

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 1 of 77

1- Groton Care & Rehab Ad
2- Harry Implement Ad
2- Community Events
3- Truss Pros Ad
4- Statement on Support for Farmers
4- Rapid City man claims \$200,000 Powerball prize

Senior Profiles - Part 2
5- Korbin Blackmun
6- Emily Blocker
7- James Cranford
8- Megan Crosby
9- Claire Davidson
10- Treyton Diegel
11- Brandon Gackle
12- Clark Gibbs
13- Caroline Graf
14- Miranda Hanson

15- Alexa Hickenbotham
16- Lucas Hinman
17- Devan Howard
18- Spencer Jacobs
19- Jeremy Johnson
20- Portia Kettering
21- Mitchell Koens
22- Josie LaMee
23- Cole Larson
24- Shyla Larson
25- Wyatt Locke
26- Emerald Sturdevant
27- Shannon Wiedrick
28- Seniors on the Move Map

29- City Council Meeting
30- Today in Weather History
31- Weather Pages
34- Daily Devotional
35- 2019 Groton Events
36- 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

Chicken Soup
for the Soul

Do not look back on
happiness or dream of
it in the future.
You are only sure of
→ TODAY; ←
do not let yourself
be cheated out of it.

-Henry Ward
Beecher

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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SC 100 HW PUSH WALK-BEHIND MOWER

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605-395-6421

Upcoming COMMUNITY EVENTS

Wednesday, May 22, 2019

End of 4th Quarter - Final Day of School
12:00pm: Golf: Girls Varsity Meet @
Milbank Golf Course

Thursday, May 23, 2019

Faculty Inservice
10:00am: Golf: Girls Varsity Regions @
Milbank Golf Course

Friday, May 24, 2019

Faculty Inservice
STATE TRACK MEET @ TEA AREA

Saturday, May 25, 2019

STATE TRACK MEET @ SIOUX FALLS

NOW HIRING!

Truss Pros

10954 424th Avenue | Britton, SD 57430

Looking for assemblers - both shifts

* New Starting Wage - \$15/hr day shift and
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- Vacation Pay
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To apply visit www.uslbn.com/careers or call Diane at 605-448-2929.

Statement on Support for Farmers

(WASHINGTON, D.C., May 21, 2019) – From a USDA Spokesperson: “Details on the new farming support program will be forthcoming shortly, but we want to be clear that the program is being designed to avoid skewing planting decisions one way or another. Farmers should continue to make their planting and production decisions with the current market signals in mind, rather than some expectation of what a farming support program might or might not look like based on inaccurate media stories.”

Rapid City man claims \$200,000 Powerball prize

PIERRE, S.D. – Leo Bald Eagle will be playing joyous tunes for some time after he became the South Dakota Lottery’s latest big winner.

Bald Eagle claimed a \$200,000 Powerball prize on Monday. The Rapid City resident won the prize by matching 4 of 5 winning numbers in addition to the Powerball. His prize grew even larger after choosing the multiplier option.

Bald Eagle, who is a retired letter carrier for the U.S. Post Office and currently works part time at Walmart, had a unique set of circumstances en route to his big win. Bald Eagle is part of a country western band called Midnight Sun, and he decided to test his luck and purchase some tickets before leaving town to perform.

This brought Bald Eagle to the Big D Oil Company on East North Street in Rapid City, where he decided to change his playing routine up a bit.

“God told me to buy the tickets,” Bald Eagle said. “I normally buy Dakota Cash and Lotto America, but last minute, I had a feeling come over me that told me to buy two Powerball tickets.”

Bald Eagle’s instincts were proven to be correct when he checked the winning numbers a couple of hours after Saturday’s drawing. After learning about his big win, Bald Eagle and his girlfriend shared in the excitement and disbelief.

“I was very excited, and I couldn’t sleep,” Bald Eagle said. “My girlfriend and I checked the numbers again in the morning.”

Now that the news is beginning to sink in, Bald Eagle is making plans for his prize. He notes that the best thing about winning is a chance at being debt free, but he isn’t planning on changing his life too much.

“I am still in shock, but It will help financially to pay off debt and possibly get a new vehicle,” Bald Eagle said. “I still plan to work at Walmart part time and continue to play in our band.”

Bald Eagle will also continue his weekly purchase of lotto tickets, and he offered advice for his fellow players.

“Keep trying, there is always hope,” Bald Eagle said. “You can’t win if you don’t play ”

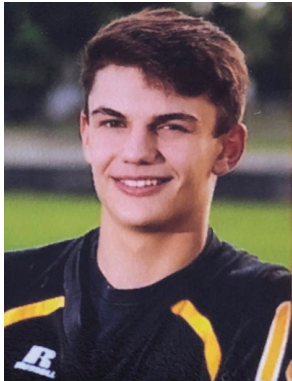
Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 5 of 77

Korbin Clark Blackmun

Parents: Dave and Marcy Blackmun

Hometown: Groton, SD



Sister: Rachel Blackmun (22)

Hobbies: Hunting, fishing, playing video games, hanging out with friends.

School/Community Activities: Football, Baseball, Show Choir, helping with the Thanksgiving Dinner at the Community Center

Favorite High School Memory: Being a part of

the 2016 football team that went to the dome.

Future Plans: USD for Criminal Justice.

Award: St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Knights of Columbus Scholarship



Best Wishes From

A large yellow banner with a black border. The word 'GROTON' is written in a large, bold, black, stylized font. Below it, the word 'Ford' is written in a smaller, black, cursive font inside an oval. At the bottom, the website 'GROTONFORD.COM' and the phone number '605-397-2311' are written in black, bold, sans-serif font.

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Ford
GROTONFORD.COM 605-397-2311

Emily Kathryn Blocker



Parents: Perry and Rebecca Blocker

Hometown: Bath

Brother: Austin Blocker (25)

Hobbies: hanging with friends & family, shopping, traveling, dance, going to concerts.

School/Community Activities: FCCLA, FBLA, FFA, Boys Basketball Stats, Dance

Favorite High School Memory: Class trip to Deadwood, SD

Future Plans: Going to Lake Area Tech to major in Accounting.



Congrats Emily! So proud of you!



New Construction
Remodeling
Hoop Barns ~ Shops

Perry Blocker

13379 Sperry Ln, Bath

605/216-2677

prblocker@hotmail.com

James Cranford



Parents: Heather Jacobs
Hometown: Aberdeen
Brother and Sister: Thomas Cranford (17) Halley Cranford (20)

Hobbies: Reading, Writing, anything to do with art (drawing, painting; etc), video games, hanging out with friends.

School/Community Activities: Groton High School
Favorite High School

Memory: Meeting my best friend Bailey at Aberdeen Central High School and getting Honor Roll like 8 times.

Future Plans: Graduate High School, Start working as a CNA and then go to tech school to become an RN.



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Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 8 of 77

Megan Montana Lea Crosby



Parents: Robin and Russell Crosby

Hometown: Claremont

Sister: Emilie Crosby (19)

Hobbies: shopping, reading, being with friends

School/Community Activities: Show choir, Chamber choir

Favorites High School Memory: going to Florida for show choir

Future Plans: get a business degree from Lake Area Tech

Award: Groton Sammuli-Rix Scholarship



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Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 9 of 77

Claire Dawn Davidson

Parents: Russell and Karla Davidson

Hometown: Groton



Brothers and Sisters: Kris Oleson (26) Michaela Oleson (25) Alec Oleson (23) Andrea Davidson (15)

Hobbies: Dance, shopping, traveling, hangout with friends, go to lake, watch movies.

School/Community Activities: FCCLA, FBLA, Basketball stats, youth group

Favorite High School Memory: beating Roncalli to

go to the Dome

Future Plans: Northern State University for Pre-Mortuary

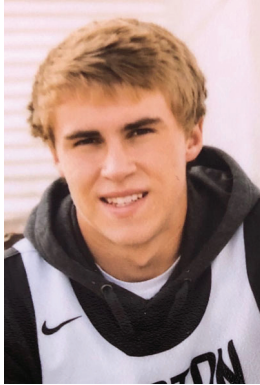


Congratulations, Claire!



605-397-2341
Groton

Treyton Glenn Diegel



Parents: Steve and Becky Diegel

Hometown: Groton

Brother: Teylor (12)

Hobbies: Hunting, fishing, Basketball, riding jet ski and hanging with friends.

School/Community Activities: Basketball, 2 years of track, Coaching

Favorite High School Memory: Senior year we

played Warner and there was a fundraiser and Brody hit the game winner.

Future Plans: SDSU for Ag Business

Awards: Kay and David Donovan Memorial Scholarship, Full Circle Ag Scholarship, Tom and Barbara Paepke Career in Agriculture Scholarship, Barry Schuring Memorial Scholarship, Groton Lions Club Scholarship, Groton Sammuli-Rix Scholarship.



Congratulations Treyton! From Full Circle Ag

Brandon Dean Gackle



Parents: Chad and Tiffany Gackle

Hometown: Columbia

Brother and Sister: Chase Gackle (13) Abby Gackle (11) Kandon Gackle (3)

Hobbies: Biking, Drawing, playing video games, participating in the furry fandom

School/Community Activities: Bowling

Favorite High School Memory:

The entirety of Forensics class

Future Plans: Moving in with a couple of friends and working



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Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 12 of 77

Clark Steven Gibbs



Parents: Steve and Ann Gibbs

Hometown: Groton

Sisters: Abby Gibbs (24) and Ashley Gibbs (22)

Hobbies: Feeding cows, driving semi, haying, loading cows, calving, hanging out with friends, snow skiing

School/Community Activities: Luther League, FFA Farm Safety, Tractor Day, Ag

Fair in Aberdeen

Favorite High School Memory: Shop class with Mr. Donley

Future Plans: Attend Lake Area in Watertown and major in Precision Ag.

Award: Emmanuel Lutheran Faith Forever Scholarship



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Caroline Ruth Graf



Parents: Pernel Graf and Margaret Deitz

Hometown: Groton

Brothers: Brady 22, Alex 20, Dylon 17. **Hobbies:** Sewing, listening to music, play with my son.

School/Community Activities: Cheerleading, oral interp, cross country, FCCLA

Favorite High School Memory: Freshman Initia-

tion

Future Plans: Attend Lake Area for law enforcement



Best Wishes From

Congratulations, Caroline!
May God's love light your
pathway to a wonderful future!



US 12, Groton

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 14 of 77

Miranda Beth Hanson



Parents: Vince and Chris Hanson

Hometown: Bristol, SD

Hobbies: Rodeo, Sports, Hunting, Fishing, Showing Live Stock, and Agricultural involvement

School/Community Activities: Basketball, Volleyball, FFA, Jills & Jeans 4H Club, High School Rodeo, 4H Rodeo, Bergen Luther League

Favorite High School Memory: Winning the team state dairy judging in FFA and getting the opportunity to go to nationals.

Future Plans: Attend Lake Area Technical Institute and Major in Ag- Business, Large Animal Tech, and Agri-Finance.

Awards: Groton Chamber of Commerce Scholarship, Jerald W. Peterson Memorial Scholarship, Anthony O'Brokaw Memorial Scholarship, Day County Conservation District, Groton FFA Alumni Scholarship, Waldorf 5000 Scholarship, Ruden Family Ag Scholarship.



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Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 15 of 77

Alexa Hickenbotham



Parents: Christa Hickenbotham

Hometown: Groton

Hobbies: art, reading, listening to oldies music, watching movies, photography (especially nature), playing with animals, writing

School/Community Activities: art, church

Favorite High School Activities: being in art class, spending time with family and

my boyfriend

Future Plans: go to college, get married, go to work and make the world a better place

Award: Roger Hendrickson Memorial Scholarship



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GDI

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- Live
- Fit
- Clean

- News
- Rent

397-NEWS (6397)

Lucas "Hinny" Rocky Hinman

Parents: Rocky and Cindy Hinman

Hometown: Groton



Brothers and Sisters: Keanu (22), Gabby, Jodi, Renae, Jazzmine, Matt

Hobbies: toss the pig skin, chillin with the dawgs

School/Community Activities: Choir, Football, track

Favorite High School Memory: beating Roncalli for the second time this season to head to the Dome.

Future Plans: Im take a break from school to save enough money to pay for college with cash. Head to Minnesota state to get my dental hygiene degree.



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Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 17 of 77

Devan Amelia Ann Howard

Parents: Jesse Howard and Lauri Harry

Hometown: Groton

Brother and Sister: Cameron Howard (29) and Maddie Howard (24)

Hobbies: Soccer, watching netflix, hanging with friends

School/Community Activities: High School soccer, FBLA, FCCLA, 4-H

Favorite High School Memory: Playing starting varsity goalie my entire high school soccer career

Future Plans: Lake Area

Technical Institute for entrepreneurship, Alexandria Technical and Community College for interior design.



Best Wishes From



Harry Implement
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Ferney



Spencer Noah Jacobs



Parents: Henry and Debbie Jacobs

Hometown: Groton

Sister: Sarah Jacobs 14

Hobbies: Airsoft, Paintball, Biking, Skateboarding

School/Community Activities: Cross Country, Band, Groton Christian and Missionary Alliance Church youth group, Rushmore Music Camp.

Favorite High School

Memory: Trip to Florida for marching band.

Future Plans: National Guard and SDSMT to major in paleontology



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Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 19 of 77

Jeremy Ryan Johnson



Parents: Alan Johnson and Kristi Eckrich

Hometown: Groton

Brothers and Sister: Nick Johnson (24), Landon Johnson (21), Kayla Willis (27)

Hobbies: Hunting, Fishing, and Shooting

Favorite High School Memory: Reading Macbeth with Mrs. Hanten

Future Plans: Go to LATI for Precision Ag.

Awards: Health Care Plus Federal Credit Union Scholarship, Columbia American Legion Auxiliary Scholarship.



Congrats Jeremy!



New Construction
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Perry Blocker

13379 Sperry Ln, Bath

605/216-2677

prblocker@hotmail.com

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 20 of 77

Portia Ranae Kettering

Parents: Kevin & Kara Pharis and Scott Kettering

Hometown: Groton

Brothers and Sisters: Pierce (16), Elise (5), Henry (4), and Kale (17)

Hobbies: Being with my friends and family, art, doing my hair and make-up

School/Community Activities: FBLA, FFA, FCCLA, Volleyball, Basketball Stats, Golf, Emanuel Lurthern Luther League

Favorite High School

Memory: State FBLA

Future Plans: Attend NDSU and receive a 4-year degree in Interior Design

Awards: Jerald W. Peterson Memorial Scholarship, Emmanuel Lutheran Faith Forever Scholarship.



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Mitchell William Koens

Parents: Brian & Kristal Koens, Shannon Hill

Hometown: Groton



Brothers and Sisters: Heather Koens (24), Amanda Koens (23), Bailey Bieglar (19), Sierra Bieglar (17), Jayden Bieglar (13), and Chelsea Pfaff (7)

Hobbies: Running, Singing, Video Games, Listening to work.

School/Community Activities: Show choir, Cross Country, Track, All State Choir,

honor choir, soccer, chamber choir

Favorite High School Memory: Florida trip with Mrs. Hanten

Future Plans: go to NSU with a Biology Education Degree.



Congratulations, Mitchell!
May God's love light your
pathway to a wonderful future!



US 12, Groton

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 22 of 77

Josie Emma LaMee



Parents: David and Glenda LaMee

Hometown: Groton

Brothers: Dustin (26) and Mathieu (24)

Hobbies: working on the farm with our livestock, most of the time i am in the barn working with my pigs. I enjoy being with my family and friends.

School/Community Activities: 4-H and FFA

Favorite High School Memory: FFA National trip to Indianapolis, going to the Ned

LeDoux and Garth Brooks Concert.

Future Plans: Attending Lake Area Technical Institute for Swine Management and Large Animal Tech.

Awards: Groton FFA Alumni Scholarship, James Valley Threshing Association Scholarship, Brown County 4H Leaders Association Scholarship.



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Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 23 of 77

Cole Davis Larson



Parents: Jamie and Jeff Larson

Hometown: Groton

Brothers: Trevor (24) and Landon (22)

Hobbies: Hunting, Fishing, Snowmobiling, Four wheeling, hanging out with friends.

School/Community Activities: weight lifting, track, basketball

Favorite High School Memory: Hanging with the Boys

Future Plans: Attending Lake Area Tech.



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Shyla Kaye Larson



Parents: David and Joy Larson

Hometown: Groton, SD

Brothers: Tate (14) and Cade (14)twins

Hobbies: Dancing, Skating, Reading and Drawing

School/Community Activities: Cheerleading, Dance, Choir, and FCCLA

Favorite High School Memory: when we won the football game against Roncalli to go to the Dome my sophomore year.

Future Plans: I plan to go to NDSCS, in Wahpeton, ND. I plan to go into the Dental Assistant program and then go back for my Dental Hygiene also.

Awards: SD Girls State Representative 2018, Groton FCCLA Service Award, Groton Lions Club Scholarship, Groton Don Bartz Memorial Scholarship.



Best Wishes From

**JAMES
VALLEY**
TELECOMMUNICATIONS



jamesvalley.com

Wyatt Anthony Locke



Parents: Lisa and Darren Locke

Hometown: Groton

Brother and Sister: Dalton Locke (24) and Emily Locke (20)

Hobbies: Hunting, Fishing, Playing Baseball, Listening to music

School/Community Activities: Director of Stations of the Cross, football, Wrestling

Favorite High School Memory: Placing 3rd at the 2019 State B High School Wrestling Tournament.

Future Plans: Receive an education in Elementary Education undecided college.

Award: Richard Duerre Memorial Scholarship



Best Wishes From

Cheri's on Main

Men & Women Haircuts ~ Perms ~ Color

7 N Main, Groton ~ **605/397-2491**

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 26 of 77

Emerald Rae Sturdevant

Parents: Jamie Sturdevant; Crystal and Polin Joseph



Brothers and Sisters: Diamond Sturdevant (24), Jayde Sturdevant (21), Jazmyn Sturdevant (9), Arayia Sturdevant (8), Polin Joseph Jr, (10), Kendrick Joseph (2), TaMaya Joseph (13), Jordan Joseph (7), Azure Joseph (due in May)

Hobbies: Knitting, hanging out with friends, shopping, going to movies

Favorite High School Memory: Switching to Groton High School and getting to meet so many new people.

Future Plans: Attend college at Minnesota State University Moorhead, majoring in Psychology.



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Shannon Lee Wiedrick

Parents: LeeAnn Harrell and Mike Wiedrick

Hometown: Groton



Brothers and Sisters:

Ashlee Beaner (37), Audumr Beidler (35), Garrett Wiedrick (22), Kayde Wiedrick (21), Grace Wiedrick (16)

Hobbies: Reading, Writing, riding bike, ice skating, hanging out with friends and family.

School/Community Activities: member of FCCLA, Participates in Carnival of Silver Skates

Favorite High School Memory: Many nights of hanging out with friends.

Future Plans: Plan on attending Black Hills State University to get a degree in Early Childhood Education.

Awards: Groton FCCLA Service Award, Groton Area School Employee Teaching Scholarship.



Best Wishes From

A large graphic for Groton Ford. It features the word "GROTON" in a large, bold, black, stylized font on a yellow background. Below "GROTON" is the Ford logo (the word "Ford" in a script font inside an oval). At the bottom, the website "GROTONFORD.COM" and the phone number "605-397-2311" are displayed in black text on a yellow background.

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Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 28 of 77

Class Motto: "I don't know where I am going from here, but I promise it won't be boring."

- David Bowie.

Class Flowers: Fire and Ice Rose

Class Colors: Black and Gold



A note to all the students at Groton Area. We need to realize and accept that a teacher's job is not to make your life easy while you are here. Their job is to make your life easier after you leave Groton Area. Only then will you understand why they challenge you to be your best.

- Dr. Steve Smith

Groton Area Board of Education President

I would like to share some recent academic statistics with you. Groton Area scored 94% for College Course-work Readiness (for comparison State Average was 64%) and our college and career readiness score was 87%. (State Avg. was 46%). Graduates, whether your choice is a 4-year university, 2-year tech school or working after graduation, you are prepared.

- Dr. Steve Smith

Groton Area Board of Education President

City give first reading to water surcharge

Starting in July, your water bill could increase by \$11.50. The Groton City Council gave first reading to the rate ordinance that would add a separate line item on your utility bill for the water tower fund. Groton City residents would be paying \$53.43 for the first 5,000 gallons of water. City Finance Officer Hope Block said that all of the enterprise funds only made \$110,000 last year. If the \$11.50 would be absorbed, that would take away \$96,000. The rate increase will need to be passed at the June 4, 2019 meeting. The surcharge will be implemented for 30 years.

A change order for the street project was approved. A fillet will need to be replaced and the plan calls to revise the storm sewer at Washington St. and Sixth Ave. West. The cost of the change order will be \$11,638.25.

Ken Hier from Clark Engineering was present to discuss the contract with Soil Technologies. They will be drilling test holes for the foundation of the new tower just east of the ground reservoir.

An easement for WEB water was approved to allow for the construction of a building which will house the water valves that feed the Groton City. Currently those valves are underground.

Kami Lipp and Brenda Madsen were present to discuss the pool operations. They are looking at a June 1 opening date, but it could be earlier if the weather cooperates.

The council authorized two officers to attend the Safe Harbor's NESD Conference in Aberdeen, June 19-20.

Sealed bids were opened for the old sweeper. There was only one and that was from Sanitary Products, Inc. for \$8,000. The city is currently leasing the new sweeper from that same company. The new sweeper arrived this week and has been put into action.

Today in Weather History

May 22, 1963: A late spring freeze impacted many locations reporting lows in the lower 20s. Some low temperatures include: 18 degrees in Andover; 20 degrees in Britton, 4 NW of Gann Valley, Leola and Roscoe; 21 degrees Castlewood, Ipswich, Kennebec, Redfield, 2 NW of Stephen, and 1 west of Summit; 22 degrees in Aberdeen, Eureka, 1 west of Highmore, McLaughlin, and 4 west of Mellette.

May 22, 1993: Nearly stationary thunderstorms dumped five to seven one-half inches of rain and hail within three hours on the southwest side of Sioux Falls causing major urban flooding and a flash flood on an area creek. Water and sewage flooded at least 200 basements as the storm and sewer systems backed up. Water came up to the rooftops of many cars in the Empire Mall area. Power was knocked out at the Empire Mall and to 2600 other customers in southwest Sioux Falls. Rainwater came through the roof of the Empire Mall causing damage to some stores. Hail up to an inch in diameter fell continuously for up to one and one-half hours in parts of southwest Sioux Falls causing considerable damage to hundreds of roofs, trees, and gardens. Thousands of cars received damage from hail or water in Sioux Falls. In the Silver Glen area, a flash flood turned a typically three-foot wide creek to a hundred feet wide in places. At least five houses near this creek had severe damage caused by the rushing waters. The flash flood also tore out a section of a road adjacent to the creek, buckled sidewalks, ripped away 100-year-old trees, and floated a 5500 lb truck down the road.

May 22, 2010: An EF2 tornado in eastern Walworth County crossed into western Edmunds County and intensified into a massive EF4 tornado as it struck several farms in its path. At the first farm, several large cottonwood trees were uprooted along with damage to several trailers. Three-grain bins were also destroyed with debris located several hundred yards to the northeast. The residence suffered some shingle and antenna damage. The tornado then tracked northeast to a second farm where several outbuildings were damaged or destroyed along with widespread tree damage. The primary residence at this location suffered no damage. Several grain cars were also rolled about 100 yards into the trees behind the house. The massive tornado continued to track northeast to a third farm to the north of Bowdle. The main residence suffered major damage to walls with part of the roof structure removed. Widespread tree damage was sustained with many of the trees completely debarked with only the stumps of the largest branches remaining. Two large garages were destroyed with the concrete slab wiped clean. The vehicles in one garage were rolled or tossed from 25 to 100 yards away. It is estimated that one car flew through the air 75 to 100 yards resting in the tree shelter belt to the north of the residence. Several other outbuildings were destroyed. The tornado then toppled six to eight metal power transmission towers as it moved to the north of the farm. One tower was sheared off from the concrete footings and traveled an estimated 400 yards. Ground scouring was visible along the path of these towers. The large tornado continued to track east crossing over State Highway 47 where a state radio tower was toppled. The tornado lifted shortly after that. The highest wind speeds were estimated to be from 166 to 200 mph.


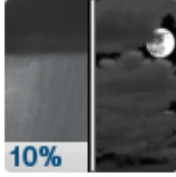

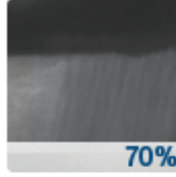

1876: Denver, Colorado was drenched with 6.50 inches of rain in 24 hours, an all-time record for that location.

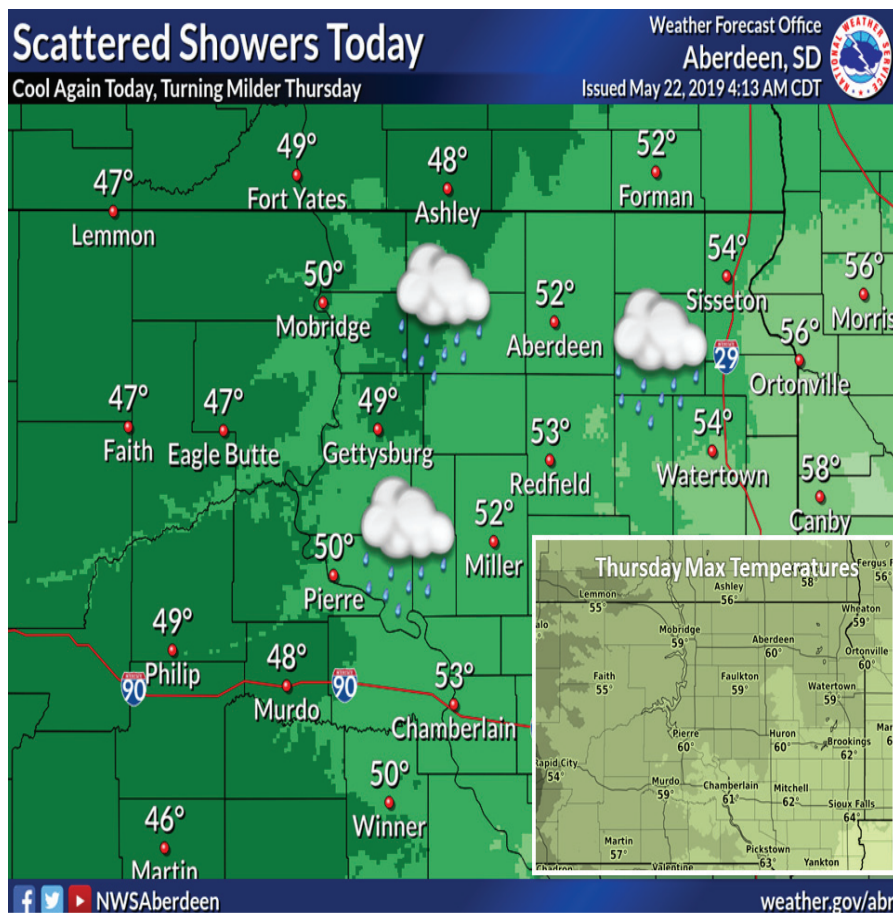
1986: A devastating hailstorm hit the Sichuan Province of China. Reports indicate that up to 100 people were killed, 35,000 homes destroyed and entire crops devastated.

2011: On this day, one of the most devastating tornadoes in the nation's history directly killed 158 people and injured over 1,000 in Joplin, Missouri. The Joplin EF5 tornado was the first single tornado to result in over 100 fatalities since the June 8, 1953, Flint, Michigan tornado.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 31 of 77

Today	Tonight	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
				
100%	10%		70%	40%
Showers	Slight Chance Showers then Mostly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Showers Likely	Chance Showers
High: 54 °F	Low: 40 °F	High: 61 °F	Low: 50 °F	High: 66 °F



A system will continue to move across the region today, with scattered showers expected. Temperatures will also remain cool, but should warm some on Thursday with fewer clouds.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 32 of 77

Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 56 °F at 11:35 AM

Low Temp: 47 °F at 6:19 AM

Wind: 37 mph at 9:41 PM

Day Rain: 0.22 in

Record High: 92° in 1928

Record Low: 22° in 1963

Average High: 70°F

Average Low: 46°F

Average Precip in May.: 2.15

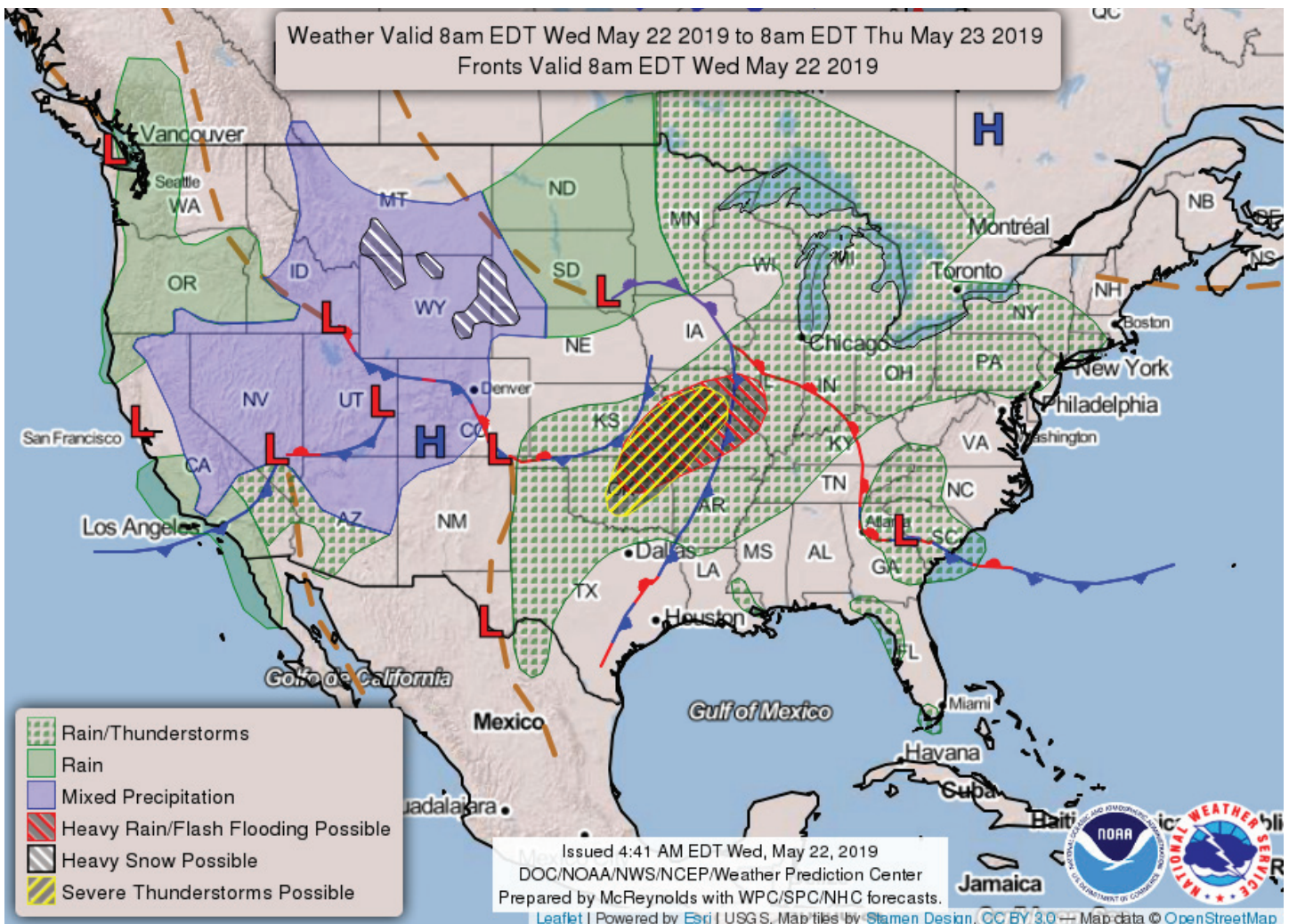
Precip to date in May.: 3.07

Average Precip to date: 6.18

Precip Year to Date: 7.78

Sunset Tonight: 9:05 p.m.

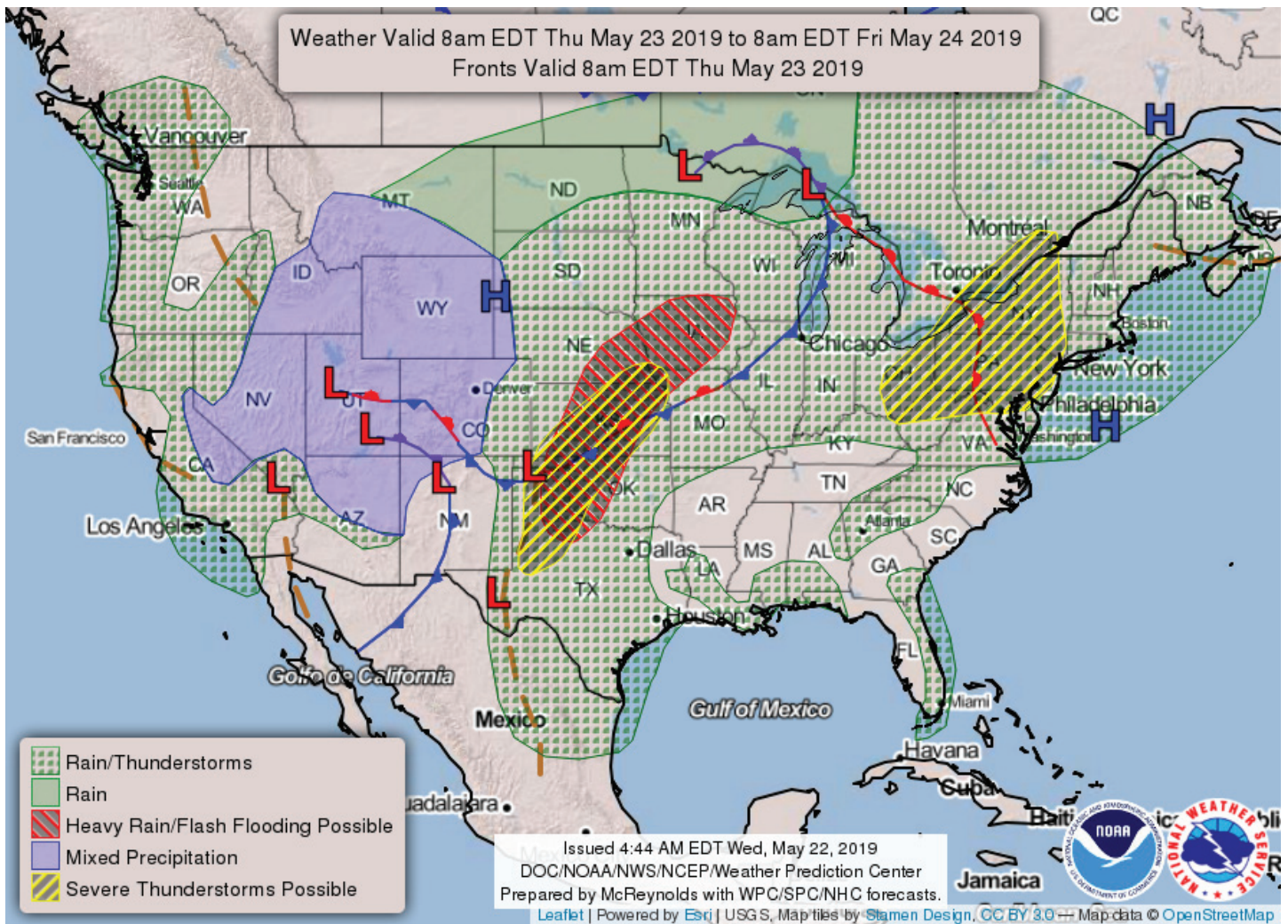
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:55 a.m.



Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 33 of 77

Tomorrow's Weather Map



Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 34 of 77



HEART HEALTH - LIFE HEALTH

While waiting for my appointment with a surgeon, I decided to take my pulse. It was beating slowly, well within the normal limits. Suddenly the nurse called my name and directed me to a consultation room. After I sat down, she took my temperature and blood pressure. My temperature was normal, but my blood pressure was extremely high, which was not normal for me. Then she placed two fingers on my wrist to take my pulse. From the waiting room to the consultation room my heart rate increased dramatically over twenty beats per minute. Fear got the best of my peaceful heart.

There is a direct connection with our emotional well-being and our physical well-being. When a fear of the unknown - the possibility of surgery - was about to become known, or, facing the reality that I would be scheduled for surgery, my fear could actually be measured!

The heart is much more than a muscle in life and in the Bible. It is the center of our being: the source of our thoughts, our emotions, our ambitions, and where decisions are made, problems are solved, and choices sorted out. According to Scripture, the heart affects every part of our life - positively or negatively.

Solomon understood that and wisely wrote, A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the body. It is obvious from what Solomon wrote and what science has now confirmed: our emotional - or inner - state greatly impacts our physical wellbeing and health.

Notice the impact of envy. Its an emotion we all deal with. For some, the desire to want something that God has not given us can become so intense that it has the same results as cancer - it eats away life. Beware of envy.

Prayer: Grant us Your peace, Lord, to meet the problems we face each day. May we look to You for help, healing, and hope in times of trouble and pain. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Proverbs 14:30 A heart at peace gives life to the body, but envy rots the bones.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 35 of 77

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)

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 36 of 77

News from the Associated Press

Man, woman found dead at Mitchell hotel

MITCHELL, S.D. (AP) — Police in Mitchell are investigating the deaths of two people at a hotel. The bodies of a man and woman were discovered Monday at the Thunderbird Lodge. Authorities say they checked into the hotel Saturday night and arrived in a U-Haul van from another state. Police don't suspect foul play, but say they are having difficulty identifying the two because they took steps to avoid identification. Officials did not explain further. The South Dakota Department of Criminal Investigation and South Dakota Highway Patrol are assisting in the investigation.

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Tuesday:
Mega Millions
10-50-55-56-58, Mega Ball: 15, Megaplier: 5
(ten, fifty, fifty-five, fifty-six, fifty-eight; Mega Ball: fifteen; Megaplier: five)
Estimated jackpot: \$367 million
Powerball
Estimated jackpot: \$288 million

Heavy snow closes Mount Rushmore monument in South Dakota

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Heavy snow has forced the Mount Rushmore National Memorial to close in the Black Hills of western South Dakota. Blaine Kortemeyer, assistant chief of interpretation at Mount Rushmore, says the park closed Tuesday morning for the safety of visitors and staff. Kortemeyer says park staff can't keep up with clearing the grounds of snow. He says while the parking lot is open, the visitors center and information center are closed. The National Weather Service in Rapid City says up to 5.5 inches (14 centimeters) of snow has fallen on Mount Rushmore. The storm has dumped 10 inches (25 centimeters) of snow on the west side of Rapid City. National Weather Service meteorologist and hydrologist Melissa Smith says Rapid City is seeing minor flooding.

Deputy shoots knife-wielding man outside South Dakota jail

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Authorities say a man was shot outside of a South Dakota jail after he charged at officers with a knife. Minnehaha County Sheriff Mike Milstead says authorities responded to gunshots just after 3 p.m. Tuesday. Milstead says a deputy fired two shots, and at least one hit the 44-year-old suspect. Jail Warden Jeff Gromer says a man holding a glass bottle approached the jail lobby and was hitting the bottle against the lobby window when security asked for police help. Gromer says the men threw either a rock or the bottle through the jail door, injuring one officer with broken glass. Gromer says the man charged officers with a knife and was shot. The man was taken to a hospital. The Argus Leader reports the courthouse and the jail were put on lockdown.

Angler's family upset after South Dakota fish record voided

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The family of an angler whose catfish held a South Dakota record for nearly 70 years is upset that state wildlife officials voided the record.

Roy Groves caught the 55-pound (24.9-kilogram) fish in 1949. The fish originally was identified as a channel catfish, but South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks voided the record Friday, saying Groves actually caught a blue catfish, not a channel catfish.

Groves' great-grandson, James Labesky, told the Argus Leader that his mother and his grandfather had shared stories about Groves' fishing exploits, but he had never heard about the record being disputed.

Labesky said in a Facebook post that South Dakota wildlife officials are taking away the record because they don't think it's a channel catfish by looking at a picture.

"Seems like they're just looking at a picture of it and showing it to some fish specialists," he told the newspaper.

He added in the Facebook post that his great-grandfather "would know the difference."

But state Fisheries Program Administrator Geno Adams said fish identification experts agreed that the photo was of a blue catfish.

Differences between the two fish can be subtle, with a primary one being whether a fin on the underside of the catfish is flat or curved.

"There's just a lot of information that doesn't line up to make that a channel catfish," Adams said.

He said the department does not "look at this lightly."

"We understand this is a big deal to a large amount of people," Adams said.

State Game, Fish and Parks officials are calling the quest for a new record "Catrush 2019" and expect the mark to be broken several times over the next few weeks.

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

Noem announces interim secretary of Social Services

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem has announced an interim secretary of Social Services. Noem said Tuesday that Amy Iversen-Pollreisz will serve as interim secretary. That follows the resignation of Secretary Greg DeSautel, which takes effect Wednesday.

In a statement, Noem says she is confident Iversen-Pollreisz will "continue moving the department in the right direction during this interim period."

Iversen-Pollreisz currently serves as deputy cabinet secretary for the Department of Social Services. She previously served in various roles in the Department of Human Services, including as director of the Division of Mental Health.

DeSautel resigned to return to medical work, just months after his appointment.

The agency has a budget of about \$43.5 million.

Judge dismisses part of Sioux Falls house dispute lawsuit

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A federal judge in South Dakota has dismissed part of a lawsuit filed by a couple who had to tear down their Sioux Falls house after a long-running dispute with their neighbors.

Judge Roberto Lange recently granted Liberty Mutual Insurance's motion to dismiss the allegations that the company acted in bad faith by hindering Joseph and Sarah Sapienza's legal defense, the Argus Leader reported.

The Sapienzas accused the insurance company of failing to pay for certain legal strategies, such as hiring an expert witness.

Lange gave the couple two weeks to show why he shouldn't dismiss their claim that Liberty Mutual provided an inadequate defense and breached its duty to defend them.

The Sapienzas tore down their Sioux Falls house last June after being sued by their neighbors in 2015. The neighbors argued the home was too tall and close to their property.

A state judge later ruled that the couple's home, which they had built in 2014, violated building standards for national historic districts.

The judge ordered the Sapienzas to make their home conform to the neighborhood's historical standards, and the South Dakota Supreme Court upheld the ruling last year.

Several questions regarding the couple's claims against Liberty Mutual will return to the high court.

Lange noted that questions remain about whether the costs that the Sapienzas incurred by demolishing their home are considered damages under their policy with Liberty Mutual.

South Dakota law doesn't specify whether demolition costs would be considered damages since the Sapienzas were under a court-order injunction when they tore down their house.

Angela Brandt, the couple's lawyer, said the Sapienzas are considering all their options to enforce the Liberty Mutual agreement.

This story has been corrected to show the judge dismissed the part of the lawsuit that alleges Liberty Mutual acted in bad faith, but not the allegation that it provided an inadequate defense.

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

Cost of buying out flood-prone homes: \$5B and rising

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

MOSBY, Mo. (AP) — The residents of this small riverside town have become accustomed to watching floods swamp their streets, transform their homes into islands and ruin their floors and furniture.

Elmer Sullivan has replaced his couch, bed and television. He's torn up water-buckled floorboards. And he put a picket fence against the front of his house to cover up a gap left when waters washed out part of the stone foundation.

"I just don't want to mess with it anymore. I'm 83 years old and I'm tired of it, and I just want to get out of it," Sullivan said.

Finally fed up, Sullivan and nearly half of the homeowners in Mosby signed up in 2016 for a program in which the government would buy and then demolish their properties rather than paying to rebuild them over and over. They're still waiting for offers, joining thousands of others across the country in a slow-moving line to escape from flood-prone homes.

Patience is wearing thin in Mosby, a town of fewer than 200 people with a core of lifelong residents and some younger newcomers drawn by the cheap prices of its modest wood-frame homes.

"It really is frustrating, because here we are, we're coming through a wet season. There's a chance that we could possibly flood, and we're still waiting," said Jason Stooksbury, an alderman who oversees the town's efforts to curb flooding. "It's not a good situation, but what are you going to do — it's the government process."

Over the past three decades, federal and local governments have poured more than \$5 billion into buying tens of thousands of vulnerable properties across the country, according to an Associated Press analysis of data from the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Department of Housing and Urban Development.

The AP analysis shows those buyouts have been getting more expensive, with many of the costliest coming in the last decade after strong storms pounded heavily populated coastal states such as Texas, New York and New Jersey. This year's record flooding in the Midwest could add even more buyouts to the queue.

The purchases are happening as the climate changes. Along rivers and sea coasts, some homes that were once considered at little risk are now endangered due to water that is climbing higher and surging farther inland than historic patterns predicted.

Regardless of the risks, the buyouts are voluntary. Homeowners can renew taxpayer-subsidized flood insurance policies indefinitely.

With more extreme weather events, flooding "is going to become more and more of an issue, and there

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 39 of 77

will be more and more properties that are at risk of total loss or near total loss," said Democratic U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio of Oregon, chairman of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, which has jurisdiction over FEMA. "Then the question is: Are we just going to keep selling them insurance and building in the same place?"

DeFazio wants to expand and revamp a buyout process that he describes as inefficient and irrational. He's backing a proposed pilot project that would give homeowners a break on their flood insurance premiums, as long as they agree in advance to a buyout that would turn their property into green space if their homes are substantially damaged by a flood.

Buyout programs rely on federal money distributed through the states, but they generally are carried out by cities and counties that end up owning the properties.

Most buyouts are initiated after disasters, but Congress has become more proactive. Appropriations for FEMA's Pre-Disaster Mitigation Grant Program — which funds buyouts and other precautions, such as elevating homes before disasters strike — have risen from \$25 million in 2015 to \$250 million this year.

A recent study for the National Institute of Building Sciences found that society as a whole saves \$7 in avoided costs for every \$1 spent through federally funded grants to acquire or demolish flood-prone buildings. Yet it's harder to gauge the benefits for the individuals who move.

After Superstorm Sandy pummeled New Jersey and New York in 2012, Duke University graduate school student Devon McGhee researched what happened to hundreds of Staten Island homeowners who took buyouts. She found that all but two of the 323 homeowners she tracked relocated to areas with higher poverty levels. Three-quarters remained on Staten Island, and about one-fifth moved to homes that still were exposed to coastal flooding hazards.

"When people take the buyouts, sometimes the money they are given on their home is not enough to buy a comparable home in a lower-risk area," said McGhee, who now works as a coastal management specialist for an engineering and consulting firm.

The prolonged buyout process also can take an emotional toll on people who are uprooted.

"Maybe they find a home, and it's a good home, but it's not their home where their kids grew up and had birthday parties and that sort of thing. There are these losses that occur in that transition process that can have implications for years," said Sherri Brokopp Binder, an Allentown, Pennsylvania-based consultant who researches disaster buyouts.

Multiple layers of government bureaucracy can slow the buyout process. So can the typical hiccups that come with property sales.

In Kingfisher, Oklahoma, officials are still working to complete a buyout prompted by Tropical Storm Erin in 2007. The city initiated a buyout in 2010, then received additional money to buy more homes about five years later. It's purchased more than 80 so far, with about 10 more to go, said Annie Vest, a former Oklahoma state hazard mitigation officer who now works for an engineering firm administering Kingfisher's grant.

The process is just getting started in some Texas communities swamped by Hurricane Harvey in 2017. Officials in Liberty County, northeast of Houston, held a meeting with residents last month to discuss a \$6.7 million HUD grant to buy out homes near the Trinity River. The county still must get appraisals of the homes, conduct asbestos inspections and take bids for a demolition contractor.

Local officials hope to start taking buyout applications by the end of the year, said David Douglas, the Liberty County engineering administrator and flood plain manager.

Formal discussions of a federally funded buyout likely are a long way off in Hamburg, Iowa, which was inundated in March by a breach of a Missouri River levee.

But local officials aren't waiting around. Mayor Cathy Crain said they are looking into the potential for a private developer to relocate some houses and to acquire higher land where new homes and businesses could be built.

Relocating to higher ground isn't likely in Mosby, unless residents are willing to go elsewhere. The entire core of the town is in a floodway, which means that new development is limited.

Located just northeast of Kansas City, Mosby began as a railroad town in 1887 and expanded with coal mines in the early 20th century. At one time, it had a school, bank, grocery store and lumber yard. Those are gone now, and the trains merely pass by. In 2015, financial strains led the town to eliminate its small police force.

Mosby experienced some of its worst flooding that same year, with three floods in less than six weeks. The next year, city officials began pursuing the buyouts, and more than 40 homeowners signed up. They've been in limbo ever since. Local officials sought nearly \$3 million in funding, submitted a revised application, obtained property appraisals and conducted environmental reviews.

Some residents have been scouting for new housing. Others are waiting to see the bids, which are expected this summer.

Sullivan hopes to get \$28,000 for his home. He would move near his sister in southeastern Missouri, but he's getting impatient.

"I'm just about ready to tell them, 'Take it and shove it,'" he said.

Sitting on the concrete porch of the white wooden house where she's lived for the past 36 years, Tammy Kilgore explains that "everybody's just really on edge and ready to leave."

"The floods, I'm tired of dealing with them, I really am," she said. "I think they should have bought out this town a long time ago."

Follow David A. Lieb at: <http://twitter.com/DavidALieb> .

Woman accused in death of newborn granted pretrial release

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota woman charged with murder in the death of her newborn who was abandoned in a ditch 38 years ago has been released from jail.

Theresa Bentaas, 57, has been in the Minnehaha County Jail since her arrest March 8. Investigators said they used advances in DNA evidence and genealogy sites to determine she was the mother of the infant, called Baby Andrew, whose body was found wrapped in a blanket in a cornfield ditch in Sioux Falls in February 1981.

Bentaas was released Monday, according to the Argus Leader , after a judge changed a \$250,000 cash-only bond to a surety bond, which allows a defendant to work with a bail bondsman to be released while their case is pending.

Bentaas, who is charged with first- and second-degree murder and first-degree manslaughter, told authorities that she hid her pregnancy from her friends and family and gave birth while alone in her apartment, according to a court affidavit. Bentaas told authorities she then drove the baby to the area where he was later discovered.

The baby died of exposure.

Bentaas, who was 19 at the time, said she was "young and stupid" and felt sad and scared as she drove away, according to the document. She later married the infant's father and has two living adult children with him. The father won't be charged because he wasn't involved, authorities have said.

Retired Detective Mike Webb said authorities used DNA from the baby exhumed 10 years ago and DNA obtained from Bentaas through a search warrant. Authorities submitted a DNA sample from Baby Andrew to Parabon NanoLabs, which found two possible matches using the public genealogical database GED-match. Police constructed a family tree and performed a "trash pull" to collect beer, water bottles and cigarette butts at Bentaas' home.

Results from a cheek swab sample show there's "extremely strong evidence" to support a biological relationship between Bentaas and the child, according to the affidavit.

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

Pine Ridge man pleads guilty in a fatal ax attack

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A Pine Ridge man has pleaded guilty in a fatal ax attack.

Emery Arapahoe changed his plea Monday in federal court in an agreement with prosecutors. Arapahoe entered the plea to second-degree murder in the death of 24-year-old Raymond Waters Jr. and to arson for setting a mobile home where Waters was sleeping on fire in 2017.

The Rapid City Journal says he faces up to life in prison on the murder and arson convictions.

Arapahoe, now 18, was initially charged in juvenile court but had his case moved to adult court. A motive for the killing has not been revealed.

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

Victims of Edmunds County farm fire were married couple

BOWDLE, S.D. (AP) — Authorities have identified a man and woman who died in a weekend fire on a South Dakota farm.

Edmunds County Sheriff Todd Holtz says 81-year-old Jerry Schack and 74-year-old Shirlee Schack died in the fire on a farm near Bowdle, in north-central South Dakota.

Holtz says an autopsy found that the Schacks, who were married, died of smoke inhalation.

Crews responded to the fire about 7 a.m. Saturday, and the Schacks' bodies were found after the fire was put out.

Person who shot a motorist in Sioux Falls at large

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Police are looking for the person who shot a motorist in Sioux Falls.

Authorities say the 34-year-old man suffered a gunshot wound to his back Saturday about 2 a.m. The victim told police he was stopped at an intersection when a man got out of his own car and approached him with a gun.

Police spokesman Sam Clemens says the victim drove away as the man fired his gun. The bullet went through the back window of the victim's vehicle, through the driver's seat and hit the man in the back.

Clemens says the man is hospitalized with non-life threatening injuries.

6 die in Indonesia riots; Widodo says he won't allow unrest

By STEPHEN WRIGHT and FADLAN SYAM Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — Indonesian President Joko Widodo said authorities have the volatile situation in the country's capital under control after six people died Wednesday in riots by supporters of his losing rival in last month's presidential election.

The clashes began Tuesday night when supporters of former Gen. Prabowo Subianto tried to force their way into the downtown offices of the election supervisory agency and have continued unabated since then. More than two dozen vehicles were burned as rioters took over neighborhoods in central Jakarta, throwing rocks and Molotov cocktails at police who responded with tear gas, water cannons and rubber bullets.

Flanked by the military chief and other top leaders, a grim-looking Widodo said, "I will work together with anyone to advance this country, but I will not tolerate anyone who disrupts the security, democratic processes and unity of our beloved nation."

Subianto, an ultra-nationalist politician, has refused to accept the official results of the April 17 election and instead declared himself the winner. The Election Commission on Tuesday said Widodo, the first Indonesian president from outside the Jakarta elite, had won 55.5% of the vote, securing the moderate technocrat a second term as leader of the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation. Subianto, an elite figure from a wealthy family connected to former dictator Suharto, also lost to Widodo in 2014. He has made four unsuccessful bids for the presidency since Suharto was ousted in 1998.

"The bottom line is the people who are protesting and rioting in the past 24 hours represent a small

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 42 of 77

minority of Indonesian voters and a small minority of Indonesian Muslims," said Alexander Arifanto, an Indonesian politics expert at the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore.

"The vast majority of both clearly accepted the election results. By tacitly backing the protesters, Prabowo has lost any remaining legitimacy he had left and clearly shows his true colors as a narcissistic New Order-era relic," Arifanto said, referring to the Suharto era.

Rudiantara, the communications and information technology minister, said social media including Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp will be restricted on a temporary basis to prevent the spread of hoaxes and inflammatory content. He said messaging systems will still work for text and audio but photos and videos will be blocked or slowed.

National police chief Tito Karnavian said the people who died in the rioting were hit by gunshots or blunt devices. Authorities are still investigating the causes of death and are not ruling out the involvement of third parties acting as provocateurs.

"There are attempts to create martyrs, blaming security officials for building public anger," he said.

The rioting in the capital was planned and not spontaneous, according to police. Officers found an ambulance filled with stones, and some of the dozens of people arrested had envelopes of money, said national police spokesman Muhammad Iqbal. Many of those arrested had come from outside Jakarta, he said.

The government had deployed some 50,000 police and soldiers in Jakarta in anticipation of protests following the official election results. Many residents have left the city and parts of the downtown are closed to traffic, with the election supervisory agency and Election Commission barricaded with razor wire.

In the past week, authorities have arrested three pro-Subianto activists on suspicion of treason. They included Sunarko, a retired general and former commander of Indonesia's special forces who uses a single name. Police allege there was a plot to seize crucial government buildings in Jakarta.

Subianto's campaign plans to challenge the election result in the Constitutional Court. They allege massive fraud in the world's third-largest democracy but have provided no credible evidence.

The former special forces general and members of his campaign team had said they would mobilize "people power" during days of street protests. Subianto on Wednesday called on supporters and security forces to exercise restraint.

"Like we've said many times before, we support all moral and constitutional means that are peaceful and nonviolent in this political fight for our nation," he said. "And so I plead to all elements of the people exercising their aspirations: the police, the armed forces, and everyone else to refrain from acts of physical harm."

Subianto ran a fear-based election campaign, emphasizing what he sees as Indonesia's weakness and the risk of exploitation by foreign powers or disintegration. He aligned himself with hard-line Muslim groups and won massive majorities in conservative provinces such as Aceh, which follows Islamic Shariah law, but was defeated by Widodo in the president's populous East Java and Central Java strongholds.

Widodo's campaign highlighted his progress in poverty reduction and improving Indonesia's inadequate infrastructure with new ports, toll roads, airports and mass rapid transit.

Associated Press journalists Niniek Karmini and Achmad Ibrahim contributed to this report.

More Democrats seeking impeachment proceedings against Trump

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — More Democrats are calling — and more loudly — for impeachment proceedings against President Donald Trump after his latest defiance of Congress by blocking his former White House lawyer from testifying.

A growing number of rank-and-file House Democrats, incensed by former counsel Don McGahn's empty chair in the Judiciary Committee hearing room on Tuesday, are confronting House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and pushing her and other leaders to act. Their impatience is running up against the speaker's preference for a more methodical approach, including already unfolding court battles.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 43 of 77

Pelosi summoned some of them — still a small fraction of the House Democratic caucus — to a meeting of investigators on Wednesday to assess strategy.

Trump on Wednesday repeated his mantra about Democrats contributing to a “Witch Hunt” against him. “The Democrats are getting ZERO work done in Congress,” he tweeted.

Some Democratic leaders, while backing Pelosi, signaled that a march to impeachment may become inevitable.

“We are confronting what might be the largest, broadest cover-up in American history,” Majority Leader Steny Hoyer told reporters. If a House inquiry “leads to other avenues including impeachment,” the Maryland Democrat said, “so be it.”

Reps. Joaquin Castro of Texas and Diana DeGette of Colorado added their voices to the impeachment inquiry chorus.

“There is political risk in doing so, but there’s a greater risk to our country in doing nothing,” Castro said on Twitter. “This is a fight for our democracy.”

Tweeted DeGette: “The facts laid out in the Mueller report, coupled with this administration’s ongoing attempts to stonewall Congress, leave us no other choice.”

One Republican congressman, Justin Amash of Michigan, has called for impeachment proceedings. He said Tuesday he thinks other GOP lawmakers should join him — but only after reading special counsel Robert Mueller’s report carefully.

Republican House leader Kevin McCarthy dismissed Amash as out of step with House Republicans and “out of step with America.” And Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina said wryly of Amash’s position, “I don’t think it’s going to be a trend-setting move.”

As Democrats weigh their options, Trump is almost taunting them by testing the bounds of executive power in ways few other administrations have. The White House contends that even former employees like McGahn do not have to abide by subpoenas from Congress.

A short time later House Judiciary Chairman Jerrold Nadler issued subpoenas for more Trump administration officials — former White House communications director Hope Hicks and Annie Donaldson, a former aide in the White House counsel’s office — for documents and testimony.

Trump’s former White House counsel is the most-cited witness in Mueller’s Trump-Russia investigation report, recounting the president’s attempts to interfere with the probe. And that makes his silence all the more infuriating for Democrats.

Nadler gaveled open Tuesday’s hearing with a stern warning that McGahn will be held in contempt for failing to appear.

“Our subpoenas are not optional,” Nadler said. “We will not allow the president to stop this investigation.”

However, Rep. Doug Collins, the ranking Republican on the committee, spoke scornfully of Nadler’s position, calling the session a “circus” and saying the chairman preferred a public “fight over fact-finding.”

Democrats are “trying desperately to make something out of nothing,” Collins said, in the aftermath of Mueller’s report.

A lawyer for McGahn had said he would follow the president’s directive and skip Tuesday’s hearing, leaving the Democrats without yet another witness — and a growing debate within the party about how to respond.

Nadler said the committee would vote to hold McGahn in contempt, though that’s not expected until June, after lawmakers return from the Memorial Day recess.

Democrats are encouraged by an early success in the legal battles, a Monday ruling by a federal judge against Trump on in a financial records dispute with Congress. Trump’s team filed notice of appeal on Tuesday.

But Pelosi’s strategy hasn’t been swift enough for some lawmakers. In particular, several members of the Judiciary panel feel they must take the lead in at least launching impeachment proceedings.

They say a formal impeachment inquiry could give Democrats more standing in court, even if they stop short of a vote to remove the president.

“I think that’s something a lot of members of the committee — and more and more members of the

caucus — think is necessary,” said Rep. Steve Cohen of Tennessee. “I think an inquiry, as the Senate Watergate hearings were, would lead the public to see the misdeeds of this administration.”

Others, though, including some from more conservative districts, said they prefer the step-by-step approach.

“We want to make sure that we’re following all the legal processes, everything we’ve been given, to truly make the best decisions,” said Rep. Lucy McBath of Georgia, a freshman on the Judiciary panel.

Pelosi scheduled Wednesday’s meeting with lawmakers from the Judiciary and Oversight committees after some members confronted her during a meeting among top Democrats Monday evening.

At that time, Rep. Jamie Raskin of Maryland led others in arguing that an impeachment inquiry would consolidate the Trump investigations and allow Democrats to keep more focus on their other legislative work, according to people familiar with the private conversation who requested anonymity to discuss it.

Pelosi pushed back, saying that several committees are doing investigations already and noting that Rep. Elijah Cummings of Maryland, the chairman of the Oversight Committee, already had won the early court battle over Trump’s financial documents.

With a 235-197 Democratic majority, Pelosi would likely find support for starting impeachment proceedings, but it could be a tighter vote than that margin suggests. Some lawmakers say voters back home are more interested in health care and the economy. Many come from more conservative districts where they need to run for re-election in communities where Trump also has support.

For Pelosi, it’s a push-pull exercise as she tries to raise awareness about Trump’s behavior without moving toward impeachment unless she knows the public is with Congress.

“We’ve been in this thing for almost five months and now we’re getting some results,” Pelosi told lawmakers Monday night. “We’ve always said one thing will lead to another as we get information.”

But other Democrats in the meeting, several of whom have spoken publicly about a need to be more aggressive with Trump, are increasingly impatient. They include Reps. David Cicilline of Rhode Island, Ted Lieu of California and freshman Joe Neguse of Colorado.

“We’re in a very grave moment,” said Rep. Madeleine Dean of Pennsylvania, and “probably right now are left, with nothing but that we must open an inquiry.”

Tweeted Rep. Veronica Escobar of Texas: Congress has made “accommodation after accommodation. I don’t think we should wait any longer.”

Associated Press writers Laurie Kellman, Matthew Daly, Michael Balsamo, Jonathan Lemire, Eric Tucker and Mark Sherman contributed to this report.

Sea dragon exhibit dazzles visitors at California aquarium

By JULIE WATSON Associated Press

LA JOLLA, California (AP) — At first glance, it looks like a branch of kelp, but then an eye moves among its leafy appendages, and ridges of tiny, translucent fins start to flutter, sending the creature gliding through the water like something from a fairy tale.

A Southern California aquarium has built what is believed to be one of the world’s largest habitats for the surreal sea dragons, whose native populations off Australia are threatened by pollution, warming oceans and the illegal pet and alternative medicine trades.

The Birch Aquarium at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California San Diego hopes the exhibit, which opened this month, will lead to the leafy sea dragon, the lesser-known cousin of the seahorse, being bred for the first time in captivity.

“It literally just looked like a piece of kelp,” said Steven Kowal, 25, who was visiting San Diego from Greensboro, North Carolina, and took time to see the exhibit. “It was crazy to me that it was, like, actually living and swimming around, so that’s cool. I’ve never seen anything like that.”

That’s a common reaction.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 45 of 77

"They look like something out of this world," said Leslee Matsushige, the aquarium's associate curator, who noted the sea dragons' amazing ability to camouflage themselves. "When people see them move, you hear them say, 'What? That's alive? Wow! That's crazy.'"

Scientists like Matsushige hope the creatures' magnetic power will prompt people to read the signs next to the tanks that outline ways to protect them and what can be done to make oceans healthier, such as picking up trash and stopping pollutants from going down the drain.

Few aquariums have sea dragons. There are only two types of sea dragons, the leafy and the weedy, each representing its own genus. Both kinds are found only in a small area of temperate waters off the southern and western coasts of Australia.

Little is known about them because their populations are so small and in remote areas.

So far, only the weedy sea dragon, a bony fish that resembles seaweed when floating, has been bred in captivity, and only a handful of times.

The Aquarium of the Pacific in Long Beach was the first in the world to breed the weedy sea dragons in 2001. It also is trying to breed leafy sea dragons.

The Birch Aquarium's 18-foot-long (5.5-meter-long) tank has three leafy sea dragons — two males and one female — and 11 weedy sea dragons. The 5,300-gallon (20,062-liter) tank is a vast space, especially for the smaller leafy sea dragon, which grows to only about 14 inches (36 centimeters) in length. The tank has grassy plants, a sandy bottom and rocks.

Scientists hope the large space will foster breeding. Sea dragons mirror each other in a courtship dance, spiraling upward before the female deposits her eggs onto a patch on the underside of the male's tail. Like seahorses, the male carries the young and gives birth.

"We're already seeing great courtship behaviors, and so we're hopeful we can get some egg transfers really soon," said Jenn Nero Moffatt, director of animal care at the Birch Aquarium.

The exhibit is the latest effort by the aquarium that is a world leader in seahorse propagation.

Sea dragons swim by spinning translucent fins while their tails act as rudders. They have no natural predators, in part because their slender bodies are covered by bony plates.

If both types of sea dragons can be bred, scientists believe it could reduce the number being taken illegally from the wild.

Big question for EU vote: How well will the far-right do?

By RAF CASERT Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — The elections to the European Parliament have never been so hotly anticipated, with many predicting that this year's ballot which starts Thursday will mark a coming-of-age moment for the euroskeptic far-right movement.

The elections, which run through Sunday and take place in all of the European Union's 28 nations, have never had stakes that high.

Europe's traditional political powerhouses — the center-right European People's Party and the center-left Socialists & Democrats — are set to lose some clout and face their strongest challenge yet from an array of populist, nationalist and far-right parties that are determined to claw back power from the EU for their own national governments.

Here's a look at the vote that starts Thursday in the Netherlands and Britain:

A CLASH OF VALUES

This clash of basic values — between Europe growing more united or more divided — has put the continent at a historic political crossroads.

French President Emmanuel Macron, champion of the closer-integration camp, says the challenge at the polls this week is to "not cede to a coalition of destruction and disintegration" that will seek to dismantle the unity the EU has built up over the past six decades.

Facing off against Macron and Europe's traditional parties are Italian Interior Minister Matteo Salvini, Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, French far-right leader Marine Le Pen and a host of other populist,

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 46 of 77

right-wing or far-right leaders who have vowed to fundamentally upend Europe's political landscape.

Nationalist leaders from 11 EU nations stood together in Milan last weekend — a show of unity unthinkable in previous years from a group once considered to be on Europe's political fringe. Salvini then declared "the extremists are in Brussels," the home of EU institutions, for wanting to retain the status quo.

"We need to do everything that is right to free this country, this continent, from the illegal occupation organized by Brussels," Salvini said.

TAKING FROM THE TRUMP PLAYBOOK

Europe's far-right and nationalist parties hope to emulate what President Donald Trump did in the 2016 U.S. election and what Brexiteers achieved in the U.K. referendum to leave the EU. That is to disrupt the powers that be, rail against what they see as an out-of-touch elite and warn against migrants massing at Europe's borders ready to rob the continent of its jobs and culture.

Standing with Salvini, Le Pen promised the far-right "will perform a historic feat," saying they could end up as high as the second-biggest political group in the EU parliament.

Predictions show that is still extremely ambitious. Projections released by the European Parliament this month show the center-right European People's Party bloc losing 37 of its 217 seats and the center-left S&D group dropping from 186 seats to 149.

As for the far-right and nationalists, the Europe of Nations and Freedom group is predicted to win 62 seats, compared to 37 currently. Such statistics though could be irrelevant as soon as Monday if national parties start shifting to other EU-wide political groups in the 751-seat European legislature which meets both in Brussels and France's Strasbourg.

Orban's nationalist Fidesz party is now in the EPP's ranks, but has been suspended for its anti-EU stance and virulent anti-migration rhetoric. The Hungarian prime minister might well bolt after the election to a new radical-right group, perhaps to be formed by Salvini, Le Pen and other nationalist leaders.

WAR, TAXES, UNEMPLOYMENT

For many among the EU's half billion citizens, the memories of war have vanished and the EU's role in helping to keep the peace for 75 years, a feat for which it won the Nobel Prize, is overlooked.

Yet Europe was body-slammed by the financial crisis a decade ago and struggled through a yearslong debt crisis that saw nations like Greece, Ireland, Portugal and Cyprus get bailouts and produced recessions that slashed the incomes of millions.

Europe's high taxes, stagnant wages and gap between rich and poor are still a sore point, highlighted now by weekly protests by France's yellow vest movement demanding more help for hard-pressed workers. EU nations have also not been able to forge a common approach to migration, fueling inter-bloc tensions, and its impotence in quickly containing a migrant influx in 2015 has propelled a surge of support for far-right and nationalist parties.

"We have a crisis of the European Union. This is a matter of fact," Macron acknowledged.

Experts say he's right.

"There are a lot of people who fear that things potentially are moving in the wrong direction or already have moved in the wrong direction," said Janis Emmanouilidis at the European Policy Centre think-tank in Brussels. "It is a mix of multiple insecurities which, at the end of the day, is pushing people toward those who are coming up with easy answers."

TURNING INTO A POTENT FORCE

Since the first European Parliament election in 1979, the legislature has slowly changed from a toothless organization where over-the-hill politicians got cushy pre-retirement jobs to a potent force with real decision-making powers.

The EU at first primarily regulated farming but now sets international trade policy for all members and even monetary rules for the 19 nations who use the shared euro currency.

The legislature itself affects Europeans' daily lives in thousands of ways: cutting smartphone roaming charges, imposing safety and health rules for industries ranging from chemicals and energy to autos and food, supporting farming, reforming copyright rules and protecting the environment.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 47 of 77

There are no cross-border elections this week, just national polls in 28 nations. Each EU nation gets a number of seats in the EU parliament based on its population. Cyprus, Luxembourg and Malta have the fewest seats with six each, while the EU's most populous member, Germany, has 96 seats.

Up until now, EU elections were tepid affairs. Voter turnout slumped to just 42.6% in 2014 — but that could well change this year.

WHICH WAY FORWARD?

The pro-EU side says increasing integration is essential for the EU to survive in a globalized world. Euro-skeptics say it robs national identity whenever more decisions are made at EU headquarters in Brussels.

Yet even some mainstream conservatives can have a euroskeptic streak. Czech politician Jan Zahradil, lead candidate for the Alliance of Conservatives and Reformists, is among those seeking to return more control to Europe's national capitals.

"(We want) an EU that is scaled back, that is flexible, that is decentralized," Zahradil said. "(An EU) that respects national governments and that cooperates with them, that doesn't fight them, that doesn't patronize them, that doesn't lecture them."

For the pro-EU side, in a world in which China, the U.S. and Russia are all flexing their political and financial muscles, Macron urges voters to think about the strength and unity that comes from 28 smaller nations working together.

"If you fragment Europe, there is no chance you have a stronger Europe. Unity makes strength," Macron said.

Associated Press writers Lorne Cook in Brussels, Angela Charlton in Paris, Elena Becatoros in Athens and Colleen Barry in Milan contributed to this report.

For more news from The Associated Press on the European Parliament elections go to <https://www.apnews.com/EuropeanParliament>

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

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

1. IMPEACHMENT CALLS GROW IN HOUSE

More Democrats are calling for action against Trump after his latest defiance of Congress by blocking his former White House lawyer from testifying.

2. NORTH KOREA HURLS INSULTS AT BIDEN

Pyongyang labels the presidential candidate a "fool of low IQ" and an "imbecile bereft of elementary quality as a human being" after he recently called Kim Jong Un a tyrant.

3. HOW FAKE NEWS IS EVOLVING

As the EU gears up for a crucial election, it is mostly homegrown groups that are using social media to push false information and extremist messages, experts say.

4. NONPROFITS TURN TO CRYPTOCURRENCY TO HELP NEEDY VENEZUELAN

A handful of charities are using digital currencies to send relief directly to those in need in Venezuela, circumventing banks and companies that handle remittances.

5. INFRASTRUCTURE TALKS BACK ON

Trump and Democratic congressional leaders will meet again to formulate a \$2 trillion package to invest in roads, bridges and broadband.

6. VIOLENCE ERUPTS IN INDONESIAN CAPITAL

Six people have died in election rioting in Jakarta as supporters of the losing presidential candidate burn vehicles and battle police while the government restricts social media.

7. PLEA DEAL FOR SERIAL ONLINE HARASSER FITS LENIENT PATTERN

A Denver man who posted a Facebook message threatening to kill women in retaliation for years of

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 48 of 77

romantic rejection has been catching breaks from courts in Colorado and Utah, AP finds.

8. E-AUTO BOOM COULD COST INDUSTRY JOBS

Volkswagen is creating its first all-electric plant in Germany, a move illustrating how the global shift to battery-only cars could disrupt a long-established industry and its jobs, AP reports.

9. THEME PARK TO STAR 'HUNGER GAMES,' 'TWILIGHT'

Lionsgate is opening what it calls the world's first vertical theme park in China featuring some of the studio's top films, AP learns.

10. A REMATCH 49 YEARS IN THE MAKING

The Bruins and Blues will meet in the Stanley Cup Final, a rematch of the 1970 series that ended with Bobby Orr's famous goal and leaping celebration.

North Korea calls Biden 'fool of low IQ' over Kim criticism

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea has labeled Joe Biden a "fool of low IQ" and an "imbecile bereft of elementary quality as a human being" after the U.S. presidential hopeful called North Korean leader Kim Jong Un a tyrant during a recent speech.

Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency on Wednesday said the former American vice president had insulted the country's supreme leadership and committed an "intolerable and serious politically-motivated provocation" against the North.

Biden during a campaign launch in Philadelphia on Saturday accused President Donald Trump of cozying up to "dictators and tyrants" like Kim and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"What he uttered is just sophism of an imbecile bereft of elementary quality as a human being, let alone a politician," KCNA said.

The piece, labeled a commentary, said Biden had "gone reckless and senseless, seized by ambition for power." It went on to mention apparent Biden gaffes, such as once appearing to fall asleep during a speech by President Barack Obama.

"It is by no means accidental that here is nonstop comment over his bid for candidacy that he is not worth pinning hope on, backed by the jeer that he is a fool of low IQ," KCNA said.

It mocked Biden's belief that he was "the most popular presidential candidate." "This is enough to make a cat laugh," the report said.

There was no immediate reaction from the Biden camp, possibly due to the late hour in the United States.

North Korea has often unleashed crude insults against U.S. and South Korean politicians to criticize what it sees as slanderous remarks toward its leadership or hostile diplomatic and military policies against Pyongyang. The insults have included racist and sexist diatribes, including when the North called Obama "a monkey" and former South Korean President Park Geun-hye, the country's first female leader, a prostitute.

During tensions created by a provocative run in missile tests in 2017, Kim called Trump a "mentally deranged U.S. dotard" after he said that the United States would "totally destroy North Korea" if forced to defend itself or its allies.

The North's description of Trump dramatically improved after Kim initiated diplomacy with Washington and Seoul in 2018 while attempting to leverage his nuclear arsenal for economic and security benefits. The nuclear negotiations between Washington and Pyongyang stalled in February when a summit between Kim and Trump collapsed over mismatched demands in sanctions relief and disarmament.

Biden: Congress should protect abortion rights, if necessary

By BILL BARROW and ELANA SCHOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Joe Biden would support Congress enshrining abortion rights into federal law "should it become necessary," his presidential campaign said Tuesday, following several other Democratic candidates in promising to take that step if elected president.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 49 of 77

The hot button issue has shot to the forefront of the Democratic primary following a spate of new Republican-backed state laws curbing access to abortion. With all the two dozen Democratic White House hopefuls supportive of abortion rights, the debate in the party has centered on how aggressive they should be if the Supreme Court were to eventually overturn legalized abortion nationwide.

Biden released a video on Tuesday blasting the GOP-backed state laws as "pernicious" and "wrong." He stopped short in the video of endorsing congressional action and offered no specifics on how he would defend *Roe v. Wade*, the landmark 1973 Supreme Court decision that is now potentially threatened with new legal challenges.

Asked by The Associated Press whether Biden believed the high court decision should be codified in law, the campaign initially pointed to the video, then later added that the former vice president would support legislation "should it become necessary." A campaign aide then clarified that Biden would support action immediately, regardless of whether the Supreme Court overturned *Roe*.

The campaign's responses highlight what Biden, a devout Roman Catholic, once called his "middle of the road" approach on abortion. As a young senator, he expressed reservations that the Supreme Court "went too far" in its abortion decision. Since then, he's joined the mainstream of the Democratic Party in defending *Roe*, though as a senator he sometimes voted with abortion-rights foes on bills related to late-term terminations.

As a moderate figure in a party whose loudest factions often embrace more doctrinaire positions, Biden is already walking a tightrope in the Democratic Party. And his evolving statements on abortion over his four decades in politics could give an opening to rivals who have seized on the Republican push to overturn *Roe* as a way to affirm their commitment to abortion rights.

Sens. Kirsten Gillibrand of New York, Cory Booker of New Jersey and Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts endorsed new federal laws safeguarding women's right to a legal abortion after Alabama passed a statute that amounts to an outright abortion ban. Sen. Kamala Harris of California also has supported the codification of *Roe* on the campaign trail, and Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont told the AP on Tuesday that he backs federal lawmaking on abortion rights.

Several of the senators visited the steps of the Supreme Court on Tuesday for one of hundreds of nationwide rallies organized by activist groups to protest state-level abortion restrictions. Gillibrand urged an energetic crowd of more than 100 people to "organize, advocate and vote" in order to ensure abortion rights are protected.

Biden did not attend such a rally Tuesday, instead releasing the video as he was in Orlando, Florida, for a campaign fundraiser.

"What this is all about is trying to get an appeal to the Supreme Court in the hope that the conservative justice the president has in fact put on the court will vote to overrule *Roe v. Wade*, the law of the land," Biden said. "It's wrong. It's pernicious. And we have to stop it."

Biden has long had to navigate the complicated politics of abortion.

Referencing his faith, he's noted often that he believes his church's teachings that abortion is morally wrong but added that shouldn't dictate public policy.

"I refuse to impose my religious beliefs on other people," he said in his Tuesday email to supporters.

As a young senator when *Roe* was first decided, Biden worried that the decision "went too far," a quote that was resurrected and redistributed on social media earlier this year. He later became a staunch defender of the high court decision.

"I've stuck to my middle-of-the-road position on abortion for more than 30 years," he wrote in his 2007 book "Promises to Keep." "I still vote against partial birth abortion and federal funding, and I'd like to make it easier for scared young mothers to choose not to have an abortion, but I will also vote against a constitutional amendment that strips a woman of her right to make her own choice."

He was referring in part to his decades of support for the Hyde Amendment, which has forbidden government insurance programs from covering abortion. He was captured on video in recent weeks telling an activist he no longer supports the Hyde Amendment.

Barrow reported from Atlanta. Associated Press writer Hunter Woodall contributed to this report from Bedford, N.H.

Follow the reporters on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/eschor> and <https://twitter.com/BillBarrowAP>

Plea deal for serial online harasser fits lenient pattern

By **MICHAEL KUNZELMAN, MARYCLAIRE DALE and COLLEEN SLEVIN** Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — Only hours before women marched through many U.S. cities in January, Christopher Cleary set off a manhunt when he posted a Facebook message threatening to kill “as many girls as I see” in retaliation for years of romantic rejection.

Cleary, 27, called himself a virgin who never had a girlfriend, stoking fears of another deadly rampage by a man blaming women for his problems. When police tracked his cellphone and arrested the Colorado resident at a McDonald’s restaurant in Provo, Utah, Cleary said he had been upset and wasn’t thinking clearly.

The frightening Facebook post fit a pattern of behavior for a troubled man with a history of terrorizing women he met over the internet.

His plea deal with Utah prosecutors appears to fit a pattern of lenient punishments — a common outcome for cyberstalking and online harassment cases.

“The vast majority of people, if there isn’t a lot of training and education going on, tend to dismiss these things,” said Carol Tracy, executive director of the Women’s Law Project in Philadelphia. “That’s why stalking is so dangerous. You think, ‘It’s not a crime. He’s got free speech.’”

Cleary pleaded guilty in April to a reduced charge of attempted threat of terrorism, a felony punishable by up to five years in prison. But prosecutors agreed to recommend probation, sparing him any additional jail time in Utah beyond the months he’s served since his Jan. 19 arrest.

If a judge accepts the recommended sentence during a hearing Thursday in Provo, it won’t be the first time Cleary avoids a prison term. Judges in Colorado gave him similar breaks after a string of women and teenagers accused him of making threats and harassing them.

The prosecutor on the Utah case said the plea bargain is designed to secure a felony conviction that could help Colorado authorities get a prison sentence for Cleary’s probation violations.

Agreeing to recommend probation was the key to securing his guilty plea, Deputy Utah County Attorney Douglas Finch said.

Finch said Utah’s criminal statutes leave a “huge gap” between a misdemeanor charge of threatening violence and a felony charge of making a threat of terrorism. He said his office views Cleary as an “unbelievably dangerous individual” but wasn’t certain it could prove the “stupid, horrible” message he posted on his Facebook account rose to the level of a terrorism threat.

“I did my review of the case with some concern over the statutes,” Finch said. “The problem is that I feel (Cleary) falls right in the middle of those two areas, but most likely he falls in the lowest level.”

He noted the Utah judge is still free to sentence Cleary to prison.

At least eight people since 2012 have contacted authorities to accuse Cleary of stalking or harassing them, according to an Associated Press review of police and court records. Police in Colorado also investigated complaints that Cleary threatened to bomb a grocery store in 2013 after an employee refused to cash his check, threatened to slit the throat of a Denver city employee after his car was towed, and threatened a mass shooting at a mental health facility during a phone call in 2016.

Cleary was on probation for a marijuana conviction when, in 2016, he was charged with stalking two 18-year-old women he met online. He was on probation and in mental health court for the stalking cases when he was charged in 2017 with stalking and harassing a third woman who was Cleary’s caseworker. Last year, judges in Jefferson County, Colorado, sentenced him to probation in all three stalking cases.

Cleary, a Denver resident, was still on probation in Jefferson County when he was arrested in Utah. Pam Russell, a spokeswoman for the county prosecutor’s office, said once the Utah case has concluded, Cleary

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 51 of 77

will be returned to Colorado and prosecutors will seek to revoke his probation and send Cleary to prison.

Cleary also has a warrant for his arrest in Denver, where a 17-year-old told police in 2015 that he sent her a string of threatening text messages, including "I own multipul guns I can have u dead in a second."

A public defender representing Cleary in Utah declined to comment. Cleary told the officer who arrested him in Provo that he has "some kind of impulse disorder" and had been taking medication but couldn't remember what type, according to records. Earlier, a Colorado defense attorney said in court that Cleary had been diagnosed with major depressive disorder.

The timing of Cleary's Utah arrest — on the second anniversary of the Women's March on Washington — and the language of his Facebook threat led to speculation on the internet and in some news reports that he could be an "incel," short for "involuntary celibate." The incel movement, an online subculture linked to deadly attacks in California, Toronto and Florida, promotes the misogynistic idea that men are entitled to have sex with women.

"All I wanted was to be loved," Cleary wrote in his post, "yet no one cares about me I'm 27 years old and I've never had a girlfriend before and I'm still a virgin, this is why I'm planning on shooting up a public place soon and being the next mass shooter cause I'm ready to die and all the girls the turned me down is going to make it right by killing as many girls as I see."

A Colorado police detective who investigated two women's stalking accusations said he didn't find any evidence Cleary identified as an incel or had other ideological motives. "I truly think he's just wired differently," Arvada Police Detective Michael Roemer said. And two of Cleary's accusers have said they had a sexual relationship with him.

Experts said Cleary appears to be emblematic of how police and courts typically handle cyberstalking and online harassment cases.

University of Maryland law professor Danielle Citron, author of the book "Hate Crimes in Cyberspace," said state criminal statutes outlawing such behavior typically are misdemeanors with light punishments that don't deter offenders. The criminal justice system tends to view online abuse as "no big deal," she said, and perpetrators get empathy while "we forget and erase the victims."

Bennet Kelley, a Santa Monica, California, lawyer who represents victims of online abuse, said police turned away one of his clients, a revenge porn victim, even though California has one of the nation's strongest laws against revenge porn. "I've actually had judges tell me they don't do internet stuff," he said. "One of them transferred the case rather than deal with it."

The sentencing in Cleary's Jefferson County, Colorado, case came in April 2018. He got three years' probation for stalking three women.

One victim, Hannah Keller, saw his mugshot on television after his Utah arrest. She said he harassed her with phone calls, text messages and Facebook posts on and off for roughly two years before she finally contacted police in 2015. "He didn't ever explain a disregard for women when I was with him," she said. "I just thought he was messed up in general."

A second victim, Cleary's former caseworker, told police in 2017 that she had a sexual relationship with him but tried to end it. She said Cleary made repeated death threats and created fake Craigslist ads soliciting sex and rape, using her phone number and an address within a block of her home.

During a hearing last year, Jefferson County Judge Dennis Hall said he and a second judge struggled to fashion appropriate sentences for Cleary's convictions. Hall said they ultimately decided a prison sentence "would just make it all worse," according to a transcript.

"I'm obviously concerned about the victim here ... but my concern is that I think to make the community a better place, you need to be treated here," Hall told Cleary. "It won't do the community any good if I put you in prison and make you worse."

Prosecutors had urged Hall to sentence Cleary to Community Corrections, a residential supervision and treatment program that's an alternative to prison or probation.

Cleary told Hall he was "100% committed" to getting help. He said he was seeing a therapist and psychiatrist.

When the second judge asked Cleary how he planned to handle frustrating situations, Cleary insisted he was getting better at controlling his anger. "Before when I got angry, I used to flip out and things would just be the end of the world," he said, according to a transcript.

That judge, Jeffrey Pilkington, warned Cleary a prison sentence may be "the only option" if his probation was revoked again.

Victoria Lathrop is one of Cleary's earlier victims. She said he seemed like a nice guy when they met online in 2015. They communicated for a few weeks by texts and Facetime. But after she turned down his sexual advances, Cleary created a Facebook page using her name and a topless photo he apparently captured while she changed clothes during a video chat. She said Cleary sent Facebook friend requests to her friends from the fake account.

Lathrop's ordeal didn't end when a judge sentenced Cleary to probation for harassing her in 2015. She kept hearing from him for years, from different numbers or online identities. Then, last year, he sent her the naked Facebook profile.

Lathrop called police again, but she says they told her there was no way to be sure it was him.

She wonders if authorities should have taken her case more seriously.

"If he's so persistent stalking women and doing this stuff, I don't think that violence is past him," she told AP.

Kunzelman reported from College Park, Maryland, Dale from Philadelphia, and Slevin from Denver.

Officials to tackle thorny issue of infrastructure funding

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Reality has set in during the three weeks since President Donald Trump and Democratic congressional leaders agreed to work together on a \$2 trillion package to invest in roads, bridges and broadband.

Republican leaders in Congress have shown little enthusiasm for the price tag, and even less for the idea of raising the federal fuel tax to help pay for upgrading the nation's infrastructure. Trump himself has suggested that Democrats are somehow setting a trap to get him to go along with a tax increase.

Trump and Democratic lawmakers will meet at the White House on Wednesday for Round 2 of their infrastructure talks.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said after their last White House meeting in late April that there was a consensus on one aspect of infrastructure: The agreement would be big and bold. But funding is a different matter. Democrats emerged saying they would return to hear Trump's suggestions on how to pay for infrastructure.

But Trump expressed wariness in a Fox News interview that aired Sunday, saying he thought the White House was "being played by the Democrats a little bit. You know, I think what they want me to do is say, 'Well, what we'll do is raise taxes,' and we'll do this and this and this, and then they'll have a news conference, see, 'Trump wants to raise taxes.'"

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., dismissed the potential for a sweeping plan or for raising the gas tax at a recent Senate GOP lunch with Vice President Mike Pence, according to those familiar with the meeting.

And House Minority Whip Steve Scalise, R-La., said that it was unrealistic to place the funding decision with the president. Democrats will need to make suggestions, too.

"You don't ask the president, 'Show me how to pay for it,'" Scalise said. "The president doesn't pass the bill that pays for it. Ultimately, it has got to go through the House and Senate. We, Republicans and Democrats in Congress, have to come to an agreement, working with the White House, on how to pay for it. Those negotiations haven't really started in earnest."

The White House released a letter Tuesday night that Trump sent Pelosi and Schumer in advance of the meeting letting them know his preference for Congress taking up the proposed U.S. trade deal with

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 53 of 77

Mexico and Canada before other issues.

"Once Congress has passed USMCA, we should turn our attention to a bipartisan infrastructure package," Trump said.

Trump also requested that Pelosi and Schumer provide more specifics about how much they would like to dedicate to the various priorities they want an infrastructure bill to cover, such as airports, ports and local wastewater systems.

"Your caucus has expressed a wide-range of priorities, and it is unclear which ones have your support," he said.

Trump also complained that he had hoped to work out the priorities following a meeting in late April at the White House, "but you cancelled a scheduled meeting of our teams, preventing them from advancing our discussions. Nevertheless, I remain committed to passing an infrastructure bill."

Shortly after the release of Trump's letter, Pelosi and Schumer issued their own statement, promising to continue "to insist on our principles: that any plan we support be big, bold and bipartisan; that it be comprehensive, future-focused, green and resilient; and that it be a jobs and ownership-boost with strong Buy America, labor, and women, veteran and minority-owned business protections."

Business and trade groups have been meeting with White House officials to emphasize the importance of shoring up the Highway Trust Fund, which pays for road improvements and transit systems. Federal fuel taxes supply most of the money that goes into the trust fund, but the purchasing power of the gas tax has declined as vehicles have become more fuel efficient.

Some 30 states have enacted fuel tax increases to raise money for local roads and bridges over the past six years, but Congress has not approved a fuel tax increase since 1993. It now stands at 18.3 cents a gallon for gasoline and 24.3 cents a gallon for diesel.

The advocacy groups are trying to make the case that state politicians supportive of gas tax increases have not been punished at the ballot box.

"The political playbook has changed. People will vote for infrastructure even if it means new user fees," said Linda Bauer Darr, president & CEO of the American Council of Engineering Companies.

However, the White House has been reluctant to provide any details of what the president will support.

Rep. Earl Blumenauer, D-Ore., introduced a bill Tuesday that would raise the fuels tax by 5 cents a year over five years and allow it to rise at the rate of inflation thereafter. It also would establish that Congress intends to replace the fuel tax with a more equitable, stable source of funding within 10 years. Blumenauer supports taxing vehicles — including electric ones — based on miles traveled.

"It is past time that we get real about funding our infrastructure needs," Blumenauer said. "We can't afford inaction any longer."

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the AFL-CIO and the American Trucking Associations voiced support for Blumenauer's bill. That's a rare mix of support on a major issue before Congress.

But some conservative groups are urging Congress to resist any gas tax increases. The Charles Koch-funded Americans for Prosperity said lawmakers should streamline the permitting process for construction on highways and other infrastructure, a move that could alienate many Democratic lawmakers.

"Congress has money to improve roads and bridges. They just need to spend it smarter," said Russ Latino, a vice president at Americans for Prosperity.

AP Congressional Correspondent Lisa Mascaro contributed to this report.

Reach Kevin Freking on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/APkfreking>

APNewsBreak: Theme park to star 'Hunger Games,' 'Twilight'

By JONATHAN LANDRUM Jr. AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Some of Lionsgate's most popular film franchises from "Hunger Games" to "Twilight" will be brought to life when the studio opens what it calls the world's first vertical theme park in China this summer.

Lionsgate Entertainment World will offer several adventures including a virtual reality motorcycle ride based on "Twilight," a maximum-security prison breakout like in "Escape Plan" and a replica of The Capitol lobby from "Hunger Games," complete with shops where guests can fashion themselves in the film's distinctive couture.

More than 25 rides and virtual reality experiences will pack a sleek, futuristic looking bean-shaped building that stands 10 stories high. The theme park, which will also include attractions based on films such as "Divergent," "Now You See Me" and "Gods of Egypt," is scheduled to open in July on Hengqin Island located in Zhuhai, China.

"We found a way to create this theme park experience inside of one box over multiple floors," said Jenefer Brown, senior vice president of Global Live and Location Based Entertainment at Lionsgate.

"We created experiences that are immersive, that tell stories and are organic to the brands," she said. "It's a mix of all the cutting-edge attractions that you'll find in entertainment right now."

Brown said Lionsgate decided to create its first theme park to expand their international brand into China where films like "Twilight" and "Gods of Egypt" are popular. She said the studio hopes to capitalize off Zhuhai's emerging status as a tourist destination and its proximity to Macau, which is considered the "Las Vegas of China." She said the Chimelong Ocean Kingdom theme park in Zhuhai has already drawn tens of millions of people.

The Santa Monica, California-based company expects to have around 1.5 million park goers this year.

"We would complement Macau," Brown said. "The idea is to have Vegas and Orlando right next to each other and create this super tourist destination. ... People are already coming here. But we're on the early side in terms of development on the island. It's growing into this dedicated kind of entertainment tourist place and virtual containment vessel."

The theme park will be a part of a large destination called Novotown, a multi-phase project that includes a hotel and office towers along with retail dining and entertainment. Future phases include plans for the National Geographic Ultimate Explorer and Real Madrid interactive experiences, as well as an international school will be built offering British-based education.

Here are some of the theme park's other features shown to The Associated Press during a recent sneak peek of the park's design and attractions:

FLYING, AND FASHION, IN "HUNGER GAMES"

Based on the four-part film series starring Jennifer Lawrence as Katniss Everdeen, park goers will journey through a motion simulator 3D ride experience called The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Flight Rebel Escape. It starts on the streets before riders board a vehicle that gets picked up by a hovercraft that flies through The Capitol.

Guests will also have the opportunity to venture around the lobby area of The Capitol where they can get their hair, makeup and even nails done to look like a citizen of the "Hunger Games" films, including the look of chaperone Effie Trinket.

Restaurants will feature a "Hunger Games"-themed menu with different dishes inspired by the film's various districts.

BIKING WITH WOLVES IN "TWILIGHT"

Guests will have a chance to spend time in Forks, the town where author Stephenie Meyer based her vampire novels before they were turned into movies.

Twilight Saga: Midnight Ride offers a chance for four to hop on a motorcycle and take a virtual ride with Jacob Black and a pack of wolves on a dirt-bike adventure through the moonlit woods while an evil creature roams the area looking for blood.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 55 of 77

Guests will control their bike's speed, which path it takes and see other riders during the excursion.

Twilight Saga: Bella's Journey will be an indoor amusement ride that highlights key moments from the films including Bella Swan's relationship with her vampire husband Edward Cullen and encountering The Volturi, the most powerful coven of vampires.

SOARING WITH THE "GODS OF EGYPT"

Gods of Egypt: Battle for Eternity will be a virtual reality roller coaster based on the 2016 film about Egyptian deities. Riders on the high-speed amusement train ride will don headsets and soar through ancient Egypt during an epic battle between good and evil.

PLOTTING AN "ESCAPE PLAN"

About 20 people work together to break out of a maximum-security prison in Escape Plan: Prison Break. The group faces a climbing challenge course and crawl through tunnels to escape to freedom.

Follow AP Entertainment Writer Jonathan Landrum Jr. on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/MrLandrum31>

Bruins, Blues meet in Stanley Cup Final 49 years in making

By **STEPHEN WHYNO AP Hockey Writer**

Seeing the famous photo of Bobby Orr scoring the 1970 Stanley Cup-winning goal to beat his St. Louis Blues doesn't bring back bad memories for Scotty Bowman.

"Not really," the legendary coach said. "Because we didn't have a big opportunity to win that series."

Orr and the big, bad Boston Bruins swept Bowman's overmatched, expansion-era Blues in that series. Now 49 years later, Boston is in its third final in nine seasons and St. Louis is back for the first time since 1970, but this Bruins-Blues rematch is a showdown between two of the NHL's best teams since Jan. 1.

"Now it's more level," Bowman said. "(The Blues) don't give a lot of room in their end, and of course their goalie's been lights out."

Coming off a sweep of Carolina in the Eastern Conference final, the Bruins are favored in the series that begins Monday in Boston. Goaltender Tuukka Rask is the front-runner to win the Conn Smythe Trophy as playoff MVP. Brad Marchand is playing some of the best hockey of his career with 18 points in 17 games, and there's a mix of veterans from the 2011 Stanley Cup-winning team and fresh players eager to get their names etched on the trophy.

"I think as you get older, you appreciate it even more, and you realize how hard it is to get to this point and advance and be thankful and stay in the moment," center Patrice Bergeron said. "But then it's back to work, and there's a lot of work in front of us."

Unlike in 1970, when the Bruins essentially just had to step on the ice to take the final, these Blues won't go away. They woke up last in the league Jan. 3 before winning 30 of their final 45 games to roll into the playoffs, where they beat the Winnipeg Jets, Dallas Stars and San Jose Sharks.

Bowman, who has coached a record nine Cup champions, only in recent days realized the Blues hadn't been to the final since he was there. He met his wife, Suzanne, when she was a nurse in St. Louis and he has a soft spot for this team because of connections to former players of his: consultant/assistant coach Larry Robinson and ambassadors Bob Plager and Brett Hull.

He also likes the size of the Blues' blue line.

"They're all big, every one of them," Bowman said. "Their defense is very big and the right type of aggressiveness. They don't take a ton of penalties."

The Blues and Bruins are among the most disciplined teams in the playoffs, which has helped them reach this point. Now they'll have to deal with another issue: idle hands with so much time off.

Boston will have a week and a half between finishing off Carolina and Game 1, and even St. Louis will go six days without playing. Bowman during his coaching career recalled making his players scrimmage at night to keep them in a rhythm, but there's no real substitute for the grind of the playoffs.

"I can't believe how long they're going to have to sit out," Bowman said. "It's quite a trick because they

were on such a high."

Follow AP Hockey Writer Stephen Whyno on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/SWhyno>

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

Lowry has 25, Raptors rout Bucks 120-102 to even East finals

By IAN HARRISON Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — With a weary Kawhi Leonard fighting through fatigue, the Toronto Raptors found enough energy to pull away from the Milwaukee Bucks.

Kyle Lowry led the way.

Lowry scored 25 points, Leonard had 19 and the Raptors beat the Milwaukee Bucks 120-102 on Tuesday night to even the Eastern Conference finals at two games apiece.

"This was one of the nights that we knew Kawhi was a little bit limited and we had to come out and be aggressive for him," Lowry said.

Leonard played 52 minutes in a double-overtime win in Game 3 on Sunday despite dealing with leg soreness. He limped away from the basket following a third-quarter dunk in Game 4, but still toughed it out for 34 minutes.

"I feel good," Leonard insisted. "I'm going to keep going and keep fighting. We have a chance to make history."

Raptors coach Nick Nurse said he's not worried about Leonard's health.

"He's certainly tired, like a lot of guys in this series are," Nurse said. "He looks OK to me. There was one time I was trying to give him an extended rest and he didn't really want it so he must be OK."

Serge Ibaka had 17 points and 13 rebounds for the Raptors, who improved to 7-2 at home this postseason. Reserve Norm Powell scored 18 points, and Marc Gasol had 17 points and a team-high seven assists.

"The first two games, they really brought the intensity to us," Powell said. "They really came out and were more physical, more active. We wanted to change that narrative coming home."

The home team has won all four games in the series so far. Game 5 is Thursday night in Milwaukee.

"We need to take this challenge of playing in a hostile environment," Nurse said. "We're going into a tough, loud place to play. Let's see if those guys can bring that same pop and focus and determination on the road."

Giannis Antetokounmpo had 25 points and 10 rebounds for the top-seeded Bucks. Khris Middleton scored 30 points, but no one else had more than 11.

Milwaukee lost its second straight following a six-game winning streak. It dropped consecutive games just once during the regular season, at Utah on March 2 and at Phoenix on March 4.

"This is probably the first night defensively where I don't feel like we were close to where you need to be," coach Mike Budenholzer said. "We got punched. They played really well."

Toronto's Fred VanVleet, who missed 16 of 20 shot attempts through the first three games of the series, went 5 for 6 from the field in Game 4. He made each of his three 3-point tries and finished with 13 points.

"He needed one of those games," Lowry said. "He played well and made some great plays tonight."

Ahead 94-81 to start the fourth, the Raptors extended their lead with a 10-3 spurt, including seven points from VanVleet. Powell's fast-break layup with 8:35 left put Toronto up 104-84.

"We've got to guard better," Middleton said. "Everybody on their team, I feel like they got pretty much whatever they wanted. Everything was easy."

Antetokounmpo shot 5 for 8 in the opening frame, matching the number of made baskets he had during Game 3. However, the Bucks star went 4 for 9 the rest of the way.

Leonard and Pascal Siakam, who both played more than 50 minutes Sunday, looked sluggish in the opening half. Leonard missed the only shot he took in the second, while Siakam played fewer than three minutes in the second after picking up his third foul. Siakam had two points at halftime.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 57 of 77

Leonard came up limping after dunking against Antetokounmpo early in the third, but remained in the game. Moments later, Siakam completed a three-point play that put Toronto up 73-60 with 8:43 left.

"We just came out in the third quarter flat," Antetokounmpo said.

Ilyasova missed a 3 with 3:50 remaining in the third that could have cut the deficit to four points. Powell replied with a 3 and, following miss by Malcolm Brogdon, Leonard drained a jumper to push Toronto's lead to 86-74.

TIP-INS

Bucks: Middleton missed his first attempt of the game, and then made the next eight in row. He finished 11 for 15. ... Antetokounmpo air-balled his first free-throw attempt in the first quarter. ... Brogdon shot 0 for 5 in the first half and missed seven straight before connecting late in the third. He finished 2 for 11.

Raptors: Lowry scored 12 of Toronto's first 17 points. He finished 10 for 10 at the line. ... The Raptors are 4-0 on Tuesdays in these playoffs. ... Toronto outscored Milwaukee 28-6 on bench points in the first half. The Raptors finished with a 48-23 advantage in bench scoring. ... Siakam scored seven points, his lowest total in these playoffs. ... Leonard had four of Toronto's nine steals.

PROUD PAPA

VanVleet became a father for the second time Monday with the birth of his first son, Fred Jr.

ATTENTION HOG

Even when Leonard isn't scoring 35, Lowry said the three-time All-Star still helps with spacing.

"The great thing about having him on your team is he still gets all the attention," Lowry said. "That's the benefit of having a superstar like him on the team."

MANY TONGUES

Ibaka answered post-game questions in English, French, and Spanish, and jokingly asked whether anyone wanted to talk to him in Italian or Portuguese.

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

Another day of tornadoes in Midwest, but St. Louis spared

By JIM SALTER and KEN MILLER Associated Press

ST. LOUIS (AP) — A dangerous storm system in the Midwest produced dozens of tornadoes for the second consecutive day Tuesday, demolishing a racetrack grandstand and damaging buildings in a wild animal park in Missouri but sparing St. Louis, the biggest city in its path.

Two deaths, both in Missouri, were blamed on the severe weather that started in the Southern Plains Monday night and moved to the northeast. Missouri and parts of Illinois and Arkansas were in the cross-hairs Tuesday. By Wednesday, the storm will move into Great Lakes region, where it will weaken. But another storm system was gathering steam for later this week, potentially covering an area from Texas to Chicago, according to the National Weather Service.

The skies grew dark over St. Louis before nightfall Tuesday and a tornado warning was issued for the city and surrounding suburbs, but the storm passed overhead without producing the rotation that often spawns tornadoes and the city was mostly spared except for heavy rain.

"The danger has passed for the St. Louis area," said National Weather Service St. Louis meteorologist Jason Gassel.

The weather service Storm Prediction Center website listed 37 reports of tornadoes on Tuesday in Oklahoma, Kansas, Missouri and Nebraska.

A tornado early Tuesday near Tulsa International Airport injured one person and damaged about a dozen homes. The airport was unscathed, but passengers were moved into shelters for about 30 minutes and several flights were delayed.

Tulsa Area Emergency Management spokeswoman Kim MacLeod said crews rescued a man who was pinned under a tree.

Storms Monday evening flipped campers at Lucas Oil Speedway in Hickory County, Missouri, injuring

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 58 of 77

seven people, four of whom were taken to hospitals. The speedway's grandstand also was destroyed, forcing cancellation of racing this weekend that was expected to draw about 3,000 campers.

Another twister Tuesday afternoon hit a drive-thru wild animal park in southern Missouri. Webster County Emergency Management Director Tom Simmons said buildings were damaged at the Wild Animal Safari near Strafford, but there were no reports that people or animals were injured. All of the animals were accounted for.

Simmons said about a half-dozen homes were damaged in the county. A tractor-trailer was blown off a highway.

Heavy rain was called a contributing factor in the deaths of two people in a traffic accident Tuesday near Springfield, Missouri. The Missouri State Highway Patrol said an SUV skidded across the center of U.S. 160 and struck a tractor-trailer, killing both people in the SUV, Brandon Beasley, 23, and his 24-year-old wife, Christin, of Willard, Missouri.

Missouri authorities also reported several water rescues from flash flooding. Among them was an 18-year-old woman who was swept off a flooded road near Joplin Monday and stranded overnight until nearby residents heard her yelling. She had only minor injuries.

Missouri Gov. Mike Parson declared a state of emergency, citing worsening flood concerns and soil inundation, as well as forecasts calling severe storms and possible tornadoes into Wednesday morning.

Flooding was also an issue in Oklahoma, where the Oklahoma Department of Transportation shut down Interstate 40 in El Reno, about 25 miles (40 kilometers) west of Oklahoma City, because of high water. The National Weather Service says up to 5 inches (13 centimeters) of rain had fallen since Monday. In El Reno and Stillwater, home to Oklahoma State University about 55 miles (88 kilometers) northeast of Oklahoma City, emergency responders rescued people from their homes.

With a potentially dangerous storm bearing down on St. Louis, baseball's Cardinals were taking no chances, calling off a Tuesday night game against the cross-state rival Kansas City Royals.

Heavy snow melt from the north and significant spring rains have led to waves of flooding in Missouri, and President Donald Trump on Monday issued a major disaster declaration for 13 counties in the state damaged by March flooding.

The Missouri River is expected to reach major flood stage by the end of the week at Jefferson City, Hermann, St. Charles and elsewhere. The levee near Jefferson City's airport holds back water up to 30 feet (9.14 meters), Cole County Emergency Manager Bill Farr said, but the National Weather Service expects a crest of 32.3 feet (9.85 meters) Thursday. Sandbagging won't help because the levee is too long, he said.

"We're just keeping our fingers crossed," Farr said.

Miller reported from Oklahoma City. Associated Press writers Heather Hollingsworth in Kansas City, Mo.; Hannah Grabenstein in Little Rock, Ark.; and David A. Lieb in Jefferson City, Mo., contributed to this report.

San Francisco police chief: Journalist 'crossed the line'

By JANIE HAR Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — The San Francisco police chief said Tuesday that he respects the news media, but a freelance journalist whose home and office were raided by officers had "crossed the line" by joining a conspiracy to steal a confidential report.

Chief William Scott addressed reporters hours after police agreed in court to return property seized from Bryan Carmody in raids aimed at uncovering the source of a leaked police report into the unexpected death of the city's former elected public defender, Jeff Adachi.

Tensions are high in the case, which has alarmed journalism advocates and put pressure on elected leaders in the politically liberal city to defend the press.

Authorities believe a police department employee was involved and had contact with Carmody.

"We believe that that contact and that interaction went across the line. It went past just doing your job as a journalist," Scott said.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 59 of 77

He added: "This is a big deal to us, as well it should be. It's a big deal to the public. It's a big deal to you all."

Scott said the primary target of the ongoing investigation is the employee, whose identity investigators do not know. He said the secondary focus is on Carmody, who may have been motivated by profit or a desire to tarnish Adachi's reputation, or both.

Carmody's attorney, Thomas Burke, declined to comment. Carmody did not respond to an email request for comment.

He said on Twitter that he was pleased with the return of his equipment but he will have to replace numerous cameras, cellphones and computers for security reasons. A GoFundMe campaign has raised nearly \$15,000 for him.

His main goal, he said, is to ensure "that nothing seized can be used against myself, North Bay Television News or our sources."

Media organizations across the country criticized the May 10 raids as a violation of California's shield law, which specifically protects journalists from search warrants. The Associated Press is among dozens of news organizations siding with Carmody and seeking to submit a friend-of-the-court brief.

The case will soon return to court. Carmody's attorney and media organizations have asked to unseal warrant materials and revoke the search warrants. San Francisco Superior Court Judge Samuel Feng has not ruled yet on those requests, but he set deadlines for further filings.

The editorial board of the San Francisco Chronicle has joined other publications in criticizing city leaders, including Mayor London Breed, for failing to quickly condemn the police actions. A Chronicle report published Monday named supervisors who have not returned messages for comment on the raids.

When they arrived at Carmody's home, police had a sledgehammer, and they cuffed him for hours. The police chief said Carmody was cuffed because of the possibility he might have firearms in the house.

Breed initially defended the raids but on Sunday posted messages on Twitter saying she was "not okay" with raids on reporters.

District Attorney George Gascon, whose office would normally be responsible for possibly prosecuting Carmody, condemned the police. He said he has not seen the warrants, which are sealed, but he could not imagine a situation where warrants would be appropriate.

"Seizing the entire haystack to find the needle risks violating the confidences Mr. Carmody owes to all his sources, not just the person who leaked the police report," he said in a Monday tweet.

The police chief acknowledged the uproar, saying that in hindsight the department could have done things differently and will strive to learn from its mistakes.

"We respect the news media," he said. "We have to own what we own and move forward, and try to get better at what we do."

The city attorney's office did not send an attorney to Tuesday's hearing, and spokesman John Cote said the office is "not appearing in court on that matter."

The duties of the city attorney's office include providing legal services to city agencies such as police, but Cote said the office does not represent the police in proceedings related to search warrants, because police have their own in-house counsel for that.

In court documents, Carmody has said he is a veteran journalist who is often the first on the scene of breaking news. He provides video news packages to outlets in return for payment.

He said a source gave him a preliminary police report on Adachi's death that contained unsavory details. Carmody went on to sell copies of the report along with video footage from the scene of the death and information obtained from interviews to three news stations.

The leak infuriated city supervisors. They scolded police for anonymously releasing the report to the press, saying it was an attempt to smear the legacy of Adachi, who was an outspoken critic of police. An autopsy blamed Adachi's Feb. 22 death on a mixture of cocaine and alcohol that compromised an already bad heart.

People who want to crack down on journalists come in all political stripes, said Jim Wheaton, founder of the First Amendment Project, a public interest law firm.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 60 of 77

"They went after him because he's all by himself," Wheaton said. "And the fact that he sells the materials that he packages. He puts together a journalism report including documents and sells it. That's what journalism is."

It was unclear who is paying Carmody's legal fees.

San Francisco police have defended the raids, and police attorney Ronnie Wagner said she intends to respond to the requests made by Burke and others. She declined to answer further questions Tuesday as reporters followed her down a courthouse staircase.

The First Amendment Coalition wants the judge to unseal the police department's applications for two search warrants, which would show whether officers informed judges that Carmody is a journalist.

Arizona prisons urged to end ban on book about black men

By TERRY TANG Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Arizona has banned prisoners from reading a book that discusses the impact of the criminal justice system on black men, drawing outcry from First Amendment advocates who say the move is censorship.

The American Civil Liberties Union called on the Arizona Department of Corrections this week to rescind the ban on "Chokehold: Policing Black Men." The book by Paul Butler, a former federal prosecutor, examines law enforcement and mass incarceration through its treatment of African American men.

"In order for them to ban a book, they have to show the restriction is related to a legitimate prison interest," said Emerson Sykes, an ACLU attorney. "There's no interest to keep inmates from learning about the criminal justice system and policing."

Butler, a criminal law professor at Georgetown University, said his publisher was notified by email in March that his book had "unauthorized content." The notice did not specify what led to the decision but warned that some aspect of the 2017 book was "detrimental to the safe, secure, and orderly operation of the facility."

Butler said he is mystified as to what raised alarm bells. He uses the title, which is a maneuver police have used to restrain a suspect by the neck, throughout the book as a metaphor for how society and law subjugate black men. Nowhere does Butler advocate violent or retaliatory behavior.

"I disavow violence because first, I think it's immoral, and second, because it wouldn't work," Butler said. "I've received letters from several inmates who have read 'Chokehold' while they are serving time. No one has indicated that reading 'Chokehold' has caused any problems in prison."

Arizona's corrections department prohibits inmates from receiving publications that contain any depictions or descriptions that would incite or facilitate a riot, a resistance or stopping work. They also can't contain pictures, illustrations or text that encourage "unacceptable sexual or hostile behaviors." Any publications with sexually explicit material or sexual representations of inmates and law enforcement also are not permitted.

Corrections spokesman Andrew Wilder said the department had not yet received the ACLU's letter asking for the ban to be reversed and declined further comment Monday.

The agency is in a court battle over a similar case. Prison Legal News, a monthly journal, sued corrections officials in 2015 for refusing to deliver four issues in 2014. The publication said in court documents that there were descriptions of "non-salacious" sexual contact between jail guards and prisoners when talking about incidents where inmates were sexually harassed. The case is set for trial later this year.

Supporters say access to books for the more than 2 million people incarcerated in the U.S. can make all the difference for life outside the prison walls. More education decreases the likelihood of repeat offenses and can lead to better job prospects later, according to inmate advocates. They point to studies showing the literacy rates of incarcerated white, black and Hispanic people are significantly lower than their non-incarcerated counterparts.

About half the adult prison population doesn't have a high school degree, said Christia Mercer, a philosophy professor at Columbia University who has taught classes in New York prisons. Reading books can

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 61 of 77

be transformative and help them feel like they are using their time to make something of themselves.

"Unless the book itself promotes violence, there is never a reason not to allow it," Mercer said. "Short of that, anything that gets people to read and think about themselves in the world is just going to be good for the person."

Arizona's population of 7.1 million is roughly 5% black, according to the U.S. census. As of October 2018, the corrections department found black people make up 14.5% of the 42,000 inmates in the Arizona system.

"One in 19 black men are in prison in Arizona right now," Butler said. "Rather than acknowledge it's a good thing that inmates want to read about and debate important public policy, Arizona pushes back against rehabilitation, against literacy, against the Constitution."

Sykes, of the ACLU, said the group is prepared to sue if corrections officials fail to respond to its written request to end the book's exclusion. He believes the ban was made based on content, which would be unconstitutional.

It's not uncommon for state prisons to ban books, Sykes said. "Chokehold" is also not the first book dealing with racial justice issues to be prohibited.

In January 2018, New Jersey banned from two prisons "The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness" by Michelle Alexander. The 2010 book looks at how black felons convicted of minor crimes are seemingly set up to fail. Officials reversed course after receiving a letter from the ACLU.

"When these issues come up, we try our best to push back against them," Sykes said. "Unfortunately, the reality is I think in many cases, no action is taken because people whose rights are being affected are not in a strong position to push back."

Terry Tang is a member of the AP's race and ethnicity team. Follow her on Twitter at www.twitter.com/ttangAP

With Brad and Leo, Tarantino debuts a fairy tale in Cannes

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

CANNES, France (AP) — Twenty-five years after premiering "Pulp Fiction" in Cannes, Quentin Tarantino returned to the French film festival with neither great vengeance nor furious anger but a gentler fairy tale about 1960s Los Angeles.

"Once Upon a Time In ... Hollywood" made its much-anticipated debut Tuesday in Cannes, giving the festival its most concentrated splash of celebrity and frenzy. The film's two stars, Brad Pitt and Leonardo DiCaprio, brought a fittingly old-school Hollywood glamour to the Cannes red carpet, where throngs of onlookers swelled along the Croisette.

Much of the plot of "Once Upon a Time In ... Hollywood" had been carefully kept under wraps leading up to the premiere. DiCaprio plays a Westerns actor anxious that his notoriety is slipping. Pitt plays his stunt double, friend and, because of a drunk driving offense, his driver. Though set against the backdrop of the Manson Family murders, much of Tarantino's film is invested in recapturing the radiance of a bygone Hollywood.

For a filmmaker often associated with blistering dialogue and ecstatic explosions of violence, "Once Upon a Time in ... Hollywood" finds the 56-year-old Tarantino working at a more relaxed pace, spending generous amounts of time in odes to spaghetti Westerns and '60s TV shows.

Ahead of the premiere, Tarantino, whose "Pulp Fiction" won the Palme d'Or in 1994, issued a statement to festival audiences imploring them not to spoil the film for future moviegoers — a request repeated before the film's press screening. Journalists lined up hours in advance.

"Once Upon a Time in ... Hollywood" is Tarantino's first movie not being released by Harvey Weinstein. After Tarantino cut ties with the disgraced mogul, the project attracted the interest of most studios. Sony Pictures landed the film and gave it a \$95 million budget — a very rare gamble on a high-priced original movie.

Instead of superheroes or intellectual property, "Once Upon a Time in ... Hollywood" will instead bank

on the draw of Tarantino and his two movie stars. Margot Robbie also co-stars as Sharon Tate. "Once Upon a Time ... in Hollywood" will be released in U.S. theaters July 26.

Follow AP Film Writer Jake Coyle on Twitter at: <http://twitter.com/jakecoyleAP>

Democratic impeachment calls swell as McGahn defies subpoena

By MARY CLARE JALONICK and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — More Democrats are calling — and more loudly — for impeachment proceedings against President Donald Trump after his latest defiance of Congress by blocking his former White House lawyer from testifying on Tuesday.

A growing number of rank-and-file House Democrats, incensed by former counsel Don McGahn's empty chair in the Judiciary Committee hearing room, are confronting House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and pushing her and other leaders to act. Their impatience is running up against the speaker's preference for a more methodical approach, including already-unfolding court battles.

Pelosi summoned some of them — still a small fraction of the House Democratic caucus — to a meeting of investigators Wednesday to assess strategy.

Some other Democratic leaders, while backing Pelosi, signaled that a march to impeachment may at some point become inevitable.

"We are confronting what might be the largest, broadest cover-up in American history," Majority Leader Steny Hoyer told reporters. If a House inquiry "leads to other avenues including impeachment," the Maryland Democrat said, "so be it."

Reps. Joaquin Castro of Texas and Diana DeGette of Colorado added their voices to the impeachment inquiry chorus.

"There is political risk in doing so, but there's a greater risk to our country in doing nothing," Castro said on Twitter. "This is a fight for our democracy."

Tweeted DeGette: "The facts laid out in the Mueller report, coupled with this administration's ongoing attempts to stonewall Congress, leave us no other choice."

One Republican congressman, Justin Amash of Michigan, has called for impeachment proceedings. He said Tuesday he thinks other GOP lawmakers should join him — but only after reading special counsel Robert Mueller's report carefully.

Republican House leader Kevin McCarthy dismissed Amash as out of step with House Republicans and "out of step with America." And Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina said wryly of Amash's position, "I don't think it's going to be a trend-setting move."

As Democrats weigh their options, Trump is almost taunting them by testing the bounds of executive power in ways few other administrations have. The White House contends that even former employees like McGahn do not have to abide by subpoenas from Congress.

A short time later House Judiciary Chairman Jerrold Nadler issued subpoenas for more Trump administration officials — former White House communications director Hope Hicks and Annie Donaldson, a former aide in the White House counsel's office — for documents and testimony.

Trump's former White House counsel is the most-cited witness in Mueller's Trump-Russia investigation report, recounting the president's attempts to interfere with the probe. And that makes his silence all the more infuriating for Democrats.

Nadler gaveled open Tuesday's hearing with a stern warning that McGahn will be held in contempt for failing to appear.

"Our subpoenas are not optional," Nadler said. "We will not allow the president to stop this investigation."

However, Rep. Doug Collins, the ranking Republican on the committee, spoke scornfully of Nadler's position, calling the session a "circus" and saying the chairman preferred a public "fight over fact-finding."

Democrats are "trying desperately to make something out of nothing," Collins said, in the aftermath of Mueller's report.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 63 of 77

A lawyer for McGahn had said he would follow the president's directive and skip Tuesday's hearing, leaving the Democrats without yet another witness — and a growing debate within the party about how to respond.

Nadler said the committee would vote to hold McGahn in contempt, though that's not expected until June, after lawmakers return from the Memorial Day recess.

Democrats are encouraged by an early success in the legal battles, a Monday ruling by a federal judge against Trump on in a financial records dispute with Congress. Trump's team filed notice of appeal on Tuesday.

But Pelosi's strategy hasn't been swift enough for some lawmakers. In particular, several members of the Judiciary panel feel they must take the lead in at least launching impeachment proceedings.

They say a formal impeachment inquiry could give Democrats more standing in court, even if they stop short of a vote to remove the president.

"I think that's something a lot of members of the committee — and more and more members of the caucus — think is necessary," said Rep. Steve Cohen of Tennessee. "I think an inquiry, as the Senate Watergate hearings were, would lead the public to see the misdeeds of this administration."

Others, though, including some from more conservative districts, said they prefer the step-by-step approach.

"We want to make sure that we're following all the legal processes, everything we've been given, to truly make the best decisions," said Rep. Lucy McBath of Georgia, a freshman on the Judiciary panel.

Pelosi scheduled Wednesday's meeting with lawmakers from the Judiciary and Oversight committees after some members confronted her during a meeting among top Democrats Monday evening.

At that time, Rep. Jamie Raskin of Maryland led others in arguing that an impeachment inquiry would consolidate the Trump investigations and allow Democrats to keep more focus on their other legislative work, according to people familiar with the private conversation who requested anonymity to discuss it.

Pelosi pushed back, saying that several committees are doing investigations already and noting that Rep. Elijah Cummings of Maryland, the chairman of the Oversight Committee, already had won the early court battle over Trump's financial documents.

With a 235-197 Democratic majority, Pelosi would likely find support for starting impeachment proceedings, but it could be a tighter vote than that margin suggests. Some lawmakers say voters back home are more interested in health care and the economy. Many come from more conservative districts where they need to run for re-election in communities where Trump also has support.

For Pelosi, it's a push-pull exercise as she tries to raise awareness about Trump's behavior without moving toward impeachment unless she knows the public is with Congress.

"We've been in this thing for almost five months and now we're getting some results," Pelosi told lawmakers Monday night. "We've always said one thing will lead to another as we get information."

But other Democrats in the meeting, several of whom have spoken publicly about a need to be more aggressive with Trump, are increasingly impatient. They include Reps. David Cicilline of Rhode Island, Ted Lieu of California and freshman Joe Neguse of Colorado.

"We're in a very grave moment," said Rep. Madeleine Dean of Pennsylvania, and "probably right now are left, with nothing but that we must open an inquiry."

Tweeted Rep. Veronica Escobar of Texas: Congress has made "accommodation after accommodation. I don't think we should wait any longer."

Associated Press writers Laurie Kellman, Matthew Daly, Michael Balsamo, Jonathan Lemire, Eric Tucker and Mark Sherman contributed to this report.

Broton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 64 of 77

NY moves to ensure Trump pardons can't nix state charges

By DAVID KLEPPER Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — A presidential pardon won't be enough to clear someone associated with the commander-in-chief of similar state charges under legislation approved by New York state lawmakers Tuesday.

The bill, which now moves to Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo, revises the exceptions to the state's double jeopardy law in an effort to ensure the state's ongoing investigations into the Republican president and his associates can't be derailed by a White House pardon.

Attorney General Letitia James had pushed for the law, which she said will eliminate a "gaping loophole" that could have allowed someone pardoned by Trump to argue similar state charges should be dismissed.

"This loophole, which effectively allows the president to pardon state crimes, must be closed," James, a Democrat, told reporters after the bill passed the Assembly Tuesday. She said presidential pardons shouldn't "be used as a get-out-of-jail-free card."

Republicans argued the bill is a partisan attack on Trump and accused Democrats of trying to rewrite the law to prepare for hypothetical pardons that may never be issued.

Assemblyman Andy Goodell, R-Jamestown, called the measure "a sharp poke in the eye" of the president. He said his Democratic colleagues were using the bill "to express a political statement about our current president, about things he hasn't done."

Democrats said the bill isn't designed to target a particular president, but to safeguard the state's ability to enforce its own laws.

"We're trying to root out corruption and abuse of presidential power," said Assemblyman Joe Lentol, D-Brooklyn.

Still, some lawmakers made it clear that they had a specific commander in chief in mind when they voted yes Tuesday.

"We are dealing with a criminal in the White House," Assemblyman Michael Blake, D-the Bronx, said of Trump.

Twenty-four states already have laws making it clear that presidential pardons do not cover state charges, according to Sen. Todd Kaminsky, D-Long Island and the bill's Senate sponsor.

The new exception wouldn't apply to all presidential pardons. Instead, the legislation spells out several categories of people for whom presidential pardons would not be sufficient: members of a president's family, their government and campaign staff, employees of a president's private business or nonprofit, as well as anyone else who prosecutors believe may have conspired with an associate of the president.

Prosecutors in New York are in the midst of several investigations related to Trump and his associates, including Paul Manafort, the president's former campaign chairman, who is now serving time in federal prison for tax and bank fraud.

A message left with the White House was not immediately returned Tuesday evening.

Tennessee House speaker to resign amid text message scandal

By KIMBERLEE KRUESI and JONATHAN MATTISE Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Tennessee's embattled House speaker said Tuesday that he plans to resign from his leadership post following a vote of no confidence by his Republican caucus amid a scandal over explicit text messages.

The move is unprecedented in Tennessee's modern political era. The last speaker resignation came in 1931 in the Senate.

"When I return to town on June 3, I will meet with caucus leadership to determine the best date for me to resign as speaker so that I can help facilitate a smooth transition," Glen Casada said in a statement.

The speaker announced the decision just a day after previously shrugging off a 45-24 secret ballot vote from his GOP caucus determining they no longer had confidence in his ability to lead the Tennessee House. Casada said he would work to regain his colleagues' trust.

Previously, he had spelled out an action plan designed to reassure fellow lawmakers and help him avoid

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 65 of 77

having to step down.

But it wasn't enough for an increasing number of Republican leaders, including the House's top officers, who began demanding he step aside. They were joined by Republican Gov. Bill Lee, who warned that he would call a special legislative session if Casada didn't voluntarily resign.

The demands began earlier this month, when it was revealed that Casada had exchanged text messages containing sexually explicit language about women with his former chief of staff several years ago.

"Speaker Casada has made the right decision, and I look forward to working with the legislature to get back to conducting the people's business and focusing on the issues that matter most to our state," Lee, who was elected to his first term in November, said in a statement.

The resignation announcement marked a quick, turbulent downfall for Casada, who has spent only a few months in the House's top position.

The lawmaker from Franklin first stepped into the key role in January, eight years after he lost a bid for the position. In the November election, the then-majority leader received 47 out of 73 votes from Republicans in the 99-member chamber, defeating Reps. Curtis Johnson of Clarksville and David Hawk of Greeneville.

Casada built up political capital by spending heavily on Republican candidates in contests during the November election, including contested primaries for open Republican seats.

He began to lose that support when his former chief of staff, Cade Cothren, was pressured into resigning after the release of years-old racist texts and the sexually explicit messages, and Cothren's admission that he used cocaine in his legislative office years before becoming Casada's top aide. Casada was included in one of the group texts with a racist message, but has said he never saw it.

Another scandal that sparked early doubts was the report that Cothren may have tampered with evidence in a young black activist's criminal case, which a special prosecutor is still investigating.

Casada denied the tampering allegation and a variety of others that continued to pile up, ranging from accusations that he spied on legislative members to a GOP colleague's claim that Casada tried to "rig and predetermine" an ethics review regarding his controversies.

About a week ago, he addressed his fellow GOP House members about the texts and other issues, assuring them there was "nothing else to come out." It wasn't long until another text exchange emerged in a WTVF-TV report, in which he and Cothren — then the House Republican caucus press secretary — joked about the ages of two women and asked if they were 21 years old.

According to the texts, Cothren responded that "it only takes 18." Casada answered "Lol!!! And true!"

It's still unknown when Casada will meet with legislative leaders to determine his last day. Hours after he announced his resignation, Speaker Pro Tempore Bill Dunn told news outlets he was willing to serve as House speaker should the chamber elect him.

Separately, GOP Rep. Mike Carter, who originally raised concerns about the ethics investigation, told the Chattanooga Times Free Press he was asking staffers to prepare a petition calling for Casada's full removal from office.

Trump officials to Congress: Goal is deterring Iran, not war

By LISA MASCARO and SUSANNAH GEORGE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Tamping down talk of war, top Trump administration officials told Congress on Tuesday that recent actions by the U.S. deterred attacks on American forces. But some lawmakers remained deeply skeptical of the White House approach in the Middle East.

After a day of closed-door briefings on Capitol Hill, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan said their objective over recent days has been to deter Iran. Now they want to prevent further escalation, Shanahan said.

"We're not about going to war," Shanahan told reporters.

"Our biggest focus at this point is to prevent Iranian miscalculation," said Shanahan, flanked by Pompeo, after back-to-back briefings for the House and Senate. "We do not want the situation to escalate."

The officials arrived on Capitol Hill as questions mounted over President Donald Trump's tough talk on

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 66 of 77

Iran and sudden policy shifts in the region. Skeptical Democrats sought out a second opinion, holding their own briefing with former Obama administration officials, former CIA Director John Brennan and Wendy Sherman, an architect of the Iran nuclear deal.

The competing closed-door sessions Tuesday came after weeks of escalating tensions that raised alarms over a possible military confrontation with Iran.

Trump, veering between bombast and conciliation in his quest to contain Iran, threatened Monday to meet provocations by Iran with "great force," but he also said he's willing to negotiate.

The results of the meetings Tuesday were mixed, with views settling largely along partisan lines.

Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, said the action taken by the Trump administration "is totally appropriate" and sends a message that "if you attack our people, there will be a response."

Romney characterized it as defensive in nature and meant to deter Iran from "malign" actions.

Democratic Rep. Ruben Gallego, a veteran of the Iraq War, left the classified House briefing, saying: "What I heard in there makes it clear that this administration feels that they do not have to come back and talk to Congress in regards to any action they do in Iran."

Democrats are particularly concerned the Trump administration may try to rely on nearly 20-year-old war authorizations rather than seek fresh approval from Congress for any action.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said he told Pompeo and the others their consultation with Congress has been "inadequate." Shanahan said he and the others heard that message and vowed to better communicate with lawmakers and the public.

In recent weeks, the U.S. sent an aircraft carrier strike group, four bomber aircraft and other assets to the region, and is moving a Patriot missile battery to an undisclosed country in the area. The Trump administration has evacuated nonessential personnel from Iraq, amid unspecified threats the administration says are linked to Iran.

Shanahan said the recent U.S. actions in the region were based on "credible threats" to U.S. forces and interests in the Middle East.

"We have deterred attacks based on our repositioning of assets, deterred attacks against American forces," he said.

Pompeo said he tried to put the Iran situation in the country's 40-year history of "malign" actions.

Pompeo, a former congressman, has become somewhat of a polarizing figure on Capitol Hill, and some lawmakers left the meeting saying he was lecturing and arrogant.

Democratic Rep. Adam Smith of Washington, the chairman of the Armed Services Committee, said he interjected at one point during the briefing: "We know Iran is bad, OK? What is the policy going forward? There wasn't enough information on that."

Smith said Pompeo was asked why it took so long to brief Congress. The congressman said the secretary's answer was, "We were busy." He said it was not an acceptable answer.

Earlier, Brennan told House Democrats that while Tehran wants to avoid conflict, the country's leadership will not capitulate to Trump. Sherman warned that reckless behavior by the Trump administration in Iran is hurting the U.S.'s credibility and undermining moderates in the country. Their comments were conveyed by a person in the room who was not authorized to discuss the private meeting by name.

Top Democrats say Trump escalated problems by abruptly withdrawing the U.S. from the Iran nuclear deal, a complex accord negotiated during the Obama administration to prevent Iran from nuclear weapons production.

"I have yet to see any exhibited strategy," said Democratic Rep. Abigail Spanberger of Virginia, a former CIA officer. She said she finds many of the administration's recent statements on Iran to be "deeply troubling."

Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., the chairman of the House intelligence committee, said, "What I'm interested in more right now is what the administration's strategy is — if they have one — to keep us out of war."

Republicans and Trump's allies in Congress said the threats from Iran are real. Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., suggested lawmakers who say otherwise are doing so for political reasons. GOP Sen. Lindsey Graham of

South Carolina urged Trump to "stand firm."

The U.S. military appears to have concluded that Iran was behind the reported attack May 12 on four commercial vessels off the coast of the United Arab Emirates. A U.S. official said Monday a probe into the attack was finished and evidence still pointed at Iran, although the official did not provide details. The official was not authorized to publicly discuss the matter and so spoke on condition of anonymity.

On Sunday, a rocket landed near the U.S. Embassy in the Green Zone of Iraq's capital of Baghdad, days after nonessential U.S. staff were ordered to evacuate from diplomatic posts in the country. No one was reported injured.

Defense officials said no additional Iranian threats or incidents had emerged in the days since the USS Abraham Lincoln carrier battle group arrived in the Arabian Sea late last week.

Iran, meanwhile, announced that it has quadrupled its uranium-enrichment production capacity. Officials said it remains set to the limits of a 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, making it usable for a power plant but far below what's needed for an atomic weapon.

Tehran long has insisted it does not seek nuclear weapons, though the West fears its program could allow it to build them.

Associated Press writers Robert Burns, Lolita Baldor and Matthew Daly contributed to this report.

Speedy reactor cleanups may carry both risks and rewards

By **BOB SALSBERG** Associated Press

PLYMOUTH, Mass. (AP) — Companies specializing in the handling of radioactive material are buying retired U.S. nuclear reactors from utilities and promising to clean them up and demolish them in dramatically less time than usual — eight years instead of 60, in some cases.

Turning nuclear plants over to outside companies and decommissioning them on such a fast track represents a completely new approach in the United States, never before carried to completion in this country, and involves new technology as well.

Supporters say the accelerated method can get rid of a hazard more quickly and return the land to productive use sooner. But regulators, activists and others question whether the rapid timetables are safe and whether the companies have the expertise and the financial means to do the job.

"We were up in arms that it was 60 years," Janet Tauro, head of the environmental group New Jersey Clean Water Action, said of the initial plans for decommissioning the Oyster Creek plant. "And then we hear it's going to be expedited to eight years. It's great to get it over with, but are there corners that are going to be cut?"

Once a reactor is shut down, the radioactive mess must be cleaned up, spent nuclear fuel packed for long-term storage and the plant itself dismantled. The most common approach can last decades, with the plant placed in a long period of dormancy while radioactive elements slowly decay.

Spent fuel rods that can no longer sustain a nuclear reaction remain radioactive and still generate substantial heat. They are typically placed in pools of water to cool, staying there for at least five years, with 10 years the industry norm, according to the Nuclear Regulatory Commission. After that, they are removed and placed in giant cylindrical casks, typically made of steel and encased in concrete.

But Holtec International, which in the past year has been buying up several retired or soon-to-be-retired nuclear plants in the U.S., has designed a cask it says can accept spent fuel after only two years of cooling.

Holtec, a corporation with more than 30 years of experience in handling radioactive waste, struck a deal last year to buy Oyster Creek in Forked River, New Jersey, from its owner, Exelon Generation.

It also has deals in place to buy several plants owned by Entergy Corp., including: Pilgrim, in historic Plymouth, Massachusetts, closing May 31; Palisades, in Covert, Michigan, set to shut down in 2022 ; and two reactors expected to close within two years at Indian Point in Buchanan, New York.

"Our commitment to the nuclear industry includes taking ownership of shutdown nuclear plants so that we can safely and efficiently decommission the plants so that the land can be returned to productive use,"

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 68 of 77

Holtec spokeswoman Joy Russell said in an email.

The proposed sales await NRC approval, with decisions expected in the coming weeks and months.

Similarly, in January, NorthStar Group Services, a specialist in nuclear demolition, completed the purchase of Vermont Yankee from Entergy with plans for its accelerated decommissioning.

The full financial details of the pending deals have not been disclosed. But if the agreements are approved, Holtec will inherit the multibillion-dollar decommissioning trust funds set up by the utilities for the plants' eventual retirement.

The company would be able to keep anything left over in each fund after the plant's cleanup. Holtec and Northstar are also banking on the prospect of recouping money from the federal government for storing spent fuel during and after the decommissioning, because there is no national disposal site for high-level nuclear waste.

The companies jumping into the business believe they can make in profit. For the utilities, such deals free them from having to oversee long, complex projects involving decades of work and round-the-clock guarding of the dangerous waste.

While there are risks in transferring spent fuel too quickly, experts also note there are dangers while the fuel rods are sitting in the pools, including the chances of a catastrophic fire or leak resulting from a natural disaster, terrorist attack or other event.

"There's a natural tendency to say, 'Oh, they're doing it fast, they're going to make mistakes, it's not going to be safe,'" said Rod McCullum, senior director of decommissioning and used fuel at the Nuclear Energy Institute, a Washington-based advocacy group for nuclear power. "You're actually getting safer by getting faster."

In legal briefs filed with the NRC, however, Massachusetts state officials have expressed skepticism about Holtec's plan to decommission Pilgrim on an expedited schedule "never before achieved." Holtec has never managed a decommissioning start to finish.

Holtec has come under scrutiny over its role in a mishap last August during the somewhat less aggressive decommissioning of the San Onofre plant in Southern California, where two reactors were retired in 2013 and the estimated completion date is 2030.

Holtec contractors were lowering a 45-ton spent fuel cask into an underground storage vault at San Onofre when it became misaligned and nearly plunged 18 feet, investigators said. No radiation was released.

Federal regulators fined Southern California Edison, the plant's owner, \$116,000, and an investigation found that some Holtec procedures had been inadequate or not properly followed.

Massachusetts officials have stopped short of asking the NRC to block Pilgrim's sale but have cited the California incident while questioning whether the money in Pilgrim's decommissioning trust fund is sufficient to cover unexpected delays or overruns.

By Holtec's accounting, the Pilgrim decommissioning will cost an estimated \$1.13 billion, leaving \$3.6 million in the fund. State officials have described that cushion as "meager" and have warned of "significant health, safety, environmental, financial and economic risks."

Holtec said its equipment has never been involved in a major accident and stands by its cost estimates.

Pilgrim, which is along scenic, environmentally sensitive Cape Cod Bay and is being retired after 47 years, has a history of unscheduled shutdowns and was only recently removed from an NRC list of the nation's least safe reactors.

The citizen group Pilgrim Watch, which has long pushed for the closing of the plant, is leery of what lies ahead during the decommissioning.

"The story isn't over. There's a sequel," said Mary Lampert, the organization's director. "And sometimes the sequel, like in the movies, is worse than the main show."

Lifer inmates excluded from Washington '3 strikes' change

By TOM JAMES Associated Press

OLYMPIA, Wash. (AP) — Dozens of inmates, many of them black, are set to stay in Washington state prisons for life — left out of the latest in a multi-year wave of reforms easing tough-on-crime “three-strikes” laws around the U.S.

At least 24 states including Washington passed such laws during the 1990s, driven by rising violent crime rates. But nearly half have since scaled them back amid concern that habitual but less-violent offenders were being stuck behind bars for life with hard-core felons.

Washington’s 1993 three-strikes law was among the first and stands out as among the nation’s strictest. Lawmakers targeted it for reform this year with legislation removing second-degree robbery — generally defined as robbery without a deadly weapon or significant injury — from the list of crimes qualifying for cumulative life sentences.

The original reform made inmates sentenced under the old law eligible for resentencing. But an amendment pushed by a prosecutors’ group cut out the retroactivity that would have applied to those already behind bars. Washington governor and Democratic presidential contender Jay Inslee signed the changes into law April 29.

That means 62 inmates convicted of second-degree robbery will still serve life sentences, according to state records, even after judges stop “striking out” new offenders convicted of the same crimes. The racial makeup of the group is disproportionate: About half are black, despite African Americans making up only 4% of Washington’s population.

Under the original bill, the inmates with a robbery “strike” would have had the opportunity to have their life sentences re-examined by judges — but now they won’t.

Supporters of the amendment have said even less serious robberies can leave emotional scars, and that prosecutors might have set aside more serious charges because they knew second-degree robbery convictions would mean life in prison for those offenders.

But inmates still facing life behind bars described frustration that offenders with similar records may face drastically shorter sentences going forward.

“It’s just wrong on its face, to make people rot in prison for the rest of their life on a sentence that doesn’t even exist anymore,” said John Letellier, 67, whose 1999 fast food restaurant robbery earned him his third strike.

The push to take out the reform’s retroactivity clause emerged from the Washington Association of Prosecuting Attorneys, a group that represents prosecutors.

Russell Brown, the group’s director, said he reviewed most of the cases listing second-degree robbery as the third strike, and believed that prosecutors in many probably refrained from seeking more serious charges because of the guarantee the charge — known in legal circles as “Rob 2” — would count as a third strike.

But he acknowledged that he never confirmed his suspicions with any of the prosecutors who handled the cases.

“You worked the deal with the understanding that the Rob 2 would count as a strike and they would go away for life,” Brown said.

Three-strike laws — typically focused on handing out life or near-life sentences — surged in popularity in the late 1980s and early 1990s in response to peaking violent crime, driven in part by gang crime and the crack cocaine epidemic.

But a movement to reform the laws grew as backers cited the high cost of life imprisonment and the potential injustice of lumping lower-level offenders with violent predators, said Alison Lawrence, head of the criminal justice program at the National Conference of State Legislatures.

In Washington, second-degree robbery has one of the lowest seriousness levels of any crime on the three-strikes list, hypothetically encompassing anything from demanding money from a clerk to snatching a purse.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 70 of 77

At least 11 states including Washington have eased their three-strikes laws since 2009, often removing property crimes from "strike" lists or restoring discretion to judges over previously mandatory life sentences.

But lawmakers have also often been reluctant to make the three-strikes reforms retroactive: Out of the 11 only California has included such a clause, Lawrence said.

In phone and email interviews, inmates among the 62 excluded from the reform in Washington described how the reform raised their hopes — and the amendment dashed them.

Among them is Devon Laird, age 54 and serving life on a robbery third strike.

Convicted of snatching a wallet from an elderly man outside a drugstore in 2007, Laird's court records include convictions for violent crimes in his early 20s, but also testimony portraying him as attempting to escape a past that included being stabbed at 14 and shot twice before age 21.

"When they said it wasn't retroactive, it really set in on me that, man, I got life," said Laird.

Cheryl Lidel, 60, is also serving life for a 2010 robbery after being convicted of other robberies and theft. She described her crimes as driven by substance abuse that began shortly after she was sexually assaulted as a young girl.

In charging documents for her third-strike robbery, prosecutors said Lidel was going through heroin withdrawal when she robbed a Subway blocks from a police station, sticking her hand in her pocket to imitate a gun. She then asked a taxi to take her to an area known for drug dealing.

"The first time I came here I was 23 years old, and in March of this year I turned 60," Lidel said.

While it's hard to say exactly how much time any of the 62 would have faced without their robbery charges counting as strikes, few would have faced life.

With the exception of third-strike crimes, Washington hands out sentences using a formula that takes into account the number and severity of a person's previous crimes.

According to state guidelines, the maximum for second-degree robbery, given to the highest-level offenders, is less than seven years.

By comparison, a life sentence under the state's three strikes law is exactly that: Life, without the chance of release.

"I've been down 21 years," Letellier said.

Some of the 62 might not have received shorter sentences because of other serious crimes on their record, including at least eight with early robbery convictions but a final strike for murder. But nearly half the inmates on the list received a third strike only for some form of robbery.

The bill's sponsor, Democratic Sen. Jeannie Darneille, said before the state's legislative session ended that she did not want to change her bill with the amendment killing retroactivity but that it would have been at risk of failing without support from law enforcement or prosecutors because lawmakers would have feared being labeled soft on crime.

Despite its low seriousness classification, second-degree robbery can still be traumatic, said Rep. Brad Klippert, a Republican who is also a police officer and opposed the reform altogether.

But advocates and the inmates themselves said making the law non-retroactive creates an inescapable disparity: Two prisoners with identical records could end up with vastly different sentences.

It's not fair "if new people don't get strikes," said Lawrence Fillion, an inmate serving life after a third-strike robbery.

"Yet I have the same thing and I am going to die in prison."

Officials to tackle thorny issue of infrastructure funding

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Reality has set in during the three weeks since President Donald Trump and Democratic congressional leaders agreed to work together on a \$2 trillion package to invest in roads, bridges and broadband.

Republican leaders in Congress have shown little enthusiasm for the price tag, and even less for the idea of raising the federal fuel tax to help pay for upgrading the nation's infrastructure. Trump himself has

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 71 of 77

suggested that Democrats are somehow setting a trap to get him to go along with a tax increase.

Trump and Democratic lawmakers will meet at the White House on Wednesday for Round 2 of their infrastructure talks.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said after their last White House meeting in late April that there was a consensus on one aspect of infrastructure: The agreement would be big and bold. But funding is a different matter. Democrats emerged saying they would return to hear Trump's suggestions on how to pay for infrastructure.

But Trump expressed wariness in a Fox News interview that aired Sunday, saying he thought the White House was "being played by the Democrats a little bit. You know, I think what they want me to do is say, 'Well, what we'll do is raise taxes,' and we'll do this and this and this, and then they'll have a news conference, see, 'Trump wants to raise taxes.'"

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., dismissed the potential for a sweeping plan or for raising the gas tax at a recent Senate GOP lunch with Vice President Mike Pence, according to those familiar with the meeting.

And House Minority Whip Steve Scalise, R-La., said that it was unrealistic to place the funding decision with the president. Democrats will need to make suggestions, too.

"You don't ask the president, 'Show me how to pay for it,'" Scalise said. "The president doesn't pass the bill that pays for it. Ultimately, it has got to go through the House and Senate. We, Republicans and Democrats in Congress, have to come to an agreement, working with the White House, on how to pay for it. Those negotiations haven't really started in earnest."

The White House released a letter Tuesday night that Trump sent Pelosi and Schumer in advance of the meeting letting them know his preference for Congress taking up the proposed U.S. trade deal with Mexico and Canada before other issues.

"Once Congress has passed USMCA, we should turn our attention to a bipartisan infrastructure package," Trump said.

Trump also requested that Pelosi and Schumer provide more specifics about how much they would like to dedicate to the various priorities they want an infrastructure bill to cover, such as airports, ports and local wastewater systems.

"Your caucus has expressed a wide-range of priorities, and it is unclear which ones have your support," he said.

Trump also complained that he had hoped to work out the priorities following a meeting in late April at the White House, "but you cancelled a scheduled meeting of our teams, preventing them from advancing our discussions. Nevertheless, I remain committed to passing an infrastructure bill."

Shortly after the release of Trump's letter, Pelosi and Schumer issued their own statement, promising to continue "to insist on our principles: that any plan we support be big, bold and bipartisan; that it be comprehensive, future-focused, green and resilient; and that it be a jobs and ownership-boost with strong Buy America, labor, and women, veteran and minority-owned business protections."

Business and trade groups have been meeting with White House officials to emphasize the importance of shoring up the Highway Trust Fund, which pays for road improvements and transit systems. Federal fuel taxes supply most of the money that goes into the trust fund, but the purchasing power of the gas tax has declined as vehicles have become more fuel efficient.

Some 30 states have enacted fuel tax increases to raise money for local roads and bridges over the past six years, but Congress has not approved a fuel tax increase since 1993. It now stands at 18.3 cents a gallon for gasoline and 24.3 cents a gallon for diesel.

The advocacy groups are trying to make the case that state politicians supportive of gas tax increases have not been punished at the ballot box.

"The political playbook has changed. People will vote for infrastructure even if it means new user fees," said Linda Bauer Darr, president & CEO of the American Council of Engineering Companies.

However, the White House has been reluctant to provide any details of what the president will support. Rep. Earl Blumenauer, D-Ore., introduced a bill Tuesday that would raise the fuels tax by 5 cents a year

over five years and allow it to rise at the rate of inflation thereafter. It also would establish that Congress intends to replace the fuel tax with a more equitable, stable source of funding within 10 years. Blumenauer supports taxing vehicles — including electric ones — based on miles traveled.

"It is past time that we get real about funding our infrastructure needs," Blumenauer said. "We can't afford inaction any longer."

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce, the AFL-CIO and the American Trucking Associations voiced support for Blumenauer's bill. That's a rare mix of support on a major issue before Congress.

But some conservative groups are urging Congress to resist any gas tax increases. The Charles Koch-funded Americans for Prosperity said lawmakers should streamline the permitting process for construction on highways and other infrastructure, a move that could alienate many Democratic lawmakers.

"Congress has money to improve roads and bridges. They just need to spend it smarter," said Russ Latino, a vice president at Americans for Prosperity.

AP Congressional Correspondent Lisa Mascaro contributed to this report.

Reach Kevin Freking on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/APkfreking>

California sues over \$1B in canceled high-speed rail money

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — California sued Tuesday to block the Trump administration from cancelling nearly \$1 billion for the state's high-speed rail project, escalating the state's feud with the federal government.

The Federal Railroad Administration announced last week it would not give California the money awarded by Congress nearly a decade ago, arguing that the state has not made enough progress on the project.

The state must complete construction on a segment of track in the Central Valley agricultural heartland by 2022 to keep the money, and the administration has argued the state cannot meet that deadline. That line of track would be the first built on what the state hopes will eventually become a 520-mile (837-kilometer) line between San Francisco and Los Angeles.

But Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom says the move is retribution for California's criticism of President Donald Trump's immigration policies.

"The decision was precipitated by President Trump's overt hostility to California, its challenge to his border wall initiatives, and what he called the "green disaster" high-speed rail project," the state said in the lawsuit.

California was not expected to tap the \$929 million the Trump administration has revoked until 2021. If the lawsuit is not resolved before then, the election could put Democrats in the White House and Congress who may be friendlier to the project.

The lawsuit faulted the Trump administration for halting cooperation with the state on granting environmental clearances for the project. It said terminating the funding would "wreak significant economic damage on the Central Valley and the state."

Newsom told reporters the administration is "after us in every way, shape or form." But he expressed confidence the state will win in court.

"Principles and values tend to win out over short-term tweets," Newsom said.

The lawsuit highlighted a series of tweets Trump sent about the project, including one that said California's rail project would be far more expensive than Trump's proposed border wall.

That tweet came a day after California led 15 states in suing over Trump's plans to fund the border wall, and hours before the administration first threatened to revoke the rail funding.

The Federal Railroad Administration did not immediately respond to an email message seeking comment about California's lawsuit.

California has worked for more than a decade on the project to bring high-speed rail service between Los Angeles and San Francisco, but the project has been plagued by delays and cost overruns. It's now

projected to cost around \$77 billion and be finished by 2033.

The state has already spent \$2.5 billion in federal funding, and the Trump administration is exploring whether it can try to get that money back.

The lawsuit also asks the court to block the administration from awarding the money to any other project.

The lawsuit was filed in the Northern District of California.

The dispute over the funding was partly driven by Newsom's remarks in February that the project faced challenges and needed to shift focus. Rail officials had been planning to connect the line under construction in the Central Valley to Silicon Valley, but Newsom has proposed extending the line further north and south into the valley before heading west.

The California High-Speed Rail Authority presented a plan in early May that showed it would cost \$18.3 billion to get trains up and running between Bakersfield and Merced by 2028.

The board overseeing the project voted Tuesday to further study whether it makes sense financially and otherwise to run early train service on that line. Tom Richards, the vice chairman, noted the board has not yet formally approved the new approach.

"The board has not been asked for, nor has the board given, any interim service direction to (the project's) management," he said.

Department stores woes reflected in latest batch of results

By ANNE D'INNOCENZIO AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The outlook for department stores grew murkier Tuesday after J.C. Penney, Kohl's and Nordstrom reported fiscal first quarter results that reflected their struggles at the start of the year.

Penney, which has been trying to turn around its business for several years after a disastrous reinvention plan, reported a wider than expected loss and sales declines during the quarter.

Kohl's sales momentum also stalled and it cut its fiscal 2020 profit outlook. It cited damp weather that cut into sales of spring clothing and a competitive environment in discounted home goods.

Upscale Nordstrom, which reported results after the close of trading on Wall Street, reported a first quarter sales drop and cut its annual sales forecast.

The downbeat reports from the department store chains were in contrast to Macy's performance. Macy's reported a first-quarter profit last week that smashed Wall Street estimates. It also put up its sixth consecutive quarter of increases in comparable store sales — or sales in stores open a year — fueled by its robust online business after a three-year sales slump. However, it's still facing challenges attracting shoppers.

Department stores have been trying to reinvent themselves as more shoppers go online. They are also facing increasing competition from the likes of T.J. Maxx and other off-price stores, which offer coveted brands at cheaper prices. T.J. Maxx's parent reported strong results Tuesday that topped Wall Street estimates, indicating that shoppers continue to be drawn to its treasure hunt experience.

To lure customers, department stores have been offering exclusive merchandise and adding online services. Last month, Kohl's said it was expanding its partnership with Amazon, with plans to accept Amazon returns in all of its 1,150 stores starting in July. But apparently, those efforts haven't yet translated into higher sales.

"The middle market is collapsing," said Steve Dennis, a strategic retail adviser. "They're fighting so many headwinds."

Department stores are also facing the threat of escalating trade wars with China that could mean higher prices on clothing and other goods. Retailers had been left largely unscathed by the first several rounds of tariffs since they focused more on industrial and agricultural products.

But items like furniture saw an increase in tariffs to 25% two weeks ago. And now the Trump administration is preparing to extend the 25% tariffs to practically all Chinese imports not already hit with levies, including toys, shirts, household goods and sneakers.

Nearly 200 footwear retailers and brands including Adidas and Shoe Carnival wrote a letter to President Donald Trump on Monday, calling for him not to slap tariffs on footwear imported from China.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 74 of 77

The group, the Footwear Distributors and Retailers of America, estimates that Trump's proposed actions will add \$7 billion in additional costs for customers every year.

Kohl's Corp., based in Menomonee Falls, Wisconsin, reported first-quarter net income of \$62 million, or 38 cents per share.

Earnings, adjusted for asset impairment costs, came to 61 cents per share, missing the average Street estimate of 67 cents per share.

The department store's revenue of \$4.09 billion in the period fell short of forecasts of \$4.2 billion.

Kohl's now expects full-year earnings per share earnings in the range of \$5.15 to \$5.45, down from a previous range of \$5.80 to \$6.15.

Meanwhile, J.C. Penney's CEO Jill Soltau, who took the helm last October, is facing more pressure to turn around its business. The Plano, Texas-based company is bringing in new executives while trying to come up with a plan to attract shoppers. On a conference call, Soltau declined to divulge specifics and said that she wasn't ready for "prime time."

J.C. Penney Co. reported a quarterly loss of \$154 million, or 48 cents per share. Losses, adjusted for one-time gains and costs, came to 46 cents per share. That's worse than the per share loss of 39 cents Wall Street was expecting, according to a survey by Zacks Investment Research.

The company's revenue was \$2.56 billion, down 5.6%. Same-store sales fell 5.5%. The company attributed part of the sales drop to its move to get rid of major appliances and furniture, which were eating away at profit margins.

Nordstrom reported net income of \$37 million. On a per-share basis, the Seattle-based company said it had net income of 23 cents.

The average estimate of 10 analysts surveyed by Zacks Investment Research was for earnings of 43 cents per share.

The department store operator posted revenue of \$3.44 billion in the period, down more than 3% from \$3.47 billion in the year-ago period.

Kohl's shares tumbled more than 12%, or \$7.76, to close at \$55.15, while J.C. Penney's shares fell nearly 7%, or 8 cents, to close at \$1.07 per share. Nordstrom shares fell 9%, or \$3.43, to \$34.42 in extended trading after the release of the company's earnings report.

Follow Anne D'Innocenzio: <http://twitter.com/ADInnocenzio>

Tech rebound powers US stocks higher, snaps 2-day S&P slump

By **DAMIAN J. TROISE** and **ALEX VEIGA** AP Business Writers

Technology companies helped power stocks broadly higher on Wall Street Tuesday, snapping the market's two-day losing streak.

The rally followed the U.S. government's decision to temporarily ease off proposed restrictions on technology sales to Chinese companies. The news gave a boost to technology sector stocks, which took steep losses a day earlier when the Trump administration announced curbs on technology sales, aimed primarily at Chinese telecom gear maker Huawei.

About one-third of that company's suppliers are American chipmakers and the move would crimp sales for companies including Qualcomm and Broadcom. Both companies posted gains Tuesday, along with other chipmakers.

The U.S. government's decision to issue a 90-day grace period on technology sales to Huawei, ZTE and other Chinese companies also relieved worries on Wall Street about yet another escalation in the trade war between the U.S. and China.

"I'm a bit surprised that the bounce back has been as strong as it has been," said Randy Frederick, vice president of trading & derivatives at Charles Schwab. "It speaks to the fact that we're still in a bull market and, in general, the economics are still pretty solid, and the markets are happy to move up on any sort of positive news, especially if it looks constructive toward trade."

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 75 of 77

The S&P 500 index rose 24.13 points, or 0.9%, to 2,864.36. The Dow gained 197.43 points, or 0.8%, to 25,877.33.

The technology heavy Nasdaq composite climbed 83.35 points, or 1.1%, to 7,785.72, erasing a good chunk of Monday's losses. The Russell 2000 index of small companies picked up 20.28 points, or 1.3%, to 1,545.25.

Major stock indexes in Europe rose. Bond prices fell, boosting the yield on the 10-year Treasury to 2.43% from 2.41% late Monday.

Heightened tensions over trade have stuck the market in a rut for the last two weeks — the S&P 500 is down 2.8% for May, although the benchmark index still shows a gain of 14.3% for the year.

The trend is a change from the relative calm that dominated markets earlier this year, when a trade agreement seemed to be in the works. The S&P 500 has twice dropped by at least 1.5% this month, as many times as it had in the first four months of the year.

"The trade negotiation with China is pretty much the big elephant in the room and continues to be," Frederick said. "Which is why we're going to continue to see above average volatility like we've seen for the last two weeks, and it's a kind of treacherous spot for people to be in right now."

The dispute between Washington and Beijing grew more heated the last two weeks after the Trump administration made good on a threat to raise tariffs on Chinese-made products and China retaliated with tariffs of its own.

The U.S. government's restrictions on technology sales to Huawei added more anxiety for traders already worried about further escalations in the trade dispute.

But the temporary delay on the restriction of sales to Huawei announced Tuesday, as well as the government saying that the 90-day grace period could be renewed, appeared to alleviate some of those concerns.

The rally particularly benefited chipmakers, which had slumped on Monday.

Intel rose 2.1% and Texas Instruments added 2.2%. Broadcom, which gets about half of its revenue from China, gained 1%. Qualcomm, which gets more than half of its revenue from China, rose 1.5%.

Technology stocks, especially chipmakers, have already been under increased pressure because of the ongoing trade war. The latest move to restrict some technology sales could cut into key revenue sources.

Apple rebounded 1.9% after falling a day earlier. Health care, financial and industrial stocks also helped drive the market higher Tuesday. Anthem climbed 4%, Wells Fargo added 1.9% and Boeing gained 1.7%. Household goods makers lagged. Tyson Foods slid 1.5%.

Gains in consumer-oriented stocks were held back by disappointing quarterly financial results from a couple of big department store chains.

J.C. Penney slid 7% after it reported declining sales and a surprisingly wide loss. The retailer attributed part of the weak quarter to its no longer selling major appliances and furniture.

Kohl's plunged 12.3% after its results fell short of forecasts amid slumping sales. The company also cut its profit forecast for the year.

The latest corporate results nearly cap an earnings season that has been better than the severe earnings recession that Wall Street initially feared.

Energy futures finished mixed Tuesday. Benchmark U.S. crude slipped 0.2% to settle at \$62.99 per barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, closed 0.3% higher at \$72.18 per barrel.

Wholesale gasoline gained 0.5% to \$2.02 per gallon. Heating oil rose 0.3% to \$2.08 per gallon. Natural gas fell 2.2% to \$2.61 per 1,000 cubic feet.

Gold slid 0.3% to \$1,273.20 per ounce, silver dropped 0.2% to \$14.41 per ounce and copper gave up 0.4% to \$2.72 per pound.

The dollar rose to 110.63 Japanese yen from 109.96 yen on Monday. The euro weakened to \$1.1158 from \$1.1168.

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 76 of 77

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, May 22, the 142nd day of 2019. There are 223 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On May 22, 1992, after a reign lasting nearly 30 years, Johnny Carson hosted NBC's "Tonight Show" for the final time (Jay Leno took over as host three days later).

On this date:

In 1868, a major train robbery took place near Marshfield, Indiana, as members of the Reno gang made off with \$96,000 in loot.

In 1939, the foreign ministers of Germany and Italy, Joachim von Ribbentrop and Galeazzo Ciano, signed a "Pact of Steel" committing the two countries to a military alliance.

In 1960, an earthquake of magnitude 9.5, the strongest ever measured, struck southern Chile, claiming some 1,655 lives.

In 1962, Continental Airlines Flight 11, en route from Chicago to Kansas City, Missouri, crashed after a bomb apparently brought on board by a passenger exploded, killing all 45 occupants of the Boeing 707.

In 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson, speaking at the University of Michigan, outlined the goals of his "Great Society," saying that it "rests on abundance and liberty for all" and "demands an end to poverty and racial injustice."

In 1968, the nuclear-powered submarine USS Scorpion, with 99 men aboard, sank in the Atlantic Ocean. (The remains of the sub were later found on the ocean floor 400 miles southwest of the Azores.)

In 1969, the lunar module of Apollo 10, with Thomas P. Stafford and Eugene Cernan aboard, flew to within nine miles of the moon's surface in a dress rehearsal for the first lunar landing.

In 1981 "Yorkshire Ripper" Peter Sutcliffe was convicted in London of murdering 13 women and was sentenced to life in prison.

In 1998, a federal judge ruled that Secret Service agents could be compelled to testify before the grand jury in the Monica Lewinsky investigation. Voters in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland turned out to cast ballots giving resounding approval to a Northern Ireland peace accord.

In 2001, Ford Motor Co. said it planned to spend more than \$2 billion to replace up to 13 million Firestone tires on its vehicles because of safety concerns.

In 2011, a tornado devastated Joplin, Missouri, with winds up to 250 mph, claiming at least 159 lives and destroying about 8,000 homes and businesses.

In 2017, a suicide bomber set off an improvised explosive device that killed 22 people at the end of an Ariana Grande concert in Manchester, England.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama promised graduating midshipmen at the U.S. Naval Academy that, as their commander in chief, he would only send them "into harm's way when it is absolutely necessary." Vice President Joe Biden arrived in Lebanon to reinforce U.S. support for the government ahead of key parliamentary elections.

Five years ago: The U.S. House of Representatives passed legislation to end the National Security Agency's bulk collection of American phone records (however, the USA Freedom Act was later blocked in the Senate.) Thailand's military seized power in a bloodless coup.

One year ago: Stacey Abrams won Georgia's Democratic gubernatorial primary, making her the first woman nominee for Georgia governor from either major party. (Abrams, seeking to become the nation's first black female governor, was defeated in November by Republican Brian Kemp.) Novelist Philip Roth, whose books included "Portnoy's Complaint" and the Pulitzer Prize-winning "American Pastoral," died in New York at the age of 85. A judge in upstate New York ordered a 30-year-old man to move out of his parents' house after they went to court to have him ejected.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Michael Constantine is 92. Business magnate T. Boone Pickens is 91. Conductor Peter Nero is 85. Actor-director Richard Benjamin is 81. Actor Frank Converse is 81. Former CNN anchor

Groton Daily Independent

Wednesday, May 22, 2019 ~ Vol. 27 - No. 316 ~ 77 of 77

Bernard Shaw is 79. Actress Barbara Parkins is 77. Retired MLB All-Star pitcher Tommy John is 76. Songwriter Bernie Taupin is 69. Actor-producer Al Corley is 64. Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, is 62. Singer Morrissey is 60. Actress Ann Cusack is 58. Country musician Dana Williams (Diamond Rio) is 58. Rock musician Jesse Valenzuela is 57. Actor Mark Christopher Lawrence is 55. Former White House Press Secretary Jay Carney is 54. Rhythm-and-blues singer Johnny Gill (New Edition) is 53. Rock musician Dan Roberts (Crash Test Dummies) is 52. Actress Brooke Smith is 52. Actor Michael Kelly is 50. Model Naomi Campbell is 49. Actress Anna Belknap is 47. Actress Alison Eastwood is 47. Singer Donell Jones is 46. Actor Sean Gunn is 45. Actress A.J. Langer is 45. Actress Ginnifer Goodwin is 41. Rhythm-and-blues singer Vivian Green is 40. Actress Maggie Q is 40. Olympic gold medal speed skater Apolo Anton Ohno is 37. Actress Molly Ephraim (TV: "Last Man Standing") is 33. Tennis player Novak Djokovic is 32. Actress Anna Baryshnikov (TV: "Superior Donuts") is 27. Actress Camren (cq) Bicondova is 20.

Thought for Today: "We have all, at one time or another, been performers, and many of us still are — politicians, playboys, cardinals and kings." — Laurence Olivier, British actor (born this date in 1907, died in 1989).