTS: First-quarter growth of 3.2% in the gross domestic product is nowhere close to the best in 14 years, by any measure. It's only the best since last year, surpassed in the second and third quarters with rates of 4.2% and 3.4% respectively.

Perhaps he meant to say it was the best first-quarter growth in 14 years. But that's not right, either. It's the best in four years.

The economy grew by 3.3% in the first quarter of 2015. So President Barack Obama has a better first-quarter record than Trump to date.

TRUMP: "Wages are rising fastest for the lowest-income Americans." — Wisconsin rally on April 27.

THE FACTS: This is true, though he's claiming credit for a trend that predates his presidency.

Some of the gains also reflect higher minimum wages passed at the state and local level; the Trump administration opposes an increase to the federal minimum wage.

With the unemployment rate at 3.6 %, the lowest since December 1969, employers are struggling to fill jobs. Despite all the talk of robots and automation, thousands of restaurants, warehouses, and retail stores still need workers.

They are offering higher wages and have pushed up pay for the lowest-paid one-quarter of workers more quickly than for everyone else since 2015. In March, the poorest 25% saw their paychecks increase 4.4% from a year earlier, compared with 3% for the richest one quarter.

Associated Press writers Christopher Rugaber, Eric Tucker, Lolita C. Baldor and Lynn Berry contributed to this report.

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Lawmakers target spouses who drug, rape their partners

By JULIE CARR SMYTH and STEVE KARNOWSKI Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Witches were still being burned at the stake when Sir Matthew Hale came up with his legal theory that rape could not happen within marriage. The 17th century English jurist declared it legally impossible because wedding vows implied a wife's ongoing consent to sex.

Three and a half centuries later, vestiges of the so-called "marital rape exemption" or "spousal defense" still exist in most states — remnants of the English common law that helped inform American legal traditions. Legislative attempts to end or modify those exemptions have a mixed record but have received renewed attention in the #MeToo era.

The most recent efforts to roll back protections for spouses focus on rapes that happen when a partner is drugged, unconscious or otherwise incapacitated. Minnesota is the latest to take action. The state Legislature this week voted to eliminate the exemption, which had prevented prosecutions in those cases.

"No longer will this antiquated and shameful law be on our books," Gov. Tim Walz said as he signed the bill into law on Thursday. "The concept of a pre-existing relationship defense should have never been part of our criminal statutes."

In Ohio, determined opponents plan to re-introduce a marital rape bill this month, after two earlier attempts failed.

Former lawmaker and prosecutor Greta Johnson was the first to introduce the Ohio legislation in 2015. She said having to address whether a woman was married to her attacker as part of sexual assault prosecutions struck her as "appalling and archaic."

"Certainly, there was a marital exemption lifted years ago, but it was just for what in the prosecutorial world we call the force element — by force or threat of force," she said. "You could still drug your spouse and have sex with them, and it's not rape. You could commit sexual imposition against your spouse, and it's not a crime. It was really troubling."

All 50 states had laws making marital rape a crime by 1993, whether as a result of the two preceding decades of activism by women's rights groups or because of a pivotal court ruling. Nearly 9% of women and 0.8% of men have been raped by an intimate partner, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. National surveys have placed the percentage of women raped within marriage between 10% and 14%.

Still, many states' marital rape laws have loopholes — not only involving the victim's capacity to consent, but related to age, relationship, use of force or the nature of the penetration. Some impose short timeframes for victims to report spousal rape.

A recent Maryland bill sought to erase the marital exemption for all sex crimes.

During discussion of the bill, one skeptical male lawmaker wondered whether a spouse might be charged with sexual assault for "smacking the other's behind" during an argument. Maryland Del. Frank Conaway Jr., a Baltimore Democrat, raised religious concerns.

"If your religion believes if you're married, two are as one body, then what happens? Can you get a religious exemption?" he asked.

"No, I would actually say that the First Amendment would prevent the state from getting entangled in that sort of judgment," replied Lisae Jordan, executive director of the Maryland Coalition Against Sexual Assault. "So you would have to rely on your faith and your commitment to that to not bring those charges. But that's no place for the General Assembly."

The bill died in March.

Professor D. Kelly Weisberg of the University of California Hastings College of the Law said the Maryland debate touched on some of the common rationales for the marital rape exemption over the centuries.

One is Hale's premise from the 1670s that marriage implies irrevocable consent and even property rights by the husband over his wife and her body. Those ideas have never truly disappeared, said Weisberg, author of a new reference book on domestic violence law.

She said other arguments for such laws are that marital privacy is a constitutional right, as when spouses

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 31 of 59

can't be forced to testify against one another in court, that marital rape isn't serious enough to criminalize and that it would be difficult to prove.

For those and other reasons, Weisberg said marital rape laws have not kept pace with other domestic violence laws. That means in some cases an unmarried domestic partner has more legal protections against attack than a spouse.

Changing attitudes — and laws — about marital rape is what drove Jenny Teeson to go public this year with her story.

The 39-year-old from Andover, Minnesota, was going through a divorce in 2017 when she discovered a flash drive with videos taken by her husband. They showed him penetrating her with an object while she lay drugged and unconscious. In one, their 4-year-old lay next to her on the bed.

Teeson turned the videos over to the police. After an investigation, her husband was charged with third-degree criminal sexual assault against an incapacitated victim. Charges were brought in the morning — but dropped by afternoon because of the state's marital rape exemption.

"I was beside myself," she told The Associated Press.

Her ex-husband ultimately pleaded guilty to a gross misdemeanor charge of invading her privacy and served 30 days in the county jail. Still shocked that he could not be charged with a felony because of the state law, Teeson decided to take action.

"I thought if I can't have the law be in place to keep myself, my kids and my community safe, I could wallow in it, or I could do something about it," she said.

The AP does not normally identify victims of sexual assault, but Teeson has shared her story publicly, including during testimony before legislative committees. Democratic state Sen. Karla Bigham credited Teeson's advocacy for persuading lawmakers to pass the bill.

"She had to relive the trauma every time she shared her story," Bigham told her colleagues during a debate in the Senate chamber this past week. "Her voice speaks loudly to those women who deserve justice. Let's do the right thing. Let's right this wrong."

AEquitas, a resource for prosecutors, reported last month that 17 states still maintain some form of the exemption for spouses who rape partners when they are drugged or otherwise incapacitated: Alabama, Alaska, Connecticut, Idaho, Iowa, Kentucky, Maryland, Michigan, Mississippi, New Hampshire, New York, Ohio, Oklahoma, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Washington and Wyoming.

In Ohio, state Rep. Kristin Boggs, a Democrat, said she's not optimistic the upcoming version of the marital rape bill will be any more successful in the Republican-controlled Legislature than it has been in the past.

But at least one past opponent — the Ohio Prosecuting Attorneys Association — has evolved on the issue. Executive Director Lou Tobin said he expects the group will support a bill that seeks to eliminate the exemption.

"In the past, I know that there's been some concern that these cases are difficult to prove; they can be a lot of he-said, she-said back and forth," Tobin said. "But sorting through those things is what prosecutors are for."

Boggs' bill would again call for removing references to the marital exemption throughout Ohio's criminal code. Her argument in favor of it is straightforward.

"Our rationale for introducing this legislation is simply that your legal relationship to another human being shouldn't give you permission to rape them," she said.

Karnowski reported from St. Paul, Minnesota.

Associated Press writer Brian Witte in Annapolis, Maryland, and News Researcher Rhonda Shafner in New York also contributed to this report.

Follow Julie Carr Smyth at <http://www.twitter.com/jcarrsmyth> and Steve Karnowski at <https://twitter.com/skarnowski>

Beer pong 2020: Will Gillibrand's cool campaign pay off?

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

NASHUA, New Hampshire (AP) — Her first shot landed short and her teammate's bounced away. But Kirsten Gillibrand's second ping pong ball splashed home and she threw both arms skyward while her opponents chugged, celebrating a beer pong victory in the most presidential way possible.

The scene on a rainy Friday night in a bar in Nashua, New Hampshire's second-largest city, follows a pattern for the 52-year-old New York senator. She's trailed better-known rivals in the packed Democratic 2020 presidential field in polling and fundraising, but she's making a case for being the coolest candidate in the race.

Driving between New Hampshire events in February, she stopped to go sledding. She's played foosball and baked cookies, arm wrestled and hung out with drag queens at an Iowa bar some call "Gay Cheers."

Other candidates have also sought humanizing moments. New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker played Pac Man at a New Hampshire video arcade, Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren danced her way through the 2017 gay pride parade in Boston and, while visiting South Carolina in February, Sen. Kamala Harris of California was goaded into trying on, and eventually buying, a multicolored, sequined jacket.

"I'm aware it probably comes across as a gimmick, but in real life it came across as genuine," said Shaye Weldon, Gillibrand's beer pong teammate.

As state director of engagement for the New Hampshire Young Democrats, Weldon meets a lot of presidential candidates — but had never played beer pong with any.

"It's a moment when I see she's a real person," she said of Gillibrand, who sipped most of the night from a glass of a craft, imperial ale called Imp IPA.

Such scenes can feature that most-valued political commodity: authenticity — at least to a point.

Gillibrand's campaign turned the beer pong game into an online ad, freeze framing the candidate mid-toss and seeking donations: "If Kirsten makes this shot" before letting the scene roll to reveal that she does. And an Associated Press analysis of financial disclosures each candidate filed through March showed that Gillibrand spent nearly \$840,000 on "communications consulting" services — more than any other Democratic 2020 presidential candidate who listed similar expenditures.

Spokesman Evan Lukasko said doing things presidential candidates don't typically do comes naturally to Gillibrand — not as a result of paid advice. He noted that many of the non-traditional campaign moments came with little or no press around and got noticed organically via social media.

That's been the case for other candidates as well. Beto O'Rourke first solidified his national standing in Democratic circles last summer, after a video of him defending NFL players' national anthem protests was viewed by millions. But he also spent hundreds of previous hours livestreaming more mundane moments to minuscule audiences, which watched him getting his haircut, doing laundry and driving seemingly endless hours to campaign events as he ran unsuccessfully for Senate in Texas.

O'Rourke has shunned political consultants, but also had unscripted-moment missteps, like when he was mocked for posting part of his teeth cleaning online.

With 20-plus Democrats vying for the White House, getting noticed is difficult. Still, Patrick Murray, director of the Monmouth University Polling Institute, said trying to catch fire doing non-presidential-candidate things isn't as important as building support in the first two states that vote in the primary, Iowa and New Hampshire, because most voters elsewhere won't really begin noticing until those races are over.

"There's no point trying to run a media campaign now," Murray said. "One, no one's paying attention. And, two, if you bomb in Iowa and New Hampshire, everything you spent trying to build up a national image is worthless."

As valuable as appearing effortlessly authentic can be, trying too hard to achieve it can backfire.

A rap song backing Ben Carson's 2016 presidential bid tried rhyming his last name with "awesome," Hillary Clinton's 2015 Saturday Night Live appearance as Val the bartender fizzled and President Gerald Ford, while visiting San Antonio in 1976, took a bite out of a tamale without knowing to remove the corn husk first.

More recently, Warren faced criticism for attempting to seem overly down-homey when she declared on

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 33 of 59

Instagram from her kitchen on New Years Eve, "I'm gonna get me a beer" before grabbing a Michelob Ultra.

"There's always a risk ... that the effort to show the candidate acting like a real person shows them not to be a real person because they've spent their entire life in politics," said Adam Sheingate, author of "Building a Business of Politics: The Rise of Political Consulting and the Transformation of American Democracy."

Sheingate, chairman of the political science department at Johns Hopkins University, said that U.S. elections are now heavily tied to candidate personality and "a lot of voters kind of know this, and so, as a result, these kinds of efforts that are overly crafted images can fall flat because it's like, "Whatever. We know why they're doing this."

"But candidates will do it anyway," he added, "because they have to get their name out there."

Associated Press writer Brian Slodysko contributed to this report from Washington.

Hiring surge lifts economy - and Trump's reelection chances

By **STEVE PEOPLES** and **CHRISTOPHER RUGABER** Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The lowest unemployment rate in a half century. More than 260,000 new jobs. And higher hourly wages.

"I'll be running on the economy," President Donald Trump declared on Friday. And why wouldn't he?

The day's new round of sunny employment figures offered fresh evidence of a strong national economy — and a big political advantage for Trump just as the 2020 presidential campaign begins to intensify. Stocks are at or near record levels, too, as the president often notes.

Democrats pointed to regional disparities in the new government report. And overall income inequality hasn't narrowed.

But the Democrats who are fighting to deny the Republican president a second term are beginning to acknowledge the weight of their challenge: Since World War II, no incumbent president has ever lost reelection in a growing economy.

Even Trump's critics are forced to admit the state of the economy could help him at the ballot box.

"Relative to all the other terrible aspects of Trump's record, the economy is more of an asset to him," said Geoff Garin, a veteran pollster whose clients include Priorities USA, the most powerful super PAC in Democratic politics.

Indeed, it was a day of celebration for Trump and his allies, who have been well aware of recent warnings that the economy might slow this year.

The president's chief economic adviser, Larry Kudlow, said the United States has entered "a very strong and durable prosperity cycle." He gave all the credit to his boss: "He is president of the whole economy."

By most measures, the U.S. economy is in solid shape. It is expanding at a roughly 3% pace, businesses are posting more jobs than there are unemployed workers and wage growth, long the economy's weak spot, has picked up.

All these trends are helping lift a broader swath of the population than in the first five years or so after the Great Recession.

Low-income workers are actually seeing healthy wage gains — larger than everyone else's. In March, the poorest one-quarter of workers were earning 4.4% more than a year earlier, according to data compiled by the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta. The richest one-quarter were up 3%.

Lower-income workers had started to outpace their higher-paid counterparts in 2015, so it's not a Trump phenomenon. And part of the increase has occurred because of minimum wage hikes by more than two-dozen states.

The news isn't good for everyone.

Workers in metro areas are still getting larger pay increases than those in smaller towns or rural areas, according to the Atlanta Fed's data. In fact, that gap that has widened since Trump was elected.

And overall income inequality hasn't narrowed. The richest 5 percent of Americans earned 3.4 times a median worker's pay in 2018, according to the left-leaning Economic Policy Institute. That's up from 3.3

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 34 of 59

times as much in 2016.

In Carlisle, Pennsylvania, in a region Trump carried three years ago, county archivist Barbara Bartos said the president's policies have helped a lot of people although she's seen little economic benefit personally.

"I think he should get credit where credit is due," said Bartos, a 69-year-old registered Democrat who backed Hillary Clinton. "And I think that he helped a lot of people but left a lot of people out."

Three hundred miles to the west in Cleveland, another former Clinton supporter, 42-year-old IT manager Jessica Wieber, said she feels "pretty good" about her economic situation.

"I think he's had a big impact," she said of Trump's effect on the economy, adding that tax breaks given to companies and corporations have allowed them to hire more workers.

"I hope it helps trickle down a bit," said Wieber, a single mom with four children.

Amid the largely positive news for Trump, friends and foes alike question whether he can stay focused on the economy as the 2020 contest plays out. Blessed with similarly positive news in the past, he has veered into more controversial topics like immigration, the Russia investigation and personal attacks against his rivals.

Democrats, in fact, are counting on him to change the subject.

"The economic indicators would normally be incredibly positive for an incumbent president," said Jeffrey Pollock, the pollster for Democratic Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand's presidential campaign. However, the pollster said hopefully and somewhat rudely, "He can't shut his mouth."

At this point, 18 months before Election Day, Trump's political standing is far weaker than the economic numbers would suggest.

The latest CNN poll finds 43% of Americans approve of the way he is handling his job as president. That's even as 56% say they approve of his handling of the economy, marking a high for the president since he took office.

He receives lower marks for other issues, including health care, immigration and foreign policy.

Specific candidates aside, the General Social Survey, a respected nationwide survey, has found that the share of Americans feeling satisfied with their finances has returned to pre-recession levels.

In 2018, about a third expressed satisfaction with their financial situation, up from 23% in 2010. About 4 in 10 said their finances had been improving over the previous few years, while just 15% felt them worsening.

In 2010, more than twice as many said their financial situations were getting worse.

Last month, the government report said, the African American unemployment rate was 6.7%, up from a record-low 5.9% last May. That's more than double the rate for whites. And in 2017, according to the latest data available, the black-white income gap widened, with the typical African American household earning \$40,258, while the equivalent white figure was \$68,145.

Still, the Asian and Latino unemployment rates hit or matched record lows in April.

By some measures, the job market has been better in the past.

A much smaller proportion of Americans are working than in the late 1990s, the last time unemployment was nearly this low. Part of that is because the United States is aging and baby boomers are retiring.

But even among workers aged 25 through 54, which filters out the impact of retirement and increased college attendance, a smaller percentage of people are working: In April 79.7% had jobs. That figure peaked at 81.9% back in 2000.

How much all this will affect the election is an open question.

Ray Fair, a Yale University economist who uses economic data to model election outcomes, says that the state of the economy in the first three quarters of an election year matters more than the rest of a president's term.

Fair's model points to a Trump victory in 2020, should the economy continue along its current path.

However, "This doesn't take into account the personalities," Fair said. "Trump is an unusual person."

Rugaber reported from Washington. AP writers Hannah Fingerhut in Washington, Mark Gillispie in Cleve-

land, Mark Scolforo in Carlisle, Pennsylvania, and Ivan Moreno in Milwaukee contributed.

AP Exclusive: US missed chance to woo Venezuela generals

By JOSHUA GOODMAN Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — Around May 2017, an unusual request from a prominent Venezuelan general made its way to the White House: Gen. Ivan Hernández, head of both the presidential guard and military counterintelligence, wanted to send his 3-year-old son to Boston for brain surgery and needed visas for his family.

After days of internal debate, the still young Trump administration rejected the request, seeing no point in helping a senior member of a socialist government that it viewed as corrupt and thuggish but wasn't yet prepared to confront.

That decision, revealed to The Associated Press by a former U.S. official and another person familiar with the internal discussions, might have gone unnoticed if National Security Adviser John Bolton hadn't admonished Hernandez this week on live TV as one of three regime insiders who backed out of a plan — allegedly at the last minute — to topple President Nicolás Maduro.

It might also have been one of several missed opportunities to curry favor with Venezuela's normally impenetrable armed forces.

The U.S. also rebuffed a back channel to the alleged ringleader of the would-be defectors, Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino Lopez.

Bolton said Hernández, Padrino and Supreme Court Chief Justice Maikel Moreno chose to stick with Maduro at the moment of truth: when opposition leader Juan Guaidó appeared Tuesday on a highway overpass surrounded by a small cadre of armed troops ready for what he said was the "final phase" of a campaign to rescue Venezuela's democracy known as Operation Freedom.

Little is known about the extent of support for the plot. Opposition leader Leopoldo Lopez said Thursday he had been speaking for weeks with military commanders while under house arrest. U.S. special envoy Elliott Abrams said there was even a document with the outlines of a transitional government that top officials had agreed to.

"I am told the document is long —15 points, I think — and it talks of guarantees for the military, for a dignified exit for Maduro, and Guaidó as interim president," he told Venezuelan online TV network VPItv.

The three officials haven't directly denied they were in talks with the opposition, but they have reaffirmed their loyalty to Maduro and remain in their posts. A fourth, Gen. Manuel Figuera, head of the feared SEBIN intelligence agency, did break ranks and has since disappeared.

But some analysts doubt top military officials who have amassed immense power under Maduro, and are sanctioned by the U.S., ever seriously considered betraying him. Instead, they speculate that the opposition — and by extension, the U.S. — may have been duped by Cuban intelligence agents in Venezuela.

"They try to buy us as if we were mercenaries," Padrino said Thursday in remarks alongside Maduro.

One clue to the military officers' apparent reluctance to join any U.S.-backed plot may be found in the story of their past, failed dealings with senior American officials.

The former U.S. official and two other people agreed to discuss details of the previously undisclosed interactions on the condition they not be identified because of the sensitive nature of what were private, high-level talks inside the Trump and Obama administrations.

For years, U.S. officials tried to identify ways to engage the military, the traditional arbiter of political disputes in Venezuela. But after Hugo Chavez's thorough scrubbing of U.S. influence in the armed forces, opportunities were limited.

That's why, with the benefit of hindsight, Hernandez's visa request stood out.

A letter addressed to the U.S. Embassy in Venezuela from Boston Children's Hospital states that Hernandez's son had been authorized for surgery on March 14, 2017, for which the family had made a \$150,000 deposit. It states that it is "in the child's best interests" if both Hernandez and his wife were granted visas to accompany the child during what was expected to be a two-month convalescence. The letter was

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 36 of 59

provided to the AP by one of the people familiar with the matter.

After the request for humanitarian visas was rejected, a former senior Venezuelan official cooperating with U.S. law enforcement appealed to his contacts in Washington on Hernandez's behalf. However, once again the request fell on deaf ears, reflecting what one of the sources viewed as a lack of strategic thinking by top policymakers in the White House and State Department.

"There's legitimate skepticism on the part of the U.S. to engage given the amount of Cuban coaching of the Maduro government," said Douglas Farah, a national security expert on Latin America and president of IBI Consultants.

"But clearly a humanitarian request can break through a lot of ideological barriers and pay major dividends down the road," added Farah, who had no direct knowledge of the episode.

There was no immediate comment from the White House.

But the former U.S. official disputes the view the visa request was never seriously considered. While he said there was some sympathy for Hernandez, he noted that for years top civilian and military loyalists have enjoyed unfettered access to the U.S. — where billions stolen from Venezuela's state coffers are invested — and nonetheless showed no interest in working with the American government to restore the rule of law in the oil-rich nation.

Further, for almost two decades of socialist rule and until summer 2017, when the Trump administration toughened its stance in response to Maduro's crackdown on protests, regime change hadn't been the U.S. policy goal. So White House officials didn't want to be seen as encouraging a barracks revolt and were wary of interacting with officials facing U.S. investigations for drug trafficking or corruption.

"If any senior official is going to join a plot, it's because of a cool assessment of its chances of success, not because their son got medical treatment in the U.S. two years ago," the former U.S. official said.

A year before Hernandez was rebuffed, his boss, Defense Minister Padrino Lopez, also sought contact with the U.S., according to the two other sources familiar with the matter.

In early 2016, a trusted associate, retired Gen. Jimmy Guzman, traveled to Washington for a meeting with a senior official from the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency. Over lunch at a Georgetown hotel, Guzman expressed Padrino's interest in opening a channel of communications with the U.S. and Maduro's opponents after the opposition's upset victory in December 2015 congressional elections.

But after Guzman returned to Caracas, the Americans abruptly cut off communications, according to the two people, when socialist party boss Diosdado Cabello identified the two Venezuelan exiles who brokered the meeting, accusing them on TV of working with the U.S. to carry out a coup.

One of the sources said the U.S. feared Padrino had been feigning interest in order to collect information for Maduro about what the Americans were up to.

Padrino had long been viewed as a potential white knight. He's one of the last active-duty officers who studied in the U.S., having been trained in psychological operations at the School of the Americas — a familiar Chavez boogeyman for its role in training generations of right-wing military dictators — and then at the Army Infantry School, both located at Fort Benning, Georgia.

Former classmates remember him as an exemplary student who enjoyed his two years in the U.S. in the 1990s, renting a town house off base and starting a family. His two children have U.S. passports, one source said.

He surprised many in the U.S. and opposition by taking a conciliatory stance in the tense hours following the 2015 elections in which speculation swirled that Maduro wouldn't recognize the opposition's win. Surrounded by the entire military command, he urged calm in a televised address and celebrated the still-unannounced results as a victory for Venezuela's democracy.

More recently, the U.S. has hardened its position toward both men. After the Trump administration at the start painstakingly avoided targeting the military, in the hopes of giving it space to pressure Maduro, it slapped financial sanctions on Padrino in September. A few months later, it was Hernandez's turn. The U.S. Treasury accused him of commanding a state intelligence operation blamed for "brutal beatings, asphyxiation, cutting soles of feet with razor blades, electric shocks, and death threats."

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Families defrauded by unregulated service dog trainers

By ALLEN G. BREED AP National Writer

APEX, N.C. (AP) — All the counseling, therapy and medication did little to ease 9-year-old Sobie Cummings' crippling anxiety and feelings of isolation. And so a psychiatrist suggested that a service dog might help the autistic child connect with other kids.

To Glenn and Rachel Cummings, Mark Mathis seemed like a dream come true. His kennel, Ry-Con Service Dogs, was just a couple of hours away, and he, too, had a child with autism. But what clinched the decision were Mathis' credentials.

"Is Ry-Con a certified program? Yes," stated an online brochure. "In 2013, Mark was certified as a NC state approved service dog trainer with a specialty in autism service dogs for children."

Ten months and \$14,500 later, the family brought home a shaggy mop of a dog that Sobie had come to view as her "savior." But when they opened the front door, Okami broke from Glenn Cummings' grasp and began mauling one of the family's elderly dogs — all as Sobie watched from the stairs in mute horror.

It was only after they had returned Okami and asked for a refund that the family learned the truth: Mathis was not a state-certified dog trainer. In fact, North Carolina has no such certification program — and neither does any other state.

The service dog industry — particularly in the field of "psychiatric" service dogs for people with autism and post-traumatic stress disorder — has exploded in recent years. But a near complete absence of regulation and oversight has left needy, desperate families vulnerable to incompetence and fraud.

"It is a lawless area. The Wild West," says David Favre, a law professor at Michigan State University and editor of its Animal Legal and Historical Center website.

Properly training a service dog can take up to 1 ½ years and cost upward of \$50,000, depending on the tasks it is taught to perform. But the Americans with Disabilities Act does not require that a service dog be professionally trained or certified. And, according to the U.S. Department of Justice, local and state agencies are prohibited from requiring that the dogs be registered.

"It needs to be specially trained to do tasks that relate to the person's disability, but it doesn't say anything about who does the training or the quality of training or the efficacy of it," says Lynette Hart, a professor of veterinary medicine at the University of California, Davis. "So it's a very broad, wide-open barn door."

The ADA allows people to train their own service dogs. But Hart, who has co-authored studies of the industry, says most don't have the time, wherewithal or confidence to do so, and that puts needy families "in a calamitous situation." "They're easy prey," says Hart, whose late brother had autism.

In 2012, the state of Illinois sued Lea Kaydus and Animals for Autism over a "heartless scam" in which she took several thousand dollars from families but never matched them with dogs. Kaydus was ordered to pay restitution.

Two years ago, Noelle's Dogs Four Hope of Colorado Springs agreed to surrender its license after state inspectors confirmed the placement of dogs with "incontinence, lack of basic house training, separation anxiety and aggression."

And last year, Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring filed suit against Service Dogs by Warren Retrievers Inc., which advertises dogs trained to help people suffering from diabetes, PTSD, seizure disorders and autism. The lawsuit alleges that the diabetes-alert dogs, for which Warren charged up to \$27,000, "were often poorly trained, ill-behaved, and unequipped to help manage a life-threatening situation, rendering them little more than incredibly expensive pets."

Attorneys for owner Charles D. Warren Jr. say the state's case is based on the complaints of "a few disgruntled and fanatical consumers" who "cannot be satisfied and refuse all attempts at accommodation and reason." A trial date has not been scheduled.

Authorities in North Carolina are now investigating Ry-Con.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 38 of 59

Mathis, a biotech engineer, founded Ry-Con after his older son, who is autistic, was successfully paired with a service dog. "It was remarkable," Mathis told a local magazine several years ago. "We had a new child."

Incorporated in 2014, Ry-Con worked exclusively with Briards — a long-haired French herding breed that can weigh anywhere from 55 to 100 pounds. The American Kennel Club site says the Briard "packs so much loyalty, love, and spirit into its ample frame that it's often described as a 'heart wrapped in fur.'"

In a May 2017 news release, Mathis claimed that Ry-Con — based in Apex, just southwest of Raleigh — was the largest provider of autism service dogs on the East Coast and boasted a "100% success rate."

There aren't a lot of programs that specialize in training dogs for children with autism, so the Cummings family felt lucky to find one so close to home.

The Charlotte couple searched online and found positive local news articles, as well as a profile of Ry-Con by CNNMoney. Mathis' website was loaded with glowing testimonials.

And then there was the state certification.

"For us to see that he had the backing of the state ... was huge," Rachel Cummings says.

The couple contacted Ry-Con in July 2017. Within days, Mathis called to say he had the perfect dog for Sobie, even though he'd not met her and his contracts promised Ry-Con would "hand select a puppy for the (consumer)." Rachel Cummings says she found that odd but: "I was blinded by hope."

Mathis sent them a photo. Sobie decided to name her new friend after the Japanese word for her favorite animal — the wolf.

Several months later, the family traveled to Apex to meet the dog. She was still a puppy and had not yet undergone training, but Sobie got to spend time with her. Her mother tears up picturing her daughter beaming as she and Okami played at a park.

"Her life has been not the easiest ... being bullied and wanting friends desperately," she says. "And so it was just a beautiful thing to see."

Sobie plastered her walls and school folders with photos of Okami. She kept a framed picture of the dog beside her bed, hugging and kissing and talking to it before going to sleep.

But on subsequent visits, Cummings says, Okami did not seem to be progressing.

The International Association of Assistance Dog Partners says a service animal should have a minimum of 120 hours of schooling over six months or more. The dog must respond to basic commands — "Sit, Stay, Come, Down, Heel" — and be able to work without exhibiting "aggressive behavior toward people or other animals."

Studies have shown that up to half wash out of training.

During training trips to local stores, Okami pulled at her leash and refused to lie down. At a mall, she growled and lunged at people, and defecated in a hallway.

Still, Sobie and the dog had bonded, and the family hoped more training would smooth out the rough edges. Okami "graduated" last May; the family brought her home Mother's Day weekend.

Cummings says her two dogs were lying in the front hall when Okami attacked, unprovoked. She says it took both her and her husband to pry the Briard's jaws from the other dog's throat.

When Mathis refused to refund their money, they sued. They were unaware that they weren't the first to have issues with Ry-Con.

In November 2017, Christian and Shannon Poirier say the dog Mathis sold them bit their 11-year-old son Daniel, who has autism. After repeated requests for a refund, they sued him in small claims court and won.

The Cummings case never got that far.

Last Nov. 13, Mathis sent an email to clients announcing he was closing down. At the time, he had about 40 dogs in training. He said the operation was no longer sustainable, blaming "issues with accounts receivables, and a select number of recently returned dogs and the unfortunate response that followed."

The following day, he filed for bankruptcy protection.

Clients were told to come collect their dogs. Not long after, complaints began pouring into state Attorney

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 39 of 59

General Josh Stein's office.

Some customers claimed they arrived at Ry-Con to find dogs emaciated, skittish and matted with urine and feces. Many said their pups lunged and nipped at children and other animals, weren't housetrained and could not respond to basic commands.

Nancy Evans says her 19-year-old daughter, Katie, had waited over a year for her dog, Bailey. Katie suffered from PTSD and anxiety so severe that she could not even take the bus by herself. Once home with them in Toronto, the dog showed extreme aggression toward Katie's older brother. An expert who examined Bailey declared her unfit for service, and a Briard rescue group took her away.

About a month after losing Bailey, Katie committed suicide. Her mother is convinced things would have been different had Bailey worked out. "My Katie would still be alive today if we had been given a trained service dog," Evans says.

Stein's office has received more than four dozen complaints against Ry-Con. In a response to one, Mathis accused clients of breaking their contracts, falling behind on payments or misrepresenting conditions in their homes, and suggested that some were attempting to blackmail him.

In an email to The Associated Press, he insisted that his troubles all stemmed from recent financial issues. "Some of (the dogs) had to go home earlier than their original planned graduation," Mathis wrote. "Some of them went home on time but aftercare support was not immediately available. ... This is not the same as selling untrained dogs, and certainly not a willful act or scam."

However, the state attorney general alleges that Mathis not only misrepresented his credentials but also falsified breeder information, providing some families animals that were trained primarily as police or security dogs, not service dogs. Stein's office also contends that Mathis may have siphoned as much as \$240,000 of the nonprofit's money for personal expenses, including groceries, haircuts and video games.

Meanwhile, Stein said the families are out more than \$950,000 — money he will try to recover. "Most if not all of the consumers had no prior experience with service dogs or the training of service animals. They therefore had no expectations as to how the industry operated," the complaint states.

Mathis declined to respond to allegations of inflated credentials and success rates, instead referring the AP to several satisfied clients.

Scott Gordon of Rolesville, North Carolina, turned to Mathis for help with his 6-year-old son, Beckett, who has autism. He says Zuzu was a perfect fit.

"I used to have to lay down with him for at least 45 minutes to get him to fall asleep," he says. "Now, I kiss them both good night, and off he goes to sleep."

Whitney Reynolds says a touch or a lick from their Briard, Cosette, can stop one of her 7-year-old son's meltdowns cold. "She's a blessing," the Cary, North Carolina, woman says.

But to the Cummings family and others, Ry-Con has been a curse.

Rachel Cummings says Sobie didn't leave her room or eat for several days after the attack; a doctor has diagnosed the little girl with PTSD.

One day, Cummings found an empty picture frame under her daughter's bed. Sobie had torn the photo of Okami into tiny pieces, locked them in a keepsake box and thrown away the key.

Now 11, Sobie sleeps with a stuffed owl — her new favorite animal.

"Her life is not what it was," her mother says. "The light's not back in her eyes yet."

And what became of Okami? Rachel and Glenn Cummings learned that Mathis had sold her to another family, with similar results.

That family has also filed a complaint.

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Hardships from Hawaii volcano stretch on 1 year later

By CALEB JONES Associated Press

PAHOA, Hawaii (AP) — A year after a volcano on Hawaii's Big Island rained lava and gases in one of its largest and most destructive eruptions in recorded history, people who lost their homes and farms in the disaster are still struggling to return to their cherished island lifestyle.

More than 700 homes were destroyed in the historic eruption, and most people will never move back to their land.

Over four months, Kilauea spewed enough lava to fill 320,000 Olympic-sized swimming pools, burying an area more than half the size of Manhattan in up to 80 feet (24 meters) of now-hardened lava. The molten rock reduced landmarks, streets and neighborhoods to a vast field of blackened boulders and volcanic shard.

But the disaster, which county officials estimate will cost about \$800 million to recover from, affected more than just the people and places in the lava's path.

Dozens of nearby homes that were spared still sit empty, either cut off by surrounding flows, damaged by airborne debris or downwind of cracks that continue to spew toxic gases.

Big Island Mayor Harry Kim lost a home in the eruption and says people are just beginning to come to terms with the devastation.

"We as human beings wish for normal to come back," Kim said. "In a volcanic eruption, everything you know is no longer there."

The longtime mayor says many outsiders question why anyone would want to live on the side of an active volcano.

"This is and was a very beautiful place to live. It was special," Kim said. "It's not just a home, it's a lifestyle here."

A FATHER'S FINAL WISH

Among those whose lives were forever changed are Tisha Montoya and her family, who lived off the grid on several acres downslope from where the eruption began.

They had a large house and several cabins, along with greenhouses, pavilions and animal pastures. Montoya harvested different types of exotic fruit and had a pineapple garden, sheep, chickens, ducks, rabbits and Guinea pigs.

On May 4, the day after the eruption started, she evacuated when a 6.9-magnitude earthquake violently jolted the family's purple octagonal home. Lava was pouring from new cracks in the nearby Leilani Estates neighborhood, and toxic gases filled the air.

Her father, Edwin Montoya, stayed behind to care for the animals. He hoped the entire family would soon be able to return.

Edwin's children begged him to leave as the lava crept toward their property over the coming weeks. But he was committed to saving the animals, and he was prepared to die doing it.

"If it blows its top and I'm there at the time, I'm 76 years old, I've lived a good life, and if I have to go, I want to go," Edwin Montoya told The Associated Press last May. "I love Hawaii, and this is where I want to stay for the rest of my days."

As the lava neared, Edwin's focus turned from taking care of the animals to evacuating them. He left the day before a river of lava arrived and cut the farm in half. The molten rock eventually took nearly all the structures, including the home and all but one small chicken coop that Edwin built.

Lava stopped flowing the first week of September. Edwin died less than a week later.

"It was very stressful to evacuate 100 animals out of here," Tisha told the AP of her father's death.

He woke her up one night because he was having trouble breathing. "We didn't make it to the hospital," she said. "He passed and then they said later it was a heart attack."

All roads to the family's farm are now cut off, leaving it accessible only by a two-hour hike through thick jungle.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 41 of 59

Tisha returned there last week.

"This was the most special spot on the whole land," she said as she paused to pray near the miles-long wall of lava covering her home. "So we buried him here as he wanted us to. His ashes, anyway, are sprinkled right over there on the edge, where the lava meets the green."

END OF THE ROAD

Mark and Jennifer Bishop's house sat atop a ridge in Leilani Estates, their deck looking out toward friends' homes in a valley.

The epicenter of the 2018 eruption — one of more than 20 places where the ground split open and released massive explosions of molten rock — is now in their front yard.

The eruption point, known as Fissure 8, created a towering cone that pumped out so much lava that it filled the valley in front of their property and flowed about 8 miles (13 kilometers) to the ocean.

"We used to be on the ridge. Now we're halfway down the hill," Mark Bishop said last week, looking up at the massive cone.

In all, lava hitting the ocean created nearly 1 square mile (2.6 square kilometers) of new land, including a new black sand beach.

The Bishops split their time between the Big Island and Harmony, Minnesota, where they own a business that gives tours of scenic cave.

They were in Minnesota when the eruption began, so they watched news reports and aerial video as lava blasted from the ground near their home. A friend called one day to tell them the lava was headed directly toward their house.

The red-hot fluid oozed onto their property and stopped about 20 feet (6 meters) from the home. Theirs is now the last house on the street.

"We just feel really fortunate that our home wasn't taken," Mark Bishop said. "All of our neighbors to the north of us are all gone for like a mile-and-a-half wide."

Debris from the nearby eruption infiltrated the Bishops' home and caused extensive damage, but the couple has begun to replace furniture and appliances and recently moved back in.

"Our plans are to stay here, keep working on the home and do the repairs as necessary, and just try to get back on to a normal life again," Mark Bishop said.

TOXIC GASES

Mark Figley bought his four-bedroom Leilani Estates home in 2016. A retired engineer who moved to Hawaii from Alaska, he envisioned spending his golden years working in his woodshop and fixing up old cars.

Now, he said, the large craftsman-style home with vaulted ceilings and meticulously designed details is a complete loss — even though it was spared when the lava stopped in the front yard.

Gases and debris from a string of eruptions across the street did extensive damage to his home. But that's not the reason he had to buy a new house while continuing to pay the \$500,000 mortgage on his now-empty dream home.

"The main reason I can't live here is because of air quality," he said.

The prevailing winds bring the volcanic gases toward his Leilani Estates house, which sits in a small valley where the fumes accumulate and build up in his home.

"If I'm in there for 15 minutes, I will have a bad headache," Figley said. "It's not a livable circumstance for me."

So, for now, the home on the edge of a lava flow remains vacant as Figley settles into his new Big Island home, a little farther from Kilauea volcano.

Follow Associated Press correspondent Caleb Jones on Instagram and Twitter: @CalebAP

Trump discusses 'Russian Hoax' in long call with Putin

By JILL COLVIN and DEB RIECHMANN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump and Russia's Vladimir Putin discussed what Trump again dismissed as the "Russian Hoax" in their first known phone call since the release of special counsel Robert Mueller's report on Russia's extensive meddling during the 2016 election campaign. Putin chuckled about Mueller's conclusions, Trump said.

During their conversation on Friday, which the White House and Kremlin said lasted more than an hour, they also discussed a possible three-party arms control pact with China, North Korea's nuclear weapons program, Ukraine and the crisis in Venezuela, where Moscow is propping up the current government over the U.S.-backed opposition.

"We had a good conversation about many things," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office.

Trump said the two leaders were considering a new nuclear agreement "where we make less and they make less. And maybe even where we get rid of some of the tremendous firepower that we have right now." He said they had discussed the possibility of including China in the deal and that China would "very much would like to be a part of" it.

But more interesting, perhaps, was what was left unsaid.

Trump said that, at no point, did he warn Putin not to meddle in the next election. And while he and Putin did discuss Mueller's findings, they appeared to gloss over Mueller's description of the extensive efforts Russia took to interfere in the 2016 election, including the 25 Russians indicted for that effort.

"We discussed it," Trump said of the report. "He actually sort of smiled when he said something to the effect that, 'It started off as a mountain and it ended up being a mouse,'" Trump said of Putin. "But he knew that because he knew there was no collusion whatsoever. So pretty much that's what it was."

Trump has repeatedly declined to publicly rebuff Putin for the 2016 operation. And their latest conversation suggests that Mueller's findings have done little to persuade Trump of the gravity of the threat of foreign election interference or derail his efforts to forge a closer relationship with Putin.

White House press secretary Sarah Sanders later said Trump didn't tell Putin not to meddle in the 2020 election because he's made that clear in the past. "He doesn't need to do that every two seconds," she said.

Mueller's report concluded that Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election was "sweeping and systematic." Ultimately, Mueller's investigators did not find a criminal conspiracy between Russia and the Trump campaign, but they found multiple contacts. Indeed, the report concluded that "the Russian government perceived it would benefit from a Trump presidency and worked to secure that outcome, and that the Campaign expected it would benefit electorally from information stolen and released through Russian efforts."

Trump has focused only on Mueller's top-line conclusions, hailing the lack of evidence of a conspiracy as a political win.

Trump tweeted after the call that the two had discussed the "Russian Hoax" among other topics.

"As I have always said, long before the Witch Hunt started, getting along with Russia, China, and everyone is a good thing, not a bad thing," he wrote.

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer slammed Trump for failing to press Putin on the report's "extensive evidence that Russia hacked our elections," saying: "Trump's priorities are appalling and undermine democracy."

Trump said he and Putin had instead focused on other topics, including the possibility of the new nuclear arms deal between the U.S., Russia and China. He said U.S. officials had broached the idea with the Chinese during ongoing trade talks and that China was "excited about that, maybe even more excited than about trade." Discussions on a new nuclear deal, he said, would likely begin shortly between the U.S. and Russia, with China potentially added "down the road."

Trump did not say which arms control agreement he and Putin had discussed, but the Russian state news agency Tass reported that they talked about the New START treaty, the last major arms-control treaty remaining between the U.S. and Russia.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 43 of 59

The treaty, which was signed in 2010 and expires in 2021, restricts both the U.S. and Russia to 1,550 deployed strategic nuclear warheads on a maximum of 700 deployed intercontinental ballistic missiles and strategic bombers.

"There was a discussion about having — extending the current nuclear agreement — as well as discussions about potentially starting a new one that could include China as well," Sanders said.

Trump earlier this year announced that he was pulling the U.S. out of the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty, or INF, a decades-old nuclear arms treaty with Russia. Trump accused Moscow of violating its terms with "impunity" by deploying missiles banned by the pact. Moscow denies violating it and has accused Washington of being in non-compliance.

Trump's decision to exit the INF treaty reflected his administration's view that it was an unacceptable obstacle to more forcefully confronting not only Russia but also China. China's military has grown mightily since that treaty was signed, and the pact had prevented the U.S. from deploying weapons to counter some of those being developed by Beijing.

"The world has moved on from the Cold War and its bilateral arms control treaties that cover limited types of nuclear weapons or only certain ranges of adversary missiles," national security adviser John Bolton told The Associated Press last week. "Russia and China must be brought to the table."

A Kremlin readout of the call said the two presidents confirmed their mutual desire "to intensify dialogue in various fields, including on issues of strategic stability," but gave no details about a possible arms deal.

Trump said the two also spoke extensively about North Korea's nuclear weapons program. North Korean leader Kim Jong Un traveled to Russia last week to meet with Putin. Sanders said Trump said several times that it was important for Russia to continue to help put pressure on North Korea to denuclearize.

The statement released by the Kremlin after Friday's call said Putin stressed that "Pyongyang's conscientious fulfillment of its obligations should be accompanied by reciprocal steps to reduce sanctions pressure on North Korea."

On Venezuela, Trump insisted that Putin "is not looking at all to get involved in Venezuela, other than he'd like to see something positive happen for Venezuela." That's despite the fact that Russia has forged a political, military and economic alliance with Venezuela over many years and is helping to support President Nicolas Maduro's embattled government.

The U.S. and about 50 other nations take the position that Maduro's re-election last year was irrevocably marred by fraud and he is not the legitimate president. In January, the administration took the unusual step of recognizing Juan Guaido, the opposition leader of the National Assembly, as interim president.

The Kremlin said that during the call, Putin stressed that only the Venezuelan people have the right to determine the future of their country. The statement said that outside interference in internal affairs and attempts at forceful regime change in Caracas undermine the prospects for a political settlement of the crisis.

Associated Press writers Kevin Freking and Lynn Berry contributed to this report.

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

Judges declare Ohio's congressional map unconstitutional

By DAN SEWELL Associated Press

CINCINNATI (AP) — A panel of federal judges ruled Friday that Ohio's congressional districts were unconstitutionally drawn by the Republicans for their political advantage, and it ordered a new map for the 2020 elections.

The ruling, if it stands, could prove an important victory for the Democrats, who are hoping redrawn boundaries will not only help them pick up House seats but also energize voters and boost turnout in this longtime battleground state, helping them defeat President Donald Trump. Republican officials said they

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 44 of 59

would appeal.

The panel unanimously declared the current map an "unconstitutional partisan gerrymander," saying the GOP-controlled Ohio Legislature put the Democrats at a disadvantage by packing lots of them into four districts and scattering the rest across the remaining 12.

"Democratic candidates must run a significantly longer distance to get to the same finish line," the judges wrote in a 301-page ruling.

The Republicans hold a 12-4 advantage in Ohio's congressional delegation under the current map, which went into effect for the 2012 elections.

The Supreme Court is already considering a gerrymandering case that could lead to a major decision on how far politicians can go in drawing districts. It involves challenges to congressional maps in North Carolina, drawn by Republicans, and Maryland, created by Democrats.

Republican Attorney General Dave Yost said he will seek to stay the court order while appealing to the U.S. Supreme Court. He also said Ohioans have already approved mapmaking reforms that will be in effect for redistricting after the 2020 census.

He called the opinion "a fundamentally political act that has no basis whatsoever in the Constitution."

Some Democrats have said that after years of lopsided congressional races, newly competitive districts could generate voter excitement in a state that Trump won in 2016 after Barack Obama carried it twice. And that, in turn, could influence the White House race.

"That could very well change the turnout for the presidential race," said Ohio Democratic Party chairman David Pepper said. "It's a bad day for Republicans in Washington, and it's a bad day for Donald Trump."

The Republican Party state chairwoman called the challenge to the map "a partisan political ploy."

"When Democrats can't win at the ballot box, they try to change the rules," Jane Timken said.

The judges — two nominated by Democratic presidents, one by a Republican — ordered a proposed new map by June 14. They heard arguments in U.S. District Court in Cincinnati in March.

Voters' rights and Democratic groups had sued Ohio Republican officials, saying redistricting after the 2010 census yielded a map that has produced an impenetrable GOP advantage. Among the examples cited was Cincinnati, a Democrat-dominated city split into two districts, both held by Republicans.

Another example was Ohio's 9th Congressional District, which stretches in a long skinny line along Lake Erie and has been dubbed "the Snake on the Lake." The judges described it as "a bizarre, elongated sliver of a district that severed numerous counties."

Attorneys for the Republicans said the map was drawn with bipartisan support. Before it took effect, the GOP held a 13-5 advantage in Ohio's congressional delegation. (Each party later lost one seat when the state's representation in Congress was reduced because of population shifts.)

"This is called democracy in action," said GOP attorney Phil Strach, adding that both parties supported "incumbency protection" — or making it more likely an incumbent will win — because that benefits all Ohioans by giving their delegation more clout in Washington.

In a case similar to Ohio's, a three-judge panel ruled last week that Michigan's congressional and legislative maps were unconstitutionally gerrymandered, and ordered the state Legislature to redraw some districts for 2020. The judges wrote that the GOP created districts in 2011 with the goal of ensuring "durable majorities" for Republicans. Republicans have appealed that ruling.

The lawsuit challenging Ohio's map called it "one of the most egregious gerrymanders in recent history," one that has reliably done its job by allowing the GOP to capture 75% of the seats by winning a little more than half the state's votes.

The longest-serving woman in House history was among the plaintiffs' witnesses. Nineteen-term Rep. Marcy Kaptur of Toledo said her district, the elongated 9th, was "hacked apart," forcing her into a Democratic primary with veteran Rep. Dennis Kucinich of Cleveland in 2012. She won, knocking him out of Congress.

___ Associated Press writer Julie Carr Smyth in Columbus contributed to this report.

___ Follow Dan Sewell at <https://www.twitter.com/dansewell>

___ This story has been corrected to show the judges ordered a new proposed map by June 14, not June 20.

Pushing off impeachment, Democrats find unity attacking Barr

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democrats are splintered by calls to impeach President Donald Trump. But they have found another common enemy and an alternate political foil in Attorney General William Barr.

Calls for Barr's resignation erupted across the Democratic Party this week after he testified before the Senate and rebuffed the House twice, first by denying Democrats a full, unredacted version of special counsel Robert Mueller's report, and then by skipping a hearing to review it. In response, Democrats threatened to hold Barr in criminal contempt of Congress — a lengthy legal process that could go on for months.

The feud with Barr has animated Democrats and temporarily shifted attention away from impeachment — and by extension, the party's divisions over whether to pursue it. But with Trump resisting other congressional investigations, and testimony from Mueller likely on the horizon, the impeachment question seems unlikely to subside for long.

For now, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler, who would lead impeachment proceedings, are putting their emphasis on investigating Trump, his business dealings and his administration. If Democrats do decide to impeach the president, they will have already made part of the case through oversight. Trump's refusal to comply with their requests — with Barr just the latest example — will only strengthen the case.

"Impeachment is never off the table, but should we start there? I don't agree with that," Pelosi said Friday at an event in Medford, Massachusetts.

Pelosi hasn't held back in her criticism of Barr, accusing him of committing a crime by lying to Congress about his communications with Mueller. Justice Department spokeswoman Kerri Kupec called Pelosi's accusation "reckless, irresponsible and false."

Other members of Pelosi's caucus are going after the attorney general in even stronger terms.

"This is serious misconduct, this is a serious effort by the administration to prevent Congress from doing its oversight, and in fact could form the basis by itself of articles of impeachment," said Rhode Island Rep. David Cicilline, a member of the Judiciary panel, after Barr skipped the hearing Thursday.

Republicans say the Democrats are focusing on Barr as a substitute for impeachment, to avoid the political backlash that would come with official proceedings against Trump.

Nadler "can't try to pacify his liberal base by pretending to do impeachment without actually taking the plunge," said Georgia Rep. Doug Collins, the top Republican on the Judiciary panel.

Rep. Matt Gaetz, R-Fla., called the strategy "impeachment in drag."

The Barr saga appears destined to end up in court. Nadler threatened Friday to hold Barr in contempt if he did not comply with a final request to turn over the Mueller report and the relevant investigative materials. The Justice Department is unlikely to comply, likely prompting a vote of contempt in committee and then the full House.

"The committee is prepared to make every realistic effort to reach an accommodation with the department," Nadler wrote to Barr. "But if the department persists in its baseless refusal to comply with a validly issued subpoena, the committee will move to contempt proceedings and seek further legal recourse."

The Justice Department declined to comment on Nadler's latest threat of contempt. But White House press secretary Sarah Sanders told reporters that she believes "at no point will it ever be enough" for Democrats.

While a contempt vote would send a message, it wouldn't force the Justice Department to hand over the report. Nor would it guarantee criminal charges against Barr: House approval of the contempt citation would send a criminal referral to the U.S. attorney for the District of Columbia, a Justice Department official who is likely to defend the attorney general.

But if the U.S. attorney declines to prosecute, Democrats have other methods to force compliance with witnesses, like hefty fines for witnesses who fail to appear.

Even as Democrats struggle with Barr, they are in hot pursuit of Mueller's testimony. Nadler said the

panel was "firming up the date" for Mueller's testimony and hoped it would be May 15. Trump signaled he won't try to stop it. During a brief Oval Office session with reporters Friday, Trump deferred to Barr, saying, "I don't know. That's up to the attorney general, who I think has done a fantastic job."

It's possible that Barr could block Mueller from appearing, since the special counsel is still a Justice Department employee. But Barr has said he has no objection to Mueller testifying.

On the other side of the Capitol, Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., says he doesn't need Mueller to testify to his panel. But he is willing to hear Mueller out on one, narrow matter. On Friday, he offered to let Mueller provide testimony "if you would like" as to whether he felt Barr misrepresented Mueller's views at the Senate hearing.

Barr testified Wednesday that Mueller didn't challenge the accuracy of his memo summarizing the principal conclusions of the special counsel's report, including when they spoke on the phone. Barr made that assertion despite a letter he received in March from Mueller complaining Barr's summary didn't fully capture the "context, nature and substance" of his nearly 400-page report.

Graham invited Mueller to provide testimony "regarding any misrepresentation by the attorney general of the substance of that phone call." He did not specify whether he wanted Mueller to appear in person.

Associated Press writers Eric Tucker, Jill Colvin and Laurie Kellman in Washington and Steve LeBlanc in Medford, Massachusetts, contributed to this report.

Minneapolis to pay \$20M to family of 911 caller slain by cop

By AMY FORLITI Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Minneapolis will pay \$20 million to the family of an unarmed woman shot by a police officer after she called 911 to report a possible crime, city leaders announced Friday — a move that comes just three days after the former officer was convicted of murder.

The settlement reached with the family of Justine Rusczyk Damond, a dual citizen of the U.S. and Australia, is believed to be the largest stemming from police violence in the state of Minnesota. It's believed that Mohamed Noor is the first Minnesota officer to be convicted of murder for an on-duty shooting.

Asked about the amount and speed of the settlement, Mayor Jacob Frey cited Noor's unprecedented conviction, as well as the officer's failure to identify a threat before he used deadly force.

"This is not a victory for anyone, but rather a way for our city to move forward," he said. "I do believe that we will move forward together, united in the shared belief that such a tragedy should never occur in our city."

Bob Bennett, an attorney for Damond's family in Australia, called the settlement amount "transformational" and said it "serves as a marker for future transgressions."

Damond, a dual citizen of the U.S. and Australia, had called 911 late on the night of July 15, 2017, to summon officers to a possible rape in the alley behind her house. Noor and his partner were driving down the alley in a police SUV when they say they were startled by a loud bang on the vehicle. Noor testified that he fired to protect them from a perceived threat, after he saw his partner's terrified reaction, and saw a woman appear at the driver's side window, raising her right arm.

Bennett said Noor's own testimony appeared to doom any defense of a civil claim.

"He didn't see a threat," Bennett said.

Jurors on Tuesday found Noor guilty of third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter. They deliberated for about 11½ hours after hearing three weeks of testimony.

Damond's family had filed a lawsuit against the city and police leaders seeking more than \$50 million, alleging her civil rights were violated.

The settlement, which will be paid by the city's self-insurance fund, calls for Damond's family to donate \$2 million to a local foundation's fund aimed at addressing gun violence. City leaders commended the family for addressing the broader issue of police violence, particularly affecting communities of color.

The settlement still needs a judge's approval, but Bennett said he anticipates that will happen.

The death of Damond, 40, came a month before she was due to marry. Noor, 33, who had trained to become a police officer in a mid-career switch, was fired after he was charged.

He is in custody awaiting sentencing in June. Sentencing guidelines call for as many as 15 years in prison on the murder charge, though judges can depart from the guidelines.

Prosecutors criticized Noor for shooting without seeing a weapon or Damond's hands. They also questioned whether the loud bang was real. Neither Noor nor his partner, Matthew Harrity, mentioned it to investigators at the scene, with Harrity first mentioning it three days later in an interview with state investigators. Noor refused to talk to investigators.

Damond's death angered and bewildered citizens in the U.S. and Australia, and led to the resignation of Minneapolis' police chief. It also led the department to change its policy on body cameras.

The fatal shooting and verdict were fraught with the issue of race. Damond was white, and Noor is Somali American, leading some in the community to question whether the case was treated the same as police shootings involving black victims.

Frey said he understands frustrations of those who feel that they have been denied justice, but said the circumstances of each civil case is different. Bennett said he doesn't believe race played a factor in the size or speed of this settlement.

Follow Amy Forliti on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/amyforliti>

Check out the AP's complete coverage of Mohamed Noor's trial.

Baltimore shifts to new political era after mayor resigns

By DAVID McFADDEN Associated Press

BALTIMORE (AP) — Baltimore's new mayor has vowed to clean up the city after being thrust into office by his predecessor's resignation amid corruption investigations, but he inherits serious, longstanding problems that have plagued previous administrations.

Bernard "Jack" Young, a longtime leader of the City Council, says he intends to serve only the remainder of former Mayor Catherine Pugh's term and has no interest in running for mayor in 2020. If the Democrat doesn't change his mind, his tenure would last just 1 ½ years.

"I wish him good luck, but I'm reserving my full support because he seems apprehensive about being the mayor in the first place," said Clayton "Mr. C" Guyton, a respected community organizer featured in "Charm City," a recent documentary about Baltimore shot amid its ongoing scourge of intense violence.

Young had been Baltimore's interim leader since April 2, when Pugh departed on an indefinite leave for what her lawyer has said was poor health after a bout of pneumonia. Pugh stepped down a month later, mired in a scandal that's put her in the crosshairs of federal, state and city investigators trying to unravel the murky financial arrangements of her self-published children's books.

"Baltimore deserves a mayor who can move our great city forward," Pugh said in a written statement read by her lawyer, Steven Silverman.

After the upheaval, Baltimore residents say they hope Young might at least continue to be a steady hand. The East Baltimore native was first elected to the City Council in 1996.

"I'm just hoping he's got a better understanding of how to fix stuff. The city is a mess, and we need all kinds of change," Mark Jones said outside his East Baltimore barber shop.

After Pugh's stunning collapse Thursday, Baltimore city employees pulled down her portraits and updated websites as the city shifts into a new era under Young.

In a phone interview, Young told The Associated Press he's ready to make changes and is focused on reducing one of the country's highest rates of violent crime and tidying up the city's streets. He aims to bring more investments and jobs, particularly to its most deeply disenfranchised neighborhoods.

"I'm determined to make a dent. I'm not a placeholder — I'm the mayor now. And I'm going to run the city like the mayor," Young said from Detroit, where's he's attending a conference about economic devel-

opment before his return to Baltimore over the weekend.

Even in a city accustomed to turmoil, Pugh's rapid unraveling was stunning.

In late March, during a brief stint back at City Hall after being diagnosed with pneumonia, Pugh described her no-contract \$500,000 arrangement to sell her "Healthy Holly" books to a university-based health care system as a "regrettable mistake" and offered apologies. A few days later, she announced her indefinite leave of absence hours after the state's governor requested a public corruption investigation into Pugh.

Other customers included a Maryland financier who divulged that his financial firm decided to write a \$100,000 check for "Health Holly" books after she clinched the 2016 Democratic primary. He insisted he expected nothing in return. She also sold tens of thousands of books to customers including a \$4 billion hospital network she once helped oversee and health carriers with business before the city.

Pugh's resignation came exactly a week after her offices, homes and multiple other locations were raided by FBI and IRS agents and it became clear that a federal grand jury has been empaneled.

She is the second Baltimore mayor in less than a decade to step down because of scandal. She came to office contrasting her clean image with her main opponent, former Mayor Sheila Dixon, who was forced to depart office in 2010 as part of a plea deal for misappropriating about \$500 in gift cards meant for needy families.

Since the book scandal erupted, Pugh's fractured administration has lurched from one crisis to another and various aides have been fired or left City Hall. Young declined to say if more Pugh-era employees would soon be fired for any reason.

The Rev. Douglas Miles, co-chairman of the prominent BUILD advocacy group, is hopeful Pugh's "Healthy Holly" saga offers Baltimore an opportunity to get serious about bringing real change. He argues that the last time the city had a clear vision or strategy that transcended a single political leader was the redevelopment of the Inner Harbor in the 1970s and '80s.

"We can no longer operate as two Baltimores. There has to be one Baltimore with one common vision, with strategies designed to make that vision reality. Anything less than that, in three years we'll be right back where we are now with another hiccup giving the city a black eye," he said.

After the mess left by Pugh, a Democrat, the Maryland Republican Party believes it might have a better shot in Maryland's biggest city, where the Democratic nomination has long been as good as being elected.

"Baltimore City has been hampered by one-party rule for far too long. ... We look forward to presenting an alternative to the status quo next year," Chairman Dirk Haire said Friday.

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'Hell no:' Defiant Semenya wins, says she won't take drugs

By GERALD IMRAY AP Sports Writer

Caster Semenya was defiant in every way at what very well could be her last 800 meter race.

Her raised fist at the start. Her unstoppable victory. And with her reply Friday to the big question of whether she will now submit to new testosterone regulations in track and field and take hormone-reducing medication.

"Hell no," the Olympic champion from South Africa said.

Semenya responded to her defeat in a landmark court case against track and field's governing body two days earlier with a resounding win in a place where she's done nothing but win the last four years — over two laps of the track.

She won the 800 meters at the opening Diamond League meeting of the season in Doha, Qatar, with a meet record of 1 minute, 54.98 seconds. It was her fourth-fastest time ever. The only person ahead of her at any time during the race was the pacemaker.

Semenya's nearest challenger, the Olympic silver medalist Francine Niyonsaba, was nearly three seconds and about 20 meters behind her — barely in the picture. Ajee Wilson of the United States was third.

It was Semenya's first 800 meter race this year and first since losing her case against the IAAF this week.

"Actions speak louder than words," Semenya told the BBC. "When you are a great champion, you always deliver."

But Semenya's four-year dominance over two laps — Friday's win was her 30th straight in the 800 continuing a run that started in late 2015 — may now be at an end.

Ended not by another competitor, but by new regulations set to come into effect Wednesday. They require the South African star and other female athletes with high levels of natural testosterone to medically lower them to be eligible to compete in events ranging from 400 meters to the mile.

Semenya failed to overturn those rules in her appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

Now, her career appears to be at a crossroads: Does she take medication to lower her testosterone? The medication will likely inhibit her athletic performance and could blunt her dominance. Or does she switch events and run in long-distance races not affected by the regulations?

She was emphatic when she told reporters after Friday's race that she wouldn't take the medication.

"That's an illegal method," she said.

But Semenya also didn't give a clear idea of what she would do next. She said she wouldn't move up to the 5,000 meters and she definitely wouldn't retire.

"God has decided my career, God will end my career," she said in the BBC interview. "No man, or any other human, can stop me from running. How am I going to retire when I'm 28? I still feel young, energetic. I still have 10 years or more in athletics.

"It doesn't matter how I'm going to do it. What matters is I'll still be here. I am never going anywhere."

Semenya's comments may foreshadow an appeal against the CAS ruling, aimed first at allowing Semenya to defend her 800 title at the world championships, also in Doha, in September and October while not taking the hormone-suppressing drugs.

But, if she keeps her promise not to lower her testosterone, there is a chance that Friday was the last time that Semenya runs in the 800, where she is a double Olympic and a three-time world champion, and arguably the best female athlete to run the distance in 40 years.

Her career, however, seems destined to be overshadowed by the testosterone debate, which has the potential for implications far beyond her own results.

Semenya gave away little on the track to indicate it might be her last race at the distance. She raised her right fist when announcers introduced her before the race.

She was presented with a bunch of flowers and tossed them to the crowd at the end. She then gave a thumbs-up to fans, flashed a brief smile, and walked off the track.

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Ebola outbreak deaths top 1,000 in Congo amid clinic attacks

By SALEH MWANAMILONGO and KRISTA LARSON Associated Press

KINSHASA, Congo (AP) — More than 1,000 people have died from Ebola in eastern Congo since August, the country's health minister said Friday as hostility toward health workers continues to hamper efforts to contain the second-deadliest outbreak of the virus.

Health Minister Oly Ilunga told The Associated Press that four deaths in the outbreak's epicenter of Katwa helped push the death toll to 1,008. Two more deaths were reported in the city of Butembo.

The outbreak declared almost nine months ago already had caused the most deaths behind the 2014-2016 outbreak in West Africa's Guinea, Sierra Leone and Liberia that killed more than 11,000 people.

A volatile security situation and deep community mistrust have hampered efforts to control the epidemic in eastern Congo. Ebola treatment centers have come under repeated attack, leaving government health officials to staff clinics in the hotspots of Butembo and Katwa.

International aid organizations stopped their work in the two communities because of the violence. A Cameroonian epidemiologist working with WHO was killed last month during an assault on a hospital in Butembo.

Insecurity has become a "major impediment" to controlling the Ebola outbreak, Michael Ryan, WHO's health emergencies chief, told reporters in Geneva earlier Friday.

He said 119 attacks have been recorded since January, 42 of them directed at health facilities, while 85 health workers have been wounded or killed. Dozens of rebel groups operate in the region, and political rivalries in part drive's community rejection of health personnel.

"Every time we have managed to regain control over the virus and contain its spread, we have suffered major, major security events," Ryan said. "We are anticipating a scenario of continued intense transmission" of the disease.

WHO has said the most recent Ebola outbreak remained contained to eastern Congo even as the number of cases rises in a dense, highly mobile population near the border with Uganda and Rwanda.

Many people fear going to Ebola treatment centers, choosing instead to stay at home and risk transmitting the disease from the virus to caretakers and neighbors.

Residents of highly volatile Butembo believe Ebola was brought to the city on purpose, said Vianney Musavuli, 24.

"I am deeply saddened to learn that the number of Ebola deaths has exceeded 1,000," Musavuli said "The problem is that people here in this area believe Ebola is a political thing, and that's why residents are still attacking the teams in retaliation."

Area residents were blocked from taking part in a January presidential election, with Congo's government citing safety concerns. Some wonder why money is poured into fighting Ebola when many more people die each year of malaria and other preventable diseases.

Insecurity also has prevented vaccination teams from getting to some areas, further limiting the health response. Still, more than 109,000 people have received an experimental but effective Ebola vaccine. Ryan said authorities are looking at introducing another one.

He called for more help from Congo and elsewhere to close an "urgent, critical gap" of some \$54 million in containment funding.

Larson reported from Dakar, Senegal. Associated Press writers Jamey Keaten in Geneva and Al-hadji Kudra Maliro in Kampala, Uganda contributed to this report.

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Tony nominee Sarah Stiles puts puppets aside for 'Tootsie'

By MARK KENNEDY AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Some records on Broadway are bound to fall one day and others are surely safe for all time. Sarah Stiles has one that's hard to top.

"I've had puppet sex on Broadway twice," she says. "I think that is like a record or something."

Indeed, the actress who just earned her second Tony nomination has had a hand in some rather intimate and fuzzy encounters during a career that's taken her from Broadway musicals to dramas and now TV in "Billions" and "Get Shorty."

She made her Broadway debut as Kate Monster in "Avenue Q" and later earned a Tony nod when her slinky puppet Jolene seduced a demonic one in "Hand to God." Add to that a credit as a puppeteer while touring with Tommy Tune in "Dr. Dolittle" and it's natural to ask about this weird, recurring theme.

Don't ask Stiles for answers, who doesn't have formal puppet training up her sleeve. "I never had any interest in puppets. But they keep coming to me," she says, laughing.

Stiles has put childish things away for her latest Broadway show, a Tony-nominated musical adaptation of the 1982 film "Tootsie," about a struggling actor who impersonated a woman in order to improve his chances of getting a job. There's some discreet sex but no puppets.

Stiles plays Sandy Lester, the actress ex-girlfriend of the gender-switching hero, Michael Dorsey, played in the film by Dustin Hoffman. Sandy is described as an "open bar of emotions," someone who fakes that

she's choking just so someone will hold her.

In the musical, a character suggests she try a therapist, to which she replies: "I tried. I just didn't think a therapist should say 'wow' that many times during a first session." On Tuesday, Stiles earned a Tony nod for playing Sandy, which includes delivering the hysterically manic song "What's Gonna Happen."

"She's allowed to go from zero to 100 in a second. Being able to play with that kind of range, is really, really fun," Stiles says. "She's a little spinning top."

The comedy modernizes the problematic 1982 film source by embracing the #MeToo movement and cheering the push for equality between the sexes. It's a woke "Tootsie" and Stiles is happy to be part of it.

"The movie was released 37 years ago so things have changed a lot and we have to speak to our audience today and our audience day would not be OK with some of the things that happened in the film. We've really brought it up to date."

As a sign of how far Stiles has come, she didn't need to audition for the role. Director Scott Ellis met her at a reading for another project and instantly knew she'd be perfect in "Tootsie."

"I just loved her. I thought, 'Oh, this woman can just take stuff and look at it in a very different way than what is expected.' I just fell in love with her," he says. On his next reading of "Tootsie," he asked if Stiles was available. She was, read the part and, at the end, he hugged her and simply offered her the role.

She may not have to audition nowadays, but Stiles is able to channel an earlier time as a struggling actress to play Sandy. To earn money, she played an elf at Macy's, was a baby-sitter and knitted caps. "I made rent a couple of months doing that during Christmastime," she says.

Stiles, who grew up in New England, remembers when a life in the theater beckoned. It was during a performance of "Les Miserables" in Boston. She was either in fifth or sixth grade.

"I sat on the edge of my seat and held my breath the whole time. So much so that I gave myself this horrifying cramp situation because I was on the edge. I just couldn't believe what was happening in front of my eyes."

Somehow, she'll continue playing Sandy while also juggling her commitments to the third season of "Get Shorty" on Epix and "Billions" on Showtime, whose fourth season is unspooling now. Thankfully, she's a power napper.

"I can sleep anywhere," she says. "I'll sleep for 10 minutes before I go back to my next thing. It's that kind of thing. I love working. I want to just keep going. I can't say no. I just love it. It's life."

Mark Kennedy is at <http://twitter.com/KennedyTwits>

Singing in the rain? Baffert eyes history, wet Derby on tap

By BETH HARRIS AP Racing Writer

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Bob Baffert times three. In a Kentucky Derby lacking a dominant favorite, the two-time Triple Crown-winning trainer saddles the top three choices.

On what could be a wet day at Churchill Downs, Game Winner is the pre-race favorite, albeit a tepid one at 9-2. Improbable and Roadster were installed as the co-second choices at 5-1.

"Last year we came in here with Justify and we knew it was my race to lose," Baffert said.

The 19-horse field for the 145th Derby on Saturday reflects the prep season leading to the opening leg of the Triple Crown: no one horse commanded the attention.

"There are a lot of good horses in here," Baffert said. "They're a pretty evenly matched group."

The picture got scrambled again when initial favorite Omaha Beach was scratched because of a breathing problem, dealing a devastating blow to 68-year-old trainer Richard Mandella, whose Hall of Fame resume lacks only a Derby victory.

That prompted the early odds to be redone. The race also lost 30-1 shot Haikal after the colt was scratched with an infected left front foot.

"This is a crazy game and anything can happen," said Bret Calhoun, who trains By My Standards. "We just have to hold our breaths until we get there."

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 52 of 59

War of Will benefited slightly from Haikal's scratch. He won't have to start in the No. 1 post, which will be left vacant. The field will break from posts 2 through 20.

A win by any of Baffert's trio would tie him with Ben Jones for the most Derby victories with six. He would become the first trainer to win the race in consecutive years twice. His last back-to-back winners were in 1997 and '98.

Baffert won last year's Derby — the rainiest on record — with Justify. Saturday's forecast calls for a 90 percent chance of rain and a high of 66 degrees (18 Celsius).

It sure looks like anybody's soggy race this time.

"It's whoever gets the trip," Baffert said of the 1 ¼-mile journey. "Especially now that it's going to rain, we don't know what is going to happen. It's too bad the weather is not going to work with us."

Game Winner finished second to Roadster in the Santa Anita Derby. Roadster's only loss in four career starts was to Game Winner. Improbable went 3-0 last year, including a win on the Churchill Downs dirt, and finished second in this year's Arkansas Derby.

A victory by any of the four California-based horses would surely boost the struggling industry in the state, where a spate of 23 horse deaths over three months at Santa Anita triggered a raft of medication and safety rules changes that are affecting the rest of the sport.

Every horse in the Derby, except Japan-bred Master Fencer, will run on Lasix, the anti-bleeding medication allowed on race day in the U.S. Churchill Downs and the other Triple Crown tracks announced recently the drug will be banned starting in 2021.

Game Winner's breeding suggests a sloppy track would appeal to him, although he's never raced on one. Neither has Code of Honor, Roadster, Tax and Vekoma.

Horses that are 1-for-1 on off-tracks are: Master Fencer, Maximum Security, Spinoff, Tacitus and War of Will.

Those with one or two losses on such tracks are: Bodexpress, By My Standards, Country House, Cutting Humor, Gray Magician, Improbable, Long Range Toddy, Plus Que Parfait and Win Win Win.

Baffert touted undefeated Florida Derby winner Maximum Security as the horse that should be the favorite. "He's a horse that nobody is talking about and that's a horse that I'm worried about," he said. "He's run faster than we have."

Gary and Mary West have two shots to win their first Derby since they own both Game Winner and Maximum Security.

The other trainers besides Baffert with multiple starters are Bill Mott and Todd Pletcher.

Mott, the second winningest trainer all-time at Churchill Downs, saddles Tacitus and Country House in pursuit of his first Derby win in a Hall of Fame career.

Pletcher has gone under the radar with a couple of 30-1 shots: Cutting Humor and Spinoff.

Master Fencer is one of two 50-1 shots and the first Japan-bred horse to run in the Derby. He's never run in a Grade 1 race and got in when three other horses ahead of him on the Japan Road to the Kentucky Derby leaderboard weren't nominated to the Triple Crown.

Keep an eye on Cutting Humor, if for no other reason than the 30-1 shot's new rider is Mike Smith. The Hall of Famer picked up the mount Friday after his original Derby horse, Omaha Beach, was scratched. Smith won his first Derby aboard 50-1 shot Giacomo in 2005. He and Justify began their Triple Crown sweep last year with a win in the Derby.

Post time is 6:50 p.m. EDT.

More AP sports: <https://apnews.com/tag/apf-sports> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Government to house more immigrants in tents at the border

By CEDAR ATTANASIO and NOMAAN MERCHANT Associated Press

EL PASO, Texas (AP) — About 50 asylum seekers stood this week in a circle near a bridge between the U.S. and Mexico to hear an American attorney explain what would happen to them when they entered

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 53 of 59

U.S. custody.

The attorney, Jodi Goodwin, told them they would probably end up at one of the Border Patrol's smaller stations, which migrants call "la hielera" — Spanish for icebox because of their cold temperatures.

Goodwin advised them to wear their heaviest clothing or borrow clothes from someone else, and to eat a hearty meal before crossing the bridge. In a carrying voice, she repeated in Spanish, "Eat well and dress well."

The advice reflects reality on the border, where a lack of space means some immigrants must sleep on floors in Border Patrol stations, while others are held in military-style tents in El Paso. The government will soon open two more that could start taking immigrants Thursday.

The newest tent cities — in El Paso and in the Rio Grande Valley — will hold 1,000 parents and families, expanding the Border Patrol's capacity to hold and process the surge of immigrants who have arrived in recent months and overwhelmed authorities. The capacity could be expanded at some point.

"I hope it's enough," said Carmen Qualia, executive officer for the Border Patrol's Rio Grande Valley sector. "We don't know what we don't know."

The tents will offer bathrooms, recreation areas and sleeping quarters that are divided by gender and by families and children traveling alone. Detainees will sleep on mats.

The tent complex in Donna, Texas, is split into four pods, each labeled a different color. In each pod, a private security guard stands watch. Gray sleeping mats are stacked on one side, and portable toilets and sinks are lined up on another. The air conditioning system keeps each pod at a comfortable temperature, but emits a constant humming that can make it hard to hear.

The tents are set to operate through the end of the year, at a cost of as much as \$37 million. A contractor in Rome, New York, obtained the bid to build the tents, which the government calls "soft-sided" shelters.

The Border Patrol's El Paso sector has become the epicenter of the influx of immigrant families from Central America.

On Tuesday alone, agents arrested around 1,100 migrants in the El Paso sector, including 424 who crossed in Sunland Park, New Mexico, according to Border Patrol spokesman Ramiro Cordero. In March alone, the agency apprehended more than 100,000 immigrants, including 53,000 family members.

The situation has drawn agents away from their traditional duties of patrolling the border and forced Immigration and Customs Enforcement to refuse to hold immigrants because it does not have enough detention space. ICE is dropping large groups of immigrants at bus stations and cities, including Phoenix, San Antonio, Texas, and Albuquerque, New Mexico.

But before the immigrants are handed over to ICE or released, the Border Patrol must process them, and the agency is struggling to keep up.

In recent weeks, immigrants have been forced to sleep in hastily constructed tents on top of gravel under a bridge in El Paso. Critics decried the conditions as inhumane and corroborated accounts of migrants who said that they were held too long and did not have access to bedding while sleeping in the cold.

"For far too long, El Paso - America's new Ellis Island, has lacked adequate temporary processing facilities to address the increase in the number of asylum-seeking families arriving at our doorstep," said El Paso Rep. Veronica Escobar, who took fellow Democrats on tours of the bridge setting.

To some critics, the new tents in El Paso and Donna, Texas, are an improvement.

Besides providing extra space, the tents also offer a better setting for agents to process immigrants. The data entry at Border Patrol processing centers can take one to two hours per migrant, as agents enter names, take fingerprints and run background checks. Agents also record the addresses where migrants will live in the U.S., and emergency medical technicians perform cursory health screenings.

In March, the Border Patrol closed down checkpoints around El Paso used for drug enforcement. Agents now bring migrants to Border Patrol offices near the checkpoints and use the computer terminals there to process migrants.

In a statement, the Border Patrol said the tents were built "to support efforts to process, care for and transfer the unprecedented number of families and unaccompanied children crossing the border illegally each day in a humane way, consistent with our border security mission and our American values."

The Border Patrol is supposed to keep people in custody for no more than three days, but migrants are sometimes detained for longer. Goodwin said she had spoken in the last week to a Guatemalan man who had been in a "hielera" for 12 days. The Border Patrol stations that house the "hieleras" will continue being used.

In some ways, the tents are better than the iceboxes, Goodwin said. "But that's not saying much."

Tent facilities previously used to detain migrants in Texas have often lacked adequate space or facilities, said Goodwin, a longtime attorney in Harlingen, Texas. A separate tent city near El Paso housed more than 2,700 migrant children before being shut down in early January amid security concerns.

It's unlikely that the new tent facilities will allow the Border Patrol to reopen the checkpoints or to stop reliance on the "hieleras" or the more hastily constructed, smaller tents.

The new 500-person tent in El Paso will only help the Border Patrol keep up, Cordero said, and the checkpoints can only be reopened if the flow of migrants slows down.

Merchant reported from Matamoros, Mexico.

This cruise line rivals Broadway with 134 shows, 50 theaters

By KELLI KENNEDY Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — In a non-descript building in North Miami, two dozen dancers in bouncing yellow skirts are high kicking the can-can, aerialists are spinning perilously high from silk cords and frantic seamstresses are hemming outfits in a 20,000 square-foot costume shop. They are all part of a company that puts on more live productions a year than Broadway and London's West End combined.

Royal Caribbean International's cruise line directs 134 shows in 50 theaters on 26 ships around the world, including seven Broadway-originating shows, eight aqua shows, 18 ice shows and dozens of original musicals.

"We have a nightly audience of about 100,000. It is by scale a very, very large operation. Probably under one roof, the biggest in the world," said Nick Weir, senior vice president of entertainment. "At any one time, there's 1,500 to 1,800 cast members employed to make this all come to life."

It takes two to four weeks for an army of dancers, singers and aerialists to learn a show before they're dispatched to ports as far away as Australia and China.

On a recent afternoon, dancers roamed the halls in crop tops and buns. One stretched into a wide split on the floor. There are 14 dance studios, 15 rehearsal rooms, a recording studio, gymnasiums and auditorium. Exercise equipment lines some hallways. Nearby are living accommodations for 470 of the performers.

Often dismissed in the past as second-tier, cruise entertainment has evolved to a genre that Royal Caribbean says commands some of the best talent and technology around.

Several of the main characters in "Mama Mia" are from the Broadway version of the show. While New York theater has struggled to turn profits with its small, intimate venues, fickle crowds and finite real estate, the cruise industry's onboard audience is growing exponentially.

Royal Caribbean is building five ships in the coming years, each with a custom-built theater with sophisticated stages and high-tech effects. A few years ago, they built a small plane with a 22-foot wingspan that now flies over the audience in every production of "FLIGHT: Dare to Dream."

"The stages that they have on the ships, the technology is far better than it ever was on a Broadway stage, even 10 years ago," said Greg Graham, who was the resident choreographer for "Billy Elliot" on Broadway before coming to the cruise line to choreograph "Hairspray."

Roughly 3,000 hopefuls showed up to recent auditions for "Hairspray" in New York and London.

Weir said the casting operation is massive, culling talent from 75 cities a year auditioning nearly 25,000 performers last year alone.

"At my audition there were hundreds of girls ... it's very competitive. There are so many people who want to be doing this," said Taryn Borman, a 21-year-old Australian dancer, who's performing on a ship for the first time in a new show with aerialists and contortionists. She'll head to Asia with the cast in a few weeks.

Singer and dancer Oli Reynolds, 26, wrapped up a starring role in London's West End production of

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 55 of 59

"Mama Mia" and came back to Royal Caribbean where he's reprising the same role.

"I think there's still a stigma about cruise ship performing ... historically, a lot of cruise lines didn't put the focus on the performing, it was more about the destinations," said Reynolds, who stressed that's changed. "People come from Cirque du Soleil, they come from Vegas, they come from London, they come from Broadway and it is a progression in my career for me."

John Kenrick, a musical theater historian and adjunct professor at New York University, says the evolution was inevitable as more sophisticated cruise audiences — accustomed to seeing shows in spots like Vegas and Atlantic City — are demanding better entertainment.

"It's certainly upped the game. (Cruise theater) used to be a little better perhaps than summer stock just with better costumes," said Kenrick, adding "it's definitely improved. I can't say it's Broadway."

Every performance on every ship worldwide is rehearsed at the roughly 133,000 square-foot facility where the halls are literally alive with the sounds of music.

In one room, dancers with black top hats are perfecting choreography to "All That Jazz." Across the hall, six singers are harmonizing a number from "Once Upon a Time." In a recording studio next door, the walls reverberate with what sounds like theme music from an adventure movie.

At the massive costume shop, the hum of a sewing machine where a seamstress works on a gold glitter costume competes with the hiss of a steam iron. One of the head seamstresses is busy completing a white sequin ballroom dress, with flowing feathers and a rhinestone studded bodice. The cruise line makes its own costumes and must coordinate fittings for dozens of shows.

The cast on each ship performs not one, but three shows — a Broadway musical like "Hairspray" or "Grease," a ballroom style show and a pop show. The shows are upbeat and family oriented and chosen to appeal to a wide audience — nothing too sexual or intellectual.

Scheduling all the rehearsals is more precise than the choreography. The new casts arrive, rehearse and depart to sea at a dizzying pace every few weeks. It takes exactly 26 days to train a new cast to perform the musical "Cats."

Typical theater productions will rotate in new cast members periodically, but Royal Caribbean prefers to sign performers to roughly nine-month contracts. They spend a few weeks learning three shows from scratch and then head to sea. When it's over, the cruise line casts a new set of performers and begins again.

Staging a show at sea has its own challenges and quirks. Performers need extra core strength to adapt to rough waves and pitching ships. If a costume is ripped, there's no one to run to the store.

There are also perks that even the most legendary theaters on land can't compete with — picturesque ports, free meals, room and board, the chance to interact with the audience and the sense of onboard community not found at other venues where performers simply go home each night.

"You definitely become more of a family," said Mya Carpenter, a 22-year-old dancer who performed in Paris before joining Royal Caribbean. "You come to know people inside and out. They're friends for life."

What's next for Venezuela after days of tumult?

By CHRISTOPHER TORCHIA Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — After days of upheaval, Venezuela is sinking back into political stalemate. In the fourth month of their standoff, President Nicolás Maduro and opposition leader Juan Guaidó are unable to deliver a knock-out blow as Venezuela spirals deeper into neglect, isolation and desperation. Abrupt shifts or behind-the-scenes power plays can't be ruled out, but there is a sense that the two camps are entrenched — too strong to be dislodged, too weak for clear-cut victory.

So what's next?

The opposition and its chief patron, the United States, emerged with fewer options after Guaidó, leader of the opposition-controlled National Assembly, stood Tuesday outside a military base and urged the armed forces to overthrow Maduro. The plan collapsed. Venezuela's military commander instead pledged loyalty to Maduro, and four people died in clashes between protesters and police after the opposition's risky bid for control.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 56 of 59

The streets of Caracas were calm on Thursday and Friday, although Guaidó called on protesters to gather outside military bases Saturday to try to persuade soldiers to support them. He is also planning a general strike, though how effective that would be in a country with a shattered economy and an exhausted population is open to question.

One Venezuela expert said the opposition and the U.S. now have the hard task of devising a new way forward after seeing a small contingent of security forces join Guaidó outside the military base, but no sign that any other military units had heeded the call to rebel.

"You only get to play this card once, and now that it's been played it's hard to see what else can be done," said Fernando Cutz, who until April 2018 led U.S. policy on Venezuela at the National Security Council under both Presidents Barack Obama and Donald Trump.

At the same time, Maduro's government is under massive strain, loathed by much of the population as it attempts to steer a decaying nation. The fact that it has not yet moved to arrest Guaidó after accusing him of trying to stage a coup suggests it is not confident enough to do so and is wary about any increase in diplomatic and economic pressure from the U.S. and dozens of other nations that say Guaidó is Venezuela's rightful president.

Any attempt to detain Guaidó would be "highly inflammatory," said Eileen Gavin, senior Latin America analyst at Verisk Maplecroft, a global risk consultancy.

"From Maduro's perspective, it might be better to simply dismiss Guaidó as a mere nuisance and a U.S. stooge, thereby undermining Guaidó's faltering movement and — once again — splintering the fractious Venezuelan opposition," Gavin said in a report.

The government has started to target people since the failed rebellion. On Thursday, Venezuela's top court ordered the arrest of Guaidó's political mentor, Leopoldo López, who took refuge in the Spanish Embassy after defying a house arrest order and joining the attempt to topple Maduro this week. The court also opened a treason investigation of Edgar Zambrano, the deputy head of the National Assembly who had joined Guaidó outside the military base in Caracas.

Some analysts believe U.S. allegations that three top Venezuelan officials had been involved in the plot against Maduro will not split his government, but tie those officials closer to him. One of the government figures, Defense Minister Vladimir Padrino López, pledged loyalty to Maduro and indicated that there had been attempts to lure the military into backing the opposition.

"They try to buy us as if we were mercenaries," he said in what amounted to a warning to any would-be defectors in the military.

The United States has imposed sanctions on Venezuela's oil industry as well as on key figures in Maduro's government, which is digging in despite dire economic and humanitarian problems that have forced around 10% of Venezuelans to leave the country in recent years, creating Latin America's biggest migrant crisis.

Cutz said that while it's likely the U.S. will ramp up rhetoric against Maduro's government, it has already deployed the key weapon — oil sanctions. Its last options include the long-threatened idea of military intervention, which is unlikely, or moving onto another foreign policy priority, according to Cutz.

"It seems more like a temper tantrum than strategic thinking," he said of the bellicose rhetoric coming out of the White House. "If I'm a low-level colonel, why would I now risk my life to share secrets with the Americans if they aren't going to keep their mouths shut."

Trump has indicated that the United States is not focusing on a military option for now.

"And we're doing everything we can do, short of, you know, the ultimate," Trump said in an interview Wednesday on Fox Business Network. "There are people that would like to do — have us do the ultimate, but we are - we are - we have a lot of options open. But when we look at what's going on there, it's an incredible mess."

Trump said Maduro was "tough, but I think he's losing a lot of control."

Associated Press journalist Joshua Goodman in Caracas contributed.

US stocks end broadly higher on solid jobs report, earnings

By ALEX VEIGA AP Business Writer

A solid jobs report and company earnings spurred U.S. stocks broadly higher Friday, driving the S&P 500 to its second straight weekly gain.

The Nasdaq composite hit an all-time high for the second time this week. The benchmark S&P 500 index closed less than 0.1% below the record high it reached on Tuesday.

Technology and consumer-focused companies did the most to push the market higher. Stocks in the communications, industrial, financial and health care sectors also notched solid gains as traders cheered surprisingly good earnings from United States Steel, Weight Watchers and other companies.

Investors also welcomed the government's latest snapshot of U.S. employment, which showed that job growth surged in April past economists' forecasts and unemployment fell to a five-decade low.

"Overall, this was a solid report that should assuage fears that the U.S. economy is losing momentum," said Quincy Krosby, chief market strategist at Prudential Financial.

The S&P 500 index gained 28.12 points, or 1%, to 2,945.64. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 197.16 points, or 0.7%, to 26,504.95. The Nasdaq composite climbed 127.22 points, or 1.6%, to 8,164.

Small-company stocks rose much more than the rest of the market, a bullish sign indicating that investors are more willing to take on risk. The Russell 2000 index picked up 31.37 points, or 2%, to 1,614.02.

Major indexes in Europe also closed higher.

Bond prices rose, sending the yield on the 10 year Treasury down to 2.52% from 2.55% late Thursday.

Despite a modest pullback earlier in the week, U.S. stocks have continued to press higher, extending their impressive recovery this year following a steep slump at the end of 2018.

The S&P 500 is now up 17.5% for the year. The Nasdaq is leading the way, however, with a gain of 23%.

The Federal Reserve fueled the market's recovery earlier this year when it signaled that it would take a patient approach to raising interest rates. Traders also have been encouraged by positive data on the U.S. economy and better-than-expected corporate earnings.

Corporate earnings for the first quarter have come in mixed so far, but good enough to ease worries that company profits would slump overall.

On Friday, United States Steel surged 17.3% after a sharp increase in sales helped push profit far beyond Wall Street forecasts.

Newell Brands, which makes Sharpie and Elmer's products, surged 13.5% on a solid earnings report.

Monster Beverage jumped 8.8% after the energy drinks company powered past analysts' first quarter profit forecast. The company reported a solid increase in sales of its namesake energy drink that helped drive a surge in profit.

Weight Watchers surged 13% after reporting losses for the first quarter that were much slimmer than expected. The company also raised its profit forecast for the year.

Arista Networks, a cloud computing company, plummeted 10.4% after telling investors that revenue in the current quarter will fall short of forecasts.

Meanwhile, Amazon rose 3.2% after billionaire investor Warren Buffet's said his company was buying the stock.

Crude oil prices recovered some of their losses from a day earlier. Benchmark U.S. crude rose 0.2% to settle at \$61.94 per barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, gained 0.1% to close at \$70.85.

In other commodities trading, wholesale gasoline rose 0.4% to \$2.03 per gallon. Heating oil slid 0.4% to \$2.07 per gallon. Natural gas dropped 0.8% to \$2.57 per 1,000 cubic feet.

Gold gained 0.7% to \$1,281.30 per ounce, silver jumped 2.5% to \$14.98 per ounce and copper added 1.4% to \$2.82 per pound.

The dollar weakened to 111.09 Japanese yen from 111.50 yen late Thursday. The euro rose to \$1.1194 from \$1.1175.

AP Business Writer Damian J. Troise contributed to this report.

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 58 of 59

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Saturday, May 4, the 124th day of 2019. There are 241 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On May 4, 1961, the first group of "Freedom Riders" left Washington, D.C. to challenge racial segregation on interstate buses and in bus terminals.

On this date:

In 1626, Dutch explorer Peter Minuit landed on present-day Manhattan Island.

In 1886, at Haymarket Square in Chicago, a labor demonstration for an 8-hour work day turned into a deadly riot when a bomb exploded.

In 1916, responding to a demand from President Woodrow Wilson, Germany agreed to limit its submarine warfare. (However, Germany resumed unrestricted submarine warfare the following year.)

In 1925, an international conference opened in Geneva to forge an agreement against the use of chemical and biological weapons in war; the Geneva Protocol was signed on June 17, 1925 and went into force in 1928.

In 1932, mobster Al Capone, convicted of income-tax evasion, entered the federal penitentiary in Atlanta. (Capone was later transferred to Alcatraz Island.)

In 1942, the Battle of the Coral Sea, the first naval clash fought entirely with carrier aircraft, began in the Pacific during World War II. (The outcome was considered a tactical victory for Japan, but ultimately a strategic one for the Allies.)

In 1959, the first Grammy Awards ceremony was held at the Beverly Hilton Hotel. Domenico Modugno won Record of the Year and Song of the Year for "Nel Blu Dipinto Di Blu (Volare)"; Henry Mancini won Album of the Year for "The Music from Peter Gunn."

In 1968, the Oroville Dam in Northern California was dedicated by Gov. Ronald Reagan; the 770-foot-tall earth-filled structure, a pet project of Reagan's predecessor, Pat Brown, remains the tallest dam in the United States, but was also the scene of a near disaster in February 2017 when two spillways collapsed, threatening for a time to flood parts of three counties in the Sierra Nevada foothills.

In 1970, Ohio National Guardsmen opened fire during an anti-war protest at Kent State University, killing four students and wounding nine others.

In 1980, Marshal Josip Broz Tito, president of Yugoslavia, died three days before his 88th birthday.

In 1998, Unabomber Theodore Kaczynski (kah-ZIHN'-skee) was given four life sentences plus 30 years by a federal judge in Sacramento, California, under a plea agreement that spared him the death penalty.

In 2006, A federal judge sentenced Zacarias Moussaoui (zak-uh-REE'-uhs moo-SOW'-ee) to life in prison for his role in the 9/11 attacks, telling the convicted terrorist, "You will die with a whimper."

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama promised to crack down on companies "that ship jobs overseas" and duck U.S. taxes with offshore havens. Jeff Kepner, of Augusta, Ga., underwent the nation's first double-hand transplant at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. Mexican officials lowered a swine flu alert level in their capital. Cleveland's LeBron James was named the NBA's MVP. Actor, comedian and director Dom DeLuise, 75, died in Santa Monica, Calif.

Five years ago: Eight acrobats were injured, most of them seriously, when a carabiner clip broke during an aerial hair-hanging stunt, sending the women plummeting to the ground during a Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus show in Providence, Rhode Island. Sinn Fein (shin fayn) party leader Gerry Adams was released without charge after five days of police questioning over his alleged involvement in the decades-old IRA killing of a Belfast mother of 10, Jean McConville.

One year ago: President Donald Trump suggested that his newly-hired attorney Rudy Giuliani needed to "get his facts straight" about the hush money paid to porn actress Stormy Daniels just before the 2016 election; Giuliani had earlier said that Trump knew about the payment to Daniels made by his personal lawyer, Michael Cohen, and that Trump had paid Cohen back. The Connecticut Supreme Court overturned

Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, May 04, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 298 ~ 59 of 59

the murder conviction of Kennedy cousin Michael Skakel in the 1975 bludgeoning death of a girl in Greenwich, finding that Skakel's trial attorney had failed to present evidence of an alibi. (The U.S. Supreme Court later left in place the Connecticut high court ruling.) Los Angeles Angels slugger Albert Pujols got his 3,000th hit, reaching the mark with a broken-bat single against the Seattle Mariners.

Today's Birthdays: The former president of Egypt, Hosni Mubarak, is 91. Katherine Jackson, matriarch of the Jackson musical family, is 89. Jazz musician Ron Carter is 82. Pulitzer Prize-winning political commentator George Will is 78. Pop singer Peggy Santiglia Davison (The Angels) is 75. Actor Richard Jenkins is 72. Country singer Stella Parton is 70. Actor-turned-clergyman Hilly Hicks is 69. Irish musician Darryl Hunt (The Pogues) is 69. Singer Jackie Jackson (The Jacksons) is 68. Singer-actress Pia Zadora is 67. Rhythm-and-blues singer Oleta Adams is 66. Sen. Doug Jones, D-Ala., is 65. Violinist Soozie Tyrell (Bruce Springsteen and the E Street Band) is 62. Country singer Randy Travis is 60. Actress Mary McDonough is 58. Comedian Ana Gasteyer is 52. Actor Will Arnett is 49. Rock musician Mike Dirnt (Green Day) is 47. Contemporary Christian singer Chris Tomlin is 47. TV personality and fashion designer Kimora Lee Simmons is 44. Rock musician Jose Castellanos is 42. Sports reporter Erin Andrews is 41. Singer Lance Bass ('N Sync) is 40. Actress Ruth Negga is 38. Rapper/singer Jidenna is 34. Actor Alexander Gould is 25. Country singer Raelynn is 25. Actress Amara (uh-MAH'-ruh) Miller is 19. Actress Brooklynn Prince (Film: "The Florida Project") is nine.

Thought for Today: "The trouble with being punctual is that nobody's there to appreciate it." — Franklin P. Jones, American journalist-humorist (1908-1980).