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CLOSED: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

Upcoming COMMUNITY EVENTS

Swimming Pool Hours

Open Swim Daily: 1 p.m. to 4:50 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. to 8:50 p.m.

Fun Night is every Friday from 6:30 p.m. to 8:50 p.m.

Adult Water Aerobics: Monday through Thursday: 8 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. to 6:15 pm

Adult Lap Swim: Monday through Friday: 7 a.m. to 8 a.m.; Monday through Thursday: 5:30 p.m. to 6:15 p.m.; Friday-Sunday: 4:50 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Swimming Lessons: First Session: June 17-27

Chicken Soup
for the Soul

The *miracle* isn't
that I finished.

The *miracle* is
that I had the
courage to start.

-John Bingham

Friday, June 14

6:00 p.m.: T-Ball Scrimmage (both)
Softball at Britton, U12 (DH), 6 p.m.
Olive Grove Golf Course: SDSU Golf Tournament,
18 holes, Noon Shotgun Start.

June 15-16

U12 Midgets at Mitchell Have Johnston Tournament
U10 Pee Wees at Mitchell Tourney

Saturday, June 15

1:00 p.m.: Junior Teeners at Aberdeen, (DH)
2:00 p.m.: Junior Legion hosts Mobridge, (DH)
U8 Pee Wees Tourney in Groton
10 a.m.: Groton Blue vs. Aberdeen Hannigan, Falk
Field; and Groton Red. vs. Watertown on Nelson
Field.
11:15 a.m.: Sisseton vs. Britton Blue, Falk Field;
and Aberdeen Borge vs. Britton Red on Nelson Field.
Losers play at 12:45 p.m. and Winners play at 2
p.m.

Seventh Place Game: 3:15 p.m. on Falk Field
Fifth Place Game: 4:30 p.m. on Nelson Field
Third Place Game: 3:15 p.m. on Nelson Field
Championship Game: 4:30 p.m. on Falk Field

Groton Triathlon is Postponed

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Transit Fundrasier

Arlis Doeden of the Groton Community Transit visits with people as they came to the fundraiser. She is pictured with June and Jim Ackman and Doug Doeden.

(Photo by Paul Kosel)

JR, Paula and Asher Johnson go through the serving line at the Groton Community Transit fundraiser held Thursday. Serving them are Lori Westby and Lorrie Weber. Also pictured on the far left is Mandy Boe. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



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Topper Tastad was in charge of making the donuts. He made this batch in eight minutes and 20 seconds. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Topper Tastad is pictured here moving quickly to get the donuts made. He said the key was to "keep the top full and the bottom empty. You go as fast as you can." (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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David McGannon and Larry Harry were busy flipping burgers on the big grill. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

Mandy Boe brings the food and drink to Elda Stange. Elda said that she used the transit when she had to go to the Groton Care & Rehab Center for physical therapy. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



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A good size crowd showed up for the annual Groton Community Transit fundraiser. The left photo features the serving line. The bottom photo features people sitting at the tables. It was a nice day for the event with the temperature around 78 degrees with a south breeze about 10-15 mph. (Photo by Paul Kosel)





Dragr Monson wins Mt. Rushmore Mayhem

Dragr Monson competed at the Mt. Rushmore Mayhem in Rapid City this week. At the beginning of the tournament, Monson ended up being bumped up from 120 pounds to 126 pounds. None of these three matches went past the first period.

In the first round, he pinned Lane Wilfong from Peyton, Colo., in 23 seconds. In the second round, he defeated Jaxon Rohde, Anthem, Ariz., by technical fall, 13-2. And in the championship match, he defeated Andrew Middleton, Calera, Alabama, by technical fall, 10-0. (Photo from Wendy Monson's Face-

book Page)

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Mosquito Control Last Night



The City of Groton did a mosquito control last night. The wind was southerly at 10 mph so only avenues were done. About 4.3 gallons of Evolver 4x4 was used. The distance traveled was 19 miles. Air temperature was 72 degrees.

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Today in Weather History

June 14, 1970: An estimated F3 tornado moved northeast from just southeast of Mound City. Barns and sheds were said to have been blown away on three farms.

June 14, 1985: A thunderstorm produced golf ball size hail in the Castlewood area causing considerable damage to grain, corn, soybeans, and gardens. Some areas just south of Castlewood had hail piled up to six inches deep. Leaves were stripped from several trees. Wind gusts to 60 mph accompanied the hail.

Another thunderstorm produced high winds and damaging hail in Grant and Roberts Counties. North of Milbank along both sides of Highway 15, crops incurred considerable damage. An area 17 miles northeast of Sisseton into Browns Valley, to Mud Lake, saw crop damage from golf ball size hail.

June 14, 2009: An upper-level disturbance combined with a warm front and very unstable air brought severe thunderstorms to parts of central and north-central South Dakota. Hail up to the size of golf balls, flash flooding, along with several tornadoes occurred with these storms. Heavy rain caused flash flooding on the Moreau River with the bridge on Route 14 being overtopped. The bridge had to be closed west of Green Grass. A basement was also flooded three miles east of Green Grass along with several roads in the area in Dewey County. A tornado touched down west of Hayes in Stanley County and traveled almost a mile before lifting. No damage occurred. A second tornado touched down east of Hayes with no damage occurring.

1903: Major flash flooding along Willow Creek destroyed a significant portion of Heppner, Oregon on this day. With a death toll of 247 people, it remains the deadliest natural disaster in Oregon.

1961 - The temperature in Downtown San Francisco, CA, soared to 106 degrees to establish an all-time record for that location. (The Weather Channel)






1987 - Thirty-two cities in the central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. The high of 97 degrees at Flint, MI, tied their record for June, and the high of 101 at Milwaukee WI marked their first 100 degree reading in 32 years. Thunderstorms brought much needed rains to South Texas, drenching McAllen with 3.2 inches in one hour. A thunderstorm soaked the town of Uncertain with 2.3 inches of rain in one hour. (The National Weather Summary)

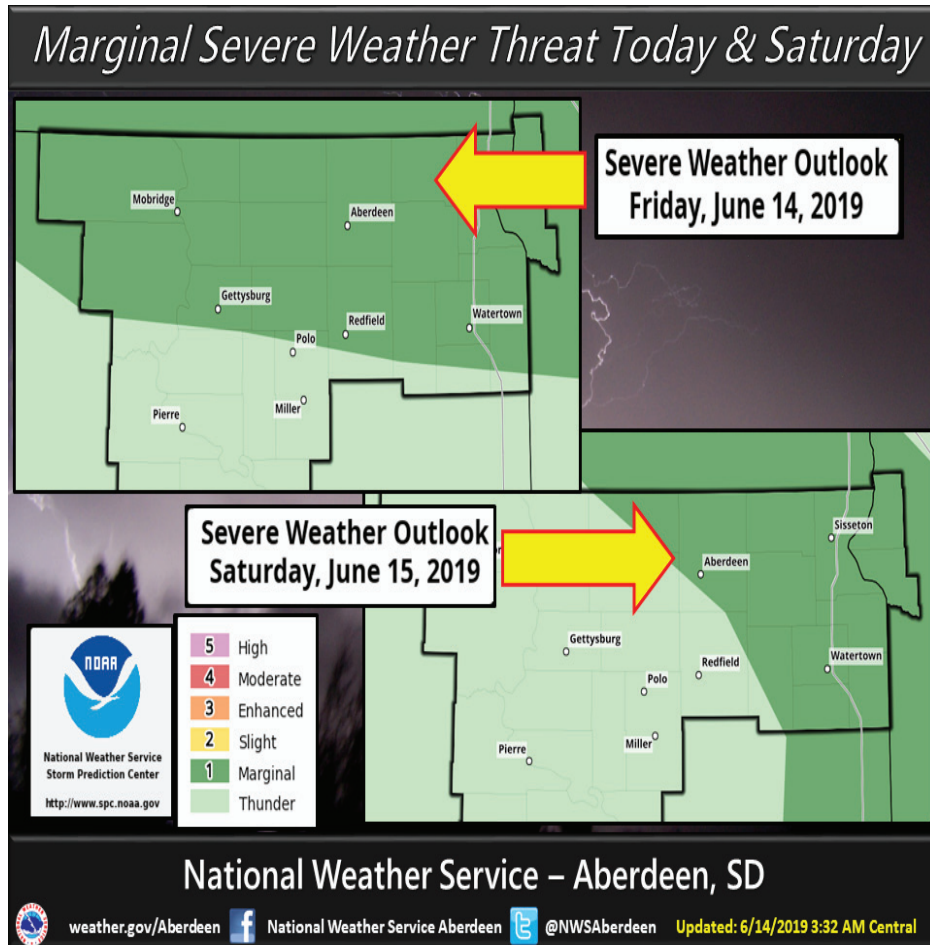
1988 - Thirty cities in the eastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms developing ahead of a cold front produced severe weather from the Central Gulf States to the Middle Atlantic Coast Region during the day and into the night. There were 62 reports of large hail and damaging winds. Thunderstorm winds caused 28 million dollars damage in Montgomery County MD. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

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Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday
				
Sunny then Slight Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms	Slight Chance T-storms	Mostly Sunny
High: 89 °F	Low: 61 °F	High: 83 °F	Low: 54 °F	High: 73 °F



Warmer and more humid air is moving into the region, and will result in an unstable atmosphere this afternoon and again Saturday. The risk will be kind of limited however, but an isolated storm or two could come with hail and strong winds. It will also be hot today, with highs in the mid/upper 80s with a few spots pushing low 90s. Cooler air will move in for the weekend and start of next week however, along with additional opportunities for moisture.

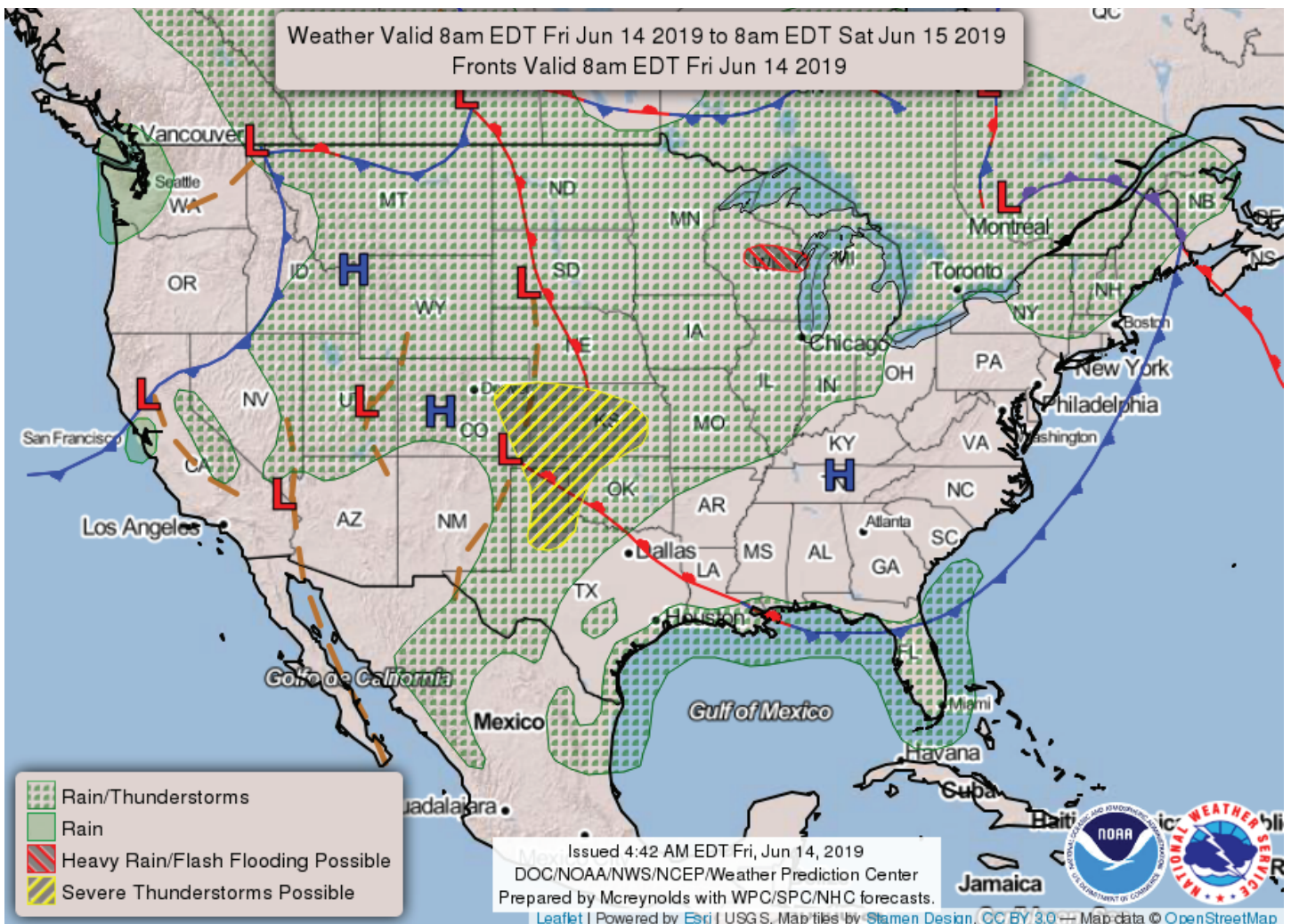
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 82 °F at 6:00 PM
Low Temp: 66 °F at 10:27 PM
Wind: 7 mph at 21 mph at 5:42 PM
Day Rain: 0.00

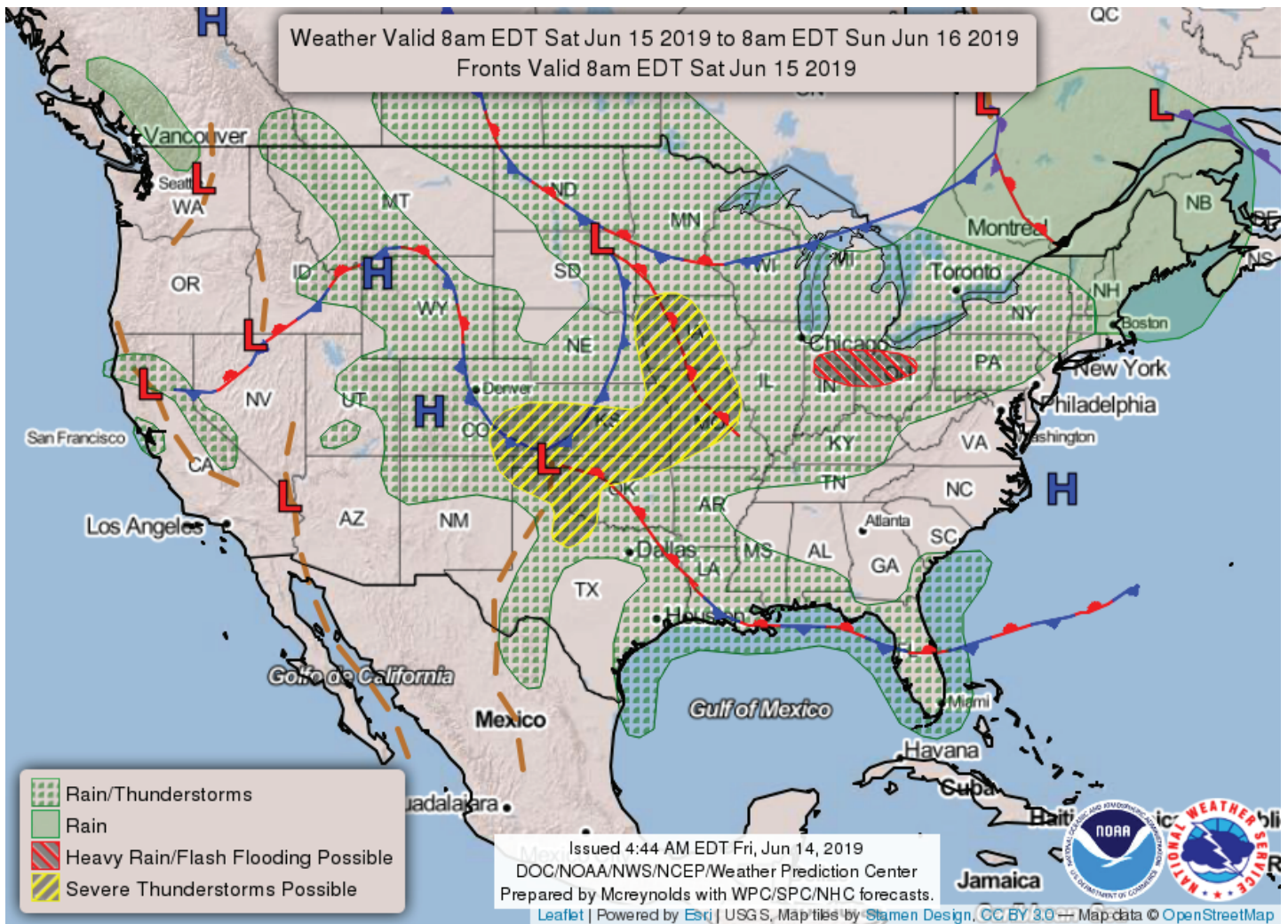
Record High: 99° in 1933
Record Low: 34° in 1969
Average High: 77°F
Average Low: 53°F
Average Precip in June.: 1.56
Precip to date in June.: 0.40
Average Precip to date: 8.70
Precip Year to Date: 8.19
Sunset Tonight: 9:24 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:45 a.m.



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Tomorrow's Weather Map



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COVER IT UP!

Asking for forgiveness is often more difficult than it seems. To have offended someone and not be troubled by the pain it produced in the other person is indeed the sign of a calloused heart and an indifferent attitude: both an abomination to God!

But to acknowledge that we have wronged another person is difficult. For whatever our reason may be, and although we do not admit it, we all seem to think we live a life that is as close to perfect as possible. Our opinions are absolute, and our values are without question, the ones that every person ought to hold.

That, however, defies Scripture and reason. Most of us have a difficult time getting through one day without some conflict about some issue with another person. And, if our opinion or position on the issue does not agree with the other persons, conflict erupts.

Now, conflict is not all bad. Often creativity comes out of conflict and that's good. If however, we become hardened in our position and refuse to accept the ideas of the other person and use words to hurt and harm them, that is indeed wrong and displeasing to God.

We are all equal in God's eyes - even when our ideas or positions disagree with another. If we are thoughtless in expressing our differences to the point that we use abusive language to destroy and defeat one of God's children that's definitely wrong. End of discussion.

He who covers over an offense promotes love. Here we are advised to plead for forgiveness and cover it up. Another way of saying it is to forgive and pray for the other.

Prayer: Give us tender hearts, Lord. May we spend time today making amends, where necessary for harming others and blessing them in Your Name. Amen.

Scripture For Today: Proverbs 17:9 He who covers over an offense promotes love, but whoever repeats the matter separates close friends.

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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

SD National Guard deployed to help Yankton archery, train

YANKTON, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota National Guard has been deployed to an archery complex in Yankton where troops will receive training and work on projects to enhance infrastructure.

The 155th Vertical Engineer Company will set up camp at the National Field Archery Association's Easton Yankton Archery complex for two weeks, the Yankton Daily Press and Dakotan reported.

The unit will assemble three comfort stations and an outdoor classroom, and clear what was once a city dump to make way for additional archery space.

"The ability to have them is something that's so important to us because none of this would happen without them," NFAA President Bruce Cull said Wednesday. "We don't have the money. We can't afford to build any of that stuff."

Captain B.J. Poore said the company, usually based in Wagner and Rapid City, comprises three platoons, cooks and a fueler. While there, the troops will complete training in masonry, carpentry, electrical and plumbing.

This isn't the first time the National Guard has been deployed to the NFAA. Cull noted that the 155th was on site in 2011 to help with flooding.

He said he was able to score the unit's assistance because his organization fits the National Guard criteria.

"You have to be a public charitable nonprofit — which we are — but the other thing is we really provide opportunities that they have a hard time getting, which are real-life situations," Cull said

Cull said the NFAA is the largest archery facility in the world.

Information from: Yankton Press and Dakotan, <http://www.yankton.net/>

Mississippi River dropping below flood stage in Iowa

By NELSON LAMPE Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — The Mississippi River is dropping below flood stage along many of Iowa's riverfront cities after nearly three months of record highs caused by melting snow and torrential rain.

The river dropped below flood stage at Guttenberg, Iowa, early Tuesday, and was more than half a foot (15 centimeters) under flood stage Thursday morning at one Dubuque gauge. The river was above flood stage at Dubuque for a record 85 days, breaking the old mark of 34 days set in 2011, according to the National Weather Service.

The river remained around 2.5 feet (three-quarters of a meter) above flood stage at Davenport, where floodwaters surged into downtown after a barrier failed April 30.

Levels of the Missouri River, which flows into the Mississippi near St. Louis, have dropped some but are expected to remain high for much of the summer. Several Midwestern rivers have flooded periodically since March, causing billions of dollars of damage to farmland, homes and businesses.

While the Mississippi is dropping now, "it could come right back up if we get a bunch of rain," said Jamie Gamerding, who owns a hotel, a fishing barge, a bait shop and rents out boats in Guttenberg. He erected concrete walls to protect his various businesses.

"If the water was going to come up high, you can't stop it," he said.

Downstream in St. Louis, the river reached its second-highest crest in recorded history Sunday and has dropped 2 feet (0.61 meters) since. It's not expected to return below flood stage for nearly two more weeks.

Nearly 280 roads remain closed in Missouri, mostly in communities situated near the Missouri and Mississippi rivers. The Missouri Transportation Department said as many as 400 have been closed by flooding.

In Jefferson City, Missouri, where Missouri River floodwaters at one point blocked streets leading up to the Capitol, the river remained more than 7 feet (2.13 meters) above flood stage. It's not expected to go

below flood stage until June 21, barring any torrential rain.

The Missouri River dropped below flood stage Thursday in Omaha but remains well above in several southeast Nebraska and southwest Iowa spots.

More flooding is possible in places protected by levees that were damaged in March because few have been repaired. The work has been hindered by the extent of the damage and lingering floodwaters, officials said.

Body found inside submerged vehicle is that of Pierre woman

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Authorities say the body found inside a vehicle that was submerged in the Missouri River is that of a Pierre woman who was last seen in Pierre in December 2017.

The body of 30-year-old Corrine Faye White Thunder was found Tuesday after authorities pulled the vehicle from the river near the exit area of Down's Marina.

Police say she had not been reported as missing.

White Thunder's cause of death is still pending. Pierre police Capt. Bryan Walz tells KCCR that authorities are investigating. They are asking anyone with information about what might have happened to come forward.

Information from: KCCR-AM, <http://www.todayskccr.com/>

Federal court hears arguments in pipeline protest bill suit

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Attorneys for the state of South Dakota and the American Civil Liberties Union appeared before a federal judge to argue their positions on a new law that aims to prevent disruptive demonstrations.

The ACLU is suing Gov. Kristi Noem and others saying the new law — which was enacted in anticipation of the Keystone XL pipeline — chills protected speech. The state's attorneys are asking for a judgment in its favor.

The Argus Leader reported that Judge Lawrence Piersol did not rule Wednesday and is expected to rule at a later date.

The law pushed by Noem allows officials to pursue criminal or civil penalties from demonstrators who engage in "riot boosting," which is defined in part as encouraging violence during a riot. Noem has said the law is meant to address problems caused by "out-of-state rioters funded by out-of-state interests."

Supporters of the legislation sought to head off protests of the Keystone XL like those mounted against the Dakota Access oil pipeline in North Dakota in 2016 and 2017. North Dakota spent \$38 million on policing those protests, which resulted in 761 arrests over a six-month span.

American Indian tribes and environmental groups have promised similar protests against Keystone XL, which TransCanada Corp. wants to build to move Canadian crude through Montana and South Dakota to Nebraska, where it would connect with lines carrying oil to Gulf Coast refineries. The \$8 billion project is tied up in the courts.

The Rapid City Journal reported that dozens of opponents of the legislation rallied outside the federal courthouse Wednesday.

"Landowners, tribal people, families are against this pipeline and this law is a threat to our right" to protest, Nick Tilsen, a plaintiff in the lawsuit and president of NDN Collective, a Rapid City-based indigenous advocacy group, said outside the courthouse.

ACLU lawyer Stephen Pevar said in a statement that states are within their rights to prohibit incitement of violence, but such laws go beyond that by criminalizing impassioned advocacy that's at the core of political discourse.

"They instill a fear among peaceful organizers that their actions or words could be misconstrued by the government as 'riot boosting.' As a result, activists are now forced to think twice before even encouraging others to join a protest, let alone train, educate, or advise those who plan to protest," he said.

Noem and Attorney General Jason Ravnsborg, who is also a defendant, have denied the ACLU's allegations. Noem spokeswoman Kristin Wileman said: "The governor fully supports freedoms of speech and assembly. There must also be law and order. No one has the right to incite violence, and for those who do, there should be consequences for their actions."

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

Debate lineup set at 20 candidates; de Blasio and Bennet in

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

The Democratic National Committee has announced that 20 candidates have qualified for the party's first presidential debates later this month.

Montana Gov. Steve Bullock and U.S. Rep. Seth Moulton of Massachusetts were the only major candidates out of the two dozen Democratic hopefuls who failed to meet the polling or grassroots fundraising measures required to get a debate spot. Two lesser-known candidates, former Sen. Mike Gravel of Alaska and Miramar, Florida, Mayor Wayne Messam, also missed the cutoff, announced Thursday.

U.S. Sen. Michael Bennet of Colorado and New York Mayor Bill de Blasio, who recently had been on the bubble, both made the debate based on polling measures.

The campaign's opening debates, set for June 26-27 in Miami, will offer a prime opportunity for many White House hopefuls to reshape a race defined in recent weeks by former Vice President Joe Biden's domination of national and many early state polls.

An NBC News drawing Friday will divide the large field between the first and second debate night. Party officials have promised to weight the drawing with the intention of ensuring that top tier and lagging candidates are spread roughly evenly over the two nights.

Those assignments will determine the debate strategies for many campaigns. Candidates will have to decide whether to go after front-runners such as Biden, challenge others in the pack or stand out by remaining above the fray. They must also decide how much to focus on President Donald Trump.

Some candidates have criticized the debate-qualifying rules that the party chairman, Tom Perez, set this year. The polling and fundraising thresholds will remain the same for the July debates over two nights in Detroit.

Bullock's campaign insists he has reached a party benchmark of a minimum 1 percent in at least three polls by approved organizations. But party officials say Bullock is wrongly counting a Washington Post-ABC poll from February.

He said Thursday that he was "certainly disappointed" by the DNC's decision.

"But the greater point really is also that I'm the only one in the field that's actually won in a Trump state, and we need to win back some of the places we've lost," he said on MSNBC.

The polling and fundraising marks will double for the third and fourth debates in September and October. Candidates will have to meet both marks instead of one or the other. That means 2 percent in the approved polls and a donor list of at least 130,000 unique contributors.

Former Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper, who will appear in the first debate, questioned some of the rules during a campaign stop Thursday before the DNC announcement, but said candidates have little choice other than to meet them.

"Fighting with the DNC is a little like fighting with the weather," he said. "You can rage against the storm, but you will not have great effect. I think the rules are the rules."

Associated Press writers Brian Slodysko in Washington and Matt Volz in Helena, Montana, contributed to this report.

Denver Broncos owner Pat Bowlen dies at age 75

By ARNIE STAPLETON AP Pro Football Writer

ENGLEWOOD, Colo. (AP) — Pat Bowlen, the Denver Broncos owner who transformed the team from also-rans into NFL champions and helped the league usher in billion-dollar television deals, died late Thursday night, just under two months before his enshrinement in the Pro Football Hall of Fame. He was 75.

In a statement posted on the Broncos' website, Bowlen's family said he died peacefully at home surrounded by loved ones. They did not specify a cause of death. Bowlen had battled Alzheimer's for several years.

Bowlen was the first owner in NFL history to oversee a team that won 300 games — including playoffs — in three decades. He had as many Super Bowl appearances (seven) as losing seasons, and Denver is 354-240-1 since he bought the club in 1984.

Under his stewardship, the Broncos won Super Bowls in 1998, '99 and 2016.

Following their 31-24 victory over Green Bay for the franchise's first championship, Bowlen famously hollered, "This one's for John!" Hall of Fame quarterback John Elway called it the greatest moment of his playing career.

Elway the executive returned the favor on Feb. 7, 2016, when he jabbed the silver Lombardi Trophy into the sky after Denver's 24-10 win over Carolina in Super Bowl 50 and declared, "This one's for Pat."

That came 18 months after Alzheimer's forced Bowlen to step down from his daily duties running the team.

"I'm just glad I had the opportunity," Elway told The Associated Press in the victorious locker room that night. "I didn't want to think about it too much because I didn't want to jinx anything. But I was waiting for the day that I was able to do that. So, I was glad and really thrilled that I was able to do that and we'll take that trophy over to Pat next week and let him cherish it."

Elway delivered the prize to Bowlen's home back in Denver. And in the Mile High City, more than a million fans packed downtown for a victory parade 17 years after Elway capped his remarkable playing career by leading the Broncos to back-to-back titles.

Super Bowl 50 was the Broncos' eighth trip to the big game, seven under Bowlen's watch, and all of those with Elway's help — first as his QB and then as his GM.

Bowlen's wife, Annabel, who recently announced that she, too, is battling Alzheimer's, and their children were on hand to accept the Lombardi Trophy on his behalf in Santa Clara, California.

"His soul will live on through the Broncos, the city of Denver and all of our fans," Bowlen's family said in their statement Thursday night. "Heaven got a little bit more orange and blue tonight."

During his 35 seasons as owner, Bowlen's teams compiled a .596 winning percentage — tied for second-best in the NFL during that span. Among professional franchises in the four major North American sports, only the San Antonio Spurs, New England Patriots and Los Angeles Lakers were better, according to the Broncos.

Bowlen relished working behind the scenes and shied away from the spotlight. In the words of former coach Mike Shanahan, "Pat just wanted to be one of the guys."

"That's why I think he was so beloved by so many people, including myself," Shanahan said. "And you also knew that he would give anything to make your football team better or at least get a chance at the Super Bowl. At that time you would say every ounce that he had — I should say every penny he had — he wanted to go into giving the football team a Super Bowl. That was his No. 1 priority. That was it. It was not trying to buy different companies and trying to make more money. His goal was winning a Super Bowl."

Former Broncos coach Gary Kubiak said: "Most guys would tell you that played for him or worked for him that he was not only our owner, but he was your friend."

Bowlen served as a sounding board for NFL Commissioners Pete Rozelle, Paul Tagliabue and Roger Goodell. He was crucial to the league's growth as a member of 15 NFL committees, including co-chairing the NFL Management Council and working on network TV contracts, including the league's ground-breaking \$18 billion deal in 1998.

"Pat was the driving force in establishing the championship culture of the Broncos. He was also an extraordinary leader at the league level during a key period," Broncos President and CEO Joe Ellis said in a

statement. "With the fans, Pat felt in many ways that his team belonged to them and approached things with that in mind. There will never be another owner like Pat Bowlen."

Bowlen had a deep appreciation for his players, whether or not they were stars, and it's not unusual to see ex-Broncos watching practice.

"When I retired, Mr. B. told me I was welcome anytime at team headquarters," said Hall of Fame tight end Shannon Sharpe. "He said I didn't need a pass, either: 'Your face is your credential.'"

Ownership of the franchise is held in a trust Bowlen set up more than a decade ago in hopes one of his seven children will one day run the team. Until then, Ellis, one of three trustees, is doing so in a "What would Pat do?" sort of way.

Although daughter Brittany is hoping to one day take over the team, the succession plan and the trustees' oversight of Bowlen's estate has been challenged in state district court in the last year by some members of the Bowlen family.

Those who worked for Bowlen remember a man who put production ahead of profits; trained tirelessly for triathlons; fostered a winning atmosphere from the lobby to the locker room; and was always quick with a compliment and sure to couch his criticism.

"Pat Bowlen was the heart and soul of the Denver Broncos," Ellis said. "Not only was Pat a Hall of Fame owner — he was a Hall of Fame person."

Bowlen flashed his competitive streak whether on the road conducting league business, on the sideline watching his team or on the StairMaster drenched in sweat.

It was evident in his dislike for Peyton Manning when the quarterback played for Indianapolis before joining the Broncos in 2012.

"I get it, and I respect that," Manning said, adding that Bowlen flew back to Denver from his offseason home in Hawaii to welcome him when he signed with the Broncos, and they were friends afterward.

"If there was a way for him to compete against what he's going through," former defensive end Alfred Williams said a couple of summers ago, "he'd beat that damn disease every time."

Bowlen is survived by his wife, Annabel, and seven children: Amie, Beth, Patrick, Johnny, Brittany, Annabel and Christianna.

___ More AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/tag/NFL> and https://twitter.com/AP_NFL

___ Follow AP Pro Football Writer Arnie Melendrez Stapleton on Twitter: <http://twitter.com/arniestapleton>

Calls mount for compromise over unpopular Hong Kong bill

By CHRISTOPHER BODEEN Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam faced calls from both outside and within her government Friday to delay extradition legislation that has spurred massive protests.

Some members of the Executive Council, Hong Kong's Cabinet, said she should perhaps rethink plans to rush the bills' passage. Meanwhile, a group of former senior government officials urged her not to force a confrontation by pushing ahead with the unpopular bills, which would allow Hong Kong suspects to be tried in mainland China.

"It can be said the government perhaps should consider other options," said Bernard Chan, a leading member of the Executive Council. He said a delay might be one possibility.

Many in Hong Kong fear the measures would undermine the former British colony's legal autonomy.

As of Friday afternoon, more than 30,000 people had signed a petition protesting the use of force by police during violent clashes with protesters on Wednesday.

Authorities were bracing for more protests late Friday and over the weekend.

The standoff between police and protesters is Hong Kong's most severe political crisis since the Communist Party-ruled mainland took control in 1997 with a promise not to interfere with the city's civil liberties and courts.

The busy downtown area was calm Friday morning after days of protests by students and human rights activists. Hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets on Sunday, challenging Lam's 2-year-old

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government, and protesters had kept up a presence through Thursday night, singing hymns and holding up signs criticizing the police for their handling of the demonstrations.

Demonstrators say they are committed to preventing the government from enacting amendments they see as eroding the freedoms and protections promised when Britain ended its colonial rule of the city in 1997, handing sovereignty to Beijing.

The clashes Wednesday drew tens of thousands of mostly young residents and forced the legislature to postpone debate on the bill.

Pressure on the Hong Kong leader, caught between a restive public and Communist rulers in Beijing, is growing, said Willy Lam, an expert on Chinese politics at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

Calls to amend the plan or for Carrie Lam to step down are coming from many sectors, including business leaders, he noted, adding that it's President Xi Jinping in Beijing who will decide, not Carrie Lam.

"If the momentum continues to grow, then there is a high possibility that Xi Jinping might strike for a compromise and postpone the bill indefinitely," Willy Lam said. "There's a possibility Beijing might strike a compromise and the blame will be put on Carrie Lam."

Police said they arrested 11 people on charges such as assaulting police officers and unlawful assembly during Wednesday's protest. Police Commissioner Stephen Lo Wai-chung said 22 officers had been injured in the fracas and hospitals said they had treated 81 people for protest-related injuries.

Signs were posted Friday on the walls of a pedestrian bridge near the city's government headquarters, including photocopies of the famed Associated Press "Tank Man" picture that became a symbol of resistance to China's bloody suppression of student-led pro-democracy protests centered on Beijing's Tiananmen Square in 1989.

Other signs criticized the police for their use of force in fighting back against protesters.

The debris-strewn area around the building, which houses the Legislative Council, was blocked off by police while sanitation workers gathered rubbish and police officers checked identity cards before letting people into the area.

It is unclear how the local leadership might defuse the crisis, given Beijing's strong support for the extradition bill and its distaste for dissent.

Anson Chan, a former chief secretary for Hong Kong, said Lam still could keep her post if she backs down.

"What the people are attempting to tell is that we are very worried about the consequences of passing the extradition bill, because no one will feel safe, even in their own beds, after passage of this bill," Chan said in an interview.

"It places everybody's individual freedom and safety at risk," said Chan, who as chief secretary was the top local civil servant under former British Gov. Chris Patton.

Beijing has condemned the protests but so far has not indicated whether it is planning harsher measures. President Xi, China's strongest leader in decades, has demanded that Hong Kong follow Beijing's dictates, saying it would not tolerate the city becoming a base for what the Communist Party considers a foreign-inspired campaign to undermine its rule over the vast nation of 1.4 billion people.

Lam, the chief executive, declared that Wednesday's violence was "rioting," potentially raising severe legal penalties for those arrested for taking part. In past cases of unrest, the authorities have waited months or years before rounding up protest leaders. In April, nine leaders of a 2014 pro-democracy protest movement known as the "Umbrella Revolution" were convicted on public nuisance and other charges.

Hong Kong residents enjoy liberties denied to Chinese living in the mainland: June 4 brought one of the biggest vigils in recent years to commemorate the 30th anniversary of the 1989 protests in Beijing.

But many in the city worry their freedoms have been diminishing since Xi came to power in 2012.

The detention of several Hong Kong booksellers in late 2015 intensified concern over the territory weakening legal autonomy. The booksellers vanished before resurfacing in police custody in mainland China. Among them, Swedish citizen Gui Minhai is under investigation for allegedly leaking state secrets after he sold gossip books about Chinese leaders.

Associated Press writers Alice Fung and Elaine Kurtenbach contributed to this report.

Sarah Sanders leaving White House job, returning to Arkansas

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — White House press secretary Sarah Sanders, whose tenure was marked by a breakdown in regular press briefings and questions about the administration's credibility, as well as her own, will leave her post at the end of the month, President Donald Trump announced.

Trump said Thursday he's encouraging her to run for governor when she returns home to Arkansas, where her father once held the job.

Sanders is one of Trump's closest and most trusted White House aides and one of the few remaining who worked on his campaign, taking on the job of advocating for and defending a president who had his own unconventional ideas about how to conduct the people's business.

At an unrelated White House event, Trump described Sanders as a "warrior" as he called her to the stage. Sanders, appearing emotional, said serving Trump has been "the honor of a lifetime" and pledged to remain one of his "most outspoken and loyal supporters."

Sanders, who is married and has three young children, later told reporters she wanted to spend more time with her family, but she did not rule out running for public office.

"I learned a long time ago never to rule anything out," said Sanders, 36.

She was the first working mother and just the third woman to be named White House press secretary.

Under her roughly two-year tenure as chief spokeswoman for the White House, daily televised briefings led by the press secretary became a relic of the past after Sanders repeatedly sparred with reporters who aggressively questioned her about administration policy, the investigation into possible coordination between Trump's campaign and Russia or any number of controversies involving the White House.

Sanders has not held a formal briefing since March 11 and said she does not regret scaling them back. Instead, reporters were left to catch her and other administration officials on the White House driveway after their interviews with Fox News Channel and other networks.

Trump also has made it a habit to regularly answer reporters' questions in a variety of settings, most notably on the South Lawn before boarding the Marine One helicopter. Sanders often sought to justify the lack of formal briefings by saying they were unnecessary when journalists could hear from Trump directly.

Behind the scenes, Sanders worked to develop relationships with reporters, earning the respect and trust of many of those on the beat.

Still, her credibility had come under question after she succeeded Sean Spicer, Trump's first press secretary, in mid-2017 in the high-profile role.

The Russia report released by special counsel Robert Mueller in April revealed that Sanders admitted to investigators that she had made an unfounded claim about "countless" FBI agents reaching out to express support for Trump's decision to fire FBI Director James Comey in May 2017.

Sanders characterized the comment as a "slip of the tongue" uttered in the "heat of the moment."

She faced similar questions last year after Rudy Giuliani, one of Trump's personal attorneys, surprised the White House by saying on national TV that Trump had reimbursed his then-fixer Michael Cohen for the \$130,000 Cohen had paid porn actress Stormy Daniels to keep quiet during the campaign about an alleged past sexual encounter with Trump. Trump has denied Daniels' claim.

The White House had failed to disclose the reimbursement. Sanders said she didn't know anything about the repayment until Giuliani disclosed it.

Sanders told reporters Thursday that she had informed Trump earlier in the day of her decision to step down. Her staff learned the news shortly before Trump tweeted, "After 3 1/2 years, our wonderful Sarah Huckabee Sanders will be leaving the White House at the end of the month and going home to the Great State of Arkansas."

Trump added that "she would be fantastic" as Arkansas governor. Sanders said she's had people "begging" her to run for governor for more than a year.

Her father is former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee, a two-time GOP presidential candidate. She managed his second White House bid.

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Asa Hutchinson, the current Arkansas governor, was re-elected in 2018 and is limited to two terms. The seat will become open in 2022.

Sanders said she hasn't discussed possible replacements with Trump. She said she saw no reason to delay informing the president once she had made her decision, saying her departure should give Trump time to put someone else in place before the 2020 presidential campaign heats up.

Associated Press writer Zeke Miller contributed to this report.

Follow Darlene Superville on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/dsupervilleap>

Middle East attack jolts oil-import dependent Asia

By FOSTER KLUG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — The blasts detonated far from the bustling megacities of Asia, but the attack this week on two tankers in the strategic Strait of Hormuz hits at the heart of this region's oil-import-dependent economies.

While the violence only directly jolted two countries in the region — one of the targeted ships was operated by a Tokyo-based company; a nearby South Korean-operated vessel helped rescue sailors — it will unnerve major economies throughout Asia.

Officials, analysts and media commentators on Friday hammered home the importance of the Strait of Hormuz for Asia, calling it a crucial lifeline, and there was deep interest in for more details about the still sketchy attack and in what the United States and Iran would do in the aftermath.

In the end, whether Asia shrugs it off, as some analysts predict, or its economies shudder as a result, the attack highlights the widespread worries here over an extreme reliance on a single strip of water for the oil that fuels much of the region's shared progress.

Here is a look at how Asia is handling rising tensions in a faraway but economically crucial area, compiled by AP reporters from around the world:

WHY ASIA WORRIES

The oil, of course.

Japan, South Korea and China don't have enough of it; the Middle East does, and much of it flows through the narrow Strait of Hormuz.

This could make Asia vulnerable to supply disruptions from U.S.-Iran tensions or violence in the strait.

The attack comes months after Iran threatened to shut down the strait to retaliate against U.S. economic sanctions, which tightened in April when the Trump administration decided to end sanctions exemptions for the five biggest importers of Iranian oil, which included China and U.S. allies South Korea and Japan.

Japan is the world's fourth-largest consumer of oil — after the United States, China and India — and relies on the Middle East for 80 percent of its crude oil supply. The 2011 Fukushima nuclear disaster led to a dramatic reduction in nuclear power generation and increased imports of natural gas, crude oil, fuel oil and coal.

In an effort to comply with Washington, Japan says it no longer imports oil from Iran. Officials also say Japanese oil companies are abiding by the embargo because they don't want to be sanctioned. But Japan still gets oil from other Middle East nations using the Strait of Hormuz for transport.

South Korea, the world's fifth largest importer of crude oil, also depends on the Middle East for the vast majority of its supplies.

Last month, South Korea halted its Iranian oil imports as its waivers from U.S. sanctions on Teheran expired, and it has reportedly tried to increase oil imports from other countries like Qatar and the United States.

China, the world's largest importer of Iranian oil, "understands its growth model is vulnerable to a lack of energy sovereignty," according to market analyst Kyle Rodda of IG, an online trading provider, and has

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been working over the last several years to diversify its suppliers. That includes looking to Southeast Asia and, increasingly, some oil-producing nations in Africa.

THE GEOGRAPHY AND THE POLITICS

Asia and the Middle East are linked by a flow of oil, much of it coming by sea and dependent on the Strait of Hormuz, which is the passage between the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman.

In April, Iran threatened to close the strait. Iran also appears poised to break a 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, an accord that U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew from last year. The deal saw Tehran agree to limit its enrichment of uranium in exchange for the lifting of crippling sanctions.

For both Japan and South Korea, there is extreme political unease to go along with the economic worries stirred by the violence in the strait.

Both nations want to nurture their relationship with Washington, a major trading partner and military protector. But they also need to keep their economies humming, which requires an easing of tension between Washington and Tehran.

Japan's conservative prime minister, Shinzo Abe, was in Tehran, looking to do just that, when the attack happened.

His limitations in settling the simmering animosity, however, were highlighted by both the timing of the attack and a comment by Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who told Abe that he had nothing to say to Trump.

In Japan, the world's third largest economy, the tanker attack was front-page news.

The Nikkei newspaper, Japan's major business daily, said that if mines are planted in the Strait of Hormuz, "the oil trade will be paralyzed." The Tokyo Shimbun newspaper called the Strait of Hormuz Japan's "lifeline."

Although the Japanese economy and industry minister has said there will be no immediate effect on the stable energy supply, the Tokyo Shimbun noted "a possibility that Japanese people's lives will be affected."

South Korea, worried about Middle East instability, has worked to diversify its crude sources since the energy crises of the 1970s and 1980s.

THE FUTURE

Analysts said that it's highly unlikely that Iran would follow through on its threat to close the strait. That's because a closure could also disrupt Iran's own exports to China, which has been working with Russia to build pipelines and other infrastructure that would transport oil and gas into China.

For Japan, the attack in the Strait of Hormuz does not represent an imminent threat to Tokyo's oil supply, said Paul Sheldon, chief geopolitical adviser at S&P Global Platts Analytics.

"Our sense is that it's not a crisis yet," he said of the tensions.

Seoul, meanwhile, will likely be able to withstand a modest jump in oil prices unless there's a full-blown military confrontation, Seo Sang-young, an analyst from Seoul-based Kiwoom Securities, said.

"The rise in crude prices could hurt areas like the airlines, chemicals and shipping, but it could also actually benefit some businesses, such as energy companies (including refineries) that produce and export fuel products like gasoline," said Seo, pointing to the diversity of South Korea's industrial lineup. South Korea's shipbuilding industry could also benefit as the rise in oil prices could further boost the growing demand for liquefied natural gas, or LNG, which means more orders for giant tankers that transport such gas.

AP writers Yuri Kageyama in Tokyo, Kim Tong-hyung and Hyung-jin Kim in Seoul, Yanan Wang in Beijing, Annabelle Liang in Singapore and Alexandra Olson in Washington contributed to this report.

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10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

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

1. US, IRAN TRADE ACCUSATIONS

The U.S. military releases video it says shows Iran's Revolutionary Guard removing an unexploded mine from a targeted tanker near the Strait of Hormuz, but Tehran denies involvement.

2. TRUMP OFFICIAL CONSULTED CLIMATE-CHANGE REJECTERS

Emails show a Trump administration national security official seeking help crafting challenges to climate change science from advisers with a controversial think tank.

3. WHITE HOUSE PRESS SECRETARY STEPPING DOWN

Sarah Sanders' tenure was marked by a breakdown in regular press briefings and questions about the Trump administration's credibility, as well as her own.

4. HOW ALLEGED MOSQUE SHOOTER REACTED DURING PLEA

Brenton Tarrant smirked as his lawyer entered not guilty pleas to terrorism, murder and attempted murder charges for the slayings of 51 people at two mosques in New Zealand.

5. FROM 'WE THE NORTH' TO 'WE THE CHAMPS'

Kawhi Leonard and the Toronto Raptors beat two-time defending champion Golden State in six games, giving Canada its first NBA championship.

6. OBSESSION WITH 1999 ATTACK COULD SHAPE COLUMBINE'S FUTURE

Two decades after the name "Columbine" became synonymous with a school shooting, the Colorado community is debating whether it's time to tear down the building.

7. BURIAL OF UGANDAN EBOLA VICTIM SHOWS FLASH OF CONFRONTATION

The burial nearly turns violent over fears of contamination, a type of resistance that has hampered outbreak containment efforts in neighboring Congo.

8. WEEKEND PROTESTS LOOM IN HONG KONG

Authorities are bracing for more protests by demonstrators trying to prevent the legislature from pushing through a contentious extradition bill.

9. CUBA GOODING JR. PLEADS NOT GUILTY TO GROPPING WOMAN AT NYC BAR

The 51-year-old Oscar-winning star of "Jerry Maguire" faces charges that include forcible touching and sexual abuse.

10. LONGTIME DENVER BRONCOS OWNER DIES

Pat Bowlen, who transformed the team from also-rans into Super Bowl champions and helped the NFL usher in billion-dollar TV deals, was 75.

Emails: Trump official consulting climate change rejecters

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER and SETH BORENSTEIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A Trump administration national security official has sought help from advisers to a think tank that disavows climate change to challenge widely accepted scientific findings on global warming, according to his emails.

The request from William Happer, a member of the National Security Council, is included in emails from 2018 and 2019 that were obtained by the Environmental Defense Fund under the federal Freedom of Information Act and provided to The Associated Press. That request was made this past March to policy advisers with the Heartland Institute, one of the most vocal challengers of mainstream scientific findings that emissions from burning coal, oil and gas are damaging the Earth's atmosphere.

In a March 3 email exchange Happer and Heartland adviser Hal Doiron discuss Happer's scientific arguments in a paper attempting to knock down climate change as well as ideas to make the work "more useful to a wider readership." Happer writes he had already discussed the work with another Heartland adviser, Thomas Wismuller.

Academic experts denounced the administration official's continued involvement with groups and scien-

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tists who reject what numerous federal agencies say is the fact of climate change.

"These people are endangering all of us by promoting anti-science in service of fossil fuel interests over the American interests," said Pennsylvania State University climate scientist Michael Mann.

"It's the equivalent to formulating anti-terrorism policy by consulting with groups that deny terrorism exists," said Northeastern University's Matthew Nisbet, a professor of environmental communication and public policy.

The National Security Council declined to make Happer available to discuss the emails.

The AP and others reported earlier this year that Happer was coordinating a proposed White House panel to challenge the findings from scientists in and out of government that carbon emissions are altering the Earth's atmosphere and climate.

President Donald Trump in November rejected the warnings of a national climate change assessment by more than a dozen government agencies.

"I don't believe it," he said.

Happer, a physicist who previously taught at Princeton University, has claimed that carbon dioxide, the main heat-trapping gas from the burning of coal, oil and gas, is good for humans and that carbon emissions have been demonized like "the poor Jews under Hitler." Trump appointed him in late 2018 to the National Security Council, which advises the president on security and foreign policy issues.

The emails show Happer expressing surprise that NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine, a former Oklahoma congressman who once questioned mainstream climate science, has come round to accepting that science.

A May 2018 email exchange between Heartland's Wismuller and Happer calls the NASA chief's change of heart on climate science "a puzzle." The exchange calls scientifically established rises in sea levels and temperatures under climate change "part of the nonsense" and urges the NASA head — copied in — to "systematically sidestep it."

Happer at the time was not yet a security adviser, although he had advised the Trump Environmental Protection Agency on climate change.

A NASA spokesman on Thursday upheld the space agency's public statements on climate change.

"We provide the data that informs policy makers around the world," spokesman Bob Jacobs said. "Our science information continues to be published publicly as it always has."

But spokesman Jim Lakeley at the Heartland Institute defended the effort, saying in an email that NASA's public characterization of climate change as manmade and a global threat "is a disservice to taxpayers and science that it is still pushed by NASA."

After joining the agency, Happer sent a February 2019 email to NASA deputy administrator James Morhard relaying a complaint from an unidentified rejecter of man-made climate change about NASA's website.

"I'm concerned that many children are being indoctrinated by this bad science," said the email that Happer relayed.

Happer's own message was redacted from the records obtained by the environmental group.

Two major U.S. science organizations took issue with Happer's emails.

"We have concerns that there appear to be attempts by a member of the National Security Council to influence and interfere with the ability of NASA, a federal science agency, to communicate accurately about research findings on climate science," said Rush Holt, chief executive officer of the American Association for the Advance of Science, the world's largest general scientific society.

There have been hundreds of scientific assessments by leading researchers and institutions the last few decades that look at all the evidence and have been "extremely credible and routinely withstand intense scrutiny," said Keith Seitter, executive director of the American Meteorological Society. "Efforts to dismiss or discredit these rigorous scientific assessments in public venues does an incredible disservice to the public."

New York ends religious exemption to vaccine mandates

By DAVID KLEPPER Associated Press

ALBANY, N.Y. (AP) — New York eliminated the religious exemption to vaccine requirements for school-children Thursday, as the nation's worst measles outbreak in decades prompts states to reconsider giving parents ways to opt out of immunization rules.

The Democrat-led Senate and Assembly voted Thursday to repeal the exemption, which allows parents to cite religious beliefs to forego getting their child the vaccines required for school enrollment.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo, a Democrat, signed the measure minutes after the final vote. The law takes effect immediately but will give unvaccinated students up to 30 days after they enter a school to show they've had the first dose of each required immunization.

With New York's move, similar exemptions are still allowed in 45 states, though lawmakers in several of them have introduced their own legislation to eliminate the waiver.

The issue is hotly contested and debate around it has often been emotional, pitting cries that religious freedom is being curtailed against warnings that public health is being endangered. After the vote in the Assembly, many of those watching from the gallery erupted in cries of "shame!" One woman yelled obscenities down to the lawmakers below.

The debate has only intensified with this year's measles outbreak, which federal officials recently said has surpassed 1,000 illnesses, the highest in 27 years.

"I'm not aware of anything in the Torah, the Bible, the Koran or anything else that suggests you should not get vaccinated," said Bronx Democrat Jeffrey Dinowitz, the bill's Assembly sponsor. "If you choose to not vaccinate your child, therefore potentially endangering other children ... then you're the one choosing not to send your children to school."

Hundreds of parents of unvaccinated children gathered at New York's Capitol for the vote to protest.

Stan Yung, a Long Island attorney and father, said his Russian Orthodox religious views and health concerns about vaccines will prevent him from vaccinating his three young children. His family, he said, may consider leaving the state.

"People came to this country to get away from exactly this kind of stuff," Yung said ahead of Thursday's votes.

Supporters of the bill say religious beliefs about vaccines shouldn't eclipse scientific evidence that they work, noting the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1905 that states have the right to enforce compulsory vaccination laws. During the Assembly's floor debate, supporters brought up scourges of the past that were defeated in the U.S. through vaccines.

"I'm old enough to have been around when polio was a real threat," said Assemblywoman Deborah Glick, D-Manhattan. "I believe in science.... Your personal opinions, which may be based on junk science, do not trump the greater good."

Supporters also suggest some parents may be claiming the religious exemption for their children even though their opposition is actually based on scientifically discredited claims about the dangers of vaccines.

The bill would not change an existing state exemption given to children who cannot have vaccines for medical reasons, such as a weakened immune system.

Cuomo told reporters on Wednesday that he believes public health — and the need to protect those who cannot get vaccinated because for medical reasons — outweighs the concerns about religious freedom.

"I understand freedom of religion," he said. "I have heard the anti-vaxxers' theory, but I believe both are overwhelmed by the public health risk."

The current measles outbreak has renewed concern about the exemptions in many states. The nation last saw as many cases in 1992, when more than 2,200 were reported.

The majority of cases are from outbreaks in New York in Orthodox Jewish communities.

California removed personal belief vaccine exemptions for children in both public and private schools in 2015, after a measles outbreak at Disneyland sickened 147 people and spread across the U.S. and into Canada. Maine ended its religious exemption earlier this year.

Mississippi and West Virginia also do not allow religious exemptions. Once common in the U.S., measles became rare after vaccination campaigns that started in the 1960s. A decade ago, there were fewer than 100 cases a year.

US says Iran took mine off tanker; Iran denies involvement

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The U.S. military on Friday released a video it said shows Iran's Revolutionary Guard removing an unexploded limpet mine from one of the oil tankers targeted near the Strait of Hormuz, suggesting the Islamic Republic sought to remove evidence of its involvement from the scene. Iran denies being involved, accusing the U.S. instead of waging an "Iranophobic campaign" against it.

The U.S. Navy rushed to assist the stricken vessels in the Gulf of Oman, off the coast of Iran, including one that was set ablaze Thursday by an explosion.

The ships' operators offered no immediate explanation on who or what caused the damage against the Norwegian-owned MT Front Altair and the Japanese-owned Kokuka Courageous. Each was loaded with petroleum products, and the Front Altair burned for hours, sending up a column of thick, black smoke.

While Iran has denied being involved in the attack, Tehran previously used mines against oil tankers in 1987 and 1988 in the "Tanker War," when the U.S. Navy escorted ships through the region.

The black-and-white footage, as well as still photographs released by the U.S. military's Central Command on Friday, appeared to show the limpet mine on the Kokuka Courageous.

A Revolutionary Guard patrol boat pulled alongside the ship and removed the mine, Central Command spokesman Capt. Bill Urban said.

"The U.S. and the international community stand ready to defend our interests, including the freedom of navigation," Urban said. "The United States has no interest in engaging in a new conflict in the Middle East. However, we will defend our interests."

Iran earlier denied involvement via a statement from its mission to the United Nations.

"The U.S. economic war and terrorism against the Iranian people as well as its massive military presence in the region have been and continue to be the main sources of insecurity and instability in the wider Persian Gulf region and the most significant threat to its peace and security," the statement said.

Meanwhile in Tokyo, the owner of the Kokuka Courageous said its sailors saw "flying objects" before the attack, suggesting it wasn't damaged by mines. Company president Yutaka Katada offered no evidence for his claim, which contradicts the U.S. military account.

Katada also said crew members saw an Iranian naval ship nearby, but did not specify whether this was before or after the attacks.

The suspected attacks occurred at dawn Thursday about 40 kilometers (25 miles) off the southern coast of Iran. The Front Altair, loaded with the flammable hydrocarbon mixture naphtha from the United Arab Emirates, radioed for help as it caught fire. A short time later, the Kokuka Courageous, loaded with methanol from Saudi Arabia and Qatar, also called for help.

The U.S. Navy sent a destroyer, the USS Bainbridge, to assist, said Cmdr. Joshua Frey, a 5th Fleet spokesman. He described the ships as being hit in a "reported attack," without elaborating.

Thursday's attack resembled that of an attack in May targeting four oil tankers off the nearby Emirati port of Fujairah. U.S. officials similarly accused Iran of targeting the ships with limpet mines, which are magnetic and attach to the hulls of a ship. The mines disable, but don't sink, a vessel.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told journalists on Thursday that the U.S. assessment of Iran's involvement was based in part on intelligence, as well as the expertise needed for the operation. It was also based on recent incidents in the region, which the U.S. also blamed on Iran, including the use of limpet mines in the Fujairah attack, he said. He also tied Iran to a drone attack by Yemen's Iranian-backed Houthi rebels on a crucial Saudi oil pipeline around the same time.

"Taken as a whole, these unprovoked attacks present a clear threat to international peace and security, a blatant assault on the freedom of navigation and an unacceptable campaign of escalating tension by

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Iran," Pompeo said. He didn't elaborate and took no questions.

Iran denied being involved in the attacks last month and its foreign minister questioned the timing of Thursday's incidents, given that Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was meeting Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in Tehran.

Pompeo noted that Abe had asked Iran to enter into talks with Washington but Tehran "rejected" the overture.

"The supreme leader's government then insulted Japan by attacking a Japanese-owned oil tanker just outside Iranian waters, threatening the lives of the entire crew, creating a maritime emergency," Pompeo added.

At the United Nations, the Security Council held closed consultations on the tanker incidents late Thursday at the request of the United States but took no action.

Tensions have escalated in the Mideast as Iran appears poised to break the 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, an accord that President Donald Trump repudiated last year. In the deal, Tehran agreed to limit its enrichment of uranium in exchange for the lifting of crippling sanctions. Now, Iran is threatening to resume enriching uranium closer to weapons-grade levels if European nations don't offer it new terms to the deal by July 7.

Already, Iran says it quadrupled its production of low-enriched uranium. Meanwhile, U.S. sanctions have cut off opportunities for Iran to trade its excess uranium and heavy water abroad, putting Tehran on course to violate terms of the nuclear deal regardless.

Meanwhile, Saudi Arabia said early Friday its military intercepted five drones launched by Yemen's Houthi rebels targeting the kingdom, including the Abha regional airport. The kingdom said a similar attack Wednesday on the Abha airport wounded 26 people.

Associated Press writers Edith M. Lederer at the United Nations, Aya Batrawy in Dubai, David Rising in Berlin, Mari Yamaguchi in Tokyo, Lolita C. Baldor, Zeke Miller and Susannah George in Washington and Amir Vahdat and Nasser Karimi in Tehran, Iran, contributed to this report.

Man accused in New Zealand mosque killings pleads not guilty

By NICK PERRY Associated Press

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand (AP) — The man accused of the New Zealand mosque attacks smirked as his lawyer entered not guilty pleas to terrorism, murder and attempted murder charges Friday before a judge who set his trial for next May.

The courtroom was filled with 80 survivors and family members of the 51 who were slain, while about another 60 watched the hearing on video in an overflow room at the Christchurch High Court. Four cultural advisers and other staff were assigned to help the victims and family members understand the proceedings and the next steps in the case.

A man who addressed the survivors said they had been praying during the holy month of Ramadan and that the Muslim community would help and support each other during the coming weeks and months.

Brenton Tarrant, the 28-year-old Australian accused of the attacks, appeared at the hearing via video link from a small room at the maximum security prison in Auckland where he's being held. The link was muted and he didn't attempt to speak.

Other than smirking a couple of times, Tarrant showed little emotion during the hearing. When Judge Cameron Mander asked if he could hear and see what was going on in the courtroom, Tarrant nodded. At times he looked around the room and stretched his neck.

The judge did not allow cameras or video in the courtroom although did approve a sketch artist commissioned by The Associated Press.

Tarrant has been charged with 51 counts of murder, 40 counts of attempted murder and one terrorism charge in relation to the March 15 shootings.

Mander said the findings of two mental-health assessments showed Tarrant had no issues related to his

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ability to enter pleas and stand trial. The assessments are standard in murder cases.

The judge scheduled a six-week trial to begin May 4. Tarrant will remain in custody ahead of his next hearing in mid-August.

Outside the court, police and court security staff escorted a man away after he got into an argument with survivors and family members, who later said the man was saying things supportive of white supremacist ideology.

Police said they arrested a 33-year-old man and charged him with disorderly behavior.

Janna Ezat wore a shirt that she'd designed which featured an image of her son Hussein Al-Umari, who was killed in the attacks. She said the court hearing had made her angry.

"Before I was OK and calm and believe in this life my son died and he is in a good place," she said. "But when I saw the terrorist, he was just, he's nothing. Just sitting like that. Pretending that he's innocent and nothing is wrong."

She said she thought the shooter deserved to be given the death penalty, even though New Zealand no longer institutes the punishment.

"It's not easy to lose your child. Not only my child, but 50 people," Ezat said. "It's unfair. It's unfair. And he was laughing."

Abdul Aziz, who is considered a hero for confronting the gunman at the Linwood mosque, said he wouldn't say the suspect's name.

"He's a coward. And behind the cell he's laughing," Aziz said. "He should have laughed when I faced him. Then I would see how he laugh. He run like a dog. He run like a chicken."

In the March 15 attacks during Friday prayers, 42 worshippers were killed at the Al Noor mosque and seven were killed at the Linwood mosque. Two more people died later at the Christchurch Hospital.

The shooter livestreamed much of the attack on Facebook.

Tarrant had earlier published a 74-page manifesto espousing a white supremacist philosophy and detailing his plans to attack the mosques.

New Zealand's Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern has vowed never to say the accused man's name. Last month she helped lead a global pledge named the "Christchurch Call," aimed at boosting efforts to keep internet platforms from being used to spread hate, organize extremist groups and broadcast attacks.

Raptors capture first NBA title, beat Warriors in Game 6

By JANIE McCAULEY AP Sports Writer

OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — Kawhi Leonard raised his arms high in triumph and celebrated Canada's first NBA championship.

"We the North!" is now "We the Champs!"

Leonard and the Toronto Raptors captured the country's first major title in 26 years with their most remarkable road win yet in the franchise's NBA Finals debut, outlasting the battered and depleted two-time defending champion Golden State Warriors 114-110 on Thursday night in a Game 6 for the ages.

"I wanted to make history here. That's what I did," a soaking wet Leonard said, ski goggles perched on his forehead and sporting a fresh black champions hat.

Stephen Curry missed a contested 3-pointer in the waning moments before Golden State called a timeout it didn't have, giving Leonard a technical free throw with 0.9 seconds left to seal it. Leonard, the NBA Finals MVP for a second time, then got behind Andre Iguodala for a layup as the buzzer sounded, but it went to review and the basket was called off before Leonard's two free throws. That only delayed the celebration for a moment.

When it actually ended, the typically stoic Leonard could let it all out. A Canadian team — and we're not talking hockey here — stood on top of one of the traditional major sports leagues for the first time since the Toronto Blue Jays won the 1993 World Series.

Serge Ibaka pulled his head up through the hoop by the Golden State bench as the crowd chanted "Warriors! Warriors!" after a sensational send-off at Oracle Arena.

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Curry walked away slowly, hands on his head on a night Splash Brother Klay Thompson suffered a torn ACL in his left knee and departed with 30 points.

Fred VanVleet rescued the Raptors down the stretch with his dazzling shooting from deep to score 22 points with five 3s off the bench, while Leonard wound up with 22 points. Kyle Lowry scored the game's first eight points and finished with 26 in all to go with 10 assists and seven rebounds.

Fans poured into the streets in Toronto, screaming and honking horns after the Raptors pulled off a third straight win on Golden State's home floor that said goodbye to NBA basketball after 47 seasons. And the Raptors did it with the very kind of depth that helped define Golden State's transformation into a dynasty the past five seasons.

This time, the Warriors were wounded.

Golden State already was down two-time reigning NBA Finals MVP Kevin Durant, who had surgery Wednesday for a ruptured right Achilles tendon. Then, the Warriors lost Thompson — and they couldn't overcome just one more heartbreaking injury.

"A lot of bad breaks in the finals, to be honest," Raptors coach Nick Nurse said. "Like us, they kept on playing. We just had to keep on playing no matter who was out there. And I think they were super intense high-level games and both teams desperately trying to win."

This thrilling back-and-forth game featured 18 lead changes, nine ties and neither team going ahead by more than nine points.

Curry scored 21 points but shot just 6 for 17 and went 3 of 11 on 3s. Iguodala added 22 for his biggest game this postseason as the Warriors did everything until the very last moment to leave a lasting legacy at Oracle.

Thompson provided his own dramatic memory. He injured his knee when fouled by Danny Green on a drive at the 2:22 mark of the third, was helped off the court and walked partially down a tunnel toward the locker room, then — shockingly — re-emerged to shoot his free throws before going out again at 2:19. He didn't return and left the arena on crutches, and the Warriors announced that an MRI had confirmed the torn ACL.

"More than the what-ifs is just feeling bad for the players involved. Injuries are always part of the NBA season — any professional sport, injuries play a huge role," Warriors coach Steve Kerr said. "It's just the nature of these injuries, the severity of these injuries. And we'll know more about Klay. But we can sit here and say, well, if this hadn't happened or that hadn't happened, that doesn't matter. What matters is Kevin Durant is going to miss next season with an Achilles tear and Klay suffered a knee injury."

In their best Bay Area version of Jurassic Park — Toronto's jam-packed gathering spot to cheer the Raptors — hundreds of red-clad fans stayed long after the game ended to watch the Larry O'Brien trophy ceremony. They waved the Maple Leaf and sang "O Canada" just as they did here after winning previously this series.

Lowry's hot start was almost fitting. It was the Toronto guard who got shoved on the sideline in Game 3 by Warriors minority owner Mark Stevens, now banned by the league and team for a year.

The Raptors, in their 24th season of existence, rallied from two games down to beat the Bucks in the Eastern Conference finals then took down the mighty Warriors on their home floor to deny Golden State a three-peat.

The Raptors went 8 for 32 on 3s in a 106-105 Game 5 defeat as the Warriors staved off elimination Monday in Toronto. They started 5 of 6 from long range in this one and finished 13 of 33 and converted 23 of 29 free throws.

Curry and these Warriors never, ever count themselves out. Yet down 3-1 in their fifth straight NBA Finals, they didn't have the health it took to win the past two titles and three of the past four against LeBron James and the Cleveland Cavaliers.

"This five-year run's been awesome but I definitely don't think it's over," Curry said.

TIP-INS

Raptors: Leonard scored 732 points this postseason and on Thursday passed Allen Iverson (723) for

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fourth place and Hakeem Olajuwon (725) for third on the NBA's single-postseason scoring list. James is second with 748 accomplished last year behind Michael Jordan's 759 points in 1992. ... Toronto 9-16 all-time at Oracle Arena but 4-0 overall this season.

Warriors: Thompson's 374 career postseason 3s passed James (370) for third place on the career playoff list, trailing only Curry (470) and Ray Allen (385). ... Thompson notched his second 30-point performance this postseason, 13th of his career and fourth in a finals game despite not playing the entire fourth quarter.

FOR OAKLAND

A gold rally towel read FOR OAK on one line and LAND on the next with the K and D lined up in white — a clever way to also pay tribute to Durant with his initials "KD."

Kerr narrated a pregame tribute to Oracle's legacy on the big screen.

In the 2,070th game at Oracle, the Warriors sold out their 343rd consecutive game and said farewell at last to the place they called home nearly five decades. Now, Golden State will move its games, practices and day-to-day operations to new Chase Center in San Francisco beginning next season.

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

Obsession with 1999 attack could shape Columbine's future

By KATHLEEN FOODY Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — Two decades after the name "Columbine" became synonymous with a school shooting, the suburban Denver community surrounding the school is debating whether it's time to tear down a building that also became a beacon for people obsessed with the killings.

School officials said the number of people trying to get close to or even inside the school reached record levels this year, the 20th anniversary of the 1999 attack that killed 13 people. People try to peek into the windows of the school library, mistaking it for the long-demolished room where most of the victims died, or ask people on campus how to take a tour.

The buses full of tourists have mostly stopped over the years, but not the visitors. This year alone, security staff contacted more than 2,400 "unauthorized" people on Columbine's campus.

Then, a few days before the anniversary, a young woman described as obsessed with the attack flew to Colorado and bought a shotgun, killing only herself yet sparking lockdowns and new fears. School security has intercepted others with a similar infatuation with the crime and its teen perpetrators -- so-called Columbiners.

District security chief John McDonald can rattle off some of the most frightening instances of people who came to the campus: An Ohio couple who was later charged with planning a domestic terror attack; a Utah teen later arrested for a bombing plot against his school; and a Texas man apprehended at the school after he said he was filled by one of shooter's spirits and intended to "complete his mission."

"These people, they want the building," McDonald said. "They want to experience it, to walk the halls ... The only way we can stop that interest in the building is to move it. Otherwise they're not going to stop coming."

But Columbine, named after the official state flower, represents more than one day to this suburban area southeast of Denver. Boisterous call-and-response chants of "We are Columbine" dominate school pep rallies and more solemn occasions including an April ceremony marking the anniversary. At the nearby memorial just over a crest named "Rebel Hill" for the school's mascot, a plaque quotes an unnamed student: "You're a Columbine Rebel for life and no one can ever take that away from you."

"It's not just a building, it's like a second home to us," said Jenn Thompson, who as a 15-year-old huddled inside a science classroom during the attack. "It's still standing 20 years later. It represents us, still standing 20 years later." She hopes her own daughter, now 8 years old, can attend the school, home to about 1,700 students.

The fates of mass shooting sites around the United States are varied.

In Newtown, Connecticut, voters authorized the demolition of the Sandy Hook Elementary School build-

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ing where 26 students and teachers were killed in 2012 and construction of a new school with the same name near the original site. The building where 17 people were killed in a shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida in 2018 is also expected to be razed; there has been no public discussion about the school's name.

After a shooter killed 12 people inside an Aurora, Colorado, movie theater in 2012, the building reopened with a new name and auditoriums identified with letters rather than numbers. In Orlando, the owner of the Pulse nightclub plans to make the site into a museum and a memorial to the 49 people gunned down there in 2016.

The discussion of Columbine's future is likely to take months. An initial proposal would keep the school's new library, which was built after the attack, and construct a new school on the existing campus but further from nearby streets to give security more room to intercept intruders.

An online survey gauging community support will close this week. District officials will spend the summer reviewing and summarizing responses. If they decide to present a plan to the school board in August, its members will determine whether to put the estimated \$60 or \$70 million expense on November ballots.

Conversations with victims' families, survivors and current staff convinced district officials that changing the school's name was a non-starter, said Jefferson County Public Schools Superintendent Jason Glass.

"Until you've heard those thousands of people yelling 'We are Columbine' together, you don't really get it," he said. "The sense of pride is real."

Some of those closest to the shooting have changed their minds over the years on the best course of action.

After the attack, Frank DeAngelis, then the school's principal, met with the families of those killed, students and staff about their scarred building's future. He said the majority felt demolishing it meant "the two killers had won."

So construction crews repaired the bullet holes, replaced broken glass and covered bloodstains and burns with fresh paint and flooring before classes resumed in the fall. The library was closed off and later torn down. Its former location became an airy atrium in the school's cafeteria with a ceiling mural of an aspen tree canopy and 13 clouds — representing the dead.

But after years of coping with unwanted visitors, DeAngelis, who retired in 2014, said he now supports the proposal to demolish and rebuild the school.

"I think if we would have known or projected what was going to happen, we may have had a different discussion about going back into the building," DeAngelis said.

Retired English teacher Paula Reed said she initially balked at the idea of demolishing the building she worked in for 32 years. After a few days, though, her opinion shifted.

"I never loved that building," Reed said. "I loved the community, my kids, my colleagues. And their needs simply matter more than my sentimentality."

Britney Spears' ex-manager hit with 5-year restraining order

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A judge on Thursday issued a five-year restraining order forbidding Britney Spears' former manager from contacting the singer or her family or making disparaging statements about them online.

Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Brenda Penny reached the decision after hearing testimony from the ex-manager, 44-year-old Sam Lutfi, and from Spears' father, James Spears, who has controlled his daughter's money and affairs via a court-ordered conservatorship for 11 years.

Penny rejected arguments from Lutfi's attorney, Marc Gans, that the order is an unconstitutional restraint on his client's free speech, calling Lutfi's testimony evasive and extending the temporary restraining order she first issued on May 8.

Gans said outside court that they are considering an appeal. James Spears declined comment.

James Spears conceded under questioning from Gans that he does not have the most peaceful relation-

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ship with Britney Spears.

"Me and my daughter's relationship has always been strained," James Spears said.

But in further testimony that Penny said she found forthright and credible, James Spears testified that Lutfi, who was close to Britney Spears in 2007 and 2008 and served briefly as her manager, has been a "predator" on his family for more than a decade whose harassment has recently resumed.

"I worried that he was trying to take down the conservatorship," Spears said from the stand. "I was very angry. I was worried that we were right back in 2008."

Spears and his lawyers suggested, and Penny appeared to agree, that Lutfi has attempted to incite fans who have used the social-media hashtag #Free Britney to criticize the control James Spears and the court have had over the pop star for the past 11 years.

Lutfi's Twitter account, the subject of much of the testimony, consists almost entirely of posts critical of Spears' circumstances and those surrounding her.

But Gans argued that none of the statements were made directly to individuals or could be considered harassment.

He also emphasized that Lutfi has made no direct contact with Britney Spears herself, and suggested that her father and his lawyers were not speaking for her and had provided no evidence that she had in any way been harmed by Lutfi's statements.

Britney Spears was not present in court, and she has made very few public comments on the conservatorship.

In testimony that Penny struck from the record, Lutfi said that Britney Spears had reached out to him at various times through the years to complain about her father's control over her.

"She wanted help to get out of this situation," Lutfi said.

The judge also shut down most of Gans' questions toward James Spears. The questions asked him to discuss his daughter's mental state and tried to establish that disparaging online statements Lutfi had made about James Spears' use of alcohol and his enriching himself through the conservatorship were true and constitutionally protected.

Lutfi admitted that he had contacted Britney Spears' mother, Lynne Spears, and the singer's brother-in-law James Watson via texts and phone calls, and sent Lynne Spears money that was subsequently returned.

Lutfi testified that he sent the money "just like numerous other fans did" because Lynne Spears had "liked" Instagram posts that suggested she was in need of money and that she should be in charge of her daughter's affairs instead of her ex-husband James Spears.

"I had a great relationship with Lynne Spears," Lutfi said of his time with Britney Spears.

Lutfi and Gans said that neither Lynne Spears nor Watson had told him to stop communicating with them or told him he was harassing them.

Gans also argued that tweets from his client, including one that simply said "Raise hell," were far too vague to be considered harassment of the Spears family.

Penny disagreed, citing that tweet in her decision as illegal incitement.

The proceedings were a resumption of a hearing that began on May 28 and had been closed to the media and the rest of the public. But Penny, who also oversees Spears' conservatorship case, kept the courtroom open on Thursday.

The Spears family has frequently fought Lutfi in court, starting with a restraining order they received against him in 2009.

"He's been asked repeatedly to stay away from this family," Chad Hummel, an attorney for the conservatorship, said in closing arguments. "He can't help himself."

Follow AP Entertainment Writer Andrew Dalton on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/andyjamesdalton> .

Rose opens with 65 to tie Pebble record at US Open

By DOUG FERGUSON AP Golf Writer

PEBBLE BEACH, Calif. (AP) — Justin Rose closed out his opening round with three straight birdies to lead the U.S. Open at Pebble Beach, which was all he could want.

He got a little more.

Rose knew what was at stake when he stood over a 12-foot birdie putt on the 18th hole in twilight Thursday from watching the telecast some six hours earlier, and from seeing Tiger Woods standing on the edge of the green.

"I was thinking, 'This would be kind of cool doing it front of the great man himself,'" Rose said.

Make the putt and he not only had the lead, he would tie the U.S. Open record at Pebble Beach for the lowest round, a 6-under 65 posted by Woods in 2000 during his record romp. Rose lightly pumped his fist when it fell and soaked up the moment.

In a gentle start to the toughest test in golf, Rose had a one-shot lead on a day so accommodating that more than three dozen players broke par.

"I wouldn't say it's exhilarating, because I feel like my mindset is I am in a 72-hole tournament," Rose said. "This is just a very small step toward outcome. So you don't feel that buzz that you would on a Sunday, but you can't help but look around over your shoulder and ... damn, this is Pebble Beach. Shot 65 and you're in the U.S. Open. It's a cool moment. Whatever transpires the rest of the week, it was a cool moment."

It was an ideal start for Rose and for the USGA, which wants a smooth ride after four years of various mishaps in the U.S. Open. The idea was to start safe and make the course progressively more difficult, and a forecast of dry weather for the week should make that easier to control.

This was the day to take advantage, especially with a cool, overcast sky for most of the day.

Rose knew the record because he was watching when Rickie Fowler had a birdie putt for a 65 earlier in the day. Fowler missed and had to settle for a 66. He was tied with Aaron Wise and two others who had big finishes.

Xander Schauffele caught a break when his tee shot on the 18th caromed off the rock edge of the left fairway, setting up a 12-foot eagle. Louis Oosthuizen finished on No. 9 by holing a bunker shot for a birdie. It felt almost as good as the wedge he holed from 95 yards for eagle on No. 11.

Woods took advantage of the scoring holes with three birdies, but there was one blunder — a tee shot he hooked on the par-3 fifth that smacked off the cart path into gnarly, deep grass some 20 yards behind the edge of the bleachers. He blasted that out beyond the green and made double bogey.

After two straight birdies, he finished with 11 straight pars for a 70.

"Pebble Beach, you have the first seven to get it going, and after that it's a fight," Woods said. "I proved that today. I was trying to just hang in there today. Rosey proved the golf course could be had."

Two-time defending champion Brooks Koepka proved the opening holes could be had. He was 4 under with his birdie on the par-5 sixth hole and appeared to be on another major mission until a few errant tee shots into nasty rough, a few missed putts and a few bogeys. Even so, he had few complaints about his 69 to begin his bid for a record-tying third straight U.S. Open.

"I didn't shoot myself out of it," Koepka said. "I'm right there. I feel like if I get off tomorrow to a good start, I'm right back into it."

Phil Mickelson, in another U.S. Open quest to complete the career Grand Slam, didn't feel he was out of it either, despite only two birdies in his round of 1-over 72, which included a 22-inch par putt that he missed.

Woods also had a one-shot lead when he had his opening 65 in 2000, a lead he stretched to six shots after the second round, 10 shots after the third and 15 shots at the end, a record for major championships.

But only 17 players were under par in the first round of 2000. For this U.S. Open, in these relatively soft conditions, 39 players broke par.

Perhaps more telling about the course, and depth of talent compared with two decades ago, there were 17 eagles. That's the most for any round at any U.S. Open, breaking the record of 13 set in 1983

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at Oakmont. The eagles included Callum Tarren holing out from a bunker on No. 10, the hardest hole at Pebble, and Rory Sabbatini making a hole-in-one on No. 12.

No one was expecting a breeze the rest of the week.

"It's a very soft start to a U.S. Open, which is a good thing," Rory McIlroy said after a 68, his first sub-70 round at the U.S. Open since he won at Congressional in 2011. "They can do whatever they want with from here. It's not as if you're starting with a course that's in the condition like a Sunday, and then you get three days and it sort of starts to get away from you."

Scott Piercy, who bogeyed the 18th for a 67, was the first player to get everyone's attention when he was at 5 under through six holes.

Graeme McDowell saw the score when he walked off the 10th green at the start of his round and quipped to his caddie, "All the USGA radios are going off and they're saying, 'Turn off the water — NOW!'"

McDowell won the last U.S. Open at Pebble Beach in 2010 when it was so difficult he made only one birdie in the final round and no one broke par for the week. Even as he saw low scores on the board — he had a bogey-free 69, one of 27 rounds in the 60s — McDowell feared what was to come for those falling into a comfort zone.

"Careful what you wish for, because I think we're going to see it come the weekend," McDowell said.

"I don't think level par wins this week," he said. "Careful what you wish for, because I think we're going to see it come the weekend."

For one day, Pebble Beach was paradise.

Dems assail Trump on being open to foreign election help

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's assertion that he would be open to accepting a foreign power's help in his 2020 campaign ricocheted through Washington on Thursday, with Democrats condemning it as a call for further election interference and Republicans struggling to defend his comments.

Trump seemed to dismiss the threat posed by Russia's interference in the 2016 election, one that led to sweeping indictments by special counsel Robert Mueller, and his incendiary remarks come as congressional investigations into the meddling have quickened.

Asked by ABC News what he would do if Russia or another country offered him dirt on his election opponent, Trump said: "I think I'd want to hear it." He added that he'd have no obligation to call the FBI. "There's nothing wrong with listening."

The Democratic denunciations were swift and overwhelming.

"It's a very sad thing that he doesn't know his right from wrong," said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi on Thursday. "It's an invasion of our democracy. Everybody in the country should be totally appalled by what the president said."

Special counsel Robert Mueller painstakingly documented Russian efforts to boost Trump's campaign and undermine that of his Democratic rival. But while Mueller's investigation didn't establish a criminal conspiracy between Russia and Trump's campaign, Trump repeatedly praised WikiLeaks in 2016 and at one point implored hackers to dig up dirt on Hillary Clinton — "Russia, if you're listening," he said.

Democrats said Trump, in his interview, was essentially asking if Russia is still listening.

"This man has so little moral compass that he doesn't understand that taking help from any foreign government during a political campaign is an assault on our democracy," said Sen. Mark Warner of Virginia, top Democrat on the Senate's intelligence committee.

Democratic presidential contender Joe Biden tweeted: "President Trump is once again welcoming foreign interference in our elections. This isn't about politics. It is a threat to our national security. An American President should not seek their aid and abet those who seek to undermine democracy."

For some Democrats, it all sparked fresh calls for impeachment. Announcing his support for starting such an inquiry, Rep. Eric Swalwell, D-Calif., said, "We must stop this lawless president from tearing down our democracy."

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On Thursday, the House Intelligence Committee subpoenaed former White House national security adviser Michael Flynn and former Trump campaign aide Rick Gates as part of its ongoing probe.

The role of Trump's eldest son, Donald Trump Jr., in organizing a 2016 meeting with a Russian lawyer offering negative information on Clinton was a focus of Mueller's probe of Russian meddling in the last presidential campaign. Trump Jr. spoke with the Senate Intelligence Committee for about three hours Wednesday to clarify an earlier interview with the committee's staff.

Congressional Republicans, usually loath to criticize Trump, struggled to strike a balance between condemning foreign interference and avoiding harsh words about the president.

"If a foreign agent or a cutout for a foreign agent approaches any American politician, they should report that to the FBI," said Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida.

Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, a staunch Trump ally, said "I think it's a mistake of law. I don't want to send a signal to encourage this."

But he likened Trump's stance to Democratic support for a research firm run by British ex-spy Christopher Steele that explored Trump's ties to Russia in the last campaign. (Steele was hired as a private citizen and used his intelligence contacts to gather information.) Taking a similar view, Iowa GOP Sen. Chuck Grassley said he's "a little astonished at the outrage" over Trump.

The Republicans' 2012 presidential nominee, Mitt Romney, now senator from Utah, said his campaign would have immediately notified the authorities if offered foreign help. He called such interference "un-thinkable."

But Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell declined to answer questions. And Idaho Sen. Jim Risch was at a loss for words in the matter: "I do not want to do any interviews on that subject."

Just last month, Trump pledged not to use information stolen by foreign adversaries in his 2020 re-election campaign, even as he wrongly insisted he hadn't used such information to his benefit in 2016.

FBI Director Christopher Wray told lawmakers that Donald Trump Jr., as an organizer of the meeting with the Russian who offered the dirt on Clinton, should have called his agency to report the episode.

But Trump, who picked Wray to lead the FBI in 2017, told ABC News that he disagrees.

"The FBI director is wrong," Trump said. "Life doesn't work like that."

Asked whether his advisers should accept information about an opponent if offered by Russia, China or another nation, or call the FBI this time, Trump said, "I think maybe you do both," expressing openness to reviewing the information.

"I think you might want to listen," he said. "There's nothing wrong with listening. If somebody called, from a country — Norway — we have information on your opponent. Oh, I think I'd want to hear it."

Addressing the controversy Thursday on Twitter, Trump said he talks about "everything" with foreign governments, noting his recent overseas trip and meetings Wednesday with the president of Poland.

"Should I immediately call the FBI about these calls and meetings," Trump tweeted. "How ridiculous! I would never be trusted again."

Associated Press writers Zeke Miller, Jill Colvin, Alan Fram, Elana Schor and Padmananda Rama contributed to this report.

Younger 2020 candidates hint at age divide in hitting Biden

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Some of the younger candidates in the crowded Democratic presidential primary are suggesting that the early front-runner, 76-year-old Joe Biden, is too mired in the past.

Former Texas Rep. Beto O'Rourke, 46, and Pete Buttigieg, the 37-year-old mayor of South Bend, Indiana, have stepped up questions this week about whether Biden really provides new perspectives for the direction of the country after the 2020 election.

"We cannot return to the past," O'Rourke told MSNBC on Thursday. "That cannot be who we are going forward. We've got to be bigger, we've got to be bolder."

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O'Rourke has spent months praising Biden's experience and perspective. His criticism now comes two weeks before Democrats gather for the first presidential debate of the primary and highlights the generational divide that some candidates are trying to draw in hopes of reshaping the race.

Though O'Rourke didn't mention Biden's age, he said Biden, a two-term vice president under Barack Obama, represents a return to the past. That echoes Buttigieg, who seemed to refer to Biden during a lengthy speech Tuesday designed to bolster his own foreign policy credentials.

"Democrats can no more turn the clock back to the 1990s than Republicans can return us to the 1950s," he said. "And we should not try."

Buttigieg was just shy of his eighth birthday when the 1990s began. When Biden announced his first run for president in June 1987, Buttigieg was 5.

Biden has long rejected notions he's too old for the White House, especially since President Donald Trump turns 73 on Friday. And Biden isn't the oldest Democratic candidate; that's Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, 77.

Biden, a seasoned politician who arrived in the Senate in 1973, insists he can remake the nation's politics after Trump.

But as Biden sits at the top of most polls, questions have begun to surface about whether some of the other candidates can get noticed. Brad Bannon, a Democratic pollster and consultant in Washington, said this is an issue in which younger candidates can potentially gain ground on Biden and Sanders.

"Basically, most voters think Washington is either Sodom or Gomorrah, or both combined, and I think the problem Biden has is he's been around too long," said Bannon, who is unaffiliated with any 2020 presidential hopeful. "People are very hostile to creatures of Washington."

Even O'Rourke's mild criticism demonstrates a shift for a candidate who had previously refused to speak ill of any other Democrats in the race, saying it simply wasn't in his DNA. Appearing Wednesday night on CBS' "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert," O'Rourke was asked jokingly, "If trapped on a deserted island with all 22 other candidates, which would you eat first?"

"I would die first," he said, refusing to take the bait.

Former Obama administration housing chief Julian Castro, 44, has also championed the fresh political perspective he says he can offer, telling The Associated Press while preparing his presidential run in December, "I think these times, right now, call for a new generation of leadership."

Asked about Biden, Castro said: "I think that everybody brings their strengths. But I'll tell you that what I hear out there is that people want a new generation of leadership."

The issue remains on Biden's mind, too. Pressed by reporters this week in Iowa, he said, "People have a right to question all of our ages. It's a totally legitimate thing."

Biden also indicated he was expecting criticism during the upcoming debate.

"My guess is it's going to be an inclination, instead of talking about the future, it's going to be talking about the past," Biden said during a stop Wednesday at a cafe in Eldridge, Iowa. "And I'm about the future, not the past. For real, there are so many opportunities we have. And so much has to be done."

Associated Press writers Paul J. Weber in Austin, Texas, and Thomas Beaumont in Eldridge, Iowa, contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected to show that the name of the CBS show is "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert," not "The Late Show with Seven Colbert."

Prosecutors drop Flint water charges, promise fresh probe

By ED WHITE Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Prosecutors dropped all criminal charges Thursday against eight people in the Flint water crisis and pledged to start from scratch the investigation into one of the worst man-made environmental disasters in U.S. history.

The stunning decision came more than three years — and millions of dollars — after authorities began

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examining the roots of the scandal that left Flint's water system tainted with lead. Michigan Solicitor General Fadwa Hammoud, who took control of the investigation in January after the election of a new attorney general, said "all available evidence was not pursued" by the previous team of prosecutors.

Officials took possession this week of "millions of documents and hundreds of new electronic devices, significantly expanding the scope of our investigation," Hammoud and Wayne County prosecutor Kym Worthy said in a statement.

The efforts "have produced the most comprehensive body of evidence to date related to the Flint water crisis," they said, putting investigators "in the best possible position to find the answers the citizens of Flint deserve."

Hammoud's team recently used search warrants to get state-owned mobile devices of former Gov. Rick Snyder and 66 other people from storage.

Among those who had charges dismissed: Michigan's former health director, Nick Lyon, who was accused of involuntary manslaughter for allegedly failing to alert the public in a timely fashion about an outbreak of Legionnaires' disease when Flint was drawing improperly treated water from the Flint River in 2014 and 2015.

The dismissal came a day before a judge planned to announce whether a 2018 decision to send Lyon to trial would stand. Dropping the charges with just hours to spare killed the possibility of an adverse ruling and still gives prosecutors the freedom to haul Lyon into court again.

Nonetheless, defense attorney Chip Chamberlain said they "feel fantastic and vindicated."

"We're confident that a just and fair investigation, done properly, will yield no evidence of any criminal wrongdoing," he said.

Hammoud said she would not speak to reporters until after a June 28 town hall-style meeting with Flint residents. Her boss, Michigan Attorney General Dana Nessel, said a "fearless" team was still on the case.

"Justice delayed is not always justice denied," Nessel said in a statement.

Some residents were skeptical.

"We don't know if new charges will be filed," LeeAnne Walters, who is credited with exposing the lead contamination, told The Associated Press. "It feels kind of degrading, like all that we went through doesn't matter. Our city was poisoned, my children have health issues and the people responsible just had all the charges dropped against them."

While waiting for a new pipeline to bring water from Lake Huron, Flint, a majority-black city of 100,000, pulled water from a river without treating it to reduce corrosive effects on old pipes. Lead contaminated the distribution system in a community where 41% of residents are classified by the government as living in poverty.

Because of its poor finances, Flint was being run by financial managers appointed by Snyder. The uproar over water quality reached a peak by fall 2015, when a doctor reported high levels of lead in children, which can cause brain damage.

Some experts also have linked the water to Legionnaires' disease, a type of pneumonia caused by bacteria that thrive in warm water and infect the lungs. People can get sick if they inhale mist or vapor, typically from cooling systems.

Flint's water no longer comes from the river and has significantly improved, but some residents are so distrustful that they continue to use bottled water.

The criminal probe began in 2016, when Bill Schuette was attorney general. He hired a Detroit-area lawyer, Todd Flood, as special prosecutor. Andy Arena, the former head of the FBI in Detroit, was a key investigator.

No one is behind bars. Seven of 15 people charged pleaded no contest to misdemeanors. Their records will eventually be scrubbed clean.

Charges were pending against eight people, including former Michigan chief medical executive Eden Wells and two men, Gerald Ambrose and Darnell Earley, who were state-appointed emergency managers in Flint. Like Lyon, Wells was charged with involuntary manslaughter.

"We understand that there will be further investigation, but do not expect it to justify any further pros-

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ecution relative to her," Wells' attorneys, Steven Tramontin and Jerold Lax, said.

Through March, the investigation and prosecution had cost about \$9.5 million, records show. State agencies separately have spent millions of dollars to provide defense lawyers to public employees.

Hammoud dismissed Flood in April and put together a new team. Flood told Detroit television station WJBK on Thursday that he wishes "all the luck in the world" to Hammoud, but he did not directly address the dismissal of cases that he had filed.

"We had an experienced, aggressive and hard-driving team. Everything we did was for the people of Flint," Schuette, Flood's former boss, said on Twitter.

Follow Ed White at <http://twitter.com/edwhiteap>

Memphis police appeal for calm after marshals kill black man

By **ADRIAN SAINZ Associated Press**

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — Police appealed for calm Thursday in a tense Memphis neighborhood where a rock-throwing crowd gathered after federal marshals fatally shot a black man who, authorities said, had rammed a police vehicle with a stolen car.

Thirty-six officers suffered minor injuries from flying rocks and bricks in the hours following the death of 20-year-old Brandon Webber, who was killed Wednesday evening after he exited the car holding some type of weapon, authorities said.

Webber had been wanted in a June 3 shooting that happened during a car theft about 25 miles (40 kilometers) south of Memphis in Hernando, Mississippi. The victim was shot five times and survived. The car was the one used to ram the police vehicle, according to DeSoto County, Mississippi, District Attorney John Champion, who spoke Thursday at a news conference.

Elected officials condemned the violence, and the police chief pleaded for patience while the shooting is investigated. But unanswered questions left many people angry as they recalled other police shootings around the country.

On Thursday evening, dozens — including Webber's father and other friends and relatives — gathered near the house where he was shot.

A couple of men spoke into megaphones and some motorists who drove by honked their horns and shouted messages of encouragement. There was a light police presence with a couple police cars parked at a nearby fire station that was damaged during Wednesday night's unrest.

Shortly after Wednesday's shooting, people began to gather in the area, and their numbers swelled as some livestreamed the scene on social media. Memphis police initially responded in street uniforms, then returned in riot gear as people began hurling rocks and bricks.

During the unrest, officers cordoned off several blocks in the Frayser neighborhood north of downtown and arrested three people. By 11 p.m., officers had used tear gas and most of the crowd dispersed, Police Director Michael Rallings said.

Rallings implored residents to wait until the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation, or TBI, finished its investigation. He appealed for people to refrain from violence and from spreading possible misinformation about the shooting.

"I need everyone to stay calm," Rallings said.

He later told WREG-TV that while peaceful protests are allowed, authorities would not tolerate further attacks on officers or any property damage or looting. Among steps designed to maintain public order and protect law enforcement, Rallings said, officers' days off have been canceled and they will ride in two-person cars as a precaution.

Separately, Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee said through a spokeswoman that the shooting would be fully investigated. Lee's press secretary, Laine Arnold, said the crowd's actions were "not representative of the community, but we stand firmly against acts of lawlessness that threaten the safety of our neighborhoods."

Webber's home was in a working-class neighborhood of north Memphis. By Thursday afternoon, the

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police presence was minimal, with two squad cars parked in front of a fire station. No uniformed officers were visible. About 20 people stood outside of Webber's one-story house, and others gathered nearby. One woman wept loudly and hugged a man as she cried.

The Rev. Andre E. Johnson said he was standing among the protesters when tear gas was released. He said he heard no police order to disperse.

People were upset because they initially did not know why the marshals sought to arrest Webber, said Johnson, who called him a beloved member of the community.

"The problem with it is they feel that police and the administration and city officials do not treat them as humans. That's what it really boils down to: You are not worthy of an explanation," said Johnson, speaking hours before the Mississippi prosecutor described the allegations against Webber.

TBI spokeswoman Keli McAlister said a fugitive task force went to a Frayser home to look for a suspect with felony warrants. She said marshals spotted the man getting into a car, which then rammed task force vehicles several times before the man got out with the weapon.

Marshals then opened fire, she said. McAlister did not say how many marshals fired or how many times the man was shot. The TBI identified the dead man as Webber.

Authorities provided no details about the type of weapon or the charges that drew the task force's interest. A criminal history for Webber released by the TBI listed two arrests, in April 2017 and April 2018, on charges including weapons possession, drug dealing and driving without a license.

The 2018 charges were not prosecuted, and the 2017 charges were dismissed, court records showed.

Webber's father, Sonny Webber, told The Associated Press by phone that his son leaves a 2-year-old boy and a young daughter, with another daughter on the way: "He would have had three children. Now he'll have a child that he won't get to meet."

The TBI is routinely called in to investigate police shootings around the state. TBI investigators typically deliver a report to the local district attorney, who then decides whether to pursue charges against officers involved.

At least two journalists also were hurt in Wednesday's violence.

Memphis-area police shootings in the past four years have prompted sporadic protests. Among them was Darrius Stewart, an unarmed 19-year-old who was fatally shot during a fight in 2015 with Connor Schilling, a white officer who was trying to arrest him on outstanding warrants.

A Shelby County district attorney recommended that Schilling be charged with voluntary manslaughter, but a grand jury refused to indict him.

Associated Press writers Jonathan Mattise in Nashville, Tennessee, Rebecca Reynolds Yonker in Louisville, Kentucky, and researcher Rhonda Shafner in New York contributed to this report.

Testimony: Suspect bought Drano after Chinese scholar death

PEORIA, Ill. (AP) — A former University of Illinois doctoral student on trial in the killing of a visiting scholar from China bought Drano and garbage bags three days after the slaying, according to testimony Thursday.

The detail came during the second day of the federal murder trial of Brendt Christensen in the June 2017 death of 26-year-old Yingying Zhang.

During opening statements Wednesday, a federal prosecutor, Eugene Miller, told jurors in grisly detail what authorities believe happened to Zhang. Miller said Christensen took Zhang to his apartment and raped, choked and stabbed her in his bedroom. Miller said Christensen then dragged Zhang into his bathroom and pummeled her in the head with a baseball bat before decapitating her.

It wasn't immediately clear what Christensen is alleged to have done with the garbage bags — or the Drano. The liquid commonly used for unclogging sinks, tubs and other drains contains sodium hydroxide or lye, which can be used for dissolving organic matter.

The (Champaign) News-Gazette reported that an FBI agent testified about the massive search in Illinois for Zhang that extended from local parks to a coal mine 30 miles (48 kilometers) away but didn't produce

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any evidence of what happened to her. She's never been found and is presumed dead.

Authorities say Christensen posed as an undercover officer to lure Zhang into his car on June 9, 2017, as she was on her way to sign a lease off campus in Urbana, 140 miles (225 kilometers) southwest of Chicago.

FBI Special Agent Anthony Manganaro testified Thursday about how he and University of Illinois detective Eric Stiverson tried to pin down Christensen about his whereabouts and actions on the day Zhang disappeared.

Manganaro said Christensen's story kept changing during questioning. Video of the interview played for jurors shows Christensen repeating his earlier claim he'd been sleeping or playing video games at home at the time Zhang was seen on surveillance video getting into a black Saturn Astra.

After initially noting he wasn't seen in the video of him picking up Zhang, Christensen says, "Maybe I'm getting my days mixed up. I did pick up a girl."

Special Agent Joel Smith testified Christensen was identified as a person of interest from a list of owners of Saturn Astras, which he said is a fairly uncommon vehicle. Christensen's Astra had a sunroof and a cracked hub cap, which were seen in the video.

Manganaro also testified that based on Christensen's Google searches, the defendant kept close tabs on news coverage of Zhang's disappearance.

Christensen was arrested on June 30, 2017, his birthday, after his girlfriend wore a wire for the FBI in an attempt to capture incriminating statements by Christensen.

It's the first federal death-penalty case in Illinois since the state struck capital punishment from its books on grounds death-penalty processes were too error-prone.

The trial was moved to Peoria in central Illinois after Christensen's lawyers said pretrial publicity would have made it impossible for the 29-year-old former physics student to get a fair trial in the Champaign area, where the 45,000-student university is located.

Thursday's testimony came a day after defense attorneys, hoping to spare Christensen the death penalty, acknowledged he killed Zhang.

Tankers struck near Strait of Hormuz; US blames Iran

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The U.S. blamed Iran for suspected attacks on two oil tankers Thursday near the strategic Strait of Hormuz, denouncing what it called a campaign of "escalating tensions" in a region crucial to global energy supplies.

The U.S. Navy rushed to assist the stricken vessels in the Gulf of Oman off the coast of Iran, including one that was set ablaze. The ships' operators offered no immediate explanation on who or what caused the damage against the Norwegian-owned MT Front Altair and the Japanese-owned Kokuka Courageous. Each was loaded with petroleum products, and the Front Altair burned for hours, sending up a column of thick, black smoke.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the U.S. assessment of Iran's involvement was based in part on intelligence, as well as the expertise needed for the operation. It was also based on recent incidents in the region that the U.S. also blamed on Iran, including the use of limpet mines — designed to be attached magnetically to a ship's hull — to attack four oil tankers off the nearby Emirati port of Fujairah and the bombing of an oil pipeline in Saudi Arabia by Iranian-backed fighters in May, he said.

"Taken as a whole, these unprovoked attacks present a clear threat to international peace and security, a blatant assault on the freedom of navigation and an unacceptable campaign of escalating tension by Iran," Pompeo said. He provided no evidence, gave no specifics about any plans and took no questions.

At the United Nations, the United States asked for closed Security Council consultations on the tanker incidents later Thursday.

Iran's U.N. Mission said the government "categorically rejects" the U.S. claim that it was responsible for the attacks and condemned it "in the strongest possible terms."

A statement from the mission issued Thursday evening said Iran "stands ready to play an active and

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constructive role in ensuring the security of strategic maritime passages." It warned of "U.S. coercion, intimidation and malign behavior" and expressed concern "over suspicious incidents" involving the two tankers on Thursday.

Iran denied being involved in the attacks last month and its foreign minister questioned the timing of Thursday's incidents, given that Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was meeting Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in Tehran.

Pompeo noted that Abe had asked Iran to enter into talks with Washington but Tehran "rejected" the overture.

"The supreme leader's government then insulted Japan by attacking a Japanese-owned oil tanker just outside Iranian waters, threatening the lives of the entire crew, creating a maritime emergency," Pompeo added.

Iran previously used mines against oil tankers in 1987 and 1988 in the "Tanker War," which saw the U.S. Navy escort ships through the region. Regardless of who is responsible, the price of a barrel of benchmark Brent crude spiked as much as 4% immediately after the attack, showing how critical the region remains to the global economy.

"The shipping industry views this as an escalation of the situation, and we are just about as close to a conflict without there being an actual armed conflict, so the tensions are very high," said Jakob P. Larsen, head of maritime security for BIMCO, the largest international association representing ship owners.

The suspected attacks occurred at dawn Thursday about 40 kilometers (25 miles) off the southern coast of Iran. The *Front Altair*, loaded with the flammable hydrocarbon mixture naphtha from the United Arab Emirates, radioed for help as it caught fire. A short time later, the *Kokuka Courageous*, loaded with methanol from Saudi Arabia and Qatar, also called for help.

The U.S. Navy sent a destroyer, the *USS Bainbridge*, to assist, said Cmdr. Joshua Frey, a 5th Fleet spokesman. He described the ships as being hit in a "reported attack," without elaborating.

In Washington, senior U.S. officials said the U.S. had photographed an unexploded mine on the side of one of the tankers. The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive matter, said the U.S. will reevaluate its presence in the region and is considering a plan to provide military escorts for merchant ships.

Frontline, the firm that operates the *Front Altair*, told The Associated Press that an explosion was the cause of the fire. Its crew of 23 — from Russia, the Philippines and Georgia — was safely evacuated to the nearby Hyundai Dubai vessel, it said.

BSM Ship Management said the *Kokuka Courageous* sustained hull damage and its 21 Filipino sailors had been evacuated, with one suffering minor injuries. All 21 were placed aboard the *Bainbridge*, according to Lt. Col. Earl Brown, a spokesman for the U.S. Central Command.

Earlier, Iranian state television said 44 sailors from the two tankers were transferred to an Iranian port in the southern province of Hormozgan. The discrepancy could not be immediately reconciled.

The *Front Altair* had been bound for Taiwan, the *Kokuka Courageous* for Singapore, according to the data firm Refinitiv.

According to a U.S. official, initial evidence suggested the attack against the *Kokuka Courageous* was conducted by Iran with a mine similar to what was used against oil tankers off the UAE last month. The official, who declined to provide additional details or evidence, spoke on condition of anonymity in order to discuss initial findings that have not been made public.

Like in Fujairah, dozens of ships ranging from massive oil tankers to smaller pleasure boats, traditional dhows and cargo vessels ply the waters of the strait and the Gulf of Oman. The navies of Iran, Oman, the UAE and the U.S. regularly patrol, but the waters are vast and lit only by the moonlight at night, allowing small vessels to approach without warning.

Tensions have escalated in the Mideast as Iran appears poised to break the 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, an accord that President Donald Trump repudiated last year. The deal saw Tehran agree to limit its enrichment of uranium in exchange for the lifting of crippling sanctions. Now, Iran is threatening to

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resume enriching uranium closer to weapons-grade levels if European nations don't offer it new terms to the deal by July 7.

Already, Iran says it quadrupled its production of low-enriched uranium. Meanwhile, U.S. sanctions have cut off opportunities for Iran to trade its excess uranium and heavy water abroad, putting Tehran on course to violate terms of the nuclear deal regardless.

In May, the U.S. rushed an aircraft carrier strike group and other military assets to the region in response to what it said were threats from Iran.

As tensions have risen, so have calls from some members of Congress warning the U.S. administration that they do not have the authority to go to war with Iran under the authorization passed after the Sept. 11, 2001 attacks.

But Pompeo sees it differently, according to U.S. Reps. Elissa Slotkin, a Democrat, and Matt Gaetz, a Republican, who said Thursday they have heard the secretary of state argue in briefings that the administration can authorize war on Iran.

For nearly two decades the 2001 authorization has been stretched to justify combat with Islamist militants in the Middle East and beyond, mostly recently the Obama administration used it during the fight against the Islamic State.

Associated Press writers Aya Batrawy in Dubai, David Rising in Berlin, Mari Yamaguchi in Tokyo, Lolita C. Baldor, Zeke Miller and Susannah George in Washington and Amir Vahdat in Tehran, Iran, contributed.

Oregon public defenders mobilize for pay, staffing overhaul

By GILLIAN FLACCUS and SARAH ZIMMERMAN Associated Press

SALEM, Ore. (AP) — Facing an ever-mounting caseload, dozens of public defenders in Oregon walked out of courthouses and into the Statehouse this week to lobby for a bill that would fix a staffing shortage and an outdated contract payment system that has some attorneys representing more than 200 clients at once.

A national watchdog report deemed Oregon's fixed-fee contract system for paying its public defenders unconstitutional earlier this year, and the ACLU has threatened to sue. But sweeping legislation that would fix the problem has been stalled in a House committee since April — and now, two weeks remain before lawmakers go home for the year.

Rep. Jennifer Williamson, a Democrat who sponsored legislation to overhaul Oregon's system, described the situation as an "absolute crisis."

"Public defenders are the linchpin to so many parts of our vulnerable communities," she said. "If you care about foster care, health care, homelessness, our public defenders are at the heart of all of these issues."

Public defenders play a vital role in U.S. democracy and are paid by the state to represent criminal defendants who can't afford a private lawyer. Yet in a mounting number of states, as in Oregon, they struggle with overwhelming caseloads, erratic funding and paltry pay compared with prosecutors and private attorneys.

That leads to "massive turnover and burnout," said Ernie Lewis, executive director of the National Association of Public Defenders, which was founded in part to address the issue.

Missouri, Louisiana and Kentucky are among other states where public defense attorneys have workloads that lead to high turnover, he said, while cities such as Seattle and New York have placed caps on the number of cases they handle.

Under Oregon's system, the state contracts with a hodgepodge of nonprofit lawyer groups, individual attorneys and private law firms to work as public defenders and then pays a flat fee for each case. There are roughly 650 attorneys who work under 63 different contracts, although the state doesn't track which attorneys work which cases once contracts are awarded, according to the report from the nonpartisan Sixth Amendment Center.

The amount paid to each contractor varies, and the amount paid varies by the type of case as well, from \$565 to \$626 for a domestic violence case, for example, to \$221 to \$255 for a probation violation.

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The Sixth Amendment Center report, which was commissioned by the state and released this year, found the system involved a "complex bureaucracy" with a "stunning lack of oversight."

In one instance, a public defense attorney in the Portland metropolitan area handled 1,265 misdemeanors in a year, not counting nearly 400 smaller cases such as probation violations and termination of parental rights. That kind of caseload should be assigned to four attorneys, according to national minimal standards, the report found.

The center concluded the system's complicated flat-fee payment structure threatens criminal defendants' right to due process because contractors have a financial incentive to take as many cases as they can and pick plea deals over trials to churn through cases more quickly.

States such as Idaho, Michigan, Nevada and Washington have banned fixed-fee contracting because it creates a conflict between attorneys' financial interests and defendants' rights, according to the report.

"We've created a system where we tell public defenders that the only way to get more money is to take on more cases," said Lane Borg, executive director of the Oregon Office of Public Defense Services. "We don't measure the outcomes of those cases. In some ways, we're monetizing failure."

Williamson's proposal would drop fixed-fee contracting and replace it with a statewide division staffed by full-time state employees, with technological infrastructure for tracking staffing levels and case outcomes. It would roll out a network of county-based public defender offices to handle 60 percent of all cases, with the rest going to private contractors who would be paid an hourly rate in cases of conflicts of interest.

States with systems similar to the one proposed in House Bill 3145 include Minnesota, Massachusetts, Wisconsin, Missouri, Kentucky, New Jersey and Connecticut.

Critics note the overhaul would add more people to Oregon's Public Employees Retirement System, which has been accruing billions in debt over the years.

The measure would cost about \$50 million to implement, according to a legislative analysis. It's among a number of campaigns seeking a slice of the state's meaty budget surplus this year, including proposals to boost funding for higher education, reform the struggling foster care system and improve infrastructure.

The full cost of revamping the entire public defender system would likely be at least double that amount, and the legislation is meant to be followed up with another bill during a future session.

Still, any step toward better pay and lower caseloads has public defenders paying attention.

Dozens of public defenders and advocates have met at the Capitol this week, lobbying lawmakers and rallying outside with signs reading "Fund justice" and "Support constitutional rights."

Charlie Peirson, who works in Multnomah County, home to Portland, said last year he had 531 criminal cases, and he currently has 206 on his docket, about 10% to 15% of which are felonies. It sometimes takes him six weeks to meet a client in person, and he works every Saturday making jail visits for his most vulnerable clients, he said.

"My experience talking to my clients is that there's really only one complaint: My clients don't hear from me, or don't hear from me fast enough," Peirson said. "And I hate that I am, on some level, disincentivized to go to trial."

Flaccus reported from Portland. Follow her on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/gflaccus> . Follow Sarah Zimmerman on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/sarahzimm95> .

Trump administration reviewing foreign money to US colleges

By COLLIN BINKLEY AP Education Writer

The U.S. Education Department has opened investigations into foreign funding at Georgetown University and Texas A&M University as part of a broader push to monitor international money flowing to American colleges.

Both universities are being ordered to disclose years of financial records amid concerns they have not fully reported their foreign gifts and contracts to the federal government, according to letters sent to the schools Thursday and obtained by The Associated Press.

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The inquiries are part of a broader campaign to scrutinize foreign funding going to universities and to improve reporting by schools, according to a Trump administration official familiar with the effort.

More schools probably will face questioning as federal officials focus on an issue they see as crucial to transparency and national security, according to the official, who was not authorized to publicly discuss the investigations and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Federal law requires U.S. colleges to report contracts and donations from foreign sources totaling \$250,000 or more, but past filings from Georgetown and Texas A&M "may not fully capture" that information, according to the letters.

As an example, department officials wrote, both schools should have reported funding related to branch campuses they operate in Qatar, an oil-rich nation in the Mideast that hosts the outposts of several U.S. colleges.

The records being sought by investigators go far beyond Qatar, though, and include dealings with China, Russia and Saudi Arabia, and specific companies in those nations.

Investigators ordered both schools to disclose funding from Huawei or ZTE, the Chinese tech giants that some U.S. officials call a threat to national security. Georgetown is being asked to detail money it received from any sources in Saudi Arabia or Russia, including Kaspersky Lab, a Russian cybersecurity company.

The letters warn that Georgetown and Texas A&M could face legal action and financial penalties if they're found to have broken the rules.

If investigators find a violation, it can be referred to the U.S. attorney general's office for action "to compel compliance and to recover the full costs" of the investigation and enforcement, according to the letters.

Georgetown officials said the school is reviewing the letter and will cooperate with the inquiry. The university said in a statement that it "takes seriously its reporting obligations and provides all information as required by the Department of Education every six months."

Texas A&M issued a statement saying it takes compliance and security seriously. "We just received the document today from the U.S. Department of Education and are reviewing it. We are fully cooperating with the inquiry."

The crackdown follows complaints from some lawmakers that the Education Department hasn't done enough to review foreign funding to colleges. The issue has gained attention amid heightened tensions with China and some other nations.

In February, a bipartisan panel in Congress urged U.S. colleges to cut ties with the Confucius Institute, a Chinese language program funded by a branch of the Chinese government. Some critics say it is a threat to U.S. national security and academic freedom.

The same panel found that 70% of U.S. schools receiving \$250,000 or more from China to operate Confucius Institutes failed to report the funding, and that the Education Department failed to provide adequate oversight.

Sen. Rob Portman, R-Ohio, chairman of the panel, told the department in January to issue updated guidance and improve its oversight practices. On Thursday, he applauded the agency for taking action.

"When U.S. schools take money from foreign governments, the American people deserve to know about it," he said.

Colleges have complained that the rules are unclear. In January, the American Council on Education, which represents dozens of college chiefs, asked for clarity on several aspects of the law and noted that the last guidance on the topic was issued in 2004.

The group said schools have been given no guidance on how to correct errors in their filings, for example, and said it is unclear if university foundations, which often house colleges' endowments, are subject to the rules. The letters to Georgetown and Texas A&M both say the schools should have reported funding from their foundations and other nonprofits they control.

Foreign funding information that schools submit to the Education Department often provides little detail about where the money comes from and none about how it's used. Typically schools report only the amount of money, the date of the agreement, the country it came from and, sometimes, a specific source

within that country.

According to data submitted by Georgetown, the school has received more than \$415 million from abroad since 2012, including \$36 million last year.

Nearly all of Georgetown's foreign money reported for 2018 came from sources in Qatar, including \$33 million from the Qatar Foundation, a nonprofit that has a partnership with Georgetown to support the school's campus in Qatar.

Data filed by Texas A&M show that the school has received \$285 million from foreign sources since 2014, including \$6.1 million last year. All of Texas A&M's reported funding from last year also came through a partnership with the Qatar Foundation.

Follow Collin Binkley on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/cbinkley>

Premature baby found in Border Patrol facility in Texas

By **ASTRID GALVAN** and **GARANCE BURKE** Associated Press

The teenage girl with pigtail braids was hunched over in a wheelchair and holding a bunched sweatshirt when an immigrant advocate met her at a crowded Border Patrol facility in Texas.

She opened the sweatshirt and the advocate gasped. It was a tiny baby, born premature, being held in detention instead of where she believes she should have been — a hospital neonatal unit.

"You look at this baby and there is no question that this baby should be in a tube with a heart monitor," said Hope Frye, a volunteer with an immigrant advocacy group who travels the country visiting immigration facilities with children to make sure they comply with federal guidelines.

Frye and other advocates say the case highlights the poor conditions immigrants are held in after crossing the border at a time when the government is dealing with an unprecedented number of families and children who are arriving each day.

She says the mother, a 17-year-old from Guatemala, had an emergency cesarean section in Mexico in early May and crossed the border with the baby June 4. She was in a wheelchair in extreme pain when legal advocates found her this week. The girl told advocates she had crossed the border through the Rio Grande River but needed people to carry her, and also needed assistance getting into a Border Patrol car when she was apprehended.

The mother and daughter were expected to be transferred to a privately-run facility for underage immigrants without parents on Thursday after outcry on social media.

They were held in an overcrowded McAllen processing facility that holds hundreds of parents and children in large, fenced-in areas and gained international attention last year when it detained children separated from their parents. Advocates describe them as cages and say they are extremely cold. The converted warehouse is the same location where a flu outbreak caused authorities to shut down the facility last month.

The Trump administration has been facing daily criticism over conditions in migrant detention facilities.

Five children have died since late last year after being detained by the Border Patrol. Immigrants have been kept outside for extended periods near a bridge in El Paso in conditions that a professor who recently visited the location told the Texas Monthly magazine was like a "human dog pound." And an Inspector General report last month found severe overcrowding inside an El Paso processing center, with 76 migrants packed into a tiny cell designed for a maximum of 12 people. Investigators saw immigrants standing on top of toilets to make room and find space to breathe because the cell was so cramped.

In a letter to Congress this week, the Department of Homeland Security's acting secretary, Kevin K. McAleenan, and Alex Azar, who heads the Health and Human Services Department, pleaded for emergency supplemental funding.

"We continue to experience a humanitarian and security crisis at the southern border of the United States, and the situation becomes more dire each day," they wrote.

Customs and Border Protection says its agents are overwhelmed and don't have the funding or resources to handle the influx. Health and Human Services, the governmental agency in charge of caring for unac-

companied children after they're released from Border Patrol custody, says it is past capacity with over 13,000 kids in its care at the moment. The agency said it plans to add new facilities for children in New Mexico, Texas and a military base in Oklahoma.

Families and underage migrants who cross the border are held in Border Patrol facilities that are meant to be temporary and were designed primarily for single adult men and not mothers, newborns and sick toddlers. Families are regularly kept in them for much longer than the allowed maximum of 72 hours.

Frye first met the teenage girl at the McAllen facility on Tuesday. The girl said border authorities made her throw away a backpack with the baby's clothing and hadn't given her anything else, so the baby was in a dirty onesie bundled in a sweatshirt that another migrant mother gave her.

At one point, the baby got sick and was listless and unresponsive, Frye said.

Frye said the baby and her mother should never have been kept there. She said she isn't sure how premature the baby was born but said she is "minuscule" and that her head was "the size of my fist or smaller than my fist."

Customs and Border Protection, which runs the facility the girl and baby were held in, has not issued comment.

This story has been corrected to show that mother and daughter were being transferred on Thursday, not Friday.

Burke contributed to this report from San Francisco.

Market awarded \$44M in racism dispute with Oberlin College

By MARK GILLISPIE Associated Press

CLEVELAND (AP) — Owners of a market in a famously liberal town were awarded \$44 million in damages this week in their lawsuit claiming Oberlin College hurt their business and libeled them in a case some observers said embodied racial hypersensitivity and political correctness run amok.

A jury in Lorain County awarded David Gibson, son Allyn Gibson and Gibson's Bakery, of Oberlin, \$33 million in punitive damages Thursday. That comes on top of an award a day earlier of \$11 million in compensatory damages.

"Ladies and gentlemen, you have spoken," Oberlin College attorney Rachelle Zidar told the jury Thursday before the larger award was announced, according to the Elyria Chronicle-Telegram. "You have sent a profound message. We have heard you. Believe me when I say, 'Colleges across the country have heard you.'"

Oberlin College spokesman Scott Wargo declined to comment after the award was announced.

Problems between the Gibsons, their once-beloved bakery and the college began in November 2016 after Allyn Gibson, who is white, confronted a black Oberlin student who had shoplifted wine. Two other black students joined in and assaulted Gibson, police said.

The day after the arrests, hundreds of students protested outside the bakery. Members of Oberlin College's student senate published a resolution saying Gibson's had "a history of racial profiling and discriminatory treatment."

When news of the protests spread online, bikers and counterprotesters soon converged on the town to jeer students and make purchases from Gibson's. Conservatives derided the students on social media as coddled "snowflakes" with a mob mentality, while students attacked the store as a symbol of systemic racism.

The Gibsons sued Oberlin and the dean of students in November 2017, accusing faculty members of encouraging the protests. The lawsuit said college tour guides informed prospective students that Gibson's is racist.

The Gibsons said the protests devastated their business and forced them to lay off workers. They said they haven't paid themselves or other family members since the protests.

The three black students later pleaded guilty to misdemeanors and read statements in court that said

Allyn Gibson's actions weren't racially motivated.

The school initially stopped doing business with Gibson's, later resumed the relationship and ended it again when the Gibsons filed their lawsuit.

Oberlin has long been a bastion of liberalism. During the 1830s, it became one of the first colleges to admit blacks and women. During the 1850s, it became a stop on the Underground Railroad.

Today, about 15% of Oberlin's 8,300 residents are black.

More recently, news articles quoted students decrying the school dining hall's sushi and Vietnamese banh mi sandwiches as cultural appropriation.

The Gibsons' attorneys said the college, which charges \$70,000 a year for tuition and room and board, has an \$887 million endowment and can easily afford to pay the family what they are owed.

Oberlin's tree-lined campus is roughly 35 miles (56 kilometers) southwest of downtown Cleveland.

Bishops OK anti-abuse steps, but skeptics seek tougher moves

By **DAVID CRARY** and **REGINA GARCIA CANO** Associated Press

BALTIMORE (AP) — Under intense public pressure, the nation's Roman Catholic bishops approved new steps this week to deal more strongly with the clergy sex-abuse crisis. But activists and others say the moves leave the bishops in charge of policing themselves and potentially keep law enforcement at arm's length.

As their national meeting in Baltimore concluded Thursday, leaders of the U.S. bishops conference stopped short of mandating that lay experts such as lawyers and criminal justice professionals take part in investigating clergy accused of child molestation or other misconduct. They also did not specify a procedure for informing police of abuse allegations that come in over a newly proposed hotline.

"Even the bishops themselves recognize they have lost their credibility in monitoring this dreadful crisis," said Thomas Groome, a professor at Boston College's School of Theology. "Without strong oversight by competent lay people, it won't be seen as credible."

Groome said the bishops should have no hesitation in declaring that credible allegations should be reported to police.

"They're not dealing simply with a sin, they're dealing with a crime," he said. "They do not have the power to forgive crimes."

The Baltimore meeting followed a string of abuse-related developments that have presented the bishops and the 76-million-member U.S. church with unprecedented challenges. Many dioceses around the country have been targeted by prosecutors demanding secret files, and a number of high-ranking church officials have become entangled in cases of alleged abuse or cover-ups.

According to a recent Pew Research Center survey, the crisis has led about one-quarter of U.S. Catholics to reduce their attendance at Mass and their donations to the church. Even some bishops sense that many Catholics are distancing themselves from the church because of the furor.

"One of the terrible costs of the scandal is costing people their faith," said Cardinal Joseph Tobin of Newark, New Jersey. "So I think it's entirely right that we give priority to this."

Of the anti-abuse measures approved by the bishops during three days of deliberations, the most tangible was the planned creation of a national hotline — to be operated by a yet-to-be-chosen independent entity — to field allegations of abuse and cover-ups by bishops.

The allegations would be forwarded to a regional supervisory bishop, who would have the task of reporting to law enforcement and the Vatican and deciding if lay experts should investigate the complaint.

Another measure specifies that the bishops will now be governed by the same code of conduct that has applied to priests since 2002. It outlines a variety of procedures for combating child sexual abuse and says even a single act of abuse should lead to a priest's permanent removal from the ministry. Catholic leaders say the charter has helped greatly to reduce clergy sex abuse.

During Thursday's debate, Bishop Shawn McKnight of Jefferson City, Missouri, urged that lay involvement in investigations be made mandatory, "to make darn sure we bishops do not harm the church."

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The bishops did not go quite that far, instead stipulating that archbishops "should identify a qualified lay person to receive reports."

The auxiliary bishop of Detroit, Donald Hanchon, said the new measures are a step in the right direction. "I feel like we accomplished something instead of just saying, 'We are sorry these things happened,'" he said. "People need more than that."

However, SNAP, a national advocacy group for victims of clergy abuse, expressed dismay that the bishops did not mandate lay involvement or spell out a policy for notifying law enforcement.

"Without these mandates, there is no guarantee that reports will be routed to police and investigations will be transparent and public," SNAP said. "Instead, all reports can remain secret and insulated within the church's internal systems."

SNAP also called on Catholic leaders to strengthen the network of lay review boards that help Catholic dioceses across the country investigate abuse cases. SNAP said these boards should be fully independent of diocesan control and include at least one abuse victim, as well as experts recommended by the attorney general's office in the diocese's state.

Tobin said some dioceses and archdioceses, including Newark, already have arrangements with local prosecutors that entail the reporting of any criminal activity.

"I'm confident that the idea of doing this in house is long gone," he said.

One of the highest-profile scandals of the past year involved former Cardinal Theodore McCarrick of Washington, who was expelled from the priesthood for sexually abusing minors and seminarians. Last week The Associated Press reported that Cardinal Daniel DiNardo, who heads the bishops' conference and the Galveston-Houston Archdiocese, was accused by a Houston woman of mishandling her allegations of sexual and financial misconduct against his deputy.

Crary reported from New York. Associated Press reporter Nicole Winfield in Rome contributed to his report.

'Deepfakes' called new election threat, with no easy fix

By SUSANNAH GEORGE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — "Deepfake" videos pose a clear and growing threat to America's national security, lawmakers and experts say. The question is what to do about it, and that's not easily answered.

A House Intelligence Committee hearing Thursday served up a public warning about the deceptive powers of artificial intelligence software and offered a sobering assessment of how fast the technology is outpacing efforts to stop it.

With a crudely altered video of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., fresh on everyone's minds, lawmakers heard from experts how difficult it will be to combat these fakes and prevent them from being used to interfere in the 2020 election.

"We don't have a general solution," said David Doermann, a former official with Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency. "This is a cat and a mouse game." As the ability to detect such videos improves, so does the technology used to make them.

The videos are made using facial mapping and artificial intelligence. The altered video of Pelosi, which was viewed more than 3 million times on social media, gave only a glimpse of what the technology can do. Experts dismissed the clip, which was slowed down to make it appear that Pelosi was slurring her words, as nothing more than a "cheap fake."

Rep. Adam Schiff, the committee chairman, said the Pelosi video "demonstrates the scale of the challenge we face." But he said he fears a more "nightmarish scenario," with these video spreading disinformation about a political candidate and the public struggling to separate fact from fiction.

The technology, said Schiff, D-Calif., has "the capacity to disrupt entire campaigns, including that for the presidency."

Doermann said the threat has grown worse due to the proliferation of what was once specialized technology. Creating convincing fabricated videos once required expensive equipment and software, but now

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"a high school student with a good computer" can do it, he said.

"It's not something that you have to be an (artificial intelligence) expert to run. A novice can run these types of things," he said.

Schiff told reporters after the hearing he believes federal regulation aimed at curbing deepfakes is "worthy of serious consideration." But he said the problem will never be completely solved, only suppressed.

Clint Watts, a research fellow with the Foreign Policy Research Institute, suggested tech companies should play a role in deciding which false videos should be taken down from the internet. But that idea drew skepticism from the committee's top Republican, California Rep. Devin Nunes. He raised concerns about granting too much authority to tech giants such as Facebook and Twitter to make judgment calls about content.

Nunes claimed that current filters have a pro-liberal bias. "Most of the time it's conservatives who get banned," he said. "It's all in who's building the filter, right?" (Nunes has sued Twitter and several of the platform's users, accusing them of defaming him.)

Danielle Citron, a University of Maryland Law professor, told lawmakers that many of the laws regulating online video date back decades and need to be overhauled to keep pace with the growing threat.

"We have an audience primed to believe things like manipulated video of lawmakers," Citron said. "I would hate to see the deepfake where a prominent lawmaker is purported to ... (be) seen taking a bribe that you never took."

U.S. intelligence officials have repeatedly warned about the threat of foreign meddling in American politics, especially in the lead-up to elections.

U.S. officials determined Russia carried out a sweeping political disinformation campaign on U.S. social media to influence the 2016 election. The director of national intelligence, Dan Coats, has said Russia attempted to meddle in the 2018 midterm elections, but was unsuccessful.

US blames Iran for attacks on 2 tankers near Persian Gulf

WASHINGTON (AP) — Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Thursday that the United States government blames Iran for attacks on two oil tankers near the Persian Gulf, casting it as the latest in a series of "provocative actions" that have sharply raised tensions in the region.

A U.S. assessment of Iran's responsibility for the attacks, which forced the evacuation of the crews in international waters, was based in part on intelligence as well as on the expertise needed to carry out the operation, Pompeo told reporters in Washington.

It was also based on a recent series of incidents in the region that the U.S. blames on Iran, including a similar attack on tankers in the area in May and the bombing of an oil pipeline in Saudi Arabia by Iranian-backed fighters, he said.

"Taken as a whole these unprovoked attacks present a clear threat to international peace and security, a blatant assault on the freedom of navigation and an unacceptable campaign of escalating tension by Iran," Pompeo said.

The U.S. planned to raise the attacks at the U.N. Security Council later Thursday. Pompeo also said the U.S. would defend its forces and interests in the Middle East but gave no details on any immediate plans. Pompeo did not take questions after giving the brief statement.

Tensions between Iran and the United States have been growing since President Donald Trump last year withdrew from an international agreement aimed at restricting Iran's nuclear program and re-instated economic sanctions that have had a devastating effect on the Iranian economy.

In May, the U.S. rushed an aircraft carrier strike group and other military assets to the Persian Gulf region in response to what it said were threats from Iran.

Pompeo on Thursday said Iran had attempted the covert deployment of small boats capable of launching missiles, in an apparent description of the threat that prompted the deployment.

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Asian shares mixed over concerns about oil tankers, trade

By YURI KAGEYAMA AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Asian shares were mixed Friday as investors weighed a variety of factors, including suspected attacks on two oil tankers in the strategic Strait of Hormuz and lingering worries about trade conflict between the U.S. and China.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 edged up 0.2% to 21,076.11 in morning trading. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 recouped earlier losses to be little changed at 6,543.10. South Korea's Kospj lost nearly 0.2% to 2,099.49. Hong Kong's Hang Seng was little changed but inched down less than 0.1% to 27,294.71. The Shanghai Composite was also little changed but a tad higher at 2,910.74.

Gains in energy and internet companies helped drive stocks broadly higher on Wall Street overnight, snapping a two-day losing streak for the market in an otherwise choppy week of trading.

Investors have been searching for direction as they cautiously await any new developments on the global trade war between the U.S. and China. Any continued escalations could crimp global economic growth and halt what is poised to be the longest economic expansion in U.S. history.

The market is also looking ahead to next week's meeting of policyholders of the U.S. Federal Reserve. Last week, Fed Chair Jerome Powell set off a market rally after he signaled that the central bank is willing to cut interest rates to help stabilize the economy if the trade war between Washington and Beijing starts to crimp growth.

The S&P 500 index rose 11.80 points, or 0.4%, to 2,891.64. The benchmark index has been seesawing this week, opening strong on Monday, and then falling for two straight days before reversing course again on Thursday. The uneven week follows the index's best week of 2019.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average gained 101.94 points, or 0.4%, to 26,106.77. The Nasdaq composite added 44.41 points, or 0.6%, to 7,837.13. The Russell 2000 index of small company stocks climbed 16.01 points, or 1.1%, to 1,535.80.

The suspected attacks in the Strait of Hormuz come amid heightened tensions between the United States and Iran. One third of all oil traded by sea, which amounts to 20% of oil traded worldwide, passes through the strait. The U.S. blamed Iran in what it called a campaign of "escalating tensions" in a region crucial to global energy supplies.

Economists Nicholas Mapa and Prakash Sakpal said in their report for ING that the market tone for the day was "wait and watch."

"Setting the mixed tone for markets today, escalation of geopolitical tensions in the Gulf region counters the positive investor sentiment from rising expectations of the U.S. Fed easing," the report said.

ENERGY:

Benchmark U.S. crude dipped 29 cents to \$51.99. It rose 2.2% to settle at \$52.28 a barrel Thursday. Brent crude oil, the international standard, fell 8 cents to \$61.23 a barrel.

CURRENCIES:

The dollar fell to 108.32 Japanese yen from 108.44 yen on Thursday. The euro weakened to \$1.1278 from \$1.1294.

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 Saturday, June 22, the 173rd day of 2019. There are 192 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 22, 1977, John N. Mitchell became the first former U.S. Attorney General to go to prison as he began serving a sentence for his role in the Watergate cover-up. (He was released 19 months later.)

On this date:

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In 1911, Britain's King George V was crowned at Westminster Abbey.

In 1918, a train carrying members of the Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus and their families was rear-ended during an emergency stop by another train near Hammond, Indiana, killing at least 86 people aboard the circus train.

In 1937, Joe Louis began his reign as world heavyweight boxing champion by knocking out Jim Braddock in the eighth round of their fight in Chicago. (A year later on this date, Louis knocked out Max Schmeling in the first round of their rematch at Yankee Stadium.)

In 1940, during World War II, Adolf Hitler gained a stunning victory as France was forced to sign an armistice eight days after German forces overran Paris.

In 1944, President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, more popularly known as the "GI Bill of Rights."

In 1945, the World War II battle for Okinawa ended with an Allied victory.

In 1969, singer-actress Judy Garland died in London at age 47.

In 1970, President Richard Nixon signed an extension of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 that lowered the minimum voting age to 18.

In 1981, Mark David Chapman pleaded guilty to killing rock star John Lennon. Abolhassan Bani-Sadr was deposed as president of Iran.

In 1992, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *R.A.V. v. City of St. Paul*, unanimously ruled that "hate crime" laws that banned cross burning and similar expressions of racial bias violated free-speech rights.

In 2012, ex-Penn State assistant coach Jerry Sandusky was convicted by a jury in Bellefonte, Pennsylvania, on 45 counts of sexually assaulting 10 boys over 15 years. (Sandusky is appealing a 30- to 60-year state prison sentence.)

In 2008, acerbic standup comedian and satirist George Carlin died in Santa Monica, California, at age 71.

Ten years ago: Nine people were killed when a Washington, D.C., commuter train crashed into the rear of another during afternoon rush hour. President Barack Obama signed the nation's toughest anti-smoking law, aiming to keep thousands of teens from getting hooked. Chris Brown pleaded guilty to felony assault of ex-girlfriend Rihanna (he was later sentenced to probation and community labor). Lucas Glover won the U.S. Open at Bethpage Black with a 3-over 73 for a two-shot victory.

Five years ago: President Barack Obama, in a recorded interview aired on CBS' "Face the Nation," said that al-Qaida-inspired militants who had violently seized territory in Iraq could grow in power and destabilize other countries in the region. Michelle Wie closed with an even-par 70 for a two-shot victory over Stacy Lewis, the No. 1 player in women's golf, in the U.S. Women's Open; it was Wie's first major championship. "The Ellen DeGeneres Show" received its eighth trophy as outstanding entertainment talk show at the Daytime Emmy awards ceremony in Beverly Hills. Steve Rossi, 82, one half of the comic duo of Allen & Rossi, died in Las Vegas.

One year ago: White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders was asked to leave a Virginia restaurant; the co-owner said the move came at the request of gay employees who objected to Sanders' defense of President Donald Trump's effort to bar transgender people from the military. Trump accused Democrats of telling "phony stories of sadness and grief" about children separated from their parents while crossing the border; he met with parents of children who'd been killed by immigrants in the country illegally. The European Union began enforcing tariffs on American imports including bourbon, peanut butter and orange juice, in retaliation for duties the Trump administration imposed on European steel and aluminum.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Prunella Scales (TV: "Fawlty Towers") is 87. Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., is 86. Singer-actor Kris Kristofferson is 83. Movie director John Korty is 83. Actor Michael Lerner is 78. Actor Klaus Maria Brandauer is 76. Fox News analyst Brit Hume is 76. Singer Peter Asher (Peter and Gordon) is 75. Actor David L. Lander is 72. Singer Howard "Eddie" Kaylan is 72. Singer-musician Todd Rundgren is 71. Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., is 70. Actress Meryl Streep is 70. Actress Lindsay Wagner is 70. Singer Alan Osmond is 70. Actor Murphy Cross is 69. Actor Graham Greene is 67. Pop singer Cyndi Lauper is 66. Actor Chris Lemmon is 65. Rock musician Derek Forbes is 63. Actor Tim Russ is 63. Rock musician Garry

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Beers (INXS) is 62. Actor-producer-writer Bruce Campbell is 61. Rock musician Alan Anton (Cowboy Junkies) is 60. Actress Tracy Pollan is 59. Environmental activist Erin Brockovich is 59. Rock singer-musician Jimmy Somerville is 58. Basketball Hall of Famer Clyde Drexler is 57. Actress Amy Brenneman is 55. Author Dan Brown is 55. Rock singer-musician Mike Edwards (Jesus Jones) is 55. Rock singer Steven Page is 49. Actor Michael Trucco is 49. Actress Mary Lynn Rajs kub is 48. TV personality Carson Daly is 46. Rock musician Chris Traynor is 46. Country musician Jimmy Wallace is 46. Actor Donald Faison is 45. Actress Alicia Goranson is 45. Actor-comedian Mike O'Brien (TV: "Saturday Night Live") is 43. TV personality/actor Jai Rodriguez is 40. Americana singer-songwriter John Moreland is 34. Actress Lindsay Ridgeway is 34. Pop singer Dina Hansen (Fifth Harmony) (TV: "The X Factor") is 22.

Thought for Today: "If you look at life one way, there is always cause for alarm." — Elizabeth Bowen, Irish author (1899-1973).

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