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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.

I AM NOT DISCOURAGED,
BECAUSE EVERY WRONG
ATTEMPT DISCARDED IS
ANOTHER STEP FORWARD.



-THOMAS EDISON

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

Cub Cadet

ALL-AROUND STRENGTH



SC 100 HW PUSH WALK-BEHIND MOWER

- 159cc Cub Cadet® performance-tuned OHV engine
- 21" Cub Cadet Signature Cut™
- High rear wheels to maneuver with ease

STARTING AT:
\$269*

XT1™ LT42" LAWN TRACTOR

- 18 HP** Cub Cadet-certified Kohler® 5400 Series single OHV engine
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- 18" tilling width
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605-395-6421

Upcoming COMMUNITY EVENTS

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
\$16/hr night shift
Overtime Available

BENEFITS INCLUDE:

- Comprehensive Health,
- Dental & Vision insurance
- Life Insurance
- Short-term Disability and Long-term Disability
- 401k
- Holiday Pay
- Vacation Pay
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- Referral Bonuses

To apply visit www.uslbn.com/careers or call Diane at 605-448-2929.



Kuehnert

Five seniors were awarded the Cortland and Lois Kuehnert Memorial Scholarships
Cassandra Townsend (Athletic), Emily Thompson (Trade, Technical, Science, Math, or Computers), AnneMarie Smith (Valedictorian), Ashley Garduno (Financial Need), Alexis Simon (Top Student)



Gwendolyn O'Connor Broman Scholarship

Left Photo: Micah Poor (left) is pictured with Leonard Broman. Poor was selected for the Groton Gwendolyn O'Connor Broman Scholarship in 2019. The scholarship is awarded yearly to a Groton student with a minimum GPA of 3.5 who is planning a major in mathematics, engineering or science. Micah is planning to major in chemistry at the University of MN, Twin Cities and is the son of Anissa and David Poor of Stratford.

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Raap

Kylie Kassube and Taylor Holm were awarded the Groton Darlene Raap Memorial Scholarships



Bugner

Samantha Menzia and Samantha Geffre were awarded the Groton Edna Bugner Memorial Scholarships



Class of 69

Jillian Barton and Tylan Glover were awarded the Groton Class of 69 Scholarships



Heinz & Fliehs

Cassandra Townsend was awarded the Wilfred N. and Lucille A. Heinz Memorial Scholarship and Kaitlyn Anderson was awarded the Irvin and Janice Fliehs Family Scholarship

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Kramer & Weismantel

Emily Thompson was awarded the Susan Deanne Weismantel Memorial Scholarship and Alexis Simon was awarded the Shawn Weismantel Kramer Memorial Scholarship



Sammuli Rix Scholarship

Treyton Diegel and Megan Crosby were selected to receive the Groton Sammuli-Rix Scholarships



Groton Community and Teaching

Kaitlyn Kassube was awarded the Groton Community Foundation Scholarship and Shannon Wiedrick was awarded the Groton Area School Employee Teaching Scholarship



Bartz Scholarship

Payton Maine and Shyla Larson were selected to receive the Groton Don Bartz Memorial Scholarships

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The fifth grade class of Shelby Hendrickson graduated from the D.A.R.E. program on Tuesday. Pictured in front, left to right, are London Bahr, Cambria Bonn, Mia Crank, Emma Davies, Dreston Dennert, Jarrett Erdmann, Kyson Fayant and Karsten Flihs; in the middle row, left to right, are Charlie Frost, Carly Gilbert, Nicholas Groeblichhoff, Hailey Hermanson, Delayne Jones, Gavin Khali, Raelee Lilly and Jerica Locke; in back, left to right, are Teacher Shelby Hendrickson, Drake Peterson, Hannah Sandness, Garrett Schultz, Jayden Schwan, Jacobo Tewksbury, Keegan Tracy and Groton Police Chief and D.A.R.E. Instructor Stacy Mayou; not pictured is Paisley Mitchell. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Groton Area held its D.A.R.E. graduation on Tuesday in the GHS Arena. The photo on the left features the parents grouping together to take pictures. The guest speaker was Aberdeen Police Officer Tom Barstad, who brought his drug dog, Neko. Barstad has been with the police department for 10.5 years and Neko has been with him for about five years. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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The fifth grade class of Janel Lone graduated from the D.A.R.E. program on Tuesday. Pictured in front, left to right, are Sierra Bohlmann, Nevaeh Brooks, Lucas Carda, Kolton Dockter, Rylee Dunker, Gavin Englund, Keegan Harry and Benjamin Hoeft; in the middle row, left to right, are Teacher Janel Lone, Breslyn Jeschke, Ryder Johnson, Lincoln Krause, Karter Moody, Jaedyn Penning, Hailey Pray, Kaitlin Raab and De Eh Tha Say; in back, left to right, are Gage Sippel, Landon Smith, Olivia Stiegelmeier, Cali Tollifson, Nathan Unzen, Logan Warrington, Natalia Warrington, Talli Wright and Groton Police Chief and D.A.R.E. Instructor Stacy Mayou.

(Photo by Paul Kosel)



The Essay winners are pictured above, left to right: Talli Wright, third place; Ryder Johnson, second place; Natalia Warrington, first place; Carly Gilbert, second place; and Jerica Locke, third place. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Today in Weather History

May 23, 1989: A complex of thunderstorms moved from southwest Minnesota through Iowa. One small tornado touched down briefly in Lyon County. But the main story with this complex was high winds and hail. Baseball size hail fell north of George in Lyon, County. Also, two-inch hail occurred in Sac County in Schaller and Odebolt, and golf ball size hail fell in Carroll, Iowa. The hail caused a lot of damage to vehicles, trees, and roofs. Thunderstorm winds of 60 miles an hour were also common across all of northwest Iowa with these storms.

1968: One of the costliest hailstorms in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma history pummeled the city on this date. Hail the size of baseballs fell over much of the city, resulting in more than 40,000 insurance claims over the 90,000 square mile path of the storm. The final cost was more than \$20 million. The parent thunderstorm also caused flash flooding that left 2 to 4 feet of water in some underpasses and a lightning strike that started a fire that killed two people.

1960: A massive earthquake in Chile the previous day produced a tsunami that killed 61 people in Hilo, Hawaii. An additional 180 people died on the islands of Honshu and Hokkaido in Japan.

1997: David McWilliams Ludlum was born 1910 in East Orange, NJ - He is responsible for researching and publishing much of the early history of weather at the beginning of America. David died May 23, 1997, in Princeton, New Jersey. He was an American historian, meteorologist, entrepreneur, and author.

2010: A rare tropical cyclone dubbed Bandu brings high winds and heavy rains to Somalia. The storm then moved into the Gulf of Aden where it quickly weakens and dissipates on the 23rd as it passes between Yemen and Somalia.

1882 - An unusual late season snow blanketed eastern Iowa, with four to six inches reported around Washington. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1953 - The temperature at Hollis OK soared from a morning low of 70 degrees to an afternoon high of 110 degrees to establish a state record for the month of May. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - It was a busy day for thunderstorms in the central U.S. Thunderstorms produced wind gusts to 65 mph at Shreveport LA and golf ball size hail at Marfa, TX. Hobart, OK, received 3.55 inches of rain in the morning, and another 4.03 inches of rain that evening. Thunderstorms in Nebraska produced 8.5 inches of rain in two hours north of Potter, and 7.5 inches of rain in ninety minutes north of Minatare. Thunderstorms in Colorado produced five inches of hail at Greeley. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather across much of the eastern U.S. Golf ball size hail was reported in Georgia, Maryland, North Carolina, South Carolina and Ohio. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)


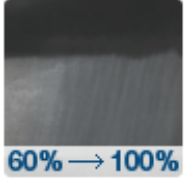



1989 - Severe thunderstorms developing along a cold front resulted in 98 reports of large hail and damaging winds in the Northern Plains and Upper Mississippi Valley. Golf ball size hail caused a million dollars damage around Buffalo City, WI, baseball size hail was reported at Northfield and Randolph, MN, and thunderstorm winds gusted to 95 mph at Dunkerton, IA. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Unseasonably hot weather continued in the south central U.S. Pueblo, CO, equalled their May record with a high of 98 degrees, and the high of 106 degrees at Midland, TX, marked a record six straight days of 100 degree heat. (The National Weather Summary)



1990 - A cold front crossing the western U.S. produced snow over parts of Oregon, California, Nevada, Idaho and Utah, with five inches reported at Austin NV, and four inches at Crater Lake National Park in Oregon. Strong winds behind the cold front sharply reduced visibilities in blowing dust over central California, and two multi-vehicle accidents resulted in one death and eighteen injuries. In northern Idaho, a cloud-burst washed tons of topsoil, and rocks as large as footballs, into the valley town of Culdesac. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)


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Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday
				
Mostly Cloudy	60% → 100% Showers Likely then Showers	40% Chance Showers and Breezy	Partly Cloudy and Breezy then Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny
High: 59 °F	Low: 49 °F	High: 75 °F	Low: 45 °F	High: 70 °F

Dry & Cool Today

Today / Tonight Partly Sunny, Cool. Showers/T-storms Tonight  HIGHS: 53-64°	Friday Becoming Partly Cloudy and Warmer after AM Showers  HIGHS: 63-78°
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 NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION
Aberdeen, SD 5/23/2019 4:59 AM f t

WEATHER.GOV/ABR

Published on: 05/23/2019 at 6:02AM

High pressure will provide for a dry and cool today across the region. A system will bring showers and thunderstorms to the area overnight, with rainfall amounts up to a half inch. After a few morning showers, Friday should turn dry and warmer.

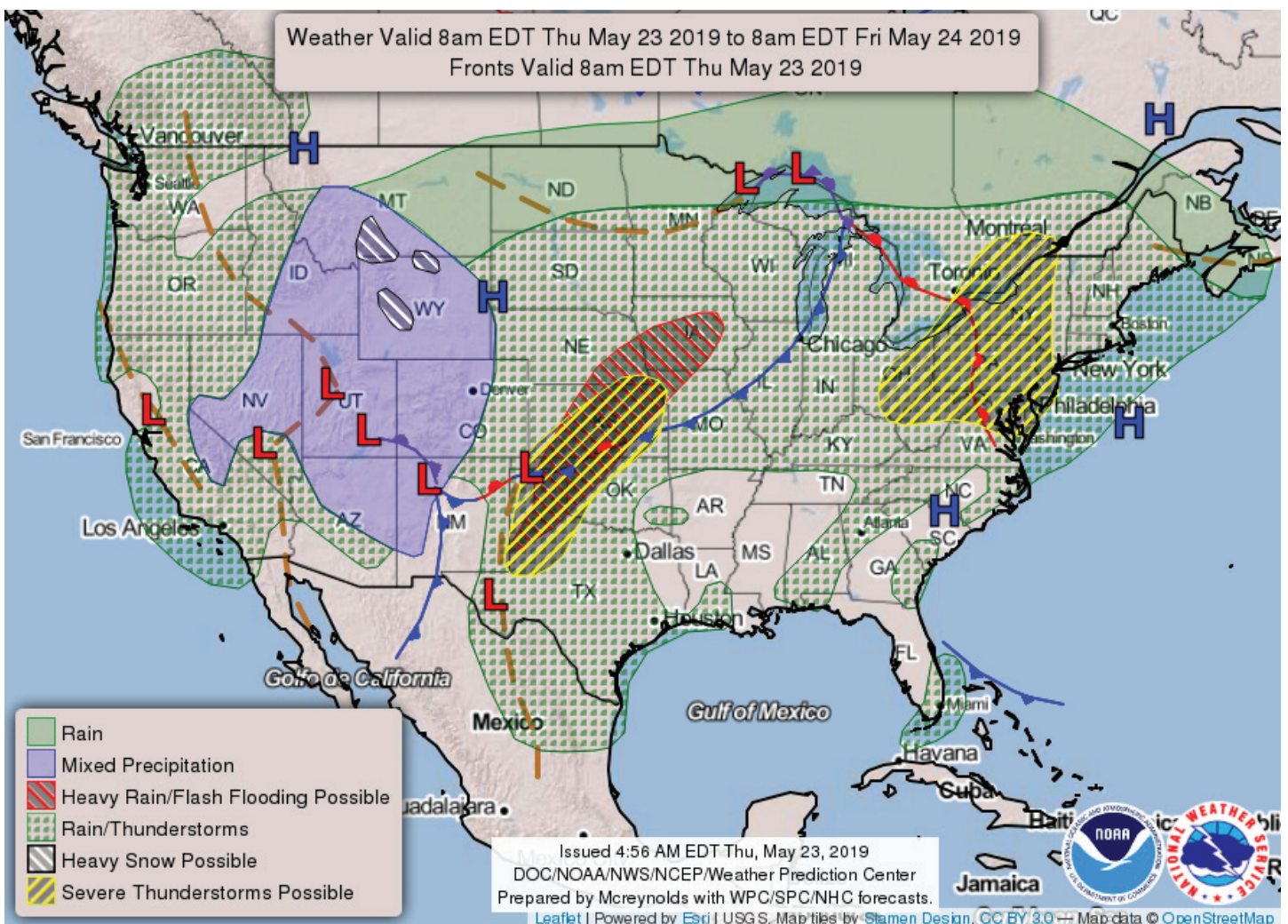
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 53 °F at 5:41 PM

Low Temp: 45 °F at 12:25 AM

Wind: 27 mph at 12:35 AM

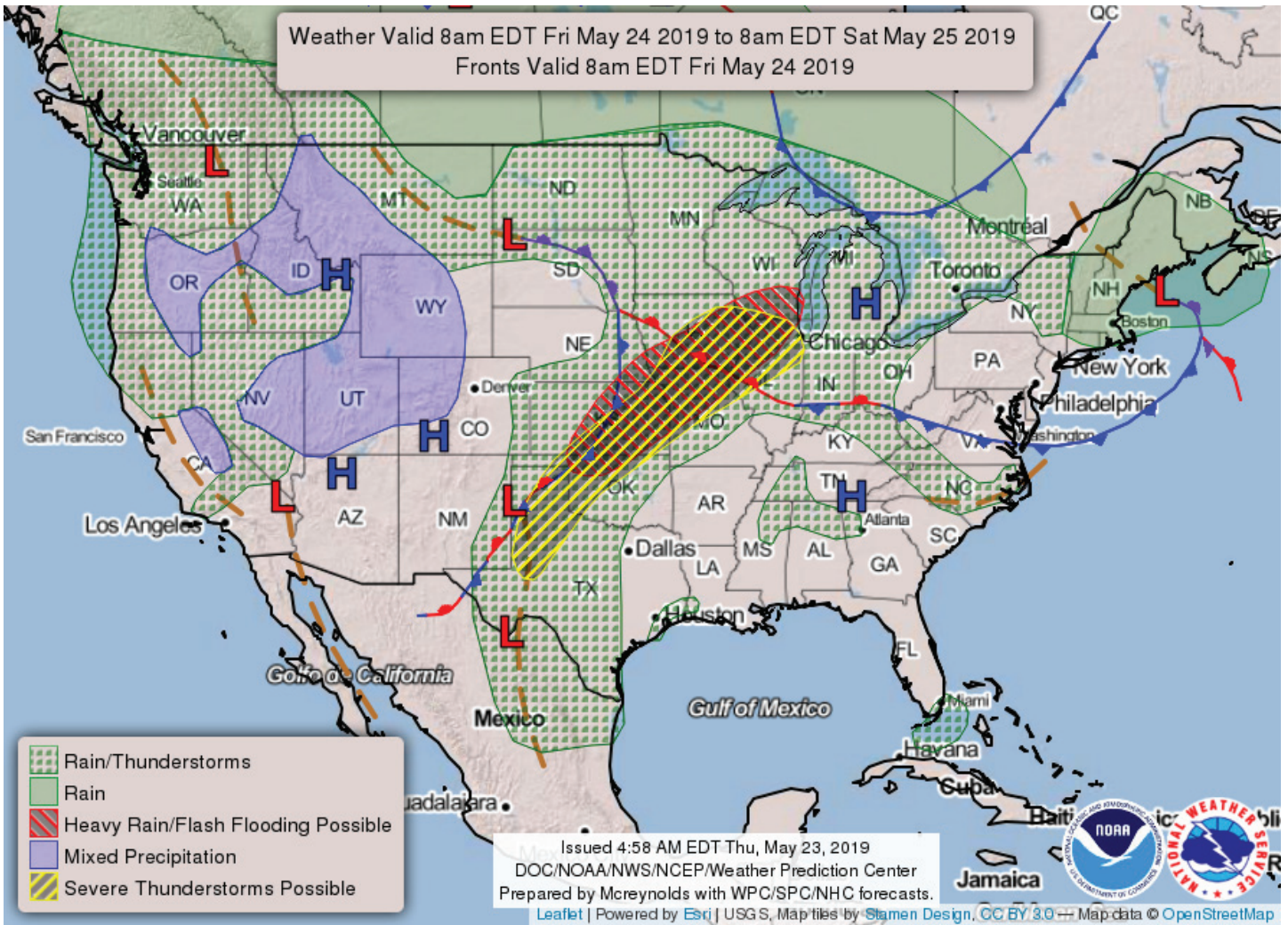
Day Rain: 0.02 in



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Tomorrow's Weather Map



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HONOR THE POOR

We were sitting in the break room having lunch. I had been invited to eat with the employees to connect with a young man who was having serious financial and marital problems. When he finished eating, he took his plastic dinnerware to the sink, washed them, wrapped them in a napkin, and put them in his pocket.

Another employee noticed what he did and said sarcastically, Wow, youre really having it tough. Want mine too? No doubt your family could use them.

When those words pierced his heart, he burst into tears, dropped his head to his chest and stood quietly, not knowing what to say. One more blow for him deal with and struggle to overcome on his path to survival.

I walked up to him, put my arm around his shoulder and said, Ive gone through difficult times, too. Im glad I had to do without when I was your age because now I understand your feelings and know you will survive.

The one who oppresses the poor is not a friend of God. In fact, such behavior reflects their attitude toward the One who created both. If anyone has contempt for another person, it spills over onto God - for He gave life for both and they are of equal value in His sight. We sometimes forget that His Son died for both - as He did for each of us.

Whatever anyone has is a gift from God to be used to honor Him including plastic dinnerware. Jesus made that extremely clear when He said, I tell you the truth, whatever you did to one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me. When we share our love and resources with those in need, as Solomon said, we honor God.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, we ask for hearts filled with compassion to care for those in need of love and lifes essentials. May we care for them as You care for us. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Proverbs 14:31 Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God.

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2019 Groton SD Community Events

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

2020 Groton SD Community Events

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

News from the Associated Press

Softball coach sentenced for sexually assaulting girl

MITCHELL, S.D. (AP) — A former Mitchell softball coach has been sentenced to spend five years in prison for sexually assaulting a 14-year-old girl last year.

Thirty-seven-year-old Andrew Murphy earlier pleaded guilty to fourth-degree rape. He was sentenced to 15 years in the state penitentiary with 10 years suspended on Tuesday.

According to court documents, Murphy invited the 14-year-old victim to his home in Mitchell last August. Murphy was a coach on the Mitchell junior varsity softball team.

He was also ordered to pay more than \$4,400 in restitution and court costs.

Police: 2 found dead in Mitchell hotel committed suicide

MITCHELL, S.D. (AP) — Police in Mitchell say two people found dead in a hotel took their own lives.

Authorities say the man and woman were found hanging in a room at the Thunderbird Lodge Monday. Autopsies determined both died of asphyxiation.

Police say the two checked into the hotel Saturday night and arrived in a U-Haul van from another state. Officials 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 assisted in the investigation.

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Dakota Cash

08-09-14-20-21

(eight, nine, fourteen, twenty, twenty-one)

Estimated jackpot: \$415,000

Lotto America

01-02-08-11-35, Star Ball: 1, ASB: 3

(one, two, eight, eleven, thirty-five; Star Ball: one; ASB: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$20.03 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$393 million

Powerball

07-10-20-44-57, Powerball: 3, Power Play: 2

(seven, ten, twenty, forty-four, fifty-seven; Powerball: three; Power Play: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$288 million

Prosecutors charge man wounded in deputy-involved shooting

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Prosecutors have charged a Sioux Falls man who was shot and wounded by a deputy outside the Minnehaha County Jail.

State's Attorney Aaron McGowan said Wednesday that an arrest warrant has been issued for 44-year-old George Lee Rinzy Jr.

Rinzy faces six counts of assaulting a law enforcement officer as well as charges of intentionally damaging public property and disorderly conduct.

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Authorities allege Rinzy charged at officers with a knife when he was shot Tuesday. That happened after Rinzy allegedly broke a window in the door of the jail, injuring an officer with broken glass.

Rinzy remains in the hospital and will be arrested when his condition improves. His condition was not released.

South Dakota Attorney General Jason Ravensborg says the state Division of Criminal Investigation is reviewing the shooting.

South Dakota governor requests federal disaster help

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem is asking for a presidential disaster declaration because of property damage caused by a snowstorm and flooding this spring.

Noem requested the federal aid in a letter to President Donald Trump on Wednesday. The governor asked for the Federal Emergency Management Agency to help with repairs for damage to both public property as well as to homes and businesses.

Noem says a "historic severe winter storm of rare intensity" began in South Dakota on March 13, followed by rapid snowmelt and flooding. She says South Dakotans continue having problems because of flooding.

A preliminary damage assessment indicates about \$43 million in damage to infrastructure in 58 counties and on three reservations. Individual assistance is estimated at about \$3 million covering 16 counties and three reservations.

South Dakota governor not planning to stop inmate execution

By JEFF BAENEN Associated Press

The governor of South Dakota says she does not plan to stop the execution of a death row inmate who claims jurors were biased against him because he's gay.

The American Civil Liberties Union is urging Gov. Kristi Noem to grant clemency to Charles Rhines. He was convicted of stabbing 22-year-old doughnut shop employee Donnivan Schaeffer to death during a 1992 burglary at the business in Rapid City, South Dakota.

In a statement to The Associated Press on Wednesday, Noem said the state Board of Pardons and Paroles reviewed Rhines' application for clemency in December and denied it.

"I agree with the Board of Pardons and Paroles' decision," said the Republican governor, who was elected last November.

In a letter to Noem dated Monday, the ACLU contends that anti-gay bias against Rhines "factored into the jury's decision to sentence him to death." The organization asks Noem to "exercise compassion and commute Mr. Rhines's sentence to life imprisonment without parole in this case."

"Our position is that Charles Rhines's execution would violate a basic premise of our criminal justice system: Our law punishes people for what they do, not who they are," Ria Tabacco Mar, senior staff attorney for the ACLU, told the AP in an email Wednesday.

Rhines has asked the courts to halt his lethal injection, which according to the ACLU is scheduled for early November. A spokesman for the South Dakota attorney general's office said the office is looking at a November execution date.

A hearing to help determine the execution date is planned for June 25.

Rhines' appeal followed a ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2017 that evidence of racial bias in the jury room allows a judge to consider setting aside a verdict. Rhines, now 62, claims one juror said Rhines should not be sentenced to life in prison because he is gay and would be housed with other men.

The Supreme Court has rejected Rhines' appeal twice, with the latest decision coming last month.

Rhines' execution would be South Dakota's first since Rodney Berget's lethal injection in October. Berget was sentenced to death for killing corrections officer Ronald "R.J." Johnson during a 2011 prison escape attempt. His execution was the state's fourth since it reinstated the death penalty in 1979.

Follow Jeff Baenen on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/jeffbaenen> .

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. Residents watched nervously this past week as high waters again threatened the town.

"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 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.

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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> .

2 South Dakota men take unique journeys to finding sobriety

By DAN CRISLER Watertown Public Opinion

WATERTOWN, S.D. (AP) — For every school student, graduation is an accomplishment that marks a milestone in life. For Carl Umlauf and Clinton Reid, their recent graduation from Drug Court was perhaps the biggest milestone they have achieved so far.

With friends, family, and well-wishers packed into a Codington County courtroom, Umlauf’s and Reid’s graduation marked a new chapter in their lives free from the substance abuse demons they’ve battled, and generally succumbed to, for years. Their addictions have been ones that have alienated their friends and families and left them in a despondent state.

As one of nine members of the Drug Court Team, Third Judicial Circuit Court Judge Carmen Means has seen the perils of how addiction affects the people who appear before her.

“Addiction is a slog and it’s difficult,” Means told the Watertown Public Opinion in the minutes after Umlauf’s and Reid’s graduation.

The Drug Court Team includes those in the legal, law enforcement and counseling communities.

Through the rigorous and voluntary multi-year process of Drug Court, the two men reclaimed their lives and controlled their demons to once again emerge as productive members of society.

Umlauf and Reid became the 18th and 19th Drug Court graduates in the five-year history of the program in Codington County. Both men achieved sobriety in their own way.

For Umlauf, it meant finding strength in his family, which includes his sister and introductory speaker Bridgette Umlauf, and friends. It also meant working a job he loves at Macksteel.

“If it wasn’t for everybody, I don’t think I could have made it through this program,” Umlauf told an emotional crowd. “I will forever be grateful for everything that’s happened in Drug Court.”

For Reid, it meant finding strength through religion. During his journey to sobriety, Reid met and found a pillar of support in Jared Kemmis, an associate pastor at Jesus Church who served as Reid’s introductory speaker. After meeting Kemmis in early 2018, Reid became baptized in Jesus Church.

“When I first got into the program, I didn’t think it would be possible for me to get sober,” Reid said. “I got connected to a higher power again. He worked to have done a miracle in my life. It’s because of God that I’m sober today.”

Now that Umlauf and Reid completed the journey to sobriety, they each begin a new journey to maintain that sobriety.

As keynote speaker Dr. Melanie Weiss, a Watertown optometrist who suffered through her own opioid addiction that led to her arrest and subsequent journey to sobriety nearly three years ago, noted, there will be bad days interspersed with the good days.

The important thing, Weiss told Umlauf and Reid, is to “keep fighting every single day.”

For Means and everyone on the Drug Court Team, each Drug Court graduation marks the best days in court.

“It means the same to me watching the 18th and 19th graduate as it does the first graduate. You see the changes in them and it’s fantastic,” Means said. “If you could just bottle this feeling and have it every week in Drug Court, you’d never have burnout. That’s for sure.

“It’s nice being able to celebrate on these days.”

Information from: Watertown Public Opinion, <http://www.thepublicopinion.com>

Bowdle woman gifts graduates with special handmade quilts

By SHANNON MARVEL Aberdeen American News

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — For the last 39 years, high school and college graduates in the Bowdle area have received a special gift — a handmade quilt from Jeanne Bieber.

"It's a good gift. It's something they can use, and it's something I do out of love," Bieber said to the Aberdeen American News. "It's a handmade gift. Giving something handmade is special. So that's why I do it."

Bieber, 67, has been making quilts for area graduates since 1980, she said. In one year, she made as many as 24 quilts, but on average makes about 10 a year. This year, she'll give out nine quilts, which were freshly completed recently.

"I do them really simple — I take two sheets then put bedding in between and tie them. But everybody seems to like them," Bieber humbly explained. "I've had people tell me 'I still have mine' all the time," she added.

"Back when I first started, it was one of the cheaper gifts you could give. They're getting more expensive every year, of course. I started giving them to all the kids that graduated with my kids. Now I give them to anyone I get a graduation announcement from," she said.

"I don't think the kids really know me, but it's OK. Some of my great-nieces and nephews, they can't wait to get my gift because they know they're going to get a quilt. I had a fella tell me a couple years ago, 'You know that was the best gift I ever got.'"

"Last year I did 14, then I had 11 just about done when my house started on fire. So I had to redo all of them. I figured they don't need them until they go off to school," Bieber said.

The tragic fire claimed so much more than just the quilts.

Her husband of 49 years, Dennis Bieber, lost his life in the May 11, 2018, house fire.

"I just feel like God must've said it was time. Because there was really no reason why he didn't walk out. That's the only way I can feel. You know? Because if you don't — you know?" Bieber said.

Bieber lost most of her belongings in the fire as well, but was able to save a handmade cedar chest that sports a drawing of her homestead and picture of her and her husband on their wedding day.

"It's amazing how that ugly smoke got into everything. The upstairs in the back closet, the last box was full of smoke. It wasn't just a few boxes in there. It was piled to the ceiling."

"I think some of my kids probably thought, 'Why did you let him go down there? Why did you do that?' Well, if they would've lived with him, they would've known he was not known to be stopped," Bieber explained of her husband's death. "He was a 75-year-old German — he did what he wanted to do. I'm still grieving. I look out the window and I see where my house was. People always say 'I know how you feel, things will get better,' and I hope it will. But I put up a good front."

Her trailer home sits right next to the site of the fire. In the middle of the upturned dirt sits a white cross.

But the loss hasn't stopped Bieber from continuing to do what she loves to do and is a testament to her dedication to still enjoy life.

"My house burned down a year ago, and I lost my husband in the fire, so last year I didn't put in a garden and stuff because I was at my daughter's house," Bieber explained. "So I didn't put in a garden last year. But I intend to put one in this year. Putting a garden in is my stress reliever. I like to work out in my garden. I also like to be able to go out in the garden and pick my stuff. If I need an onion, I can go out and get it."

Bieber also was bound and determined to get back on the farm after the fire.

"I've been raised on a farm all my life, and I like my privacy. I spent until October in town living with my daughter for most of the time not knowing when I was finally going to get this trailer house out here," she said.

"It just wasn't me. This is where I want to be."

Bieber said she also makes lap quilts for folks who are retiring or celebrating an anniversary.

"The people like them, and it's something that they can use," Bieber said of the lap quilts. "I just gave one to my neighbor lady for her 85th birthday. She tells me, 'Oh, this is going on my bed.' I just keep go-

ing. I don't mind doing it. People can use them and they enjoy them."

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

Man retires after 43 years in South Dakota National Guard

By KELDA J.L. PHARRIS Aberdeen American News

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — It was a privilege.

Brig. Gen. Thomas Croymans didn't speak the phrase.

He didn't have to. With a slight flush in his skin, he averts his eyes and wipes at invisible particles on his meeting table in his office. His voice holds steady.

"It went quick," Croymans told the Aberdeen American News.

Croymans, 60, retired from the South Dakota National Guard after 43 years. He was officially honored May 4 during a retirement ceremony at Joint Force Headquarters on Camp Rapid.

He's quick to call attention to the sacrifice his family and employers have made and the support they've shown him and every guard member. He never anticipated being at this stage when he signed on at 17. He's 60 now and continues working in his civilian job as a highway engineer with the Bureau of Indian Affairs Central Office.

He joined the Guard in October 1975. He would graduate high school in Wilmot the following spring. His father had been a first sergeant with the National Guard's 740th in Milbank. There was a little pressure, but Croymans was also excited.

"When I first signed up, I wasn't thinking about anything long term. It was more fun; just to do something different. Once a weekend get out, go do drill. It was a lot of fun in the beginning. So that put the hook in a while. I had a good time when I first got in," Croymans said.

The first 10 years went by quickly so he decided he'd continue to the 20-year mark for full benefits.

"After a while, one opportunity after another came along. Each time I got a new job, there was a new set of challenges there. I kind of liked doing that kind of thing," Croymans said.

Each advancement was spurred by different things — sometimes luck, sometimes timing. With each rise in rank, Croymans could count on more responsibility and bigger decisions with bigger consequences.

"All those things happened, especially in a career that's this long, but it doesn't always work the way you think it will," he said.

When he joined the Guard, the U.S. was enjoying a peaceful respite after the Vietnam War. The Guard's first active duty was during Desert Shield and Desert Storm in 1990 and 1991. It tested the Guard's mettle in a way it hadn't been for some time, Croymans said. This was after his time as a soldier, so he fulfilled his duties stateside.

"The last time the Guard was really utilized was in World War II. We had to up our game a bit, and we did. It was something that we had an integral part of," Croymans said.

His career took him to Milbank, Brookings, Sioux Falls, Mitchell, Rapid City and Aberdeen. His first 14 years were as an enlisted soldier. The moving became more frequent, about every two years, when he got his commission and rose to second lieutenant. The Guard, run at the state level, sent Croymans and his compatriots to a number of disasters and incidents.

"Watertown floods in spring of '98, coordination for fighting forest fires, search and rescue, those kinds of civil support activities," he said. "It's pretty rewarding work because you get to do something for the citizens of the state."

In 1992, he married his wife, Vicki. He was 32, which he called "a little later in life." His Guard duty was already ingrained and his family was understanding. It was just a mindset. Family activities, games, recitals and reunions all took a backseat to Croymans' duty. That's the shadow he hasn't quite shaken — that automatic priority response.

This June, a big Guard month, will be the first time he can attend a Fathers Day fishing tournament, if he wants. For 43 years, there was no choice.

His wife likes to joke that he still may need to get away one weekend a month to keep for a happy home. He laughs that he wouldn't know what to do if his hair touched his ears. He hadn't considered modifying the regimental cut, now that he can.

At the thought, Croymans laughs heartily, wipes away another imaginary crumb and folds his hands humbly in service well spent.

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

SculptureWalk in Sioux Falls debuts Arc of Dreams structure

By MAKENZIE L HUBER Argus Leader

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A small neon-vest-clad group was clustered in the Raven Industries parking lot in downtown Sioux Falls on May 18, waiting for the first installment of Sioux Falls' newest sculpture, the Arc of Dreams.

The Arc is a centerpiece and celebration of SculptureWalk, which is entering its 16th year. The 2019 slate featured 59 pieces from artists across the country and Canada, the Argus Leader reported.

The sculpture was six years in the making. Although 45 minutes to transport the sculpture pieces from the north side of town to its new home was a relatively short time to wait, the anticipation for its arrival was palpable.

Semi trucks carried three pieces of the structure that will stand on the west bank of the Big Sioux River. The morning sun glistened off the woven stainless steel pieces, which when constructed will represent the risk and uncertainty that must be overcome when chasing dreams, ambitions and goals, according to its designers.

Koni Schiller cried at the sight of it.

"It's going to be for generations to come," Schiller said. "It'll promote the new and the young to make Sioux Falls better than before and take that leap of faith."

The Arc is the culmination of six years of work, six different designs, three wind studies and hours of effort through a network of people, said Dale Lamphere, the sculpture's artist. It's essentially the culmination of his 50 years of work as an artist, said Lamphere, who is South Dakota's artist laureate and also created Dignity, placed near Chamberlain.

"I hope it'll exceed expectations, but I'll feel relief," Lamphere said. He's yet to see the structure in its entirety, since it's been sitting in pieces outside his studio. "The SculptureWalk is doing something truly world class for Sioux Falls."

Construction of the Arc of Dreams itself is a perfect example of the work it takes to achieve a dream, Lamphere said.

A network of people in Sioux Falls came up with the idea of the Arc of Dreams to celebrate the SculptureWalk and Sioux Falls. Hundreds of hands have been involved in the project through making the sculpture, fundraising for the structure and arranging its fruition.

"It honors past and present dreamers," Lamphere said.

It'll take two weeks to assemble the west bank's structure, and another two weeks to complete the east bank near Cherapa Place. The assembly is similar to puzzle pieces. Construction and installation is difficult because of the bedrock under the structure, along with its size and 57-ton weight.

It's expected to be finished by mid June.

Downtown Sioux Falls 16 years ago would be unrecognizable now, according to Lynne Byrne, a selection judge for SculptureWalk and chair of the South Dakota State Art Council.

The downtown area was struggling economically, and SculptureWalk was created to revitalize the area by getting people out and walking downtown, drawing them to businesses.

"It's been part of why our downtown is so vibrant now," Byrne said.

Since 2004, 836 sculptures have been displayed across downtown.

"Over the years Sioux Falls has grown to be a national leader in the arts," SculptureWalk director Jim

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Clark said. "SculptureWalk is honored to be a part of the renaissance that has made downtown Sioux Falls a visitor destination and a great place to live, work and play."

The construction of the Arc of Dreams structure, towering 70 feet above the Big Sioux rapids, will immediately alter the Sioux Falls skyline.

"I think it will be a point of pride for the entire city. Everybody will be able to identify with the leap. It'll be right up there with the (St. Joseph) cathedral representing Sioux Falls," Byrne said.

It will also change the landscape of South Dakota, establishing the state as the "Sculpture State," Byrne said. The South Dakota Department of Tourism has coined the "Sculpture Trail" across the state, including the Arc of Dreams, the Sioux Falls SculptureWalk, Dignity, the Badlands (a natural work of art), the Rapid City president walk, Crazy Horse Monument, and Mount Rushmore.

The construction of the Arc of Dreams makes Sioux Falls an even bigger part of the landscape, according to Clark.

"If we did something big, we really wanted to do something that represented the community," he said.

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

Former Senate Majority Leader Daschle joins cannabis board

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Former Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle has been named to an advisory board of a cannabis investment company.

The Argus Leader reports the South Dakota Democrat joined New York-based Northern Swan Holdings Inc. The firm supports companies in the international cannabis industry in countries where marijuana is legal. Joe Crowley, a former New York Democratic congressman, also was named to the company's board.

Daschle, in a statement, called for changes to U.S. laws regarding cannabis research and use.

Daschle served in the Senate from 1987 to 2005.

Beer Industry Contributes \$925 Million Annually to South Dakota's Economy

ALEXANDRIA, Va., May 22, 2019 /PRNewswire/ -- Just ahead of Memorial Day, which marks one of the top beer selling holidays of the year and the start of the summer beer selling season, a new economic impact study shows America's beer industry contributes \$925 million annually to South Dakota's economy and supports 7,227 jobs in the state.

Jointly commissioned by the National Beer Wholesalers Association (NBWA) and the Beer Institute, the study shows that the 7,227 jobs impacted by the beer industry in South Dakota account for \$260 million each year in wages and benefits. The industry also generates \$129 million annually in business, personal and consumption taxes.

The beer industry is made up of three distinct partners that work together to get beer to customers: brewers and importers, independent beer distributors and licensed retailers. This system has created more choice and variety in America's beer market than ever before.

NBWA President & CEO Craig Purser said, "America's 3,000 independent beer distribution companies are proud to employ 141,600 hardworking Americans with jobs that pay a collective \$9.5 billion in wages, offer solid benefits and provide the opportunity for advancement. Independent beer distributors are Main Street businesses whose economic contributions are felt in every community and congressional district across the country as they work with brewers large and small to grow brands and safely deliver America's favorite alcohol beverage to more than 640,000 licensed retailers nationwide."

Beer Institute President & CEO Jim McGreevy said, "Beer is more than America's most popular alcohol beverage. The beer industry is vital to the United States, generating more than 2 million jobs and contributing \$328 billion to the American economy. Beer Serves America demonstrates how brewers, beer importers and beer industry suppliers are creating jobs, providing wages and benefits to working Americans

and supporting the economy in every state and every congressional district.”

According to the study, the beer industry generates more than \$328 billion in economic activity, produces more than \$58.6 billion in tax revenue and supports more than 2 million jobs. Independent beer distributors directly employ 141,600 Americans, an increase of more than 19 percent in the last decade. Brewers and beer importers directly employ 69,928 Americans, and about 58 percent of brewing jobs are linked to large and mid-sized brewers and beer importers.

The Beer Serves America study was compiled by the independent economics firm John Dunham & Associates. It is the most comprehensive analysis of the industry available, using data collected directly from private companies, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Alcohol Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau and the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis.

The National Beer Wholesalers Association (NBWA) represents the interests of America’s nearly 3,000 licensed, independent beer distributor operations in every state, congressional district and media market across the country. Beer distributors are committed to ensuring alcohol is provided safely and responsibly to consumers of legal drinking age through the three-tier, state-based system of alcohol regulation and distribution. To learn more about America’s beer distributors, visit www.AmericasBeerDistributors.com. For additional updates from NBWA, follow @NBWABeer on Twitter, like NBWA on Facebook, follow NBWA on Instagram and subscribe to NBWA’s YouTube channel.

The Beer Institute is a national trade association for the American brewing industry, representing both large and small brewers, as well as importers and industry suppliers. First founded in 1862 as the U.S. Brewers Association, the Beer Institute is committed today to the development of sound public policy and to the values of civic duty and personal responsibility: www.BeerInstitute.org. Connect with us @ BeerInstitute and on Facebook.

View original content: <http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/beer-industry-contributes-925-million-annually-to-south-dakotas-economy-300854657.html>

SOURCE National Beer Wholesalers Association

Commission approves hauling route for Keystone XL pipeline

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The Pennington County Commission has given approval to TC Energy to use county roads during construction of the proposed Keystone XL crude oil pipeline.

The commission on Tuesday approved a route for moving TC Energy equipment, supplies and materials in Pennington County. The company has similar agreements with other counties involved along the pipeline which would pass through western South Dakota.

The Rapid City Journal says TC Energy is required to make any necessary improvements to the roads and keep them in good condition through the end of the construction project.

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

3 deaths in Missouri as tornado strikes state capital

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — A tornado caused heavy damage in Missouri’s capital city as severe weather swept across the state overnight, causing at least three deaths and injuring nearly two dozen people as homes and businesses were ripped apart.

The National Weather Service confirmed that the large and destructive tornado moved over Jefferson City shortly before midnight on Wednesday.

“Across the state, Missouri’s first responders once again responded quickly and with strong coordination as much of the state dealt with extremely dangerous conditions that left people injured, trapped in homes, and tragically led to the death of three people,” Gov. Mike Parson said.

Missouri Public Safety said the three were killed in the Golden City area of Barton County, near Missouri’s southwest corner, as the severe weather moved in from Oklahoma, where rescuers struggled to

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pull people from high water. The tornado hit during a week that has seen several days of tornadoes and torrential rains in parts of the Southern Plains and Midwest.

The damage spanned about a 3-mile area in the state capital, Jefferson City Police Lt. David Williams said. About 20 people were rescued by emergency personnel, and although there were no reports of missing people, authorities planned to make door-to-door checks on Thursday, he said.

The weather service reported that a "confirmed large and destructive tornado" was observed over Jefferson City at 11:43 p.m. Wednesday, moving northeast at 40 mph (64 kph). The capital city has a population of about 40,000 and is located about 130 miles (209 kilometers) west of St. Louis.

"It's a chaotic situation right now," Williams said.

Williams spoke from the Cole County Sheriff's office, where debris including insulation, roofing shingles and metal pieces lay on the ground outside the front doors. Authorities were discouraging people from beginning clean-up efforts until power is safely restored. Area hospitals set up command centers in case the need arises.

Missouri Public Safety tweeted that there was a possibility of more tornadoes and flash flooding.

Austin Thomson, 25, was in the laundry room of his complex of two-story apartment buildings to do his wash and noticed the wind started picking up. He saw sheets of rain coming down and a flagpole bend and then slam to the ground. The windows broke and he dove behind the washers and dryers.

After it calmed down, he walked outside to check the damage, and retrieved a stuffed animal for his daughter from his damaged apartment.

"There's basically one building that's basically one story now," he said.

The weather service said it had received 22 reports of tornadoes by late Wednesday; some could be duplicate reporting of the same twister.

One tornado skirted just a few miles north of Joplin, Missouri, on the eighth anniversary of a catastrophic tornado that killed 161 people in the city. The tornado caused some damage in the town of Carl Junction, about 4 miles (6.44 kilometers) north of the Joplin airport, where several injuries were reported.

The severe weather was expected to continue Thursday as the storms head east. Forecasters at the Storm Prediction Center say parts of the Ohio Valley and the Mid-Atlantic could see tornadoes, large hail and strong winds. Forecasters say the area most at risk for bad weather Thursday includes Baltimore and Pittsburgh.

Storms and torrential rains have ravaged the Midwest, from Texas through Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri and Illinois. Authorities urged residents of several small towns in Oklahoma and Kansas to leave their homes as rivers and streams rose.

Two barges broke loose and floated swiftly down the swollen Arkansas River in eastern Oklahoma, spreading alarm downstream as they threatened to hit a dam. A posting on the official Facebook page of the river town of Webbers Falls, Oklahoma, said the runaway barges posed a dire threat to its 600 residents: "Evacuate Webbers Falls immediately. The barges are loose and has the potential to hit the lock and dam 16. If the dam breaks, it will be catastrophic!! Leave now!!"

Authorities located the barges Thursday morning, stuck on rocks in the swollen river. The Oklahoma Highway Patrol says the barges were still tied together, and crews were working to secure them.

Still, the Interstate 40 bridge and a state highway bridge remain closed over the Arkansas River at Webbers Falls as a precaution, according to the Oklahoma Department of Transportation. Over Memorial Day weekend in 2002, a barge struck the Interstate 40 bridge pier at Webbers Falls, causing part of the bridge to collapse into the Arkansas River. Fourteen people died after their vehicles plunged into the water.

Deaths from this week's storms include a 74-year-old woman found early Wednesday morning in Iowa. Officials there say she was killed by a possible tornado that damaged a farmstead in Adair County. Missouri authorities said heavy rain was a contributing factor in the deaths of two people in a traffic accident Tuesday near Springfield.

A fourth weather-related death occurred in Oklahoma, where the Highway Patrol said a woman apparently drowned after driving around a barricade Tuesday near Perkins, about 45 miles (72 kilometers) northeast

of Oklahoma City. The unidentified woman's body was sent to the state medical examiner's office, which confirmed Wednesday that the death was attributed to the flooding.

Senior German diplomat in Tehran for nuclear deal talks

By DAVID RISING Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — A senior German diplomat headed Thursday to Tehran to press Iran to continue to respect the landmark nuclear deal, despite the unilateral withdrawal of the U.S. and increasing pressure from Washington.

Tensions have soared in the Mideast recently as the White House earlier this month sent an aircraft carrier and B-52 bombers to the region over a still-unexplained threat it perceived from Iran.

In Berlin, the Foreign Ministry said Political Director Jens Ploetner was to hold talks with Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi on Thursday to try salvage the nuclear deal signed in 2015 in Vienna. The accord has steadily unraveled since the Trump administration pulled America out of the deal, re-imposed and escalated U.S. sanctions on Tehran last year.

The German envoy's visit also follows Iran's declaration earlier this month that the remaining signatories to the deal — Germany, France, Britain, China and Russia — have two months to develop a plan to shield Iran from American sanctions.

"The situation in the Persian Gulf and the region, and the situation surrounding the Vienna nuclear agreement, is extremely serious," the German Foreign Ministry said in an e-mail to The Associated Press. "There is a real risk of escalation — including due to misunderstandings or an incident. In this situation, dialogue is very important."

With Iran's 60-day deadline, the ministry said there is still a "window for diplomacy to persuade Iran to continue its full compliance" and said Germany remains in close contact with the other nations that have been struggling to keep the deal alive.

The accord, intended to keep Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon, promised economic incentives in exchange for restrictions on Tehran's nuclear activities. Despite efforts so far by the others to keep the deal from collapsing, Iran's economy has been struggling and its currency has plummeted after the re-imposition of U.S. sanctions.

Iran continued abiding by the stipulations of the deal, according to a February report by the International Atomic Energy Agency, though it expressed increasing frustration with the inability of the Europeans to provide economic relief. A new IAEA report is due out soon.

Then on Monday, Iran announced it had quadrupled its production capacity of low-enriched uranium. Iranian officials made a point to stress that the uranium would be enriched only to the 3.67% limit set under the nuclear deal, making it usable for a power plant but far below what's needed for an atomic weapon.

But by increasing production, Iran will likely soon exceed the stockpile limitations set by the nuclear accord, which would escalate the situation further.

Several incidents have added to the crisis, including the sabotage of the oil tankers off the coast of the United Arab Emirates, as well as a rocket that landed near the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. The U.S. has blamed Iran for both incidents without publicly offering evidence. America also has evacuated nonessential diplomatic staff from Iraq amid the tensions.

Also, Iran-aligned rebels in Yemen have targeted a Saudi pipeline and sent a bomb-laden drone to target a Saudi airport with a military base on Tuesday.

The Pentagon was to present plans on Thursday to the White House to send up to 10,000 more American troops to the Middle East, to beef up defenses against potential Iranian threats, U.S. officials said. Iran has watched warily as the USS Abraham Lincoln heads toward the Strait of Hormuz and B-52 bombers began flying missions in the region.

Iran's armed forces chief of staff, Gen. Mohammad Hossein Bagheri, said Thursday the military will remain watchful about "deceptions by the U.S. government and its adventurous" president.

"With the finger on the trigger, Iran is ready to respond to any invader strongly and with unbelievable

speed," Bagheri said in a statement.

Associated Press writer Nasser Karimi in Tehran, Iran, contributed to this report.

'War is ugly': For French vet, D-Day's lessons are timeless

By JOHN LEICESTER Associated Press

OUISTREHAM, France (AP) — There were countless times on D-Day and in the fighting in Normandy that followed when Leon Gautier could have been killed or grievously wounded.

He and his comrades in an elite French unit were among the first waves of Allied troops to storm the heavily defended beaches of Nazi-occupied northern France, beginning the liberation of western Europe. The commandos spent 78 days straight on the front lines, their numbers dwindling from one firefight to the next.

Of the 177 who waded ashore on the morning of June 6, 1944, just two dozen escaped death or injury, Gautier among them.

Then, his good fortune ran out.

Back in England for some well-deserved R&R, an impatient Gautier jumped off a moving train. He injured his left ankle so badly that he was forced to sit out much of the rest of the war, which ended in Europe with Germany's surrender in May 1945.

The now 96-year-old Gautier rolls up a trouser leg to show how the ankle remains painfully swollen three quarters of a century later, his story neatly encapsulating the lunatic and arbitrary nature of war.

As Gautier chuckles at his own tales, cracks jokes and charms the ticket lady guarding the door of the museum that overlooks the beach near where he and his comrades landed 75 years ago, it is impossible not to wonder: Who will tell World War II stories with such verve and authority when he and the rest of his generation are gone?

In the huge D-Day invasion force made up largely of American, British and Canadian soldiers, French Capt. Philippe Kieffer's commandos ensured that France had feats to be proud of too, after the dishonor of its Nazi occupation, when some chose to collaborate with Adolf Hitler's forces.

"For us it was special. We were happy to come home. We were at the head of the landing. The British let us go a few meters in front, 'Your move, the French,' 'After you,'" Gautier recalls. "Most of us had left France in 1940, four years earlier, so for us it was the liberation of France, the return into the family."

After the bloodshed of World War I, Gautier's generation had grown up on a diet of hatred for neighboring Germany. He was 17 when he joined the navy in 1940. When France fell in June that year to the Nazi blitzkrieg, he shipped off to England, where a French general, Charles de Gaulle, was rallying his countrymen.

Volunteering, as Gautier did, for Kieffer's commando unit meant undergoing brutal and dangerous training. The men became so hardened that on D-Day they came ashore carrying four days' worth of rations and ammunition, 30 kilograms (nearly 70 pounds) in all. They sprinted up the beach with their heavy sacks.

Their initial objective was a heavily fortified bunker. Although the strongpoint was just a few kilometers (miles) away, it took them four hours of fighting to get there and take it. On the beach, they cut through barbed wire under a hail of bullets.

"We were being shot at, but we shot at them too," Gautier remembers. "When we arrived near the walls of the bunkers, we threw grenades in through the slits."

The commandos were trained for quick in-and-out raids to take prisoners, gather intelligence and destroy things. Gautier remembers that not all of the newly liberated inhabitants of Ouistreham where they fought were pleased to see them, figuring the troops would soon turn tail and be replaced again by vengeful Germans.

"I told them, 'We're not leaving! We're here for good!'" Gautier recalls. "I don't know that they believed me."

Just three of Kieffer's commandos survive. Gautier is the youngest. The oldest is 105. A 1943 photo of

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70 of them, taken in Scotland where they trained, shows square chins and resolute looks under the green berets they made famous.

One of the benefits of longevity: Gautier has a great-great-great-grandson born, incredibly, on the 6th of June, two years ago.

Gautier and his wife, Dorothy, were married for more than 70 years. She died in 2016 at 91. They met in 1943 when he was stationed in England. Seriously injured by a German artillery shell during the war, she lived with a metal plate over the hole in her skull and had persistent headaches.

Gautier worked after the war building car bodies. He and his wife lived in England, where they had two daughters. Later, the family moved to Africa, where he was a workshop director, training mechanics in Nigeria and Cameroon.

The family was forced to return to France after Gautier was seriously injured in a traffic accident. Once recovered, he worked as a vehicle inspector and settled with Dorothy in Ouistreham, where Gautier and his comrades fought in 1944.

Gautier says he doesn't like talking about the war: "The older you get, you think that maybe you killed a father, made a widow of a woman. ... It's not easy to live with."

Yet he has devoted much of his life since then making sure that lessons from the war aren't forgotten by giving countless interviews, taking part in countless commemorations and helping put together the museum in Ouistreham that commemorates the commandos.

"The younger generations have to be told, they need to know," Gautier says. "War is ugly. War is misery, misery everywhere."

India's ruling party claims win with assured lead in votes

By EMILY SCHMALL Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party claimed it had won reelection with a commanding lead in Thursday's vote count, while the stock market soared in anticipation of another five-year term for the pro-business Hindu nationalist leader.

Election Commission data by midafternoon showed the Bharatiya Janata Party leading in contests for 299 out of 542 seats in the lower house of Parliament, with its main rival, the Indian National Congress, ahead in 50 contests.

The data didn't indicate what percentage of the estimated 600 million votes cast over the six-week election had been counted. Although the final tally was not expected until Thursday evening at the earliest, BJP President Amit Shah claimed a victory, crediting Modi's "leadership."

Modi himself tweeted: "India wins yet again."

The election has been seen as a referendum on India's 68-year-old prime minister, whose economic reforms have had mixed results but whose popularity as a social underdog in India's highly stratified society has endured. Critics have said his Hindu-first platform risks exacerbating social tensions in the country of 1.3 billion people.

On the campaign trail, Modi presented himself as a self-made man with the confidence to cut red tape and unleash India's economic potential, and labeled Congress party president Rahul Gandhi, the scion of a political dynasty that lost power in 2014, as an out-of-touch elite.

The BJP's performance "is absolutely stunning. Modi is the predominant leader in India today. He has pushed everybody else aside. Nobody in the opposition is a match for him," said political commentator Arti Jerath.

Half a dozen exit polls released after voting concluded Sunday showed Modi and the Bharatiya Janata Party winning. A party or coalition needs a simple majority of 272 seats, or just over half the seats in Parliament's lower house, to govern.

"Mr. Modi's going to be the next prime minister, we are very assured of that," said Meenakshi Lekhi, a member of Parliament running for re-election in New Delhi. Shortly after officials began tabulating the votes, India's Sensex jumped 2.3% to an all-time high over 40,000.

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If BJP's lead holds, it won't need a coalition partner to stay in power and could even improve its position compared to 2014, when it won 282 seats. This election may mark the first time in the party's history that it has two consecutive elections on its own.

World leaders, including Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Chinese President Xi Jinping and Sri Lankan President Maithripala Sirisena, congratulated Modi on Twitter.

Trends in the election data suggest that BJP's strategy of pursuing an aggressive campaign in eastern India paid off, with the party breaking into the citadels of Trinamool Congress Party in West Bengal state and the Biju Janata Dal in Odisha state. Picking up seats in these two states would compensate for projected losses in Uttar Pradesh in northern India.

The biggest losers appear to be the communists who ruled West Bengal state for 34 years until they were ousted by Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress Party in 2011. Coalition partners of the Congress-led government in New Delhi between 2004 and 2008, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) was leading in only three constituencies and the Communist party of India in two constituencies.

Outside BJP headquarters in New Delhi, hundreds of people cheered and shouted party slogans, lifting cardboard cut-outs of Modi and BJP President Amit Shah into the air as other people played drums and set off fireworks.

Mohit Sharma, a 29-year-old who runs a bathroom fittings business, said India had never had a prime minister like Modi.

"In the past, when leaders after they won elections, they sat in air-conditioned rooms and they never reached out to people, but Modi was never like that. He was always connected to the people through social media," Sharma said.

Fashion designer Sandeep Verma, 39, said he wasn't a BJP supporter but had voted for the party in the elections.

"A country like India needs a decisive leader and the people did not find that in Rahul Gandhi. There was no alternative to Modi," Verma said.

The BJP harnessed social media, including Twitter, where Modi has 47.4 million followers, and WhatsApp to reach out to millions of supporters.

Modi also capitalized on a suicide bombing in Kashmir in February that killed 40 Indian soldiers. India retaliated with airstrikes at alleged terrorist training camps in Pakistan, fanning the flames of nationalism and helping the BJP turn voters' attention away from the flailing economy and onto matters of national security.

The airstrike "gave him the narrative he needed to counter all these allegations of non-performance, unemployment and rural distress. It reenergized him and enabled him to reclaim his image as a strong leader India needs at this juncture," Jerath said.

As votes were counted across India, Pakistan's military said it has successfully test-fired a long-range ballistic missile capable of carrying a nuclear warhead.

At Congress headquarters, only a few party workers stood outside looking dejected.

Jagdish Sharma, 50, blamed the counting method, using electronic voting machines, saying "Rahul Gandhi is the crowd's favorite, but has always lost only due to EVMs. While EVMs exist even Lord Vishnu can't defeat Modi," he said, referring to a powerful Hindu god.

Voters cast ballots on some 40 million electronic voting machines, a method India began using 15 years ago after complaints that the manual count of paper ballots was tainted by fraud and abuse. But losing candidates and political parties have raised doubts about the accuracy and reliability of the electronic method, doing so again this week.

Top opposition leaders met with Election Commission officials on Tuesday after videos appeared on social media showing some electronic voting machines being moved. The party officials alleged that the machines were going to be altered, but the commission said the images showed unused machines being moved into storage.

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Associated Press journalists Rishabh R. Jain, Bharatha Mallawarachi and Ashok Sharma contributed to this report.

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press undefined

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

1. 'VIOLENT TORNADO' TOUCHES DOWN IN MISSOURI CAPITAL

The twister wreaks heavy damage in Jefferson City as severe weather sweeps across the state, causing three deaths and leaving many people trapped in the wreckage of their homes.

2. WHAT TRUMP TOLD TOP DEMOCRATS

The president bristles over accusations of a cover-up and says he won't work with Democratic lawmakers as long as they investigate him and his administration.

3. EUROPEANS OPEN PARLIAMENTARY VOTING

Dutch and British citizens head to the polls, starting four days of voting across the 28-nation bloc that pits supporters of deeper integration against populist Euroskeptics.

4. WHO HAS DECLARED VICTORY IN INDIA

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's party claims it has won re-election, which would secure another five-year term for the Hindu nationalist leader.

5. RECALLING D-DAY'S HORROR AND TRIUMPH

For the men who were among the 160,000 Allied fighters who mounted history's largest amphibious invasion on June 6, 1944, the memories are diverse.

6. PENTAGON PROPOSING TROOP BUILDUP IN MIDEAST

In light of tensions with Iran, but with no specific threat set out, the Defense Department will present plans to the White House to send up to 10,000 more troops to the Middle East.

7. WHERE RED WOLVES ARE ENDANGERED

The number of the canines roaming the forests of North Carolina plunges to fewer than three dozen in recent years — the most precarious position of any U.S. wolf species, AP reports.

8. BIG CITIES AREN'T GROWING LIKE THEY USED TO

New U.S. Census Bureau figures show most of the largest cities last year grew by a fraction of the numbers they did earlier this decade.

9. AND AMERICA'S TOP BEACH IS ...

Hawaii's Oahu's Kailua Beach Park has been selected as the best stretch of sand for an annual list of top U.S. beaches.

10. GRACELAND GETTING NEW EXHIBITS

One of three museum-style exhibits opening at Elvis Presley's Graceland in Tennessee includes one focused on the life and career of Muhammad Ali.

Dutch, UK polls open, starting 4 days of European elections

By MIKE CORDER Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — Dutch and British voters were the first to have their say Thursday in elections for the European Parliament, starting four days of voting across the 28-nation bloc that pits supporters of deeper integration against populist euroskeptics who want more power for their national governments.

Polls opened first in the Netherlands, and half an hour later the election began across the United Kingdom — the only other country voting Thursday, and a nation still wrestling with its plans to leave the European Union altogether and the leadership of embattled Prime Minister Theresa May.

Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte said he doesn't want his country to follow the U.K. out of the EU door. "For our safety, for our jobs, for our prosperity, our stability we need to stay a part of European Union,"

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he said after riding his bicycle to his former school in a leafy Hague suburb to cast his vote.

The elections, which end Sunday night, come as support is surging for populists and nationalists who want to rein in the EU's powers, while traditional powerhouses like France and Germany insist that unity is the best buffer against the shifting economic and security interests of an emerging new world order.

French President Emmanuel Macron says the challenge is "not to cede to a coalition of destruction and disintegration" that will seek to dismantle EU unity built up over the past six decades.

In a significant challenge to those centrist forces, populists appear largely united heading into the elections. On Saturday, Italy's anti-migrant Interior Minister Matteo Salvini was joined at a rally by 10 other nationalist leaders, including include far-right leaders Marine Le Pen of France's National Rally party and Joerg Meuthen of the Alternative for Germany party.

On Thursday morning, U.K. Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn released a message with a warning that "the far-right is on the rise" and adding that "the actions we take now will have huge consequences for our future."

Voters across Europe elect a total of 751 lawmakers, although that number is set to drop to 705 when the UK leaves the EU. The Dutch make up just 26 currently and 29 after Brexit. The UK has 73 European lawmakers, who would lose their jobs when their country completes its messy divorce from the EU.

Results of the four days of voting will not be officially released until Sunday night, but Dutch national broadcaster NOS will publish an exit poll after ballot boxes close Thursday night.

The Netherlands could provide a snapshot of what is to come. Polls show the right-wing populist Forum for Democracy led by charismatic intellectual Thierry Baudet running neck-and-neck with Rutte's center-right VVD party.

While the country, an affluent trading nation, profits from the EU's open borders and single market, it also is a major contributor to EU coffers. Skeptical Dutch voters in 2005 rejected a proposed EU constitution in a referendum.

Astrid van Foreest, 75, voted for Rutte's party, saying the Netherlands needs to be part of the EU.

"We are such a small country. We can't do without Europe," she said. "Europe has brought us a lot of riches — not for everybody; that is a point to be improved. We can't do it all on our own."

Baudet, whose party emerged as a surprise winner of provincial elections in March, identifies more with hard-line Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban than with the nationalist populist movement led by Salvini, although in a debate Wednesday night he called Salvini a "hero of Europe" for his crackdown on migration.

"The immigration we get here from Africa and the Mideast is completely contrary to our culture, our values, our way of life, tolerance, love of women and so on," Baudet said. "That has to stop and it will not happen at the European level."

AP sources: Pentagon proposing troop buildup in the Mideast

By LOLITA C. BALDOR and ROBERT BURNS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Pentagon on Thursday will present plans to the White House to send up to 10,000 more troops to the Middle East, in a move to beef up defenses against potential Iranian threats, U.S. officials said.

The officials said no final decision has been made yet, and it's not clear if the White House would approve sending all or just some of the requested forces. Officials said the move is not in response to any new threat from Iran but is aimed at reinforcing security in the region. They said the troops would be defensive forces, and the discussions include additional Patriot missile batteries, more ships and increased efforts to monitor Iran.

The officials spoke on the condition of anonymity because the plans have not been formally announced.

Thursday morning's meeting comes as tensions with Iran continue to simmer, and it wasn't clear if a decision would be made during the session. Any move to deploy more forces to the Middle East would signal a shift for President Donald Trump, who has repeatedly emphasized the need to reduce America's troop presence in the region.

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U.S. officials have provided few details about possible Iranian threats but indicated they initially involved missiles loaded onto small Iranian boats. This week officials said the missiles have been taken off the boats near Iran's shore, but other maritime threats continue.

Sending more troops could also raise questions on Capitol Hill. During back-to-back closed briefings for the House and Senate on Tuesday, defense leaders told congressional officials the U.S. doesn't want to go to war with Iran and wants to de-escalate the situation.

Acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told lawmakers the U.S. is seeking to deter, not provoke, Iran, even while accusing Tehran of threatening U.S. interests in the Mideast. Shanahan told reporters, "Our biggest focus at this point is to prevent Iranian miscalculation."

Many in Congress are skeptical of the administration's approach to Iran, questioning whether it is responding to significant new Iranian threats or escalating a situation that could lead to war.

CNN first reported that the Pentagon will brief the White House on a plan that could send thousands of additional U.S. troops to the Middle East.

Air Force Col. Patrick Ryder, spokesman for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, declined to comment, saying, "As a matter of long-standing policy, we are not going to discuss or speculate on potential or alleged future operations or plans."

In early May, the U.S. accelerated the deployment of an aircraft carrier strike group to the Mideast and sent four B-52 bomber aircraft to the region. The Pentagon also decided to move a Patriot air-defense missile battery to an undisclosed country in the area.

The Trump administration has evacuated nonessential personnel from Iraq, amid unspecified threats the administration said are linked to Iranian-backed militias in the country.

On Sunday, a rocket was fired into Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone, landing less than a mile from the sprawling U.S. Embassy. There were no injuries and no group claimed responsibility, but the rocket was believed to have been fired from east Baghdad — which is home to Iran-backed Shiite militias.

Some Democrats say Trump is responsible for drawing Iran's ire. Last year he abruptly pulled the U.S. out of the Iran nuclear deal, negotiated during the Obama administration to prevent Iran from nuclear weapons production, without crafting a coherent strategy for how to combat other Iranian behavior like supporting extremist organizations. He also has reimposed punishing sanctions that have crippled Tehran's economy, and designated Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps as a foreign terrorist organization in April.

"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."

Yes or No: Who's in charge? Power struggles roil Washington

By LAURIE KELLMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A dozen times, Rep. Ayanna Pressley asked the witness for a yes or no answer on housing policy.

Not once did Ben Carson, President Donald Trump's housing secretary, give her one. Instead, he mocked her: "Yes or no, can you ask me some questions yourself and stop reading?" Other times, he repeated: "You already know the answer."

"I know the answer," snapped Pressley. "Do YOU know the answer?"

It was a smaller pop in the epic struggle over who's in charge in Washington these days, reflecting the dynamics crackling high and low across the battlefield of divided American government. Meeting by meeting, questions of competence, generational change, #MeToo politics, special counsel Robert Mueller's report, and the 2020 elections are animating the fight for power. Even as Trump and his top Cabinet officials refuse to cooperate with congressional investigations, there is evidence that newly empowered Democrats are slowly — sometimes messily — resetting the balance after Trump's first two years in office under Republican congressional control.

This week alone, a selection of skirmishes big and small played out in public, including a Trump-size explosion by noon on Wednesday. In the span of three hours: House Speaker Nancy Pelosi jabbed at him,

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telling reporters that “the president is engaged in a cover-up,” repeating for emphasis, “a cover-up” — and breezily added that she was due at the White House for a meeting on infrastructure.

On his turf, Trump blew up that gathering in under three minutes, refusing to shake anyone’s hand or take a seat. He announced he could not do such a deal “under the circumstances” of “phony investigations” — and stalked out. Pelosi then I-told-ya-so’d to the people still in the Cabinet Room: “I knew the president was not serious about infrastructure and would find a way out,” according to a Democratic aide.

“For some reason, maybe it was lack of confidence on his part ... he took a pass and it just makes me wonder why he did that. In any event I pray for the president of the United States,” Pelosi, going on with her day, said later.

It was the latest sass she’d aimed at Trump after questioning his manhood, clapping and smirking at him at the State of the Union speech and, before that, forcing him to reopen the government without the money he demanded for his border wall.

“Nancy, thank you so much for your prayers, I know you truly mean it!” Trump tweeted from the White House.

It’s more than a public shoving match between septuagenarians at the pinnacle of American government. The spectacle Wednesday took attention away from dissent among Pelosi’s Democratic ranks over what some say looks like a march toward impeachment proceedings against Trump. But more broadly, it’s part of an ongoing tug-of-war for public perception about who has political power now and who should wield it after the 2020 presidential and congressional elections.

In hearing by hearing, across the warren of Capitol Hill, a new generation of House Democrats, including a record number of women, are transforming what Treasury Secretary Steve Mnuchin last month called “this relationship” between the administration and, in his case, the House Financial Services Committee. There, Mnuchin tried to goad Rep. Maxine Waters, the panel’s first African American chairman, into banging her “gravel” and dismissing him. In a widely shared video, she told him not to tell her how to run the panel.

Mnuchin was back in the witness chair before her panel on Wednesday saying he has no idea who wrote a confidential IRS memo that says, according to The Washington Post, Trump’s tax returns must be given to Congress unless the president asserts executive privilege. Mnuchin said he believes he was following the law when he refused to turn over six years of Trump’s tax returns.

A day earlier, Waters’ committee also was a class in oversight for Carson, and a chance for Democrats to question the former neurosurgeon’s qualifications to serve as secretary of Housing and Urban Development.

Freshman Rep. Katie Porter, a California Democrat, lawyer and expert in foreclosure law, asked Carson whether he knew the housing term “REO.” Carson seemed to think she was referring to a popular chocolate sandwich cookie.

“An Oreo?” Carson asked.

“No, not an Oreo,” Porter said. She spelled it back for him and asked again.

Carson replied, “Real estate,” and hesitated.

“What’s the ‘O’ stand for?” Porter pressed.

Carson said, “Organization.”

“Owned,” Porter corrected him. “Real estate owned.” She explained that the term, obscure to most anyone but housing experts, refers to what happens when a property goes to foreclosure.

Later, Carson later sent Porter and a family-size box of double-stuffed Oreos. She countered, “What I’m really looking for is answers.”

His exchange with another woman on the committee — Pressley — grew especially sharp.

“It pains me that your gifted hands and mine are doing the bidding and carrying the water of what I believe is one of the most morally bankrupt presidents in our nation’s history,” Pressley, Massachusetts’ first black congresswoman, began.

Quickly though, she demanded yes or no answers, “reclaiming” her time when he refused. When she pressed, he parried, “Reclaiming my time.”

“You don’t get to do that,” Pressley said.

Waters dropped the gavel. "The time belongs to the lady."

Follow Kellman on Twitter at: <http://www.twitter.com/APLaurieKellman> .

Runaway barges threaten dam in another day of Midwest storms

By KEN MILLER Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Two barges broke loose and floated swiftly down the swollen Arkansas River in eastern Oklahoma on Wednesday, spreading alarm downstream as they threatened to hit a dam.

The emergency was the latest consequence of storms and torrential rains that have ravaged the Midwest, from Texas through Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri and Illinois.

Authorities urged residents of several small towns in Oklahoma and Kansas to leave their homes as rivers and streams rose.

The Arkansas River town of Webbers Falls, Oklahoma, was one such town. Town officials ordered a mandatory evacuation Wednesday afternoon because of the river's rising level.

But Wednesday evening, a posting on the town's official Facebook page sounded the alarm about the runaway barges for its 600 residents: "Evacuate Webbers Falls immediately. The barges are loose and has the potential to hit the lock and dam 16. If the dam breaks, it will be catastrophic!! Leave now!!"

There was no word by midnight Wednesday where the barges were on the river, but local television stations showing live video of the river and the lock and dam said they had not yet arrived.

For the third consecutive day, dangerous storms prompted numerous tornado warnings and reports of twisters touching down, most in Missouri and Oklahoma.

The National Weather Service said it had received 22 reports of tornadoes by late Wednesday evening, although some of those could be duplicate reporting of the same twister.

One tornado skirted just a few miles north of Joplin, Missouri, on the eighth anniversary of a catastrophic tornado that killed 161 people in the city. The tornado caused some damage in the town of Carl Junction, about 4 miles (6.44 kilometers) north of the Joplin airport.

A 'violent tornado' touched down in Jefferson City, Missouri, causing possible fatalities, heavy damage at 11:43 p.m. on Wednesday. The mayor of the capital city had earlier issued a mandatory evacuation for an area involving a handful of homes. The city's airport also has been evacuated.

The Arkansas River was approaching historic highs, while the already high Missouri and Mississippi Rivers were again rising after a multi-day stretch of storms that produced dozens of tornadoes. Forecasters predicted parts of Oklahoma, Missouri and Kansas could see more severe weather Wednesday night into Thursday.

"The biggest concern is more rain," Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt said during a news conference following an aerial tour with Tulsa Mayor G.W. Bynum and other officials Wednesday morning.

The deluge inundated roadways, closing highways in 22 Oklahoma counties and 17 Kansas counties, along with more than 330 Missouri roads. Amtrak suspended train service Wednesday and Thursday along a route between St. Louis and Kansas City because of congestion and flood-related delays.

The Arkansas River, which was just above 37 feet (11 meters), or 9 feet (2.74 meters) above flood stage, at Muskogee, Oklahoma, was expected to eventually reach 43.5 feet (13.26 meters). Officials encouraged residents in several communities along the river to leave their homes.

But Bynum, Tulsa's mayor, said his city of more than 400,000 people was safe so far.

"The levee system is working the way it's supposed to right now," he said.

Near Crescent, about 34 miles (55 kilometers) north of Oklahoma City, erosion left several homes hanging over the swollen Cimarron River. One unoccupied home rolled into the river Tuesday, and authorities say others could collapse.

More than 9 inches (23 centimeters) of rain has fallen since Sunday in parts of Oklahoma after an already rainy spring.

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"Any rainfall we get just continues to saturate the soils that are already saturated. Especially rivers and streams," said Oklahoma State Climatologist Gary McManus.

"There is simply nowhere for this water to go" as it flows downstream from Kansas, according to McManus.

In Kansas, residents in parts of the city of Iola, along the Neosho River, were being urged to evacuate and officials had set up an emergency shelter at a community college, said Corey Schinstock, assistant city administrator. If the river reaches its predicted crest of 27.8 feet (8.47 meters) Thursday, it would be the second-worst flood ever for the town of about 5,400 residents.

Elsewhere, the Mississippi River was at or approaching major flood stage from Iowa through southern Missouri and Illinois. At St. Louis, the Mississippi was expected to crest Monday at nearly 12 feet (3.7 meters) above flood stage. If that holds, the Coast Guard will likely close the river to navigation for the second time this month.

Along the Missouri River, about 50 levees in Missouri could be overtopped by Saturday as high water levels move downstream, according to the Army Corps of Engineers. The river was expected to crest Thursday at 36.1 feet (11 meters) near the town of Glasgow, Missouri, overtopping agricultural levees and inundating some homes, highways and parkland.

Deaths from this week's storms include a 74-year-old woman found early Wednesday morning in Iowa. Officials there say she was killed by a possible tornado that damaged a farmstead in Adair County. Missouri authorities said heavy rain was a contributing factor in the deaths of two people in a traffic accident Tuesday near Springfield.

A fourth weather-related death may have occurred in Oklahoma, where the Highway Patrol said a woman apparently drowned after driving around a barricade Tuesday near Perkins, about 45 miles (72 kilometers) northeast of Oklahoma City. The unidentified woman's body was sent to the state medical examiner's office to confirm the cause of death. Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management spokeswoman Keli Cain said she isn't yet listed as what would be the state's first storm-related death.

Associated Press writers Jill Bleed in Little Rock, Arkansas; Tim Talley in Oklahoma City; Jim Salter in St. Louis; Terry Wallace in Dallas, Heather Hollingsworth in Kansas City, Missouri, and John Hanna in Topeka, Kansas, contributed to this report.

Liberal groups want 2020 Dems to back Pentagon spending cuts

By ELANA SCHOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Nearly two dozen progressive groups are launching a new push to persuade Democratic presidential candidates to support dramatic spending cuts at the Pentagon.

The liberal groups are writing Thursday to all candidates in the crowded 2020 Democratic primary, urging the White House hopefuls to support slashing \$200 billion or more from an annual defense budget that topped \$700 billion for the current fiscal year.

Dubbed "Put People Over the Pentagon" and shared with The Associated Press before its release, the groups' effort aims to elevate defense spending in a presidential race where energized progressive activists are nudging candidates to embrace their agenda on a variety of high-profile issues.

"Hundreds of billions of dollars annually should be shifted away from the Pentagon and to pressing needs from education to averting catastrophic climate change," said Robert Weissman, president of the watchdog nonprofit Public Citizen. "America needs leaders who will speak plain truths about Pentagon excesses and waste."

Four senators vying for the Democratic nomination to take on President Donald Trump last year voted against the measure that authorizes the current Pentagon budget: Bernie Sanders of Vermont, Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, Kamala Harris of California and Kirsten Gillibrand of New York.

Sanders and Warren have criticized defense spending levels as excessive, with the Vermont senator vowing to challenge spending on the "military-industrial complex" during a March rally that launched his 2020 campaign.

Besides Public Citizen, the other progressive groups behind Thursday's push for defense spending cuts include MoveOn.org, Indivisible and Democracy for America.

Trump's campaign centered on fighting Democrats, not policy

By ZEKE MILLER and JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump dropped the pretense of working with congressional Democrats on Wednesday and sent a clear message that his re-election campaign will be centered on condemning overzealous investigations rather than advancing a robust domestic policy agenda.

Both sides may have feigned surprise at Trump's angry outburst, in which he said he won't work with Democrats until they drop their probes of his administration. But they were on a collision course long before Wednesday's confrontation in the Cabinet Room. Trump has been betting the future of his presidency on trying to goad Democrats into impeaching him, and the three-minute meeting marked a new low in the slow-moving drama over executive powers, congressional oversight and the critical needs of the nation.

Trump's declaration that he would end any attempt at bipartisan cooperation until Democrats drop their probes of his administration was eagerly retold by representatives of both parties. The two sides echoed long drawn rhetorical battle lines in the hours that followed.

But the roots of the disagreement trace back more than six months, to when White House aides strategized over how handle to an anticipated Democratic takeover of the House.

Trump first delivered the warning publicly the day after Nancy Pelosi secured her return to the speakership last November, when she said her party would not have to choose between investigations and compromise. "You can't do them simultaneously," Trump countered. Promising GOP-led investigations and political attacks of his own if Democrats tried it, Trump predicted, "I could see it being extremely good politically, because I think I'm better at that game than they are, actually."

Now Trump is putting that confidence to the test.

"You can go down the investigation track," Trump said Wednesday, "or the track of 'Let's get things done for the American people.'" Expecting Democrats to stick with the former, Trump added: "Let them play their games. We're going to go down one track at a time."

As the subpoenas have flown in recent weeks, White House officials have adopted a quasi-official policy of trying to goad Democrats into impeachment. Trump has ordered his administration to stop complying with House Democrats' probes, stonewalling efforts across the board while challenging the legislative body's basic constitutional role of oversight. His intransigence has animated more and more Democrats to talk impeachment, even if just to begin proceedings in order to get further access to documents and testimony.

White House aides believe that Pelosi cannot withstand the clamor from her rank-and-file to impeach Trump, and believe that when Democrats take that step, it will assure Trump's re-election.

"We believe the president of the United States is engaged in a cover-up," Pelosi told reporters Wednesday morning, barely an hour before the Democrats' scheduled meeting with Trump. Speaking later, at an event sponsored by the liberal Center for American Progress, Pelosi seemed to try to strike a balance between answering the desire to begin impeachment proceedings with concern for the political implications of that action in 2020.

"The fact is, in plain sight in the public domain, this president is obstructing justice and he's engaged in a cover-up — and that could be an impeachable offense," Pelosi said.

Even Democrats acknowledge that Trump has long excelled at playing the victim: As a candidate and president, he has railed against the "rigged" electoral system and the conspiratorial Deep State that he claims is trying to block him. He has sold his supporters on a belief that the system — secular society and the government — have worked to hold them down. The narrative of an overreaching Democratic Congress persecuting a president who has not been found guilty of any crime plays nicely into that, the Trump team believes.

Still, Trump himself has expressed a leeriness of what he calls "the I-word." He told confidants that he

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doesn't like discussing impeachment, yet advisers have found that the president constantly talks about it, often veering there mid-conversation to express worry or frustration at the prospect.

In one meeting with Pelosi, Trump couldn't help himself and blurted out a question for the speaker, asking if she was planning to try to impeach him. Pelosi assured him that she was not. Though Trump has worried that impeachment would be the first line of his political obituary, even though he was confident of being saved by the Senate, those around him think it may be the best thing that could happen to his re-election campaign.

White House officials believed Trump and Democrats were braced for impact in Wednesday's meeting and they were prepared to take advantage of the moment. Even before the session — meant to be a follow-up conversation on infrastructure spending — signs were building that it could signal a new phase in relations between the White House and Congress.

At the same time, Trump has been increasingly freed from the forces of containment around him in the past. Acting chief of staff Mick Mulvaney has been open about viewing his role as executing on Trump's decisions and instincts, rather than steering him toward safer ground.

On Tuesday, two senior Trump aides — including legislative affairs director Shahira Knight — announced they were departing.

That signaled the shift from legislating toward campaigning even before Wednesday's blowup in the Cabinet Room.

Lemire reported from New York.

Follow Miller on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/@zekejmilller> and Lemire at <http://twitter.com/@JonLemire>

Trump stalks out on Democrats, demands end of investigations

By **LISA MASCARO** and **MARY CLARE JALONICK** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump abruptly stalked out of a White House meeting with congressional leaders Wednesday, flatly declaring he would no longer work with Democrats unless they drop all investigations in the aftermath of the special counsel's Trump-Russia report.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi called it all "very, very, very strange" and said she was praying for Trump and the nation. Trump tweeted his thanks for her prayers but said he would not proceed down two tracks — investigation and legislation.

Democrats said his ultimatum seemed scripted, with signs declaring his innocence already prepared for his outdoor remarks that followed. Yet Trump's unease with congressional oversight and talk of what he called the "i-word" — impeachment — now threatens to deprive him of legislative accomplishments for the remainder of his term.

The scene playing out live on television was reminiscent of earlier ones at the White House, including during the federal government shutdown, when Trump walked out on Democrats. While this standoff could benefit him politically in the short term, with his tough talk stirring up supporters, it leaves his trade deals, a new budget and other goals in jeopardy as he heads into a re-election campaign. Democrats called it another Trump temper tantrum.

"I want to do infrastructure," Trump said he told Pelosi and Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer, noting the scheduled topic of the meeting.

"But you know what? We can't do it under these circumstances," he said he told them. "So get these phony investigations over."

Without ever shaking anyone's hand, or even taking a seat, Trump turned and left the three-minute meeting. He strode to the Rose Garden where reporters and TV cameras had been assembled and proceeded to assail the Democrats, particularly Pelosi for her comment earlier in the morning on Capitol Hill that she believed the president was engaged in a "cover-up" of the Russia probe.

"I don't do cover-ups," Trump fumed.

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On Twitter late Wednesday, Trump denied Pelosi's claim that he had "a temper tantrum for us all to see." "I was purposely very polite and calm, much as I was minutes later with the press in the Rose Garden," he tweeted. "Can be easily proven. It is all such a lie!"

On Capitol Hill, Pelosi said Trump "just took a pass" on working on national infrastructure problems. Flanked by Schumer and other House and Senate leaders, Pelosi said the Democrats had gone to the White House "to give this president the opportunity to have a signature infrastructure initiative."

The meeting had been set weeks ago, after Trump and the Democratic leaders agreed to talk further about a possible \$2 trillion infrastructure proposal. Democrats have been working with the president's daughter Ivanka, and Trump was due to provide his ideas on how to pay for it.

But he told them he couldn't engage on infrastructure because Pelosi said "something terrible," according to an administration official and another person familiar with what happened in the room.

Democrats said they doubted he actually was ever going to put forward a plan. Schumer — who brought his own 35-page proposal to the meeting — said that when Trump "was forced to say how he would pay for it he had to run away."

What started as a challenging day for Pelosi as she tries to tamp down growing calls for an impeachment inquiry swiftly turned, with the attention going back on the president. Even some Republicans noted the shift.

"In the end we've got work to do," said Sen. John Cornyn, who called the meeting dramatic. "And I think the best thing we could do for the people we work for is to try to make progress where we can."

Earlier Wednesday, House Democrats had convened for a closed-door meeting amid Trump's stonewalling of their investigators, as a growing number of the party's lawmakers say they want to open an impeachment inquiry. They say it's not necessarily aimed at removing the president from office but to bolster their position in court against his blocking their probes with broad claims of immunity. Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York spoke up at the meeting, and some two dozen Democrats have signed on to the idea.

With her leadership team, Pelosi, who has resisted pressure to impeach, suggested patience. She pointed rank-and-file Democrats toward the legal battles that she said have already found success in forcing Trump to comply with investigations.

"We do believe it's important to follow the facts," Pelosi told reporters afterward. "We believe that no one is above the law, including the president of the United States, and we believe that the president of the United States is engaged in a cover-up."

A federal judge ruled Wednesday that the White House cannot block subpoenas for Trump's financial records from Deutsche Bank, which has lent his real estate company millions of dollars. On Monday a federal judge also ruled against Trump in a separate financial records dispute with Congress, though his team filed a notice of appeal that is expected to keep the court battles running for months.

Pelosi said the court victories were "no surprise."

The Democrats leaving that Capitol meeting appeared to be taking her words into consideration, even as many say the march to impeach becomes more inevitable. Tennessee Rep. Steve Cohen, who called for the impeachment inquiry on Tuesday, said he could see both sides.

Of leaders' reluctance, Cohen said "it's a political concern rather than an actual constitutional one."

Rep. Katie Hill, a freshman from a California swing district, said she is undecided on starting an impeachment inquiry but wants to let the court action play out.

The more Trump "defies us, the more that it's becoming an inevitability," she said. But she doesn't think the Democratic caucus "is there yet."

Pelosi faces her own political calculations amid the push-pull of impeachment. While Democrats have a majority in the House, and would likely find support for starting impeachment proceedings, it could be a tighter vote than the 235-197 margin suggests. Many lawmakers come from relatively conservative districts where Trump also has support.

Democrats have long said they can work on two tracks -- conducting oversight and legislating on their agenda of lower health care costs and infrastructure investment. But Trump says they can't do both.

"They can continue the Witch Hunt ... or get back to work," Trump tweeted.

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Pelosi showed no signs of backing down.

"The fact is, in plain sight, in the public domain, this president is obstructing justice and he's engaged in a cover-up, and that could be impeachable," Pelosi said during an event later at the liberal Center for American Progress.

"As they say, the cover-up is frequently worse than the crime," she said. She reminded that the third article of impeachment against President Richard Nixon was his obstruction of Congress.

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

Supreme leader criticizes Iran's politicians amid US tension

By AMIR VAHDAT and JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iran's supreme leader publicly chastised the country's moderate president and foreign minister Wednesday, saying he disagreed with the implementation of the 2015 nuclear deal they had negotiated with world powers.

The extraordinary comments by Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the first time he's criticized both politicians by name, came amid tensions with the United States a year after Washington's withdrawal from the accord.

Khamenei has final say on all matters of state, and his blaming the deal's unraveling limits the influence of President Hassan Rouhani and Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif — relative moderates within Iran's Shiite theocracy who had struck the deal.

It also shows the growing power of hard-liners.

The White House earlier this month sent an aircraft carrier and B-52 bombers to the region over a still-unexplained threat it perceived from Iran.

Since that development, Iran has announced it will back away from the atomic accord. The United Arab Emirates, meanwhile, alleged that four oil tankers were sabotaged off its coast, and Iranian-allied rebels in Yemen have launched drone attacks into Saudi Arabia.

Both Washington and Tehran have said they want to ease heightened tensions in the region in recent days. But many fear a miscalculation between the two countries, who have a 40-year history of mistrust, could escalate the situation. On Thursday, U.S. officials say the Pentagon will brief the White House on plans to send up to 10,000 additional troops to the Middle East. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity as the plans had yet to be formally announced.

Khamenei made the comments before hard-line students gathered for a Ramadan lecture. For years, hard-liners have criticized the accord for giving too much away to the West.

Khamenei had given his implicit stamp of approval on the deal, which when signed sparked spontaneous celebrations across Iran. The accord saw Iran limit its enrichment of uranium in exchange for the lifting of crippling economic sanctions.

But the deal has unraveled after Trump's withdrawal, with the U.S. re-imposing old sanctions and coming up with even stricter new ones.

"To some extent, I did not believe in the way that the nuclear deal was implemented," Khamenei said, according to his official website. "Many times I reminded both the president and the foreign minister."

Khamenei has previously warned the West, especially the U.S., wasn't trustworthy. But he hasn't named the country's top elected politician and his top diplomat before Wednesday night. He's previously said the two had done the best they could.

Even before Trump became president and later withdrew from the deal, there were concerns in Washington that the supreme leader might turn on the agreement if the envisioned sanctions relief fell short of what Tehran expected. For that reason, the Obama administration dispatched senior officials to Europe, Asia and elsewhere to explain to foreign governments and countries what was permitted.

Former Secretary of State John Kerry and Treasury Secretary Jack Lew each encouraged foreign investors to do business with Iran so that the benefits of the deal would be apparent to the Iranian people.

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Since Trump's pullout last year and the re-imposition of U.S. sanctions in November, remaining parties to the deal have been unable to keep up the pace of relief and Iran's economy has been significantly harmed, notably because of the loss of revenue from oil exports and the risk of incurring U.S. penalties that has dissuaded international companies from opening shop in Iran.

The role of the supreme leader within Iranian society, while overseeing its elected representatives, is spiritual rather than political. Khamenei acknowledged that in his speech Wednesday night, saying the gravity of the situation called on him to speak.

"Our belief is that the leadership should not enter into the executive issues, unless if it affects the entire revolution," Khamenei said.

There was no immediate comment from either Rouhani, who is serving his second four-year term as president, or Zarif.

Khamenei did not directly address the ongoing tensions, which include a heightened U.S. naval presence in the region. However, during his appearance with the students, one came up to Khamenei with a painting of Revolutionary Guard soldier credited with laying mines targeting U.S.-escorted oil tankers in the Persian Gulf during Iran's 1980s war with Iraq. The Guard says he was killed in a confrontation with the U.S. Navy.

On Monday, Iran announced it had quadrupled its production capacity of low-enriched uranium. Iranian officials made a point to stress that the uranium would be enriched only to the 3.67% limit set under the nuclear deal, making it usable for a power plant but far below what's needed for an atomic weapon.

But by increasing production, Iran soon will exceed the stockpile limitations set by the nuclear accord. Tehran has set a July 7 deadline for Europe to set new terms for the deal, or it will enrich closer to weapons-grade levels in a Mideast already on edge.

Earlier Wednesday, a prominent reformist lawmaker who chairs parliament's national security and foreign policy commission stressed that neither Iran nor its proxy allies are seeking armed conflict with the U.S.

"Under no circumstance will we enter a war," Heshmatollah Falahatpisheh said, according to the semi-official ILNA news agency. "No group can announce that it has entered a proxy war from Iran's side."

Meanwhile, Iran's army chief Gen. Abdolrahim Mousavi alleged without providing evidence that Saudi Arabia and the U.S. were behind the sabotage of the oil tankers off the UAE, as well as a rocket that landed near the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad. The U.S. has blamed Iran for both incidents without publicly offering evidence. America also has evacuated nonessential diplomatic staff from Iraq amid the tensions.

The U.S. Air Force also announced Wednesday that a B-52 bomber deployed to America's vast Al-Udeid Air Base over the tensions took part in a formation flight with Qatari fighter jets. That comes as Qatar has grown closer to Iran after facing a nearly two-year boycott by four Arab nations also allied with the U.S.

"This flight was conducted to continue building military-to-military relationships" with Qatar, the Air Force said.

Gambrell reported from Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Associated Press writers Nasser Karimi in Tehran, Iran, and Matthew Lee, Robert Burns and Lolita C. Baldor in Washington contributed to this report.

New York puts Democrats a step closer to Trump tax returns

By CHRIS CAROLA and DAVID KLEPPER Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — New York lawmakers gave final passage to legislation Wednesday that would allow President Donald Trump's state tax returns to be released to congressional committees that have, so far, been barred from getting the president's federal filings.

The Democrat-led Senate and Assembly both approved the measures Wednesday, sending them to Gov. Andrew Cuomo, a Democrat. A spokesman has said the governor supports the principle behind the legislation but will review the bill carefully before deciding whether to sign it.

The legislation doesn't target Trump by name, but it would allow the leaders of the U.S. House Ways and Means Committee, the Senate Finance Committee or the Joint Committee on Taxation to get access to any New York state tax returns filed by elected officials and top appointed officials. The legislation would

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apply to personal income tax returns, as well as business taxes paid in New York.

An earlier version of the proposal that passed the state Senate two weeks ago would have allowed congressional committees to get any New Yorker's returns, regardless of whether they held public office. Lawmakers later narrowed the legislation to address concerns that it went too far, prompting the Senate to hold a second vote on the new language Wednesday.

New York Republicans have railed against the bill. John Flanagan, who leads the Senate GOP, called the legislation "troubling" and "bad public policy."

Fellow GOP lawmakers said the new proposal's narrower focus shows Democrats went too far with their first proposal, which would have required state tax officials to hand over any New Yorker's state tax returns.

"This bill is nothing more than political showmanship, and we all know it," said Assembly Andrew Goodell, who represents a mostly rural western New York district.

Republicans also blasted Democrats for going after the president instead of focusing on challenges closer to home.

"The fact that we're talking about taxes in this house is ironic because we're not talking about the taxes that New Yorkers pay, which are the highest in the nation," said Rob Ortt, a senator from the Buffalo area.

But the proposals' Democratic sponsors — Sen. Hoylman, of Manhattan, and Assemblyman David Buchwald, of Westchester County — said the legislation promotes government transparency at a time when Americans need to know whether their elected leaders are putting the public's interest first.

"We are affirming Congress' role as a co-equal branch of government and the sacred constitutional principle that nobody is above the law, not even the highest elected official in the land," Hoylman said.

The proposed changes to state law were made amid a battle going on in Washington over Trump's federal returns.

Democrats are seeking six years of Trump's personal and business tax returns to aid a committee investigation into whether the IRS is doing its job properly to audit a sitting president and whether the law governing such audits needs to be strengthened.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin has said he wouldn't comply with a congressional subpoena seeking six years of Trump's tax returns, in part because the request "lacks a legitimate legislative purpose." U.S. Rep. Richard Neal, D-Mass., chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, has threatened to go to court to get the administration to comply.

New York is Trump's home state and headquarters of many of his business enterprises. Much of the information on his state returns would mirror the information included on a federal return, giving the Democrats a potential end run around the IRS if they wished to take it.

If Congress does request and obtain Trump's state tax returns, that doesn't mean the public gets to see them. Under federal law, the confidential information in the returns is supposed to be for the committee's eyes only.

The New York bills have no time limitation on the tax filings that could be shared with Congress. They require that the returns be requested "for a specified and legitimate legislative purpose," wording that could ostensibly give state officials the ability to refuse some requests they felt were primarily political in nature.

The New York bills would become law immediately upon being signed by Cuomo, though it could be delayed by a court challenge.

Passage of the legislation came just a few hours before a federal judge in Manhattan refused to block congressional subpoenas seeking financial records from two banks that did business with Trump.

The judge said subpoenas from lawyers for the House Financial Services and Intelligence committees have "a legitimate legislative purpose" in their investigation into Trump, his family and his company's dealings with Deutsche Bank and Capital One.

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.

A spokesman for Biden's campaign, Andrew Bates, responded later Wednesday: "Given Vice President Biden's record of standing up for American values and interests, it's no surprise that North Korea would prefer that Donald Trump remain in the White House."

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.

Officials: Last slave ship from Africa ID'd on Alabama coast

By JAY REEVES Associated Press

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (AP) — Researchers working in the murky waters of the northern Gulf Coast have located the wreck of the last ship known to bring enslaved people from Africa to the United States, historical officials said Wednesday.

Remains of the Gulf schooner Clotilda were identified and verified near Mobile after months of assessment, a statement by the Alabama Historical Commission said.

The wooden vessel was scuttled the year before the Civil War to hide evidence of its illegal trip and hasn't been seen since.

"The discovery of the Clotilda is an extraordinary archaeological find," said Lisa Demetropoulos Jones, executive director of the commission. She said the ship's journey "represented one of the darkest eras of modern history," and the wreck provides "tangible evidence of slavery."

In 1860, the wooden ship illegally transported 110 people from what is now the west African nation of Benin to Mobile, Alabama. The Clotilda was then taken into delta waters north of the port and burned to avoid detection.

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The captives were later freed and settled a community that's still called Africatown USA, but no one knew the location of the Clotilda.

A descendant of one of the Africans who was brought to the South aboard the ship said she got chills when she learned its wreckage had been found.

"I think about the people who came before us who labored and fought and worked so hard," said Joycelyn Davis, a sixth-generation granddaughter of African captive Charlie Lewis. She added, "I'm sure people had given up on finding it. It's a wow factor."

A Mobile-area news reporter discovered wooden remains of what was initially suspected to be the Clotilda, but the wreck turned out to be that of another ship. That publicity helped spark a renewed search last year that found another wreck now identified as the slave ship.

Officials didn't say how much of the ship remains or what might become of its remnants. But the dimensions and construction of the wreck match those of the Clotilda, the commission said, as do building materials including locally sourced lumber and metal pieces made from pig iron. There are also signs of fire.

"We are cautious about placing names on shipwrecks that no longer bear a name or something like a bell with the ship's name on it," maritime archaeologist James Delgado said in a statement. "But the physical and forensic evidence powerfully suggests that this is Clotilda."

Officials said they are working on a plan to preserve the site where the ship was located.

The United States banned the importation of slaves in 1808, but smugglers kept traveling the Atlantic with wooden ships full of people in chains. Southern plantation owners demanded workers for their cotton fields.

With Southern resentment of federal control at a fever pitch, Alabama plantation owner Timothy Meaher made a bet that he could bring a shipload of Africans across the ocean, historian Natalie S. Robertson has said. The schooner Clotilda sailed from Mobile to western Africa, where it picked up captives and returned them to Alabama, evading authorities during a tortuous voyage.

"They were smuggling people as much for defiance as for sport," Robertson said.

The Clotilda arrived in Mobile in 1860 and was quickly scuttled north of Mobile Bay. It was there that researchers worked to identify the shipwreck.

The Africans spent the next five years as slaves during the American Civil War, freed only after the South had lost. Unable to return home to Africa, about 30 of them used money earned working in fields, homes and vessels to purchase land from the Meaher family and settle in a community still known to this day as Africatown.

Officials said they plan to present a report on the findings at a community center in Africatown next week.

Search warrants tied to former Trump lawyer Cohen released

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It was Michael Cohen's numerous contacts with a Russia-linked company and a sudden flow of foreign money into a bank account he controlled that led federal investigators to look into whether the money might be part of a plan to lift U.S. sanctions on Russia, according to court filings unsealed Wednesday.

Five search warrant applications, from the early stages of special counsel Robert Mueller's Russia investigation in 2017, were made public in response to requests from The Associated Press and other media organizations.

Cohen, once President Donald Trump's personal lawyer and confidant, was not charged by Mueller or prosecutors in New York with anything related to Russian collusion or illegal influence peddling. But the documents shed further light on how Cohen capitalized financially on his closeness to Trump immediately after the 2016 election.

Cohen quickly immersed himself in the Washington swamp his boss had pledged to drain. The lawyer cut deals to act as a highly paid consultant to several foreign and domestic companies with business interests linked to federal government decisions.

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Cohen is now serving a three-year prison sentence for tax evasion, lying to Congress about a Trump real estate project in Moscow, and campaign finance violations related to hush-money payments he orchestrated to two women who claimed to have had affairs with Trump, the porn actress Stormy Daniels and erotic model Karen McDougal. Trump has denied the allegations.

Investigators said in the warrant applications that a corporate entity Cohen created, Essential Consultants LLC, received multiple deposits from foreign sources, including companies that investigators said had "significant ties to foreign governments or are entities controlled by foreign governments."

Essential Consultants received funds from U.S. and foreign corporations that appear to have approached Cohen "in connection with political objectives in the Trump administration," investigators wrote.

Among them were AT&T, which the documents show wanted Cohen's help securing approval for its merger with Time Warner, and pharmaceutical giant Novartis, which wanted "access and advice" after Trump pledged to fight high drug prices.

Investigators were especially curious about deposits of about \$500,000 from an account linked to an investment management firm, Columbus Nova, LLC. The warrants tie that firm and the holding company that controls it to Viktor Vekselberg, a Russian oligarch with ties to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

In an application to search his Trump Organization email account, prosecutors said Cohen exchanged over 230 phone calls and 950 text messages with the CEO of Columbus Nova between Nov. 8, 2016, and July 14, 2017. There were no text messages or telephone calls before Election Day in 2016, prosecutors said.

Investigators at the time were examining whether any of the fund transfers were connected to Cohen's involvement in a plan, described months earlier in a New York Times story, to try to get the U.S. to lift sanctions on Russia.

"The United States continues to investigate if any of the payments or financial relationships described above, or other relationships described further below, were connected to Cohen's involvement in the distribution of a plan to lift Russian sanctions," a special agent wrote in a search warrant application in July of 2017.

A Columbus Nova spokesman wrote in an email to the AP that there was nothing nefarious about the frequent contacts between Cohen and company executives.

"They were working together so of course texted and called each other," the email said. "This was all known and investigated and wasn't even deemed worthy of being included in the special counsel's report."

Columbus Nova has described as false any allegation that Vekselberg used Columbus Nova as a conduit for payments to Cohen, saying it is solely owned and controlled by Americans.

Both Cohen and some of his clients apparently tried to keep his work secret. An AT&T consultant emailed a senior vice president at the company, saying that Cohen had "made the point several times that he doesn't list clients, doesn't talk about clients and hopes we won't be publicizing that he's working w/us. I assured him. And I hope he means it."

Novartis also didn't see the need to advertise that it was doing business with Cohen. In an April 2017 email exchange quoted in the search warrant documents, one executive wrote that they wanted to assess Cohen's ability "to secure high-level government meetings" and that there was "no need to divulge our relationship" with him.

Cohen has acknowledged offering his insights into Trump's administration to multiple corporate clients, but said he broke no laws in doing so. Cohen's attorney, Lanny Davis, said in a statement Wednesday night that "Cohen was not charged with anything to do with these allegations."

The newly unsealed material reveals nothing about Trump's own role in the crimes that put Cohen behind bars.

The warrant applications covered requests to search Cohen's email accounts, including one associated with the Trump Organization, They were blacked out in certain sections to protect the secrecy of an ongoing federal investigation into Cohen's campaign finance crimes.

Cohen has said he arranged payments to McDougal and Daniels at Trump's behest, which the president has denied along with the affairs.

Associated Press writers Michael Balsamo and Chad Day in Washington and Michael R. Sisak and Jim Mustian in New York contributed to this report.

'American Taliban' fighter to be released after 17 years

By **MATTHEW BARAKAT** Associated Press

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (AP) — John Walker Lindh, the young Californian who became known as the American Taliban after he was captured by U.S. forces in the invasion of Afghanistan in late 2001, is set to go free after nearly two decades in prison.

But conditions imposed recently on Lindh's release, slated for Thursday, make clear that authorities remain concerned about the threat he could pose once free.

Lindh, now 38, converted to Islam as a teenager after seeing the film "Malcolm X" and went overseas to study Arabic and the Quran. In November 2000, he went to Pakistan and from there made his way to Afghanistan. He joined the Taliban and was with them on Sept. 11, 2001, when al-Qaida terrorists attacked the World Trade Center and the Pentagon.

The U.S. attacked Afghanistan after the country failed to turn over al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden. Lindh was captured in a battle with Northern Alliance fighters in late 2001. He was present when a group of Taliban prisoners launched an attack that killed Johnny Micheal "Mike" Spann, a CIA officer who had been interrogating Lindh and other Taliban prisoners.

Television footage of a bearded, wounded Lindh captured among Taliban fighters created an international sensation, and he was brought to the U.S. to face charges of conspiring to kill Spann and providing support to terrorists. Eventually, he struck a plea bargain in which he admitted illegally providing support to the Taliban but denied a role in Spann's death.

Lindh received a 20-year prison sentence. He served roughly 17 years and five months, including two months when he was in military detention. Federal inmates who exhibit good behavior typically serve 85 percent of their sentence.

His probation officer asked the court to impose additional restrictions on Lindh while he remains on supervised release for the next three years. Lindh initially opposed but eventually acquiesced to the restrictions, which include monitoring software on his internet devices; requiring that his online communications be conducted in English and that he undergo mental health counseling; and forbidding him from possessing or viewing extremist material, holding a passport of any kind or leaving the U.S.

Authorities never specified their rationale for seeking such restrictions. A hearing on the issue was canceled after Lindh agreed to them.

The Bureau of Prisons said Lindh rejected an interview request submitted by The Associated Press, and his lawyer declined to comment. But there have been reports that Lindh's behavior in prison has created cause for concern. Foreign Policy magazine reported in 2017 that an investigation by the National Counterterrorism Center found that Lindh "continued to advocate for global jihad and to write and translate violent extremist texts."

A former inmate who knew Lindh from the time they spent at the same federal prison said he never heard Lindh espouse support for al-Qaida or indicate a risk for violence, but he found Lindh to be anti-social and awkward around others, with an unyielding, black-and-white view of religion. The inmate spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because he wanted to avoid further stigmatization from his time in Lindh's prison unit.

Michael Jensen, a terrorism researcher at the University of Maryland's National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, said it's clear the government has concerns about Lindh's mindset.

"For three years he's going to be watched like a hawk," Jensen said.

He said Lindh represents an interesting test case, as he is on the leading edge of dozens of inmates who were convicted on terror-related offenses in the aftermath of Sept. 11 and are eligible for release in the next five years. He said there's little research to indicate the efficacy of de-radicalizing inmates with

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connections to radical Islam, but he said the research shows that recidivism rates for those connected to white supremacy and other forms of extremism are high.

Lindh has been housed in Terre Haute, Indiana, with other Muslim inmates convicted on terror-related charges. The rationale was to keep those inmates from radicalizing others in the general prison population, Jensen said. Those inside the unit were supposed to be limited in their ability to communicate with each other.

"But the reality is these guys still talk to each other," he said.

Lindh, for his part, admitted his role and his wrongdoing in supporting the Taliban, but he and his family have bristled at any notion that he should be considered a terrorist. When he was sentenced, Lindh said he never would have joined the Taliban if he fully understood what they were about. He also issued a short essay condemning acts of violence in the name of Islam that kill or harm innocent civilians.

Lindh's time in prison has provided only a few clues about his current outlook. He filed multiple lawsuits, which were largely successful, challenging prison rules he found discriminatory against Muslims. In the more recent lawsuits, he used the name Yahya Lindh. One lawsuit won the right to pray in groups at the prison in Terre Haute. A second lawsuit reversed a policy requiring strip searches for inmates receiving visitors, and a third won the right to wear prison pants above the ankle, which Lindh said is in accordance with Islamic principles.

In the strip-search lawsuit, Lindh offered a discussion of Islamic rules prohibiting exposure of the body. If he's compelled to reveal himself, he said, he's also compelled under his religion to fight the rules requiring him to sin.

Some have criticized Lindh's pending release. In March, the legislature in Alabama, where Spann grew up, adopted a resolution calling it "an insult" to Spann's "heroic legacy and his remaining family members."

In addition, Republican Alabama Sen. Richard Shelby and Democratic New Hampshire Sen. Maggie Hassan wrote a letter last week to the Bureau of Prisons expressing concern.

"We must consider the security and safety implications for our citizens and communities who will receive individuals like John Walker Lindh who continue to openly call for extremist violence," they wrote.

On Monday, Spann's father, Johnny Spann, wrote a letter requesting that Lindh be investigated before he's released, citing the National Counterterrorism Center's investigation as his rationale for concern.

3 minutes: Trump meeting with Democrats goes bust in a flash

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The curtains in the Cabinet Room were drawn. The Democrats were waiting. And President Donald Trump came and went in three minutes, never stopping to sit down or shake hands.

Trump's angry walkout on Wednesday left behind a shattered bipartisan infrastructure effort and an escalation of tension between the president and the congressional Democrats investigating him. He barked at House Speaker Nancy Pelosi for earlier suggesting he was involved in a "cover-up" and headed to the Rose Garden for an impromptu news conference in which he declared that he would not work with Democrats if they continue with their probes.

"I don't do cover-ups," Trump said. "You can't do it under these circumstances. So get these phony investigations over with."

Trump's anger had been building well before he stepped into the Cabinet Room for a follow-up meeting with Democrats about an infrastructure deal that both parties already suspected was on life support.

Long upset by the wave of Democratic investigations into his administration, Trump was incensed by reports Tuesday that some of his closest former aides, including ex-communications director Hope Hicks, for whom the president has long had a soft spot, were being subpoenaed to testify, according to three White House officials and Republicans close to the West Wing. The three spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly about private conversations.

The president reached a boiling point just a few hours before the meeting when he saw media coverage of Pelosi's remark. She told reporters after a private meeting with House Democrats that Trump was

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"engaged in a cover-up" even as she tried to temper impeachment talk in her own party. Trump told aides that he would refuse to work with Democrats and, over some advisers' objections, called for the Rose Garden news conference.

After the president left the Cabinet Room, Pelosi looked across the table at Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and others around the room and described how Presidents Thomas Jefferson and Theodore Roosevelt brought people to the White House to solve infrastructure problems, but this president chose to walk out. The speaker added that she was not surprised Trump bailed, according to three people with knowledge of the exchange who spoke on condition of anonymity to describe the private moment.

Senior White House counselor Kellyanne Conway then whirled to Pelosi and asked if she had "a direct response to the president." Pelosi replied: "I'm responding to the president, not staff."

Moments later, as the room emptied, Conway, miffed that Pelosi chose not to respond directly to her, turned to the speaker and said: "Really great, that's really pro-woman of you."

White House reporters were summoned for an unscheduled news conference in the Rose Garden, photographers jockeying for position in the moments before the president appeared. A printed sign that read "No Collusion" and "No Obstruction" was hastily posted on the president's lectern. And Trump held up a printed version of an ABC News graphic depicting the cost and breadth of special counsel Robert Mueller's probe, but notably did not highlight its second page — the one that listed the number of indictments Mueller produced.

Speaking at the Capitol a short time later, Pelosi again needled the president by invoking how Trump could not measure up to previous presidents.

"He just took a pass," Pelosi said. "And it just makes me wonder why he did that. In any event, I pray for the president of the United States and I pray for the United States of America."

Prospects for the meeting's success were never high: Neither side wanted to unveil its plan to pay for the ambitious program while the term "Infrastructure Week" drew snickers from White House aides and reporters alike who recalled how other efforts at the initiative inevitably were overshadowed by chaos.

That happened again Wednesday, and as Washington reeled from the Rose Garden spectacle, Trump turned to Twitter to make his sarcastic retort: "Nancy, thank you so much for your prayers, I know you truly mean it!"

Associated Press writers Lisa Mascaro and Zeke Miller contributed to this report.

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US officials: Plan may send up to 10,000 troops to Mideast

By LOLITA C. BALDOR and ROBERT BURNS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Pentagon on Thursday will present plans to the White House to send up to 10,000 more troops to the Middle East, in a move to beef up defenses against potential Iranian threats, U.S. officials said Wednesday.

The officials said no final decision has been made yet, and it's not clear if the White House would approve sending all or just some of the requested forces. Officials said the move is not in response to any new threat from Iran, but is aimed at reinforcing security in the region. They said the troops would be defensive forces, and the discussions include additional Patriot missile batteries, more ships and increased efforts to monitor Iran.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because the plans have not been formally announced.

Thursday morning's meeting comes as tensions with Iran continue to simmer, and it wasn't clear if a decision would be made during the session. Any move to deploy more forces to the Middle East would signal a shift for President Donald Trump, who has repeatedly emphasized the need to reduce America's troop presence in the region.

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U.S. officials have provided few details about possible Iranian threats, but indicated they initially involved missiles loaded onto small Iranian boats. This week officials said the missiles have been taken off the boats near Iran's shore, but other maritime threats continue.

Sending more troops could also raise questions on Capitol Hill. During back-to-back closed briefings for the House and Senate on Tuesday, defense leaders told congressional officials the U.S. doesn't want to go to war with Iran and wants to de-escalate the situation.

Acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told lawmakers the U.S. is seeking to deter, not provoke, Iran, even while accusing Tehran of threatening U.S. interests in the Mideast. Shanahan told reporters, "Our biggest focus at this point is to prevent Iranian miscalculation."

Many in Congress are skeptical of the administration's approach to Iran, questioning whether it is responding to significant new Iranian threats or escalating a situation that could lead to war.

CNN first reported that the Pentagon will brief the White House on a plan that could send thousands of additional U.S. troops to the Middle East.

Air Force Col. Patrick Ryder, spokesman for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, declined to comment, saying, "As a matter of long-standing policy, we are not going to discuss or speculate on potential or alleged future operations or plans."

In early May, the U.S. accelerated the deployment of an aircraft carrier strike group to the Mideast and sent four B-52 bomber aircraft to the region. The Pentagon also decided to move a Patriot air-defense missile battery to an undisclosed country in the area.

The Trump administration has evacuated nonessential personnel from Iraq, amid unspecified threats the administration said are linked to Iranian-backed militias in the country.

On Sunday, a rocket was fired into Baghdad's heavily fortified Green Zone, landing less than a mile from the sprawling U.S. Embassy. There were no injuries and no group claimed responsibility, but the rocket was believed to have been fired from east Baghdad — which is home to Iran-backed Shiite militias.

Some Democrats say Trump is responsible for drawing Iran's ire. Last year he abruptly pulled the U.S. out of the Iran nuclear deal, negotiated during the Obama administration to prevent Iran from nuclear weapons production, without crafting a coherent strategy for how to combat other Iranian behavior like supporting extremist organizations. He also has reimposed punishing sanctions that have crippled Tehran's economy, and designated Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps as a foreign terrorist organization in April.

"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."

Michael Avenatti charged with defrauding Stormy Daniels

By **JIM MUSTIAN** and **LARRY NEUMEISTER** Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Michael Avenatti, the attorney who rocketed to fame through his representation of porn star Stormy Daniels in her battles with President Donald Trump, was charged Wednesday with ripping her off.

Federal prosecutors in New York City say Avenatti used a doctored document to divert about \$300,000 that Daniels was supposed to get from a book deal, then used the money for personal and business expenses. Only half of that money was paid back, prosecutors said.

Daniels isn't named in the court filing, but the details of the case, including the date her book was released, make it clear that she is the client involved.

Avenatti denied the allegations on Twitter.

"No monies relating to Ms. Daniels were ever misappropriated or mishandled. She received millions of dollars worth of legal services and we spent huge sums in expenses. She directly paid only \$100.00 for all that she received. I look forward to a jury hearing the evidence," he wrote.

Avenatti added in a later tweet that his agreement for representing Daniels "included a percentage of any book proceeds."

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The charges pile on top of previous allegations of legal misconduct by Avenatti, who represented Daniels when she sued to be released from a nondisclosure agreement involving an alleged tryst with Trump. The president denies an affair took place.

Avenatti was previously charged in New York with trying to extort up to \$25 million from Nike by threatening to expose claims that the shoemaker paid off high school basketball players to steer them to Nike-sponsored colleges. And in Los Angeles, he's facing a multicount federal indictment alleging that he stole millions of dollars from clients, didn't pay taxes, committed bank fraud and lied during bankruptcy proceedings.

Avenatti has denied the allegations against him on both coasts, saying he expects to be exonerated. The Los Angeles charges alone carry a potential penalty of more than 300 years in prison.

"I look forward to a jury hearing all of the evidence and passing judgment on my conduct," Avenatti wrote in a text message to The Associated Press.

Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford, initially hired Avenatti to handle a lawsuit she filed last year in which she sought to invalidate the nondisclosure agreement she'd signed with Trump's then-lawyer Michael Cohen in exchange for \$130,000.

The money was supposed to buy her silence during Trump's run for president about an alleged affair between the two. In August, Cohen pleaded guilty to violating campaign finance laws in connection with the payment.

In announcing the new charges Wednesday, prosecutors said that Avenatti sent a "fraudulent and unauthorized letter" to Daniels' literary agent, instructing the agent to send payments not to Daniels but to a bank account Avenatti controlled. They said he used the stolen funds to pay employees of his law firm and pay for hotels, airfare, dry cleaning and his Ferrari.

"Far from zealously representing his client, Avenatti, as alleged, instead engaged in outright deception and theft, victimizing rather than advocating for his client," Manhattan U.S. Attorney Geoffrey Berman said in news release.

Avenatti "blatantly lied" and stole to maintain his "extravagant lifestyle," Berman said.

Daniels raised concerns with Avenatti about late payments around the time her book, "Full Disclosure," was published in October, according to the indictment.

"When is the publisher going to cough up my money," she asked Avenatti in early December, according to the indictment.

Avenatti responded that he was "working them and threatening litigation," prosecutors said, but he did not tell Daniels he had already received the money.

Daniels began publicly raising concerns about Avenatti's conduct in November. In a statement, she said Avenatti had launched a fundraising effort to raise money for her legal case without telling her. She also said he had filed a defamation lawsuit against Trump, on her behalf, against her wishes.

"For months I've asked Michael Avenatti to give me accounting information about the fund my supporters so generously donated to for my safety and legal defense. He has repeatedly ignored those requests," she said. "Days ago I demanded again, repeatedly, that he tell me how the money was being spent and how much was left. Instead of answering me, without my permission or even my knowledge Michael launched another crowdfunding campaign to raise money on my behalf. I learned about it on Twitter."

At the time, Avenatti responded that he was still Daniels' "biggest champion."

He said that under his retention agreement, she had agreed to pay him just \$100 for his services, and he was entitled to keep all the money he raised for her legal defense to defray what he said were substantial costs of her case.

The defamation case initiated by Avenatti against Trump backfired, with a judge ordering her to pay the president's legal bills.

When Avenatti was first charged with defrauding other clients and extorting Nike in March, Daniels said she was "saddened but not shocked."

She added on Twitter that she had fired Avenatti a month earlier after "discovering that he had dealt

with me extremely dishonestly.”

Associated Press writer Tom Hays contributed to this report.

Sea dragons captivate 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.

“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 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 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 that could reduce the number being taken illegally from the wild.

Last days of May? UK leader in peril as Brexit offer slammed

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British Prime Minister Theresa May dug in Wednesday against a relentless push by rivals and former allies to remove her from office as her attempts to lead Britain out of the European Union appeared to be headed for a dead end.

May resisted calls to rip up her tattered Brexit blueprint and end her embattled premiership after her attempt at compromise was rejected by both her own Conservative Party and opposition lawmakers.

But it seemed only a matter of time. Amid a feverish mood as rumors and plots swirled through Parliament, Conservative lawmakers set up a showdown meeting with May for Friday, giving her less than 48 hours to announce she will go or face a renewed attempt to oust her.

And a senior Cabinet minister quit with an excoriating letter attacking May's failure to lead Britain out of the EU and hold her divided government together.

Leader of the House of Commons Andrea Leadsom alleged there had been "a complete breakdown of collective responsibility" in government, and said May's Brexit plan would not "deliver on the referendum result" that saw voters in 2016 opt to leave the EU.

Leadsom campaigned to leave the EU in the referendum and was a strong pro-Brexit voice in Cabinet.

Several other senior ministers were reportedly seeking meetings with May to express unhappiness with her Brexit plan — and possibly urge her to quit. But her spokesman, James Slack, said he was "not aware of any discussions" with Cabinet colleagues.

Lawmaker Tom Tugendhat, a leading Conservative moderate, said the only chance of delivering an orderly Brexit was for May "to go — and without delay."

"She must announce her resignation after Thursday's European elections. And the Conservative Party must fast track the leadership process to replace her," he wrote in the Financial Times.

In the House of Commons, May received a flurry of criticism and hostile questions as she implored lawmakers to support a bill implementing Britain's departure from the EU that she plans to put to a vote in Parliament in June.

Nearly three years after British voters opted to leave the EU, May said "we need to see Brexit through, to honor the result of the referendum and to deliver the change the British people so clearly demanded."

If Parliament rejected her deal, she said, "all we have before us is division and deadlock."

That could serve as a fair summary of Britain's current situation.

Lawmakers have already rejected May's divorce deal with the 27 other EU countries three times, and Britain's long-scheduled departure date of March 29 passed with the country still in the bloc.

In a last-ditch bid to secure support for her Brexit plan, May on Tuesday announced concessions including a promise to give Parliament a vote on whether to hold a new referendum on Britain's EU membership — something she has long ruled out.

"I have compromised. Now I ask you to compromise too," she said.

But there was little sign her plea was being heeded. Pro-EU and pro-Brexit lawmakers have only hardened their positions during months of political trench warfare, and they are in no mood to compromise.

Pro-Brexit Conservatives accused May of capitulating to pro-EU demands, and opposition Labour Party lawmakers dismissed her offer as too little, too late.

"The rhetoric may have changed but the deal has not," said Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn. "She did not seek a compromise until after she had missed her own deadline to leave, and by the time she finally did, she had lost the authority to deliver."

May's authority as Conservative leader has been shredded by her loss of the party's parliamentary majority in a 2017 election and her failure to lead Britain out of the EU as promised.

The party's powerful anti-EU wing wants to oust May and replace her with a staunch Brexit supporter such as former foreign secretary Boris Johnson.

May has said she will announce a timetable for her departure once Parliament has voted on her Brexit bill, but it looks increasingly unlikely she can hang on that long.

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May survived a no-confidence vote among Conservative lawmakers in December, leaving her safe from challenge for 12 months under party rules. Some pro-Brexit lawmakers wanted the party's 1922 Committee, which oversees leadership contests, to change the rules when so that May can face a new challenge within days.

But the party committee decided instead to send its chairman Graham Brady to meet May on Friday before it decides whether to alter the rules.

If May stays on until next week, pressure is likely to increase when results come in from this week's elections for the European Parliament, with Conservatives expect to receive a drubbing. Many British voters on both sides of the Brexit debate look set to use the election to the EU legislature to express displeasure over the political gridlock. Opinion polls show strong support for the single-issue Brexit Party — largely from angry former Conservative voters — and for pro-EU parties including the Liberal Democrats and the Greens.

The election is being held Thursday in Britain, but results won't be announced until all 28 EU countries have finished voting late Sunday.

May insisted she would fight on. She said the Brexit withdrawal bill would be published Friday so that lawmakers can study it.

Despite speculation that May will scrap plans to bring it to a vote to avoid a crushing defeat, her office said a vote will be held during the week of June 3.

"In time, another prime minister will be standing at this despatch box," May told lawmakers, acknowledging that her days in the job are numbered.

But, she told Parliament, "in the end our job in this House is to take decisions, not to duck them.

"So I will put those decisions to this House. Because that is my duty and because it is the only way that we can deliver Brexit."

Follow AP's full coverage of Brexit at: <https://www.apnews.com/Brexit>

US, China appear to brace for long haul in trade dispute

By PAUL WISEMAN and JOE McDONALD AP Business Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — With negotiations on hold and tariffs piling up, the United States and China appear to be bracing for a prolonged standoff over trade.

Beijing is airing Korean War movies (antagonist: America) to arouse patriotic feelings in the Chinese public and offering tax cuts to software and chip companies as U.S. export controls threaten Chinese tech companies.

In Washington, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin is talking to Walmart and other companies about finding ways to ease the pain if President Donald Trump goes ahead with plans to extend import taxes to the \$300 billion in Chinese products that haven't already been hit with tariffs.

And the Trump administration is working on an aid package for American farmers hurt by China's retaliatory tariffs on soybeans and other U.S. agricultural products — on top of last year's \$11 billion farm bailout.

Mnuchin and U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer wrapped up an 11th round of talks with the Chinese earlier this month without reaching an agreement to resolve a dispute over Beijing's aggressive efforts to challenge American technological dominance. The U.S. charges that China is stealing technology, unfairly subsidizing its own companies and forcing U.S. companies to hand over trade secrets if they want access to the Chinese market.

"It's really hard to identify whether this the beginning of a prolonged conflict or just negotiating tactics," said David Dollar, senior fellow at the Brookings Institution and a former official at the World Bank and U.S. Treasury. "I increasingly think that this is going to turn into a long-term trade conflict. We have to entertain the possibility that there is no deal."

Dollar points to the airing of Korean War movies and comments by President Xi Jinping suggesting that the Chinese people need to steel themselves for another "Long March" — a reference to the legendary

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and arduous trek Mao Zedong's Communists made to escape pursuers from China's ruling Nationalist government in 1934-1935.

The world's two biggest economies are already locked in the costliest trade combat since the 1930s.

The United States has imposed 25% tariffs on \$250 billion in Chinese imports and is planning to target another \$300 billion — a move that would cover everything China ships to the United States.

China has targeted \$110 billion in U.S. products in retaliation.

China is also looking at other ways to pressure the United States.

President Xi made it a point to visit a Chinese factory this week that processes rare earths — minerals used in things like mobile phones and electric cars. The unspoken message: The United States needs China to supply the exotic minerals.

China also turned up the heat on Boeing Co.: On Wednesday, two of China's three major state-owned airlines — Air China Ltd. and China Southern Airlines Ltd. — demanded compensation for the grounding of the plane maker's 737 Max jetliners after fatal crashes in Ethiopia and Indonesia. The third state-owned carrier — China Eastern Airlines Ltd. — made a similar request last month.

Meantime, the Chinese government took steps to protect tech companies from becoming collateral damage in the U.S.-China conflict.

Under the new measure, most software and integrated circuit companies can skip paying income taxes for two years and will see their tax bills cut by half for three years after that, the Finance Ministry said.

Most smartphones, tablet computers and other electronics are assembled in China. But Chinese manufacturers typically use U.S., Japanese or Taiwanese microchips and other components.

The United States has squeezed Chinese companies by threatening to shut off supplies of those key components. The Trump administration issued an order last week that will curb or end Chinese telecom giant Huawei Technologies Ltd.'s access to American chips and to Google, which provides the Android operating system and services for Huawei smartphones.

A similar export ban almost put the Chinese telecom firm ZTE Corp. out of business last year. The U.S. charged that the company had violated sanctions by selling equipment to Iran and North Korea. Eventually, ZTE escaped the export ban by agreeing to pay a \$1 billion fine and to replace its management team.

In Washington, members of the House Financial Services Committee pressed Mnuchin Wednesday on the costs of the trade war with China. Mnuchin said he'd spoken to Walmart and other firms about how to limit the effect of higher tariffs on American consumers. "I don't expect there will be significant costs on American families," he said.

But many American businesses are not so sanguine.

Nearly 200 footwear retailers and brands including Adidas and Shoe Carnival wrote a letter to Trump on Monday, calling on him not to slap tariffs on footwear imported from China.

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.

Can the United States and China break the impasse?

No talks have been scheduled, and many analysts suspect a breakthrough will require an intervention at the top before the Group of 20 major economies meets next month in Osaka, Japan.

"For a deal, there needs to be a Trump-Xi call, which would enable a useful Lighthizer visit to Beijing," said Derek Scissors, a China specialist at the conservative American Enterprise Institute. "Then the two leaders could meet in Osaka and compromise on at least one major issue: reinvigorating the talks."

AP Economics Writer Martin Crutsinger in Washington and AP Retail Writer Anne D'Innocenzio in New York contributed to this report.

Israeli scientists brew beer with revived ancient yeasts

By ILAN BEN ZION Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli researchers raised a glass Wednesday to celebrate a long-brewing project of making beer and mead using yeasts extracted from ancient clay vessels — some over 5,000 years old.

Archaeologists and microbiologists from the Israel Antiquities Authority and four Israeli universities teamed up to study yeast colonies found in microscopic pores in pottery fragments. The shards were found at Egyptian, Philistine and Judean archaeological sites in Israel spanning from 3,000 BC to the 4th century BC.

The scientists are touting the brews made from “resurrected” yeasts as an important step in experimental archaeology, a field that seeks to reconstruct the past in order to better understand the flavor of the ancient world.

“What we discovered was that yeast can actually survive for a very, very long time without food,” said Hebrew University microbiologist Michael Klutstein. “Today we are able to salvage all these living organisms that live inside the nanopores and to revive them and study their properties.”

Beer was a staple of the daily diet for the people of ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia. Early Egyptian texts refer to a variety of different brews, including “iron beer,” “friend’s beer,” and “beer of the protector.”

The yeast samples came from nearly two dozen ceramic vessels found in excavations around the country, including a salvage dig in central Tel Aviv, a Persian-era palace in southern Jerusalem and ‘En Besor, a 5,000-year-old Egyptian brewery near Israel’s border with the Gaza Strip. The project was spearheaded by Hebrew University microbiologist Ronen Hazan and antiquities authority archaeologist Yitzhak Paz.

Other researchers of ancient beers, such as University of Pennsylvania archaeologist Patrick McGovern, have concocted drinks based on ancient recipes and residue analysis of ceramics. But the Israeli scientists say this is the first time fermented drinks have been made from revived ancient yeasts.

Aren Maeir, a Bar Ilan University archaeologist, excavates at Tel es-Safi, the biblical city of Gath, where ancient Philistine beer pots yielded yeasts used to brew a beer offered to journalists. He likened the revival of long-dormant yeast to the resurrection of ancient beasts fictionalized in “Jurassic Park,” but only to a point.

“In Jurassic Park, the dinosaurs eat the scientists,” he said. “Here, the scientists drink the dinosaurs.”

“It opens up a whole new field of the possibility that perhaps other microorganisms survived as well, and you can identify foods such as cheese, wine, pickles,” opening a portal into tasting cultures of the past, he said.

For this initial experiment, the team paired up with a Jerusalem craft brewer to make a basic modern-style ale using yeast extracted from the pots. The ale had a thick white head, with a caramel color and a distinctly funky nose. The mead, made using yeast extracted from a vessel found in the ruins of a palace near Jerusalem that contained honey wine roughly 2,400 years ago, was champagne bubbly and dry, with a hint of green apple.

The beer incorporates modern ingredients, like hops, that were not available in the ancient Middle East — but it’s the revived yeast that provides much of the flavor.

“We tried to recreate some of the old flavors that people in this area were consuming hundreds and thousands of years ago,” said Shmuel Naky, a craft brewer from the Jerusalem Beer Center, who helped produce the beer and mead. Yeasts, he said, “have a very crucial impact on flavor.”

Naky described the beer as “spicy, and somewhat fruity, and it’s very complex in flavor,” all attributes produced by the ancient yeast.

Genome sequencing of the yeast colonies extracted from the pots showed that the ancient strain of yeast was different from the yeast used in beer-making today, but similar to those still used to make traditional Zimbabwean beer and Ethiopian tej, a type of honey wine.

The researchers said their next aim is to pair the resurrected yeasts with ancient beer recipes to better reproduce drinks from antiquity.

Asian shares slip as US-China spat takes center stage

By ANNABELLE LIANG Associated Press

SINGAPORE (AP) — Asian markets were broadly lower on Thursday as traders focused on tensions between the U.S. and China and braced for the impact of their tariff hikes.

The Shanghai Composite index retreated 0.6% to 2,873.70 and Hong Kong's Hang Seng tumbled 1.2% to 27,376.69. The Kospi in South Korea was 0.2% lower at 2,060.32. Australia's S&P ASX 200 fell 0.3% to 6,489.10. Shares slipped in Taiwan, Singapore and the Philippines but rallied in Indonesia.

Japan's Nikkei 225 index lost 0.8% to 21,107.87, after a private survey suggested that manufacturing contracted in May. The Markit/JMMA flash purchasing managers' index fell to 49.6 in May from 50.2 in the previous month. Numbers above 50 on the index show acceleration.

Earlier this month, the U.S. and China concluded their 11th round of trade talks with no agreement. Further talks have not been arranged.

The U.S. has imposed 25% tariffs on \$250 billion in Chinese imports and is planning to target another \$300 billion. It has also mounted sanctions against Huawei and is threatening to do the same with other Chinese companies. China, meanwhile, has retaliated against \$110 billion in U.S. products.

"The stalemate between the U.S. and China looks likely to last longer as both sides continued to ratchet up rhetoric," Zhu Huani of Mizuho Bank said in a commentary.

"Despite potential significant negative spillover effect this might have on U.S. firms, the Trump administration seems determined to curb China's rise in technology advancement," she added.

On Wall Street, trade worries and mixed corporate earnings pulled stocks lower.

Minutes by the Federal Reserve had scant influence on trading. They showed that some central bank officials felt more interest rate hikes may be needed to keep low unemployment from triggering unwanted inflation.

The S&P 500 index was down 0.3% at 2,856.27 and the Dow Jones Industrial Average retreated 0.4% to 25,776.61. The Nasdaq composite shed 0.5% to 7,750.84. The Russell 2000 index of small company stocks was 0.9% lower at 1,531.63.

ENERGY: Benchmark U.S. crude lost 36 cents to \$61.06 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It gave up \$1.71 to settle at \$61.42 per barrel on Wednesday. Brent crude, the international standard, shed 42 cents to \$70.57 per barrel. The contract slipped \$1.19 to \$70.99 in the previous session.

CURRENCIES: The dollar eased to 110.26 Japanese yen from 110.34 yen late Wednesday. The euro strengthened to \$1.1153 from \$1.1151.

AP Business Writers Damian J. Troise and Alex Veiga contributed to this report.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Thursday, May 23, the 143rd day of 2019. There are 222 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On May 23, 1934, bank robbers Clyde Barrow and Bonnie Parker were shot to death in a police ambush in Bienville Parish, Louisiana.

On this date:

In 1788, South Carolina became the eighth state to ratify the United States Constitution.

In 1814, a third version of Beethoven's only opera, "Fidelio," had its world premiere in Vienna.

In 1915, Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary during World War I.

In 1939, the Navy submarine USS Squalus sank during a test dive off the New England coast. Thirty-two crew members and one civilian were rescued, but 26 others died; the sub was salvaged and re-commis-

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sioned the USS Sailfish.

In 1944, during World War II, Allied forces bogged down in Anzio began a major breakout offensive.

In 1945, Nazi official Heinrich Himmler committed suicide by biting into a cyanide capsule while in British custody in Luneburg, Germany.

In 1967, Egypt closed the Straits of Tiran to Israeli shipping, an action which helped precipitate war between Israel and its Arab neighbors the following month.

In 1975, comedian Jackie "Moms" Mabley, 81, died in White Plains, New York.

In 1977, Moluccan extremists seized a train and a primary school in the Netherlands; the hostage drama ended June 11 as Dutch marines stormed the train, resulting in the deaths of six out of nine hijackers and two hostages, while the school siege ended peacefully.

In 1984, Surgeon General C. Everett Koop issued a report saying there was "very solid" evidence linking cigarette smoke to lung disease in non-smokers.

In 1993, a jury in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, acquitted Rodney Peairs of manslaughter in the shooting death of Yoshi Hattori, a Japanese exchange student he'd mistaken for an intruder. (Peairs was later found liable in a civil suit brought by Hattori's parents.)

In 1994, funeral services were held at Arlington National Cemetery for former first lady Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis.

Ten years ago: Former South Korean President Roh Moo-hyun, 62, leapt to his death amid a widening corruption scandal. Charles Donald Albury, co-pilot of the plane that dropped the atomic bomb on Nagasaki, Japan, died in Orlando, Florida, at 88.

Five years ago: A 22-year-old armed with knives and a gun went on a rampage near the University of California, Santa Barbara; Elliot Rodger killed six students and wounded 13 other people before taking his own life. In a report potentially exposing the Catholic Church to new legal arguments by clerical sex abuse victims, a U.N. committee found that the Vatican did exercise worldwide control over its bishops and priests, and had to comply with the U.N.'s anti-torture treaty.

One year ago: NFL owners approved a new policy allowing players to protest during the national anthem by staying in the locker room, but forbidding players from sitting or taking a knee if they're on the field. A federal judge ruled that President Donald Trump violates the First Amendment when he blocks critics on Twitter because of their political views. For the first time in the 36 seasons of TV's "Survivor," the season finale ended in a deadlock, and a tiebreaker was needed to crown Wendell Holland as the champ.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Barbara Barrie is 88. Actress Joan Collins is 86. Actor Charles Kimbrough is 83. International Tennis Hall of Famer John Newcombe is 75. Actress Lauren Chapin is 74. Country singer Misty Morgan is 74. Country singer Judy Rodman is 68. Chess grandmaster Anatoly Karpov is 68. Boxing Hall of Famer Marvelous Marvin Hagler is 65. Singer Luka Bloom is 64. Former baseball manager Buck Showalter is 63. Actor-comedian-game show host Drew Carey is 61. Actress Lea DeLaria is 61. Country singer Shelly West is 61. Author Mitch Albom is 61. Actor Linden Ashby is 59. Actress-model Karen Duffy is 58. Actress Melissa McBride is 54. Rock musician Phil Selway (Radiohead) is 52. Actress Laurel Holloman is 51. Rock musician Matt Flynn (Maroon 5) is 49. Singer Lorenzo is 47. Country singer Brian McComas is 47. Actor John Pollono is 47. Singer Maxwell is 46. Singer Jewel is 45. Game show contestant Ken Jennings is 45. Actor LaMonica Garrett is 44. Actor D.J. Cotrona is 39. Actor Lane Garrison is 39. Actor-comedian Tim Robinson is 38. Actor Adam Wylie is 35. Movie writer-director Ryan Coogler is 33. Golfer Morgan Pressel is 31. Actor Alberto Frezza (TV: "Station 19") is 30. Folk/pop singer/songwriter Sarah Jarosz (juh-ROHZ') is 28.

Thought for Today: "Life is like a game of poker: If you don't put any in the pot, there won't be any to take out." — Jackie "Moms" Mabley (1894-1975).