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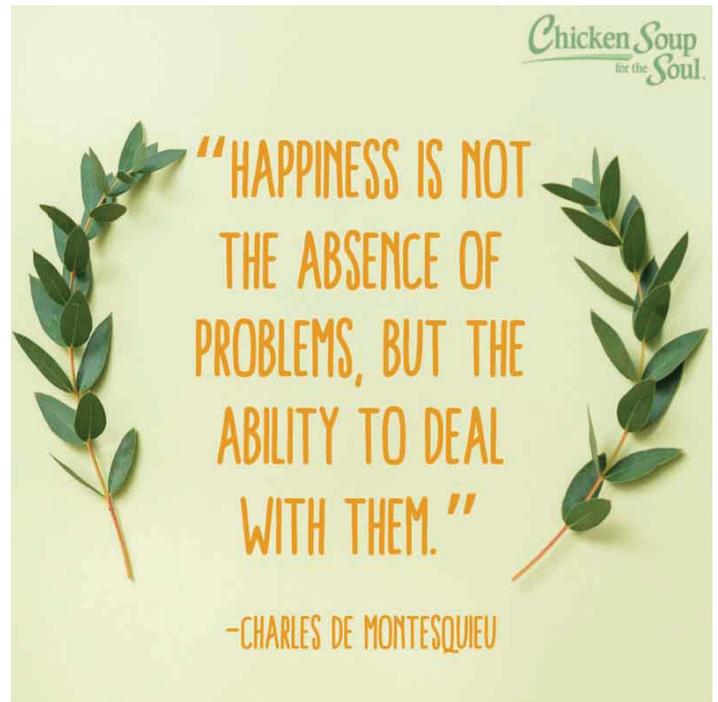
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CLOSED: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

Wednesday, July 10

5:30 p.m.: U8 Pee Wees host Warner, (DH) (R)
6:00 p.m.: U8 Pee Wees host Jacobson, (DH) (B)
6:00 p.m.: T-Ball at Columbia (Gold)

Thursday, July 11

Cancelled: Legion at Castlewood, (DH)
6:00 p.m.: T-Ball at Claremont (Black)
Softball hosts Webster (U10 at 6 p.m. (1 game), U12 at 7 p.m. (2 games))
Softball hosts Faulkton, (DH), 6 p.m.

July 12-14

Legion at Clark Tourney
U12 Midgets State Tournament, TBD
U10 Pee Wees State Tournament, TBD

Saturday, July 13

1:00 p.m.: Locke Electric Amateurs at Mt. Vernon (Tentative)

Sunday, July 14

1:00 p.m.: Locke Electric Amateurs vs. Groton 2 Amateurs

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PUC gives Crowned Ridge Wind Farm permit to construct

PIERRE, S.D. — The South Dakota Public Utilities Commission today approved a permit, with conditions, giving the go ahead for the construction of the Crowned Ridge Wind Farm in northeastern South Dakota. Commission members Gary Hanson, Chris Nelson and Kristie Fiegen made their decision at the regular PUC meeting in Pierre on Tuesday, July 9.

The Crowned Ridge Wind Farm will cover 53,186 acres in Grant and Codington counties. It will be capable of producing as much as 300 megawatts of energy from up to 130 wind turbines. The wind farm is owned by Crowned Ridge Wind LLC, a wholly-owned indirect subsidiary of NextEra Energy Resources LLC. Northern States Power Co., doing business as Xcel Energy, will purchase the energy produced by the wind farm.

Crowned Ridge Wind filed its application with the PUC on Jan. 30, 2019, launching a statutory six-month review period that included a public input hearing in Waverly in March and an evidentiary hearing in Pierre in June.

The 2019 legislature revised the law, extending the review period to nine months for wind energy permit applications filed with the commission after July 1, 2019.

Intervenors participating in the Crowned Ridge Wind docket included Allen Robish and Amber Christenson of Strandburg; Kristi Mogen of Twin Brooks; and Patrick and Melissa Lynch of Watertown.

Among the 46 conditions the PUC placed on the permit are those that address sound levels and shadow flicker experienced by nearby residences, the detection of ice on turbine blades, monitoring of grouse leks within the wind farm area once construction is complete, and funding for the removal of the facilities, known as decommissioning.

"I truly believe that through the conditions we specified today, we came up with a good product," stated PUC Chairman Hanson. "We go through this process following the evidence that has been presented and making certain we follow the law. We have to base our decision on evidence, not our feelings," he said.

"It's been a grind to get to where we are today," noted PUC Vice Chairman Nelson. "Having considered all the evidence presented during this process, I believe the applicant has met the burden required in state law to obtain a permit. The operational aspects of this project have to meet the requirements that the PUC and the counties have established," Nelson said.

Commissioner Fiegen spoke about the commission's final decision, stating, "Today we have addressed a



Position available for full-time Police Officer

"Position available for full-time Police Officer. Experience and SD Certification preferred. Salary negotiable DOE. Please send application and resume to the City of Groton, PO Box 587 Groton, SD 57445. This position is open until filled. Applications may be found at <https://city.grotonsd.gov/forms/ApplicationForCityEmployee.pdf> For more information, please call 605-397-8422 Equal opportunity employer."

(0704.0710)



2 bedroom apt
\$750/month plus utilities
attached garage
major appliances furnished

480-980-8513
or
605-397-7118

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lot of concerns brought to our attention during the evidentiary hearing and through post-hearing briefs. What we have landed on is a combination that works for the residents of the area, for the applicant and for the state.”

Crowned Ridge Wind estimates the wind farm will cost \$400 million and expects it to be completed by 2020. This wind farm is separate from the Crowned Ridge II wind farm for which an application is expected to be filed with the PUC. The commission will have nine months to process that application, pursuant to the new law, which took effect July 1.

The Crowned Ridge Wind Farm docket can be viewed on the PUC’s website at www.puc.sd.gov, Commission Actions, Electric Dockets, 2019 Electric Dockets, EL19-003 – In the Matter of the Application by Crowned Ridge Wind, LLC for a Permit of a Wind Energy Facility in Grant and Codington Counties.

Century Club Announces Oldest Living South Dakotan



SIOUX FALLS, SD (July 9, 2019) The South Dakota Health Care Association's Century Club, along with KELOLAND Television, is pleased to announce Vivian Grover as the 2019 Centenarian of the Year! Born in February of 1911, Vivian is 108 years old, and the oldest member of the Century Club! This marks the second year Vivian has been recognized as the current oldest living South Dakotan.

"Congratulations to Vivian on being honored as our Centenarian of the Year," said LuAnn Severson, Century Club Coordinator. "Her lifetime of experience is an inspiration for all of us."

Vivian grew up on a farm outside of Dover, Minnesota, getting up early every morning to milk cows and do other chores, before walking a mile to school. She moved into town and lived with her aunt to attend high school.

She met the man who would become her husband, Harry Grover, while visiting her brother in Rapid City. They were married November 30, 1931. Together, they worked a ranch, then later owned Grover's store in Keystone, and worked for Donaldson's department store in Rapid City. Vivian also was a deputy clerk for the magistrate court, an especially notable achievement because Vivian's formal education ended after two years of high school. She remains very proud of her service with the court. Vivian's husband passed away in 1987. She currently resides at Fountain Springs Healthcare in Rapid City.

Vivian helped raise her husband's three children in a blended family, and has 10 grandchildren, 25 great-grandchildren, 57 great-great-grandchildren, and 12 great-great-great grandchildren.

Throughout her life, Vivian has loved to travel, including visits to England and France, as well as bus trips around the country, cruises, and fishing trips. She went whitewater rafting in Colorado when she was 83 and hiked Black Elk Peak every year until she was 84 years old. She believes that her active lifestyle has been one of the reasons she has lived so long.

"Do what you want to do," is Vivian's advice to others. "I'm just thankful I am here today, and that I can drink coffee, eat, and have a good night's sleep."

The Century Club was created by the South Dakota Health Care Association to recognize South Dakotans age 100 or older, both for their longevity and their contributions to our state. Over 1,300 South Dakotans have been inducted into the Century Club since its founding in 1997. The Century Club is, as its name states, a club. Therefore, there may be older people in the state that have not yet been inducted by a family member or loved one into the Century Club.

The Century Club is open to any resident of South Dakota upon the celebration of his or her 100th birthday. There are no dues and each inductee receives a specially designed certificate and membership card. Once a year, the current oldest living Century Club Member is recognized as the "Centenarian of the Year." Submit names for the Century Club by visiting [HYPERLINK "http://www.sdhca.org"](http://www.sdhca.org) www.sdhca.org and downloading a Century Club application or call LuAnn Severson, Century Club Coordinator, at 1-800-952-3052.

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Today



Breezy.
Chance
Showers then
Mostly Sunny

High: 78 °F

Tonight



Clear

Low: 56 °F

Thursday



Sunny

High: 87 °F

Thursday
Night



Mostly Clear
then Slight
Chance
T-storms

Low: 67 °F

Friday



Mostly Sunny

High: 89 °F

This Morning



*Cloudy With
Light Showers*

Today

*Winds
Diminishing
In The
Afternoon*

*Highs:
70s*

Tonight



*Clear & Calm
Lows:
50s*

 NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Updated: 7/10/2019 4:07 AM Central

Published on: 07/10/2019 at 12:20AM

Low pressure in North Dakota responsible for gusty winds this morning, along with showers and milder temperatures with low humidity. Windy conditions will continue as the system moves to our north, replaced with high pressure, and with clear conditions, temperatures/humidity will remain quite comfortable. More summer-like heat and humidity will return Friday and is expected to stick with us well into next week.

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Today in Weather History

July 10, 1998: Flash flooding occurred from Keldron, in Corson County, and areas south, during the late afternoon and evening as a result of up to seven inches of rain that had fallen from slow-moving thunderstorms. Willow Creek and several small tributaries went out of their banks causing the inundation of low areas and county roads. Many county roads were damaged with one farmer losing several pigs and cows as a result of the flooding.

1887: A dam breaks in Zug, Switzerland, killing 70 people in their homes and destroying a large section of the town. Click [HERE](#) for more information from the History Channel.

1911: The mercury hit 105 degrees at North Bridgton, Maine the hottest reading of record for Maine. North Bridgton also reached 105 degrees on the 4th of July in 1911.

1913: The mercury hit 134 degrees at Greenland Ranch in Death Valley, California, the hottest reading of record for the World. Sandstorm conditions accompanied the heat.

1926: At the Picatinny Arsenal in New Jersey, lightning struck one of the explosives storage structures during a thunderstorm and started a fire. As a result, several million pounds of explosives detonated over a period of 2–3 days. This explosion not only structural devastation, 187 of 200 buildings destroyed but military and civilian casualties as well. Close to one hundred are injured as explosion spreads havoc within a radius of 15 miles in New Jersey. Otto Dowling was in charge at the time and received a Distinguished Service Cross for his handling of the situation.

1913 - The mercury hit 134 degrees at Greenland Ranch in Death Valley, CA, the hottest reading of record for the North American continent. Sandstorm conditions accompanied the heat. The high the previous day was 129 degrees, following a morning low of 93 degrees. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1926 - A lightning bolt struck an ammunition magazine in northern New Jersey, and a big red ball of fire leaped into the air triggering a series of explosions. All buildings within a half mile radius were destroyed, and debris fell as far as twenty-two miles away. Sixteen persons were killed, and property damage was seventy million dollars. (David Ludlum)

1936 - Afternoon highs of 112 degrees at Martinsburg, WV, 109 degrees at Cumberland, MD, and Frederick, MD, 110 degrees at Runyon, NJ, and 111 degrees at Phoenixville, PA, established all-time record highs for those four states. It was the hottest day of record for the Middle Atlantic Coast Region. (The Weather Channel)

1979 - The temperature at El Paso, TX, hit 112 degrees, an all-time record for that location. The next day was 110 degrees. (The Weather Channel)

1980 - The temperature in downtown Kansas City, MO, hit 109 degrees, following a sultry overnight low of 89 degrees. The daily low of 89 degrees was the warmest of record for Kansas City, and overall it was the hottest July day of record. It was the seventh of a record seventeen consecutive days of 100 degree heat, and the mean temperature for the month of 90.2 degrees was also an all-time record for Kansas City.

1987 - An early morning thunderstorm in Minnesota produced wind gusts to 91 mph at Waseca. Later that day, thunderstorms in South Dakota produced wind gusts to 81 mph at Ipswitch, and baseball size hail near Hayes and Capa. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms brought welcome rains to parts of the central U.S., but produced severe weather along the New England coast, in the Great Lakes Region, in North Carolina, and in the Southern Plateau Region. Strong thunderstorm winds gusting to 80 mph at Bullfrog, UT, sank three boats on Lake Powell. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Severe thunderstorms spawned seventeen tornadoes in the northeastern U.S. A powerful (F-4) tornado struck Hamden CT and New Haven, CT, causing 100 million dollars damage at Hamden, and another 20 million dollars damage around New Haven. Forty persons were injured in the tornado. Seventy persons were injured in a tornado which traveled from Watertown, CT, to Waterbury, CT, and another powerful (F-4) tornado touched down near Ames NY injuring twenty persons along its 43.5 mile track. It was the strongest tornado of record for eastern New York State. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

2005 - Hurricane Dennis landed near Pensacola, Florida as a category 3 storm. Maximum sustained winds at the time of landfall were near 120 mph. There were nine hurricane-related fatalities in the U.S. and preliminary estimates of insured losses ranged from \$1 to \$1.5 billion.

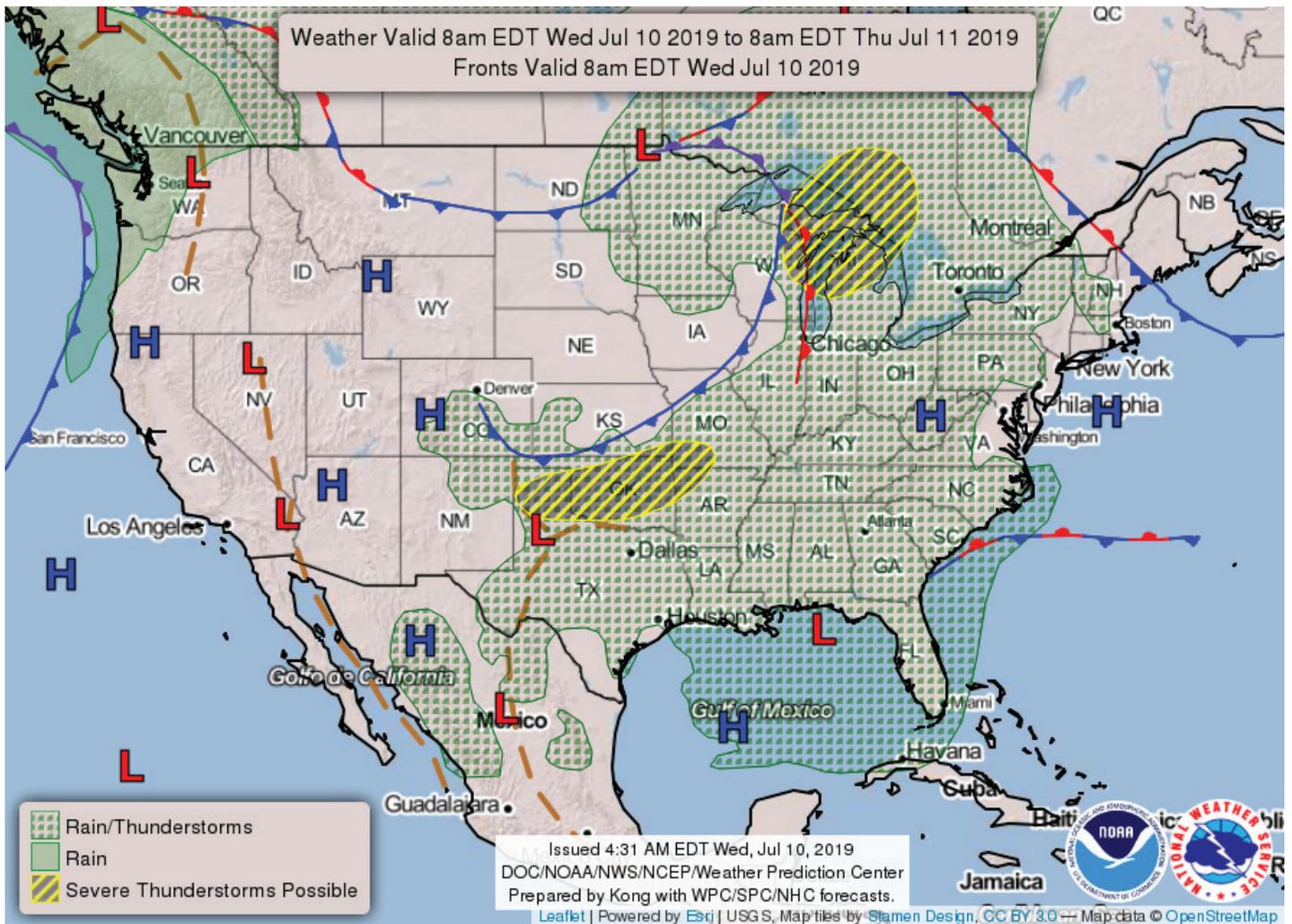
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 81 °F at 4:41 PM
Low Temp: 66 °F at 1:00 AM
Wind: 25 mph at 3:55 AM
Day Rain: 0.05 this morning

Record High: 114° in 1936
Record Low: 42° in 1945
Average High: 83°F
Average Low: 59°F
Average Precip in July.: 0.96
Precip to date in July.: 1.22
Average Precip to date: 11.80
Precip Year to Date: 13.94
Sunset Tonight: 9:23 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:56 a.m.



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DISCIPLINE OR DEATH?

Solomon was widely recognized for his insightful proverbs. There were many who did not worship his God but respected and followed the advice that was embedded in his wisdom. Many of his proverbs were written for his sons. But they were not intended to be limited to them. They were written to provide guidance for all fathers and mothers and children of all times and in all cultures.

A recurring theme throughout Proverbs is the importance of discipline. Solomon often reminds us that self-discipline is a life-long, never-ending necessity. But on one occasion he reminds fathers, which is also intended to include mothers, that there are some children who require life-long discipline which hopefully and eventually may accomplish its purpose. Though it may seem futile and a waste of time and effort, with no results, parents are to persevere!

Discipline your son, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to his death, is a rather stark warning. There may be times when parents think that education or guidance or advice or opportunity or wealth may bring hope for their children's future. But what value are all those things without discipline? The underlying rule to what he is saying is this: The undisciplined life is not worth living because it will certainly end in death!

What a vivid warning: If we who are parents do not make discipline the most important priority in the life of our children, we willingly - and now knowingly - contribute to their death! This is breathtaking and frightening. And notice that there is no age limit to discipline a child. Whenever a child needs discipline, parents are to step in and intervene! A child or adult - is never beyond the need for discipline if it is necessary or required it will honor God.

Discipline may not be accepted and parents must never give up hope. And there is one simple, Biblical rule we are to apply: the if/then rule - If you want our help, then you must honor Him.

Prayer: Its not easy, Father, to be a parent and discipline our children. But You discipline us and are our example. If we want Your blessings, we must obey Your rules. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Proverbs 19:18 Discipline your son, for in that there is hope; do not be a willing party to his death

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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

2 killed in highway washout on reservation

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Authorities say the bodies of two people have been recovered from a washed-out section of highway on a southern North Dakota reservation.

The drivers of two other vehicles were rescued from the floodwaters that collapsed the road on the Standing Rock Reservation in Sioux County.

Flash flooding washed out a 30- to 40-foot section of a road over Joe Brush Creek resulting in a 60- to 70-foot deep drop overnight Monday and early Tuesday. Tribal chairman Mike Faith says the body of Trudy Peterson was recovered late Tuesday. Faith says the body of Jim Vanderwal was recovered hours earlier.

Two others whose vehicles plunged into the hole were rescued from the creek below, including a bus driver and a pickup truck driver. They were taken to hospitals.

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Mega Millions

12-26-40-48-64, Mega Ball: 1, Megaplier: 2

(twelve, twenty-six, forty, forty-eight, sixty-four; Mega Ball: one; Megaplier: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$107 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$180 million

South Dakota regulators OK permit for wind farm construction

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota regulators have approved a permit for construction of a wind farm in the northeastern part of the state.

The South Dakota Public Utilities Commission approved a permit with conditions Tuesday to build the Crowned Ridge Wind Farm.

The proposed wind farm will cover more than 53,000 acres in Grant and Codington counties. The project will be capable of producing as much as 300 megawatts of energy from up to 130 wind turbines.

Northern States Power Co., doing business as Xcel Energy, will purchase energy produced by the wind farm.

Among the conditions the PUC placed on the permit are addressing sound levels and shadow flicker experienced by nearby residents, detecting ice on turbine blades, and monitoring grouse mating areas within the wind farm area once construction is complete.

Crowned Ridge Wind estimates the wind farm will cost \$400 million. Construction is expected to be completed by 2020.

Ban proposed on transporting deer, elk carcasses to curb CWD

FORT PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A new proposal would ban transporting deer and elk carcasses in some parts of South Dakota to help slow the spread of chronic wasting disease.

The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Commission on Tuesday gave preliminary approval to the most restrictive options presented to the commissioners for transporting mule deer, whitetail deer and elk carcasses into and around South Dakota.

A final decision is expected by the commission in September. If approved, the restrictions would go into effect on July 1, 2020, the Argus Leader reported.

Chronic wasting disease, which strikes the nervous system in deer, elk and moose and is fatal to the

animal, has been found in free-ranging deer and elk in southwestern South Dakota. Staff urged the commission to adopt the most restrictive options to slow the disease's spread to the rest of the state.

Wildlife program administrator Chad Switzer said if a hunter transports an infected carcass home and then disposes of it in a slough or shelter belt, the protein that causes the disease can spread to deer or elk in an area that previously was not infected.

Officials don't know how prevalent chronic wasting disease is in South Dakota, but projections based on other states' research are "not looking so rosy," Switzer said. Not much is known about the disease, but the more tha

Pups program brings joy to South Dakota State Penitentiary

By JACK WILLIAMS Sioux Falls Argus Leader

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Nala, a 1-year-old terrier mix, is a ball of energy.

Her tail wagged rapidly as she tried to hold back her excitement inside the visitors' room of the South Dakota State Penitentiary last month. There's a lot to be excited about with new people and other dogs around.

However, she was still sitting and listening to her handler, inmate Justin Goens. Nala likes people and wants to please them, something Goens knows very well and has used to his advantage.

"When she barks or nips, I just turn around and walk away," he said. "She really likes people, so when she's acting up, I just take away what she likes."

Growth, understanding and friendship are all a part of the Paroled Pups program inside the walls of the South Dakota State Penitentiary. Since 2004, the program has provided a home to unwanted dogs and a sense of joy to the inmates.

The program started 15 years ago with four dogs and only one handler. Now, six dogs at the penitentiary work and interact with a handful of inmates inside and outside the grounds of the institution.

Most dogs end up in the program because they need some sort of stability before adoption. Nala was an extremely jumpy dog and had a hard time focusing. Sioux Falls Area Humane Society Officer Andy Oestreich said that sending dogs to the penitentiary helps with stability because they follow a set schedule.

From 5 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily, the dogs are out and about with the inmates. For one hour of the day, the dogs spend time learning simple commands such as sit and stay. Each week a report card is written by the inmate to Oestreich about the dog's progress.

The rest of the day is spent playing and walking around, inside and outside the walls of the prison. This helps the dogs develop a stronger social sense by being in different environments with different people. Oestreich said this aspect is key in developing the adaptability of the dog.

"People take dogs everywhere nowadays," Oestreich said. "Whenever a family is at a park or downtown, they want that dog to behave and not go crazy. The pen is always busy and always has people walking around, so it's a good environment for the dogs to adjust to."

After six months in Paroled Pups, these once un-adoptable dogs have a second chance. The majority of them will find homes with new families while others will continue training to become service dogs. The program offers a second chance many dogs won't receive, as well as giving inmates a friend.

"This program really makes the dog more desirable compared to when they first came to the Humane Society," Oestreich said. "It creates a pet that people want to enjoy and be proud of."

The relationship with the dogs goes far beyond the classroom as inmates look to build a bond.

"One of the things we do is sit in their kennels with them," Goens told the Argus Leader. "Some have been abused and are scared of people, so we sit with them and get them used to us. Once they get used to us, the goal is to bring them to others."

As the dogs begin to gain the trust of their handler, the inmates begin to warm up to the dogs as well. Goens said that even the toughest of inmates break down into a baby voice when a pup comes by.

The training process isn't always enjoyable. There's a lot of patience that comes into training a dog, especially one with behavioral issues.

It might take one dog an hour to learn how to sit, where another dog may need a week. It can be frustrating at take a toll on one's patience.

"Sometimes you expect them to be able to catch on a lot quicker, and they don't," Goens said. "A lot of people think they're doing that to spite you, but they're just being dogs."

The end product does have its benefits not only for the dog, but the handler as well.

"I like seeing them get better," said Kenneth Staab, an inmate and trainer with Paroled Pups. "It lets me know that I know what I'm doing and that I'm picking up what I am learning."

There is a bitter sweet feeling for inmates when a dog leaves the penitentiary at the end of the six month program. It's sad to see the pup leave, but they know that the dog is heading to a good home.

"You grow attached to them because you spend a lot of time with them," Goens said. "You build that relationship with them, and then they're gone. It's sad because you're losing your friend, but you're happy because they're going home."

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

Man accused of driving child to hospital while drunk

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Police say a Sioux Falls man is facing multiple charges after he was accused of driving drunk while rushing a 1-year-old child to the hospital.

Authorities say the driver reached speeds of up to 70 mph in Sioux Falls, drove on the wrong side of a downtown street and sped through a stop sign before arriving at Avera McKennan Hospital Sunday night.

Officers learned the child had accidentally ingested lighter fluid before the 26-year-old man drove him to the hospital. A preliminary breath test indicated the man had a blood alcohol content of 0.16, twice the legal limit to drive.

The Argus Leader reports police are recommending charges of child abuse, reckless driving and driving while intoxicated.

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

Iran warns Britain of 'repercussions' over ship seizure

By NASSER KARIMI Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iran's president said Wednesday that Britain will face "repercussions" over the seizure of an Iranian supertanker last week that authorities in Gibraltar suspect was breaching European sanctions on oil shipments to Syria.

Hassan Rouhani was quoted by the official IRNA news agency as calling the seizure "mean and wrong" during a Cabinet meeting. "You are an initiator of insecurity and you will understand its repercussions," he warned the British government, calling for the "full security" of international shipping lanes.

The tanker's detention comes at a particularly sensitive time as tensions between the U.S. and Iran grow over the unraveling of the 2015 nuclear deal, from which President Donald Trump withdrew last year. In recent weeks, Iran has begun to openly breach limits on uranium enrichment set by the deal in order to pressure European signatories to salvage it.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif meanwhile denied the supertanker belonged to Iran, saying whoever owned the oil shipment and the vessel could pursue the case through legal avenues. Iran had earlier summoned the British ambassador over what it called the "illegal interception" of the ship.

The latest U.S.-Iranian tensions date back to last year, when Trump withdrew from the nuclear accord and restored heavy sanctions on Iran, including its oil industry, exacerbating an economic crisis that has sent the currency plummeting.

A senior Iranian security official said Wednesday that Iran will not reverse its decision to increase uranium enrichment beyond the limits set by the accord until it achieves its "full rights" under the deal.

Ali Shamkhani told a French envoy that the decision to increase enrichment is an "unchangeable strategy"

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and criticized European countries for their "lack of will" in providing relief from U.S. sanctions, according to the official IRNA news agency.

France and other countries have called on Iran to go back to complying with the nuclear deal. Emmanuel Bonne, a French presidential envoy, is in Iran this week for talks aimed at resolving the crisis.

In the deal with world powers negotiated by the Obama administration, Iran had agreed to curb its nuclear activities in return for sanctions relief. It has offered to return to the agreement, but Trump has long rejected the deal, saying it was too generous to Tehran and did not address its involvement in regional conflicts.

In May, the United States dispatched a carrier group, bombers and fighter jets to the Persian Gulf region in response to alleged Iranian threats. The U.S. has accused Iran of involvement in the bombing of oil tankers in the Gulf and says it shot down an American drone in international airspace. Iran denies any involvement in the attacks on the tankers and says the drone had veered into its airspace.

Iran is a key ally of Syrian President Bashar Assad's government, which is under Western sanctions linked to attacks on civilians during the country's civil war.

AP Interview: Rising Iran politician has intelligence ties

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Iran's first government minister born after its 1979 Islamic Revolution is a carefully manicured, charming internet engineer who posts Instagram pictures of his weekends with his family and spends 30 minutes a day reading letters from his constituents.

He also used to work for the Intelligence Ministry.

Meet Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi, whose quick rise through the Islamic Republic's carefully managed political system already is generating speculation he could be a candidate for Iran's 2021 presidential campaign.

From his current post as information and communications technology minister, Jahromi oversees Iran's tightly controlled internet and a satellite program that the U.S. alleges serves as a cover for experiments on intercontinental ballistic missiles capable of carrying nuclear warheads.

Despite being heralded as a new, accessible civilian face in a Shiite theocracy that is now 40 years old, Jahromi's past as an intelligence officer has raised political concern. The 37-year-old politician doesn't see it that way.

"Many politicians around the world have served in their intelligence services," Jahromi said in an interview with The Associated Press in Tehran this week. "The current U.S. secretary of state has worked as the CIA chief. Mr. (Vladimir) Putin as the Russian president used to be at the KGB. Is there any problem with background in the Iranian intelligence apparatus?"

Jahromi made a point several times in the interview to simply describe himself as an engineer. However, during his parliamentary confirmation hearings in 2017, he acknowledged helping design the ministry's surveillance systems. He left the ministry in 2009, the year of former hard-line President Mahmoud Ahmadi-najad's disputed re-election, which sparked mass protests that were violently suppressed.

European nations and Iranian exile groups accuse the Intelligence Ministry of involvement in assassinations abroad and spying campaigns since its founding. In Iran's political system, it serves under the direction of elected officials headed by the president, now the relatively moderate cleric Hassan Rouhani. That's contrasted to other intelligence services like those under Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, which answers only to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

The Guard and the Intelligence Ministry routinely find themselves at odds. The Guard has been behind the internationally criticized arrests of Iranian dual nationals and those with Western ties.

Jahromi defended his work, but did not go into detail in describing it.

"Other politicians who might consider this as a negative point have taken part in operations against the people and there is lots of evidence on their actions against humanity," Jahromi said, without elaborating.

So far, Jahromi has been able to avoid widespread criticism and "appears to represent a new generation

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of technocrats in Iran's political elite," said Adnan Tabatabai, an Iran analyst based in Germany who is the CEO of the Center for Applied Research in Partnership with the Orient.

"He has managed to overcome this negative image," Tabatabai told the AP. "He is very interactive with ordinary social media users on Twitter and Instagram, doesn't shy away from back-and-forth messages on both platforms."

From his post at the ministry, Jahromi oversees the internet in Iran. He maintains a Twitter account, like other top Iranian officials such as Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, and interacts with those messaging him. Jahromi occasionally makes news in a country where all radio and TV stations remain state-controlled.

Twitter has been banned for the Iranian public since the 2009 unrest, something many circumvent by using virtual private networks and other workarounds. Jahromi says Twitter should be unblocked and blames the judiciary's fears of the microblogging site for keeping the block in place.

"We believe that this is a very effective network and the fact that I use it means that we think it is effective," he said. "I believe efforts should be made to make access possible for everyone."

Jahromi also framed the block as a national security risk, saying Gulf Arab states and Iranian exile groups exploit the absence of Iranian voices on the site. About 46 million Iranians use the internet and access unblocked social media, predominantly through mobile phones.

"Today, the small states of this region, which are the cradles of dictatorship and have no free elections in them, are investing a lot in social networking to promote Iranophobia in the region," Jahromi said. "They have organized networks and do psychological work to mislead (world leaders) about what the Iranian public is thinking."

Iran plans to launch three satellites this year, two that do remote-sensing work and another that handles communications, Jahromi said. While his ministry is responsible for building the satellites, the Guard's aerospace program launches them from the Imam Khomeini Space Center in Semnan province. Two satellite launches earlier this year failed to reach orbit.

The U.S. alleges such launches defy a U.N. Security Council resolution calling on Iran to undertake no activity related to ballistic missiles capable of delivering nuclear weapons.

Iran, which long has said it does not seek nuclear weapons, maintains its satellite launches and rocket tests do not have a military component. Tehran also says they don't violate a U.N. resolution that only "called upon" it not to conduct such tests.

Jahromi stressed that Iran's program is "peaceful."

"Iran's missile program is transparent and it doesn't have any hidden dimensions," he said.

His ministry also controls internet access in Iran, where Western websites are slowed or otherwise filtered. He acknowledged reports of a recent uptick in U.S. cyberattacks on the country amid tensions over the unraveling of the 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, but said Iran has continued to fend off such assaults.

"No one doubts America's evilness in attacking our infrastructure," Jahromi said, mentioning the suspected U.S. and Israeli Stuxnet attack targeting its centrifuges prior to the nuclear deal. "They always use cyber-weapons against other countries and they are carrying out cyberterrorism in the world as a government."

Jahromi appears to have aspirations beyond his current position. Tabatabai and others suggest he could run in the 2021 presidential election, assuming he's allowed to by the candidate-vetting Guardian Council.

"I believe that Iran's security and military establishment has been more active in creating a new modern political breed," Tabatabai said. "This is bad news for questions like political liberalization and meaningful social and cultural reform. But it may in fact be good news for that vast majority of Iranians who are desperately hoping for a government that can get deeply rooted structural and economic problems solved - with corruption and unemployment being central parts of it."

Jahromi started a program allowing people to write him postage-free at his office and he said he spends 30 minutes a day reading and responding to letters, a habit of former U.S. President Barack Obama. Two letters hung taped to the wall in his office, one including a child's drawing of an Iranian fist punching

through a U.S. flag.

"Those who do not want to be up-to-date with the current world where everyone is connected to each other . might like to say that Mr. Jahromi's activities are aimed at future purposes," he said in Farsi, referring to those who criticize his online activity. "I have no problem with their speculations."

Pressed on his answer, Jahromi smiled and answered in English: "I think I said something that is good for you."

Associated Press producer Mohammad Nasiri and writer Amir Vahdat contributed.

UK ambassador to US quits days after leaked cables on Trump

LONDON (AP) — Britain's ambassador to the United States resigned Wednesday, just days after diplomatic cables criticizing President Donald Trump caused embarrassment to two countries that often celebrate having a "special relationship."

The resignation of Kim Darroch came a day after Trump lashed out at him on Twitter describing him as "wacky" and a "pompous fool" after leaked documents revealed the envoy's dim view of Trump's administration.

"I am grateful to all those in the UK and the US, who have offered their support during this difficult few days," Darroch said in a letter. "This has brought home to me the depth of friendship and close ties between our two countries. I have been deeply touched."

Prime Minister Theresa May said it was a "matter of regret" that Darroch resigned.

Darroch's forthright, unfiltered views on the U.S. administration — meant for a limited audience and discreet review — appeared in leaked diplomatic documents that were published in Britain's Mail on Sunday newspaper.

Trump combined criticism of Darroch with a broadside at May, chiding the British leader for failing to get her Brexit deal with the European Union through Parliament.

"I told @theresa_may how to do that deal, but she went her own foolish way-was unable to get it done. A disaster!" Trump tweeted Tuesday. "I don't know the Ambassador but have been told he is a pompous fool."

The resignation offers May a chance to replace him before she leaves office at the end of July.

Trump directing government to revamp care for kidney disease

By LAURAN NEERGAARD AP Medical Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is directing the government to revamp the nation's care for kidney disease, so that more people whose kidneys fail have a chance at early transplants and home dialysis — along with better prevention so patients don't get that sick to begin with.

Senior administration officials told The Associated Press that Trump is set to sign an executive order Wednesday calling for strategies that have the potential to save lives and millions of Medicare dollars.

That won't happen overnight — some of the initiatives will require new government regulations.

And because a severe organ shortage complicates the call for more transplants, the administration also aims to ease financial hardships for living donors, said the officials, who spoke on the condition of anonymity ahead of the announcement.

Another key change: steps to help the groups that collect deceased donations do a better job. Officials cited a study that suggests long term it may be possible to find 17,000 more kidneys and 11,000 other organs from deceased donors for transplant every year.

Federal health officials have made clear for months that they intend to shake up a system that today favors expensive, time-consuming dialysis in large centers over easier-to-tolerate at-home care or transplants that help patients live longer.

"Right now every financial incentive is toward dialysis and not toward transplantation and long-term survivorship," Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar, whose father experienced traditional and

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at-home dialysis before getting a living donor transplant, told a Senate hearing in March. "And you get what you pay for."

About 30 million American adults have chronic kidney disease, costing Medicare a staggering \$113 billion.

Careful treatment — including control of diabetes and high blood pressure, the two main culprits — can help prevent further kidney deterioration. But more than 700,000 people have end-stage renal disease, meaning their kidneys have failed, and require either a transplant or dialysis to survive. Only about a third received specialized kidney care before they got so sick.

More than 94,000 of the 113,000 people on the national organ waiting list need a kidney. Last year, there were 21,167 kidney transplants. A fraction — 6,442 — were from living donors, according to the United Network for Organ Sharing, which oversees the nation's transplant system.

"The longer you're on dialysis, the outcomes are worse," said Dr. Amit Tevar, a transplant surgeon at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, who praised the Trump administration initiatives being announced Wednesday.

Too often, transplant centers don't see a kidney patient until they've been on dialysis for years, he said. And while any transplant is preferable, one from a living donor is best because those organs "work better, longer and faster," Tevar said.

Among the initiatives that take effect first:

—Medicare payment changes that would provide a financial incentive for doctors and clinics to help kidney patients stave off end-stage disease by about six months.

—A bonus to kidney specialists who help prepare patients for early transplant, with steps that can begin even before they need dialysis.

—Additional Medicare changes so that dialysis providers can earn as much by helping patients get dialysis at home as in the large centers that predominate today. Patients typically must spend hours three or four times a week hooked to machines that filter waste out of their blood.

Home options include portable blood-cleansing machines, or what's called peritoneal dialysis that works through an abdominal tube, usually while patients are sleeping.

Today, about 14% of patients in kidney failure get at-home dialysis or an early transplant. By 2025, the goal is to have 80% of people with newly diagnosed kidney failure getting one of those options, officials said.

These changes are being implemented through Medicare's innovation center, created under the Obama-era Affordable Care Act and empowered to seek savings and improved quality. The Trump administration is relying on the innovation center even as it argues in federal court that the law that created it is unconstitutional and should be struck down entirely.

Other initiatives will require new regulations, expected to be proposed later this year. Among them:

—Allowing reimbursement of lost wages and other expenses for living donors, who can give one of their kidneys or a piece of their liver. The transplant recipient's insurance pays the donor's medical bills. But they are out of work for weeks recuperating and one study found more than a third of living kidney donors reported lost wages, a median of \$2,712, in the year following donation. Details about who pays — and who qualifies — still have to be worked out.

—Clearer ways to measure how well the nation's 58 organ procurement organizations collect donations from deceased donors. Some do a better job than others, but today's performance standards are self-reported, varying around the country and making it hard for government regulators or the OPOs themselves to take steps to improve.

"Some OPOs are very aggressive and move forward with getting organs allocated and donors consented, and there are those that are a little more lackadaisical about it," said Pittsburgh's Tevar. Unlike the medical advances in transplantation, "we haven't really made big dents and progress and moves in increasing cadaveric organs or increasing live donor options."

Associated Press writer Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar contributed to this report.

Judge blocks 9 government lawyers from quitting census fight

By LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The Justice Department can't replace nine lawyers so late in the dispute over whether to add a citizenship question to the 2020 census without explaining why it's doing so, a judge says.

U.S. District Judge Jesse M. Furman, who earlier this year ruled against adding the citizenship question, put the brakes on the government's plan on Tuesday, a day after he was given a three-paragraph notification by the Justice Department along with a prediction that the replacement of lawyers wouldn't "cause any disruption in this matter."

"Defendants provide no reasons, let alone 'satisfactory reasons,' for the substitution of counsel," Furman wrote, noting that the most immediate deadline for government lawyers to submit written arguments in the case is only three days away.

The judge said local rules for federal courts in New York City require that any attorney requesting to leave a case provide satisfactory reasons for withdrawing. The judge must then decide what impact a lawyer's withdrawal will have on the timing of court proceedings.

He called the Justice Department's request "patently deficient," except for two lawyers who have left the department or the civil division which is handling the case.

President Donald Trump tweeted about the judge's decision Tuesday night, questioning whether the attorney change denial was unprecedented.

"So now the Obama appointed judge on the Census case (Are you a Citizen of the United States?) won't let the Justice Department use the lawyers that it wants to use. Could this be a first?" Trump tweeted.

The new team came about after a top Justice Department civil attorney who was leading the litigation effort told Attorney General William Barr that multiple people on the team preferred not to continue, Barr told The Associated Press on Monday.

The attorney who was leading the team, James Burnham, "indicated it was a logical breaking point since a new decision would be made and the issue going forward would hopefully be separate from the historical debates," Barr said.

Furman's refusal came in a case that has proceeded on an unusual legal path since numerous states and municipalities across the country challenged the government's announcement early last year that it intended to add the citizenship question to the census for the first time since 1950.

Opponents of the question say it will depress participation by immigrants, lowering the population count in states that tend to vote Democratic and decreasing government funds to those areas because funding levels are based on population counts.

At one point, the Justice Department succeeded in getting the Supreme Court to block plans to depose Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross. Nearly two weeks ago, the Supreme Court temporarily blocked the plans to add the census question, saying the administration's justification for adding the question "seems to have been contrived."

Afterward, the Commerce Department's Census Bureau began printing census questionnaires without the question and the Department of Justice signaled it would not attempt to continue the legal fight.

It reversed itself after Trump promised to keep trying to add the question.

The Justice Department then notified judges in three similar legal challenges that it planned to find a new legal path to adding the question to the census.

Furman said the urgency to resolve legal claims and the need for efficient judicial proceedings was an important consideration in rejecting a replacement of lawyers.

He said the Justice Department had insisted that the speedy resolution of lawsuits against adding the question was "a matter of great private and public importance."

"If anything, that urgency — and the need for efficient judicial proceedings — has only grown since that time," Furman said.

Furman said the government could re-submit its request to replace attorneys only with a sworn statement by each lawyer explaining satisfactory reasons to withdraw so late. He said he'll require new attorneys to promise personnel changes will not slow the case.

Associated Press Writer Mike Balsamo in Washington contributed to this report.

Trump defends Acosta but will look 'closely' at Epstein deal

By JILL COLVIN and ALAN FRAM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump says he'll be looking "very closely" at Labor Secretary Alex Acosta's handling of a sex trafficking case involving now-jailed billionaire financier Jeffrey Epstein. But he also seemed to stand by his Cabinet official, praising Acosta's performance on the job and saying he felt "very badly" for him.

As for Epstein, Trump — who had once praised the financier as "a terrific guy" — distanced himself from the hedge fund manager now charged with abusing minors, saying the two had had a falling-out 15 or so years ago.

"I was not a fan of his, that I can tell you," Trump said.

His comments on Tuesday came as a parade of Democratic presidential contenders and party leaders demanded that Acosta, a former federal prosecutor in south Florida, resign or be fired over his role in a secret 2008 plea deal that let Epstein avoid federal prosecution after allegations he molested teenage girls.

Epstein pleaded not guilty on Monday to new child sex-trafficking charges. Federal prosecutors in New York accuse him of abusing dozens of underage girls in the early 2000s, paying them hundreds of dollars in cash for massages and then molesting them at his homes in Florida and New York. He could face up to 45 years in prison if convicted.

Speaking to reporters Tuesday, Trump repeatedly praised Acosta, calling him a "really great secretary of labor" and "very good" at his job. He suggested it's not unusual to find past mistakes if you look hard enough.

"You know, if you go back and look at everybody else's decisions, whether it's a U.S. attorney, or an assistant U.S. attorney or a judge, if you go back 12 or 15 years ago or 20 years ago and look at their past decisions, I would think you would probably find that they would wish they'd maybe did it a different way," said Trump.

In sympathetic words that seemed to echo his statements of support for then-Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh, who had been accused of sexual misconduct as a young man, Trump also said he felt "very badly" for Acosta "because I've known him as being somebody that works so hard and has done such a good job."

Still, he said his administration would be going back to look "very closely" at the circumstances of the deal that allowed Epstein to avoid prosecution on federal charges, plead guilty to lesser state charges and serve 13 months in jail, during which he was allowed to leave to go to his office during the day.

Former Trump Press Secretary Sarah Sanders had said in February that the White House was looking into Acosta's role in the settlement. The White House has not responded to repeated questions about whether there ever was such an investigation, and, if there was, what it found.

Acosta himself weighed in Tuesday on Twitter, ignoring the calls for his resignation and crediting the charges brought against Epstein in New York to new evidence that "offers an important opportunity to more fully bring him to justice."

"The crimes committed by Epstein are horrific, and I am pleased that NY prosecutors are moving forward with a case based on new evidence," he tweeted.

On Capitol Hill, a slew of Democrats called for Acosta's resignation, including House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who accused him on Twitter of having "engaged in an unconscionable agreement w/ Jeffrey Epstein kept secret from courageous, young victims preventing them from seeking justice."

She told reporters Tuesday that it was "no surprise" Trump was standing by Acosta. "He knew about this when he nominated him for the Cabinet," she said. "It just goes to show."

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said Trump should explain his previous comments praising Epstein.

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"The president needs to answer for this, and 'I don't recall' is not an acceptable answer in this case," the New York Democrat said on the Senate floor.

Trump in 2002 told New York Magazine he'd known Epstein for 15 years, describing him as "a lot of fun to be with."

"It is even said that he likes beautiful women as much as I do, and many of them are on the younger side. No doubt about it - Jeffrey enjoys his social life," Trump was quoted saying. The two were also photographed together at parties in the 1990s and early 2000s.

Senate Republicans were critical of Epstein's alleged offenses, yet many were noncommittal about whether Acosta should retain his job.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., said he was "inclined to defer to the president to make that decision." Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., suggested his panel might examine Acosta's plea deal "to find out how it got off the rails."

Trump Organization attorney Alan Garten has since distanced Trump from Epstein, telling Politico in 2017 that Trump "had no relationship with Mr. Epstein and had no knowledge whatsoever of his conduct."

Epstein's personal address book, copies of which have been included in legal filings, lists multiple private numbers for contacting Trump, his wife Melania and daughter Ivanka, as well as Trump's butler, executive assistant and security staff.

Pressed on the nature of their relationship Tuesday, Trump said he'd known Epstein "like everybody in Palm Beach knew him," describing him as "a fixture" of the beachfront town where Trump spends many of his winter weekends at his private Mar-a-Lago club.

Trump went on to say that he'd had a falling-out with Epstein "a long time ago."

"I don't think I've spoken to him for 15 years. I wasn't a fan," Trump said.

The White House and Trump Organization did not immediately respond to questions about the nature of that conflict. But in court documents, a Florida lawyer representing several of Epstein's alleged victims contended the Wall Street financier was barred from Mar-a-Lago after an unspecified incident involving a teenage girl.

In a 2009 lawsuit filed by a different lawyer, a woman identified in legal filings as Jane Doe No. 102 claimed she was 15 and working a part-time job at Mar-a-Lago when she was recruited in 1998 to go to Epstein's Palm Beach mansion to provide him a massage. The woman, whose father was a maintenance manager at Trump's club, said she was then kept by Epstein as a sex slave for the next four years. The woman's case against Epstein was later settled for undisclosed terms.

As Trump campaigned for president in June 2016, a California woman filed suit against both Trump and Epstein, claiming she had sexual encounters with Trump at Epstein's sprawling New York mansion on at least four occasions in the summer of 1994, when she was 13 years old. Trump denied the allegations, and the woman's lawyer filed paperwork to voluntarily withdraw the lawsuit shortly before the November election.

That lawyer, Thomas Meagher of Princeton, New Jersey, declined Monday to comment about the case or say why it was withdrawn.

Associated Press writers Michael Biesecker, Darlene Superville and Kevin Freking contributed to this report.

China's largesse in Tonga threatens future of Pacific nation

By NICK PERRY Associated Press

NUKU'ALOFA, Tonga (AP) — The days unfold at a leisurely pace in Tonga, a South Pacific archipelago with no traffic lights or fast-food chains. Snuffling pigs roam dusty roads that wind through villages dotted with churches.

Yet even in this far-flung island kingdom there are signs that a battle for power and influence is heating up among much larger nations — and Tonga may end up paying the price.

In the capital, Nuku'alofa, government officials work in a shiny new office block — an \$11 million gift from China that is rivaled in grandeur only by China's imposing new embassy complex.

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Dozens of Tongan bureaucrats take all-expenses-paid training trips to Beijing each year, and China has laid out millions of dollars to bring 107 Tongan athletes and coaches to a training camp in China's Sichuan province ahead of this month's Pacific Games in Samoa.

"The best facilities. The gym, the track, and a lot of equipment we don't have here in Tonga," said Tevita Fauonuku, the country's head athletic coach. "The accommodation: lovely, beautiful. And the meals. Not only that, but China gave each and everyone some money. A per diem."

China also offered low-interest loans after pro-democracy rioters destroyed much of downtown Nuku'alofa in 2006, and analysts say those loans could prove Tonga's undoing. The country of 106,000 people owes some \$108 million to China's Export-Import bank, equivalent to about 25% of GDP.

The U.S. ambassador to Australia, Arthur Culvahouse Jr., calls China's lending in the Pacific "payday loan diplomacy."

"The money looks attractive and easy upfront, but you better read the fine print," he said.

China's ambassador to Tonga, Wang Baodong, said China was the only country willing to step up to help Tonga during its time of need.

Graeme Smith, a specialist in Chinese investment in the Pacific, is not convinced China tried to trap Tonga in debt, saying its own financial mismanagement is as much to blame.

Nonetheless, he said it's worrying that the nation of 171 islands, already vulnerable to costly natural disasters, has little ability to repay.

Why is China pouring money into Tonga?

Teisina Fuko, a 69-year-old former parliament member, suspects China finds his country's location useful. "I think Tonga is maybe a window to the Western side," he said. "Because it's easy to get here and look into New Zealand, Australia."

"It's a steppingstone," he said.

For decades, the South Pacific was considered the somewhat sleepy backyard of Australia, New Zealand and the United States. Now, as China exerts increasing influence, Western allies are responding.

Experts say there hasn't been this level of geopolitical competition in the region since the U.S. and Japan were bombing each other's occupied atolls.

"We haven't seen anything like this since World War II," said Smith, a research fellow at Australian National University.

After Cyclone Gita destroyed Tonga's historic Parliament House last year, the government first suggested China might like to pay to rebuild it. Then Australia and New Zealand stepped in and are now considering jointly funding the project.

Elsewhere in the region, Australia is redeveloping a Papua New Guinea naval base while New Zealand has announced it will spend an extra \$500 million on overseas aid over four years, with most of it directed at South Pacific nations.

Rory Medcalf, the head of the National Security College at Australian National University, said the area could provide a security bridgehead for China's navy, which currently must sail through the U.S.-friendly islands of Japan, Taiwan and the Philippines to get to the Pacific.

Other possible explanations, Medcalf said, include the region's fisheries, seabed minerals and other natural resources, as well as China's ongoing effort to lure away the few remaining countries that recognize Taiwan instead of China — several of them Pacific island nations.

"It's not entirely clear what China wants in the South Pacific," Medcalf said. "It's just clear that China is becoming very active and making its presence felt."

China has poured about \$1.5 billion in aid and low-interest loans into the South Pacific since 2011, putting it behind only Australia, according to an analysis by Australian think-tank the Lowy Institute. And that figure rises to over \$6 billion when future commitments are included.

China's use of loans and aid to gain influence in developing nations worldwide is nothing new, as illustrated by Chinese-financed projects from Africa to Latin America and the Asian subcontinent.

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Some worry that these can become debt traps when nations can't repay. In Sri Lanka, for example, the government was forced to hand over control of its Hambantota port as it struggles to repay loans it got from China to build the facility — a move that has given Beijing a strategic foothold within hundreds of miles of rival India.

Wang said China has only benevolent intentions in Tonga and no hidden agenda. "Some people in the West are being over-sensitive and too suspicious," he said. "No need."

It's not just money flowing in from China. Chinese immigrants began arriving in the 1990s when Tonga started selling passports.

The passports, which went for about \$10,000 each, were aimed at attracting wealthy Hong Kong residents hedging their bets ahead of the former British colony's return to China in 1997. Instead, they were snapped up by rural Chinese looking for a better life — and who now compete with native Tongans for scarce jobs.

Chinese immigrants already run most of the dozens of hole-in-the-wall groceries dotting the islands, selling cheap imports like potato chips and canned meat. And Tongans worry they are now expanding into farming and construction.

Most Tongans live a subsistence existence in a nation where the king is revered and people take Christianity so seriously that working on Sundays is, with few exceptions, banned under the constitution. The economy relies on foreign aid and cash sent home by Tongans working abroad.

And the Chinese loans haven't changed that because the money went to Chinese-run projects, Fuko said. "They brought the money, they brought the workers, they brought the building materials," he said. "Maybe a few Tongans pulled wheelbarrows."

Wang acknowledged the criticism that Chinese immigrants run many businesses but said Tonga's leaders recognize the contribution they make and have even called on Tongans to learn from their hard-work ethic.

Tonga never benefited from the passport money, either. A former financial adviser to the government, American Jesse Bogdonoff, helped place about \$26 million into speculative investments and almost all of it evaporated.

The real threat to Tonga's future may lie in its crippling loans from China.

In December 2017, the International Monetary Fund increased Tonga's debt distress rating from moderate to high risk, citing its vulnerability to natural disasters and noting that the large upcoming loan repayments to China would reduce Tonga's foreign exchange reserves, double its debt-servicing costs, and could force the country to borrow yet more money.

Repayments were due to start last year, and panic crept in.

In August, Prime Minister 'Akilisi Pohiva called on other Pacific nations to join forces to demand debt relief, warning that China could snatch away buildings and other assets. But he reversed his position days later, saying Tonga was "exceedingly grateful" for China's help.

Within months Tonga announced it had been given a reprieve and didn't need to start repayments for another five years.

Tonga also said it was joining China's Belt and Road Initiative, the trillion-dollar global investment and lending program that is a signature policy of President Xi Jinping.

Tongan officials don't seem eager to discuss the relationship with China. The prime minister withdrew from an interview with The Associated Press because of an illness, while Finance Minister Pohiva Tu'ionetoa cancelled at the last minute due to "something urgent." The chief secretary to the prime minister's office, Edgar Cocker, agreed to meet but then quickly asked a reporter to leave, saying he wasn't authorized to speak for the government.

Cocker said all questions about China's loans and aid should be directed to Chinese officials.

Wang said there was no link between Tonga getting a break on its loans and joining the Belt and Road Initiative. He said Tonga had raised concerns about the loan, and China was willing to help.

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Tonga's immediate financial crisis has been averted, but Fuko thinks the loans have given China the upper hand.

"I don't know how we are going to pay that back," the former lawmaker said.

An unintended consequence of Tonga's China loans could be a reduction in foreign investment and withering of the revenues needed to pay them back.

Take the Scenic Hotel. One of the few large hotels on the main island of Tongatapu, it abruptly closed its doors in March in a setback to the key tourism industry.

Brendan Taylor, managing director of the New Zealand-based Scenic Hotel Group, said one problem was the new Foreign Exchange Control Act Tonga introduced last year.

Designed to keep money in the country and protect its currency during financial emergencies, it was enacted as Tonga prepared to begin making the Chinese loan repayments.

"The issue you have got in Tonga is that no overseas companies are keen to go in," Taylor said. "They've cut out investors."

He said the hotel got a large insurance payout after it was hit by Cyclone Gita. But the new law created legal hurdles to move money out of Tonga to pay New Zealand suppliers for repairs and so the payout languished in a Tongan trust account, he said.

Tonga-based lawyer Ralph Stephenson said that while the law isn't being enforced, it's still spooking investors.

"The penalties for breaching the act are Draconian, in terms of fines that can be imposed, and also in so far as the act actually affords the courts the power to forfeit property," he said.

Wang said any suggestion that China might be engaged in a Pacific power struggle with the West or using Tonga to keep tabs or even spy on New Zealand and Australia is nonsense.

"Tonga is a small country. It's almost impossible to hide any secret," Wang said. "For some of our Western friends, personally, I think they should be confident in their relations and influence in this region."

If China sees any strategic importance to Tonga, it was the country's recognition that Taiwan is part of China, he said. Tonga switched from recognizing Taiwan and established formal diplomatic relations with Beijing in 1998.

China's economic success has allowed it to build new embassies around the world and too much shouldn't be read into the size of its new embassy in Tonga, Wang said.

He said that over the past 20 years, diplomatic relations between China and Tonga have widened to include infrastructure, trade, education and sports. He doesn't see it as a case of larger countries jockeying for influence.

"I don't think so," he said. "Just whoever is able to provide assistance for the goodness of the Tongan people."

But for Ola Koloj, who runs a tourist lodge, China's footprint is too pervasive, influencing what she can buy since so many goods for sale come from China.

She said the China loans should worry every Tongan.

"I feel like I'll be Chinese soon," she said.

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press undefined

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

1. CABINET MEMBER UNDER FIRE AS EPSTEIN CASE REAPPRAISED

President Trump said he would be looking "very closely" at Labor Secretary Alex Acosta's handling of a sex trafficking case involving now-jailed billionaire financier Jeffrey Epstein. But he also praised Acosta's performance on the job and saying he felt "very badly" for him.

2. DEMS STRUGGLING TO PUT HOUSE IN ORDER

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In what could be a momentary blip or a foreshadowing of divisions to come, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez are speaking at one another in a way that threatens party unity and underscores broader tensions reshaping the Democrats.

3. WHERE GUN CONTROL IS HIGH ON THE AGENDA

Deep-pocketed interest groups and activists on both sides of the long-running fight over gun laws are gearing up for a major clash in Virginia, now a key election battleground in the issue.

4. WHO COULD GO FROM SPY TO NATIONAL LEADER

Mohammad Javad Azari Jahromi, an internet engineer who could be a candidate for Iran's 2021 presidential campaign, tells The AP in an interview that his past work helping design the Intelligence Ministry's surveillance systems should not be a concern.

5. WHICH FISH SEE A DRAMATIC REVERSAL OF FORTUNE?

Sturgeon were America's vanishing dinosaurs, armor-plated beasts that crowded the nation's rivers until mankind's craving for caviar pushed them to the edge of extinction. Now, some populations of the massive bottom feeding fish are showing signs of recovery in the dark corners of U.S. waterways.

6. POLYNESIAN KINGDOM THREATENED BY CRIPPLING LOANS FROM BEIJING

Tonga, a South Pacific archipelago with no traffic lights or fast-food chains, is a country of 106,000 people which could be undone by debts of some \$108 million to China's Export-Import bank, equivalent to about 25% of GDP.

7. DETERMINED REPORTERS STILL DIGGING DEEP

The Miami Herald's stories on sex trafficking charges against billionaire financier Jeffrey Epstein illustrate a counter-intuitive trend: Investigative journalism is thriving as the news media industry struggles.

8. TIME-HONORED ARTISTRIES DISAPPEARING IN GAZA

For decades, traditional crafts like clay pottery, colorful glassware and bamboo furniture defined the economy of the coastal Palestinian enclave, but today the industries are almost non-existent.

9. BRING ON THE CONFETTI

The U.S. women's national soccer team will reign supreme once again Wednesday in New York City's Canyon of Heroes, inspiring another ticker tape parade in lower Manhattan to celebrate its historic World Cup win.

10. NOTABLE THESPIAN PASSES ON

Rip Torn, the free-spirited Texan who overcame his quirky name to become a distinguished actor in theater, television and movies and win an Emmy in his 60s, has died. He was 88.

Biden earned more than \$15 million after leaving White House

By STEPHEN BRAUN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Joe Biden and his wife, Jill, took in more than \$15 million since leaving the Obama White House, according to newly released documents, catapulting the Democratic presidential candidate into millionaire status and denting the working-class aura he's developed over decades.

Long fond of describing himself as "Middle Class Joe" while he took in little more than his government salary, the former vice president stressed his working-class roots from the very beginning of his bid for his party's 2020 presidential nomination. But federal tax returns and a financial disclosure released Tuesday show that since Biden left public office, his income has surged thanks to a lucrative book deal and constant publicity tours that brought in more than \$4 million.

Biden's disclosure showed that he also made at least \$2.7 million in business income as part of his publicity tour and writing and took a \$425,000 salary from CelticCapri Corp., the business entity the Bidens used for their post-White House work.

Since leaving the White House, Biden and his wife signed a multibook deal with Flatiron Books valued at \$8 million, according to Publishers Weekly. Biden's first book, an account of his son Beau's death from cancer, briefly topped bestseller lists in 2017. He and his wife have also worked on two other book projects.

Biden earned \$540,000 as a professor and namesake of the University of Pennsylvania's Penn Biden

Center for Diplomacy and Global Engagement. Jill Biden made at least \$700,000 in her own speaking engagements, the disclosure shows.

Joe Biden's basic speaking fee was reportedly \$100,000 a speech, but his disclosure showed that while some appearances were priced as low as the \$40,000 range, others ranged as high as \$190,000 for a lecture at Drew University in New Jersey.

Biden's last financial disclosure, filed in 2016 during his final year as vice president, showed that even after eight years at his \$230,000-a-year government salary, Biden held significant personal debt. The 2016 disclosure revealed financial assets worth more than \$273,000 — including a \$150,000 rental property — and more than \$750,000 in debt. Those liabilities included a recent mortgage worth more than \$500,000 on the rental property and a recent \$250,000 home equity loan.

But much of that debt has been paid off, according to the latest disclosure, which showed only two old loans, each worth no more than \$15,000 and dating to the 1980s.

Biden's three newly available tax returns, for 2016, 2017 and 2018, show that his family income jumped from \$400,000 in 2016 to \$11 million in 2017 as a result of his book deal.

Biden's most recent federal tax return had been released by the Obama administration in 2015. He and Jill Biden paid \$85,000 in federal taxes on \$390,000 in income, which includes both their salaries and nearly \$19,000 in rental income. The Bidens that year held less than \$25,000 in investments and gave nearly \$7,000 to charity.

The Bidens also donated between \$100,000 and \$499,000 to the Biden Foundation, a family based nonprofit, since its launch in November 2016, according to the charity's website. The Bidens set up the nonprofit to advance political and cultural issues aligned with his political interests, but the couple suspended the foundation's operations last April to concentrate on Biden's presidential campaign.

Pelosi feud with Ocasio-Cortez tests party heading into 2020

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — They don't talk to each other much, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. But they're lately speaking at one another in a way that threatens party unity and underscores broader tensions reshaping the Democrats.

Their power struggle has spilled open in what could be a momentary blip or a foreshadowing of divisions to come.

It started with a rare public rebuke — Pelosi chiding AOC, as she's called, in a newspaper interview; AOC responding pointedly on Twitter — that's now challenging the House agenda and rippling into the 2020 presidential campaign. A new test will come this week on a must-pass defense bill that the White House on Tuesday threatened to veto.

At its core, the tension between the most powerful Democrat in the country and one of the party's newest, most liberal members embodies a debate over how best, in style and substance, to defeat President Donald Trump. And both sides think they're right.

For allies of the longtime California congresswoman, Pelosi's off-handed dismissal of Ocasio-Cortez and the three other liberal freshmen House members who opposed a border security package last month was a necessary comeuppance for "the squad" of newcomers who are trying to push the party leftward.

"These people have their public whatever and their Twitter world," Pelosi told The New York Times. "But they didn't have any following." In the speaker's world, they lack what Pelosi often calls "the currency of the realm" — the power to turn their high-volume activism into a coalition of votes to pass legislation or, in their case, to stop it.

But for fans of Ocasio-Cortez, including some of the New York congresswoman's millions of social media followers, Pelosi's remarks were nothing short of a patronizing slap-back to four women of color who represent the future of the Democratic Party, a stark example of its generational and demographic transition. Their four lonely votes against the bill were a principled stand, with more to come.

The ability to channel the influence of the newcomers into the currency of Congress may determine

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whether the speaker, six months into her new majority, continues her steady leadership or loses her firm grip — especially with former special counsel Robert Mueller’s expected testimony next week in a high-stakes hearing amid rising calls for Trump’s impeachment.

“There’s an opportunity right now for House Democrats to lead the charge,” said Ezra Levin, the co-executive director of the liberal group Indivisible. In his living room, he said, is a framed 2010 newspaper clipping of Pelosi from her previous tenure as speaker, passing the Obama-era Affordable Care Act. “What we’re looking for is that decade-ago fighter Pelosi was.”

This week the differences could tumble into full view again as the House considers defense legislation that’s often rejected by liberals because of military funding. It’s a must-pass bill that Congress has approved essentially every year since World War II. But with the opportunity to divide Democrats, the White House issued a veto threat saying the funding levels are inadequate. That means Pelosi will be forced to muscle it through without much, if any, Republican support.

Fresh from the border funding fight, Ocasio-Cortez signaled a first salvo Tuesday, telling reporters that progressive lawmakers want to ensure the defense bill prevents Trump from sending any troops to the U.S.-Mexico border.

Asked about Pelosi’s comments, Ocasio-Cortez said: “It was just kind of puzzling more than anything. It’s just, why? The idea that millions of people we represent matter less or don’t matter is a notion I disagree with.”

Lawmakers visiting border detention facilities over the past week have delivered grave reports of migrant children and families being held in dire conditions. Liberals say the border-funding battle was exactly the kind of fight the House should be waging against the Trump administration, especially after disclosures of border patrol officers joking about the migrants and deriding lawmakers on a private Facebook group.

When White House adviser Kellyanne Conway on Tuesday mocked the “Major Meow Mashup” and “cat-fight” between Pelosi and the foursome, several of them fired back.

“Remember that time your boss tore babies from their mothers’ arms and threw them in cages?” Rep. Ayanna Pressley, D-Mass., tweeted at Conway. “Yeah take a seat and keep my name out of your lying mouth.”

Behind the scenes, though, some on Capitol Hill were quietly appreciative of Pelosi’s tough-love approach to Ocasio-Cortez, Pressley, and Reps. Ilhan Omar, D-Minn., and Rashida Tlaib, D-Mich.

Lawmakers and freshmen from more centrist-leaning districts than those of the four, including regions Trump won in 2018, don’t want the House majority to be defined by the liberal flank as they face voters for reelection next year. They prefer the party hew to Pelosi’s center-left approach. In describing the sentiment among those from more centrist districts, a senior congressional aide said Pelosi emerged as a “super-hero.” The aide requested anonymity to describe the private discussions.

While those more moderate views may have helped Democrats win the majority, liberal activists fear they won’t necessarily motivate or energize the party ahead of the 2020 election.

Brian Fallon, a former top aide to Hillary Clinton and Sen. Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., said Pelosi’s comments have riled the party’s left flank and activists question why she’s fighting with the newcomers when she should be confronting, if not impeaching, Trump.

“It’s not a good look,” Fallon said. Pelosi’s background runs strong in the liberal community, he said, so “it’s not enough to undo the relationship because she has deep ties, she knows how to count votes and is a bad ass.”

“But there is frustration,” he said.

Associated Press writer Alan Fram contributed to this report.

AL fans 16, tops NL 4-3 to win 7th straight All-Star Game

By BEN WALKER AP Baseball Writer

CLEVELAND (AP) — For one night, the pitchers took back the power.

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Hours after an awesome Home Run Derby got everyone buzzing even louder about monster shots and juiced balls, only a couple flew out of Progressive Field in the All-Star Game.

Instead, Justin Verlander blazed 97 mph heat from the start, Shane Bieber and Aroldis Chapman each struck out the side and the American League slowed a loaded NL lineup 4-3 Tuesday for its seventh straight win.

"I know it's the year of the home run, but pitching dominated today," Colorado slugger Nolan Arenado said. Sure did — at least until play resumes Thursday.

Facing Christian Yelich, Cody Bellinger and a bunch of boppers, the AL staff combined to strike out 16. "Baseball is a funny game," said Bieber, a most unlikely MVP after being added late to the roster.

With fans hoping to see a replay of Monday's jaw-dropping aerial show when 312 homers cleared the walls, this became the Arm-Star Game up until the late innings.

Derby champ Pete Alonso of the Mets grounded a two-out, two-run single past Gleyber Torres in the eighth to close the NL's gap. After a double steal put runners at second and third against Cleveland reliever Brad Hand, White Sox catcher James McCann made a tumbling catch on Mike Moustakas' twisting foul pop to end the inning.

Chapman closed to give the AL its 19th win in 22 games, with a tie stuck in there. He got a little encouragement with two outs — Yankees teammate CC Sabathia, honored this week for his contributions on and off the field, strolled to the mound to talk to the flamethrower.

Chapman then struck out Yasmani Grandal for a save, giving the AL an overall 45-43-2 lead in the Mid-summer Classic.

No need, either, for the experimental rule that was set to go effect: If the game went into extras, each team would've started the 10th with an automatic runner on second base.

Major League Baseball is on a record-shattering pace for homers this season, but no one came close to clearing the walls until Charlie Blackmon connected in the NL sixth to make it 2-1. Texas' Joey Gallo countered with a solo drive in a two-run seventh.

Still, it was a far cry from last year's All-Star Game that featured a record 10 home runs.

"I kind of expected it, to be honest," former NL MVP Kris Bryant said. "You only see them once, so they have the advantage."

"There are a lot of hard throwers and great pitchers over there. Unless you've seen them before, it's a difficult matchup," he said.

Cleveland favorite Michael Brantley had an early RBI double off losing pitcher Clayton Kershaw. Jorge Polanco drove in a run with an infield single for a 2-0 edge in the fifth and another scored on a double-play grounder.

"I wanted to swing the bat early. I had some nervous jitters I wanted to get out," Brantley said.

Winning pitcher Masahiro Tanaka, Lucas Giolito and Shane Greene did their parts to protect the lead with scoreless innings.

Bieber dazzled in front of a chanting home crowd, striking out Willson Contreras, Ketel Marte and Ronald Acuña Jr. in the fifth with a 1-0 lead. Bieber later donated his cap to the Hall of Fame.

"It was electric out there, the fans got in it and it was fun," AL manager Alex Cora of the Red Sox said. "And I'm glad that he got the MVP. He plays at this level. He's really good."

The biggest misplay of the night might have been on the scoreboard. NL All-Stars David Dahl of Colorado and Willson Contreras of the Cubs had their names misspelled — "Davis Dahl" and "Wilson Contreras" — on the outfield videoboard. Jeff McNeil was spelled correctly, but the photo accompanying it was of Mets teammate Jacob deGrom.

"That was tough, to see deGrom's picture up there," McNeil said. "I didn't really like that. I wanted to see my picture up there. I know my family did, too. What are you going to do, I guess, but I don't think that should happen."

Fittingly, the first batter of the game was the guy who leads the majors in home runs — Yelich, the NL MVP with 31 homers at the break, hit leadoff for the first time this year.

Yelich lined out and Verlander quickly fanned Javier Báez and Freddie Freeman to finish his work.

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Those lively balls that Verlander is complaining about? Didn't bother him a bit.

NL starter Hyun-Jin Ryu, deGrom and Luis Castillo threw scoreless innings to keep the NL close in the early going.

Pittsburgh dynamo Josh Bell was part of the youngest starting lineup in All-Star history, with the NL crew averaging under 26 years old.

Overall, there were 36 first-timers, a number boosted by the absence of Bryce Harper, Manny Machado, José Altuve and several past perennials. And consider this: Of the 16 AL pitchers on the 2017 All-Star roster, zero made the roster this year.

TRIBUTE

All players wore a uniform patch with No. 45 to honor late Angels pitcher Tyler Skaggs. Los Angeles teammates Mike Trout and Tommy La Stella switched their jerseys to Skaggs' number, and there was a pregame moment of silence.

"I felt him out there with me," Trout said. "To be able to represent him and what he meant to us on a stage like this is special."

UP NEXT

The regular season resumes on Thursday night with one game, Houston at Texas. All teams are back in action Friday. ... Next year's All-Star Game is at Dodger Stadium for the first time since 1980.

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

Epstein story shows investigative journalism is thriving

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The Miami Herald's stories on sex trafficking charges against billionaire financier Jeffrey Epstein illustrate a counter-intuitive trend: Investigative journalism is thriving as the news media industry struggles.

In announcing new charges against Epstein 11 years after the financier secretly got a sweetheart deal from federal prosecutors in Florida to settle nearly identical allegations, New York prosecutor Geoffrey Berman said Monday that his team was "assisted by excellent investigative journalism."

"It's really gratifying," Aminda Marques Gonzalez, president, publisher and executive editor of the Herald, said Tuesday. "You hope your work will have impact. It's beyond your expectation to have your work cited as the basis for an arrest."

While Berman did not cite the Herald by name, it was obvious he was referring to the work of journalist Julie K. Brown, who in a series of stories, including a big investigative piece last November, reported on at least 60 women who said they had been sexually abused by Epstein between 2001 and 2005, when they were minors. Eight agreed to be interviewed.

The Herald's story, which Brown spent 18 months on, came as news organizations are finding that investigative work helps them stand out and is rewarding in a rough business climate. Recent examples include stories looking into Russia's involvement in the 2016 election, Donald Trump's behavior before and during his presidency and sexual misconduct by public figures.

"It used to be said in this business that we couldn't afford to do investigative journalism," said Martin Baron, executive editor of the Washington Post. "Now we have to do investigative journalism. First of all, it's at the core of what readers expect of us and increasingly, it's at the core of our business model as well."

Three weeks ago, the Post announced it was adding 10 new positions devoted to investigative journalism - increasing its staffing in this area from eight to 26 since the beginning of 2017.

The newspaper won a Pulitzer in 2018 for its revelations about sexual misconduct by Alabama Senate candidate Roy Moore. The Moore story was part of the Post's "rapid-response" team; along with the traditional long-term projects, news organizations are seeking more nimble investigative teams that respond to breaking news.

Besides adding staff, Gonzalez said she has tried to establish a culture at the Herald where departments

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throughout the newsroom are pursuing enterprise projects. What she doesn't want is an investigative team "isolated in a corner of the room, which used to be the case."

The New York Times also has emphasized an investigative ethos across the newsroom. The Times won a 2019 Pulitzer for an exhaustive study of Trump family finances and, in 2018, shared a Pulitzer with The New Yorker for reporting on sexual misconduct.

"Broadly speaking, with the attacks on the press and on facts there has been a reinvigoration of the investigative mission of journalism," said Matthew Purdy, deputy managing editor who oversees investigations at The New York Times. "I don't mean just at the Times but across the industry. It's sort of unmistakable."

Big investigations aren't new. There's a history of memorable digging on Watergate and the Pentagon Papers. And Baron was editor at the Boston Globe when it published a series of stories revealing priests' history of sexual abuse and the church's ensuing cover-up, which was chronicled in the 2015 movie "Spotlight."

But when the newspaper industry's financial downturn intensified in the 2000s, investigative units were often cut. Many of the news organization's bean counters saw them as luxuries, said Doug Haddix, executive director of the organization Investigative Reporters & Editors.

IRE's membership is now at a record-setting 6,178, up from around 4,000 in 2010, Haddix said. Its Houston conference last month set an attendance record. Where the typical IRE conference attendee once worked at a newspaper, now a member is just as likely to work in television or at a non-profit web site. Sold-out IRE workshops show reporters and editors are looking to become more employable by learning digital journalism and how to better mine public records, he said.

Things were looking so dire a decade ago that Michael Hudson thought he'd be using his skills in a different profession by now, perhaps as a private investigator. Instead, he's global investigations editor at The Associated Press, which has beefed up investigation teams internationally and domestically. The AP also is creating a dedicated team focused on investigations that spin off breaking news.

The AP won a 2019 Pulitzer for investigations around the conflict in Yemen, and in 2016 an all-female team of investigative reporters won a Pulitzer for breaking news about slavery in the fishing industry in Southeast Asia.

"I feel like there's been a really heartening turnaround," Hudson said.

While the mission is important, news organizations say the work helps the bottom line. The AP found its Yemen stories were very popular with readers. Many of the Post's new subscribers cite investigative work as a reason for signing up, and those are the stories readers are drawn to, Baron said.

In the body of the digital version of Brown's project last November, the Herald invited readers to click if they wanted a subscription. The newspaper collected as many new subscribers in a couple of days that it normally gets in a couple of weeks, and Gonzalez was stunned to find that roughly three-quarters of them lived outside of the Miami area.

They were subscribing to support the journalism.

There seems to be a new spirit among journalists who are more willing to elevate the good work of colleagues at other organizations, as this week has proven with the Herald, said Kyle Pope, editor of the Columbia Journalism Review.

"We as an industry need to stand together," the Post's Baron said. "While we're competitors, we also need to be mutually supportive of quality work. If it's a trend, it's a good trend."

From Nazis to hippies: End of the road for Volkswagen Beetle

By DAVID McHUGH AP Business Writer

FRANKFURT, Germany (AP) — Volkswagen is halting production of the last version of its Beetle model this week at its plant in Puebla, Mexico. It's the end of the road for a vehicle that has symbolized many things over a history spanning eight decades since 1938.

It has been: a part of Germany's darkest hours as a never-realized Nazi prestige project. A symbol of Germany's postwar economic renaissance and rising middle-class prosperity. An example of globalization,

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sold and recognized all over the world. An emblem of the 1960s counterculture in the United States. Above all, the car remains a landmark in design, as recognizable as the Coca-Cola bottle.

The car's original design — a rounded silhouette with seating for four or five, nearly vertical windshield and the air-cooled engine in the rear — can be traced back to Austrian engineer Ferdinand Porsche, who was hired to fulfill Adolf Hitler's project for a "people's car" that would spread auto ownership the way the Ford Model T had in the U.S.

Aspects of the car bore similarities to the Tatra T97, made in Czechoslovakia in 1937, and to sketches by Hungarian engineer Bela Barenyi published in 1934. Mass production of what was called the KdF-Wagen, based on the acronym of the Nazi labor organization under whose auspices it was to be sold, was cancelled due to World War II. Instead, the massive new plant in what was then countryside east of Hanover turned out military vehicles, using forced laborers from all over Europe under miserable conditions.

Re-launched as a civilian carmaker under supervision of the British occupation authorities, the Volkswagen factory was transferred in 1949 to the Germany government and the state of Lower Saxony, which still owns part of the company. By 1955, the millionth Beetle — officially called the Type 1 — had rolled off the assembly line in what was now the town of Wolfsburg.

The United States became Volkswagen's most important foreign market, peaking at 563,522 cars in 1968, or 40% of production. Unconventional, sometimes humorous advertising from agency Doyle Dane Bernbach urged car buyers to "Think small."

"Unlike in West Germany, where its low price, quality and durability stood for a new postwar normality, in the United States the Beetle's characteristics lent it a profoundly unconventional air in a car culture dominated by size and showmanship," wrote Bernhard Rieger in his 2013 history, "The People's Car."

Production at Wolfsburg ended in 1978 as newer front drive models like the Golf took over. But the Beetle wasn't dead yet. Production went on in Mexico from 1967 until 2003 — longer than the car had been made in Germany. Nicknamed the "vochito," the car made itself at home as a rugged, Mexican-made "carro del pueblo."

The New Beetle — a completely retro version build on a modified Golf platform — resurrected some of the old Beetle's cute, unconventional aura in 1998 under CEO Ferdinand Piech, Ferdinand Porsche's grandson. In 2012, the Beetle's design was made a bit sleeker.

The end of the Beetle comes at a turning point for Volkswagen as it rebounds from a scandal over cars rigged to cheat on diesel emissions tests. The company is gearing up for mass production of the battery-driven compact ID.3, a car that the company predicts will have an impact like that of the Beetle and the Golf by bringing electric mobility to a mass market.

The last of 5,961 Final Edition versions of the Beetle is headed for a museum after ceremonies in Puebla on July 10 to mark the end of production.

AP photo blog about the last Volkswagen Beetle: <https://bit.ly/32bXuMx>

Tom Steyer launches 2020 campaign after saying he wouldn't

By JUANA SUMMERS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Tom Steyer, the billionaire investor and activist, said Tuesday he's joining the race for the Democratic presidential nomination, reversing course after deciding earlier this year that he would forgo a run.

Steyer, 62, is one of the most visible and deep-pocketed liberals advocating for President Donald Trump's impeachment. He surprised many Democrats in January when he traveled to Iowa, home to the nation's first presidential caucus, to declare that he would focus entirely on the impeachment effort instead of seeking the White House.

Since then, Steyer, of California, has said he's grown frustrated at the pace at which the Democratic-controlled House is approaching Trump. Roughly half of the Democratic presidential contenders, seeking to appeal to the party's progressive base, have called on House Democrats to start an impeachment inquiry.

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But Speaker Nancy Pelosi has resisted, warning that Democrats need to collect the facts and that a rush to impeachment could ultimately help Trump politically.

Despite becoming a national voice on the impeachment issue, Steyer made no mention of it in his campaign announcement. Instead, he said his campaign will focus on reducing the influence of corporations in politics. He also plans to target climate change, which is the focus of the Steyer-backed advocacy group NextGen America.

"The other Democratic candidates for President have many great ideas that will absolutely move our country forward, but we won't be able to get any of those done until we end the hostile corporate takeover of our democracy," Steyer said in a statement.

Steyer confirmed to The Associated Press on Tuesday that he would spend at least \$100 million on his campaign, a figure that was first reported by The New York Times.

Sens. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and Bernie Sanders of Vermont, who are competing for the support of liberal voters in the Democratic presidential primary, decried the influence of billionaires in the 2020 race.

Warren, who didn't mention Steyer by name, tweeted after his announcement: "The Democratic primary should not be decided by billionaires, whether they're funding Super PACs or funding themselves. The strongest Democratic nominee in the general will have a coalition that's powered by a grassroots movement."

Sanders said that while he may "like Tom personally," he is "a bit tired of seeing billionaires trying to buy political power."

Asked about Warren's and Sanders' criticism of his plan to invest so heavily in his own campaign, Steyer said the common goal among all candidates is to present a vision that connects with voters.

"That's what Americans are waiting for, that's what's missing, and that's something that every single candidate, including Sen. Warren and Sen. Sanders, have to address," he said. "And so, if I can't do that, all the money in the world isn't going to help me."

As he seeks the presidency, Steyer is resigning his leadership positions in both NextGen America and Need to Impeach. He says he has committed more than \$50 million through 2020 to the two organizations.

Steyer joins the race three weeks before the next presidential debates, and he could struggle to get a spot on the stage. He told the AP that he does not expect to qualify for the second Democratic presidential debates, which will be held July 30-31 in Detroit.

"We're serious about making the debates in September and October, but I think we're too late to make the July one," he said.

There are 20 spots at the debate for a field that includes two dozen candidates. If more than 20 people qualify, the Democratic National Committee will hold a tiebreaker to determine who gets on stage.

Steyer also could potentially face challenges hiring staff. Several of his former NextGen America staffers have joined Washington Gov. Jay Inslee's presidential campaign. A former Steyer spokeswoman, Aleigha Cavalier, recently joined Beto O'Rourke's 2020 campaign.

The sprawling Democratic field is in flux as Steyer becomes the newest contender. Some lower-tier candidates are facing increasingly dire prospects if they don't secure spots on the debate stage this fall.

California Rep. Eric Swalwell exited the race on Monday, and former Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper's campaign has undergone a shake-up after his debate performance last month, with some staffers encouraging him to consider a Senate campaign instead.

This is not the first time Steyer has considered running for office. He eyed bids for governor of California in 2018 and the Senate in 2016. His net worth, according to Forbes, is estimated at \$1.6 billion.

Financier in sex abuse case went from math whiz to titan

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and JIM MUSTIAN Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — He has rubbed elbows with a prince and flown a former president on his private jet. He amassed a fortune that includes a 100-acre island in the Caribbean and one of the biggest mansions in New York.

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He has donated tens of millions of dollars to Harvard and other causes, becoming a darling of professors and scientists — all without a college degree.

Jeffrey Epstein has long been an enigma, his ascent shrouded in mystery. Just how a middle-class Brooklyn math whiz became a Wall Street master of high finance with friends in very high places has been a subject of tabloid speculation for years.

Now, the details of Epstein's life and his alleged predilections are coming into sharper focus as federal prosecutors in New York pursue sex-trafficking charges accusing the 66-year-old billionaire of recruiting and abusing dozens of underage girls at his mansions in New York and Palm Beach, Florida, in the early 2000s.

Epstein, who pleaded not guilty Monday, could get up to 45 years in prison if convicted.

The financier avoided a potentially long prison sentence on nearly identical allegations more than a decade ago thanks to a once-secret agreement with federal prosecutors in Florida that has been widely criticized as a sweetheart deal.

In bringing charges this time, prosecutors in New York said a search of Epstein's Upper East Side mansion over the weekend yielded a vast trove of hundreds or even thousands of lewd photos of young women or girls.

Epstein's defense attorneys contend he never used violence or coerced any of the girls, and that his actions amount, at most, to soliciting prostitution. They say the charges should be dismissed in light of Epstein's earlier plea deal.

"This is ancient stuff," defense attorney Reid Weingarten said during a court appearance Monday.

Epstein has long obscured the source of his wealth. Even after his arrest, he refused to provide authorities with even basic information about his income and assets. His attorney said Epstein's lawyers intend to provide the information but want to make sure it is correct first.

This much is clear: "He is a man of nearly infinite means," federal prosecutor Alex Rossmiller said in court.

The somewhat reclusive Epstein splashed onto the international scene in 2002 after a New York tabloid reported he had lent his Boeing 727 to ferry former President Bill Clinton and other notables on an AIDS relief mission to Africa.

Profiles in New York magazine and Vanity Fair followed, establishing Epstein's reputation as an exorbitantly wealthy playboy and a stealthy Wall Street mover and shaker. Vanity Fair in 2003 described him holding court in his extravagant New York mansion with real estate tycoons, business executives and the scions of some of America's wealthiest families.

He was said to spend 75 minutes a day practicing yoga with a personal instructor and eschewed email for face-to-face conversations. Vanity Fair reported that he drank Earl Grey tea and didn't touch alcohol, tobacco or drugs.

Epstein also enjoyed surrounding himself with women much younger than him, including Russian models who attended his cocktail parties and beautiful women he flew aboard his plane, according to the Vanity Fair profile.

His friends over the years have included Donald Trump, Britain's Prince Andrew and former Harvard law professor Alan Dershowitz.

"I've known Jeff for fifteen years. Terrific guy," Trump told New York magazine in 2002. "He's a lot of fun to be with. It is even said that he likes beautiful women as much as I do, and many of them are on the younger side. No doubt about it — Jeffrey enjoys his social life."

The writer of the Vanity Fair article, Vicky Ward, said Monday that she had also interviewed two girls who alleged Epstein tried to entice them into sexual activity, but that the magazine didn't run that part of story. Former editor Graydon Carter said it was cut because he "didn't have confidence" in Ward's reporting.

Epstein grew up in the Coney Island neighborhood of Brooklyn, the son of a New York City parks department employee.

He taught calculus and physics at the prestigious Dalton School, a prep school in Manhattan, from 1973 to 1975, despite not having a college degree. Attorney General William Barr's father, Donald Barr, was headmaster at the time.

Dalton graduate Paul Grossman said that he never had Epstein in class but that he was known among

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students as a math whiz.

"Everyone pretty much knew him as brilliant," said Grossman, who graduated in 1978. "None of us were surprised that when he left Dalton he made a zillion dollars in business."

William Barr has decided not to recuse himself from overseeing Epstein's case, a Justice Department official told The Associated Press on Tuesday. But Barr has withdrawn from taking part in any review of the 2008 deal in Florida because Barr's former law firm previously represented Epstein, the official said. The official was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Epstein left Dalton in the mid-1970s for a job at Bear Stearns at the urging of a student's father who arranged a meeting with the chairman of the investment bank, according to published reports. He later began his own money-management business, J. Epstein & Co.

Epstein also forged a relationship with Leslie Wexner, the retail titan behind Victoria's Secret, The Limited and other store chains. He started managing Wexner's money in the late 1980s and helped straighten out the finances for a real estate development Wexner was backing in a wealthy Columbus, Ohio, suburb.

It was through Wexner that Epstein acquired his Manhattan mansion, a seven-story, 21,000-square-foot former prep school less than a block from Central Park. It has been valued at about \$77 million.

Wexner's relationship with Epstein soured around the time of the money man's Florida arrest, and Wexner severed ties with him nearly 12 years ago. Wexner has not commented on Epstein's latest arrest.

"Little is known or said about Epstein's business except this: He manages money for the extremely wealthy," the Palm Beach Post reported in 2006 after Epstein's legal troubles began there. "He is said to handle accounts only of \$1 billion or greater."

In 2008, he reached a non-prosecution agreement with federal prosecutors in Florida over allegations of sex with underage girls. He was allowed to plead guilty to state charges of soliciting a minor for prostitution and served 13 months in jail. The deal also required that he reach financial settlements with dozens of his alleged victims.

Epstein nearly got another break in 2011, when the Manhattan District Attorney's office took the unusual step of asking a judge to register him as a lowest level sex offender so he wouldn't be required to check in with authorities every 90 days. Judge Ruth Pickholz balked, saying she had "never seen a prosecutor's office do anything like this," and the DA's office later reversed its position.

Federal prosecutors acknowledged Monday that the current charges overlap with the Florida case from more than a decade ago. But they said one count in the indictment is based entirely on New York victims.

Epstein spent most of his time in recent years in the Virgin Islands and regularly flew off to foreign destinations, making more than 20 trips in and out of the U.S. on his private jet in the last 18 months, according to prosecutors. He has six homes, including one in Paris, and two private planes.

Workers in Epstein's New York neighborhood said Tuesday that they rarely saw him, if at all, in recent years.

A bellman a few doors down who declined to give his name said he saw the billionaire leaving his mansion about three months ago with a woman who was covering her face. The bellman said he had seen multiple women going in and out maybe once every two weeks.

Michelle Licata, who says she had sexual encounters with Epstein when she was 16, welcomed his arrest.

"The first moment of finding out that Jeffrey Epstein was put in jail was so relieving to me I felt safer," she said Tuesday on ABC's "Good Morning America." "I've waited for this one day just to happen and it's finally come."

Associated Press writers Ali Swenson, Bernard Condon and Randy Herschaft in New York, Michael Balsamo in Washington, Danica Coto in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, and Curt Anderson in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, contributed to this report.

Amy McGrath announces bid for Mitch McConnell's Senate seat

By MICHAEL TACKETT Associated Press

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WASHINGTON (AP) — Amy McGrath, a Marine combat aviator who narrowly lost a House race to an incumbent Republican in Kentucky, has set her sights on an even more formidable target: Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell.

McGrath, whose campaign announcement video in her House race showcased the viral power of social media to raise money and national profile, said Tuesday she will be trying to defeat one of the most entrenched officials in Washington in McConnell. But she sees him as vulnerable because of his lengthy tenure in Washington, his stance on health care and his taut allegiance to the policies of President Donald Trump.

Her decision to enter the race represents a rare victory for Democratic Sen. Chuck Schumer of New York, who has had difficulty persuading top-tier candidates in other states to take on incumbent Republicans with control of the Senate at stake.

The contest also will test the power of incumbency against a call for generational change along with a measure of whether Trump's popularity is transferable.

McGrath, 44, will almost certainly be able to raise enough money to mount a serious challenge to McConnell, 77, but she is still a decided underdog in a state that has not elected a Democrat to the Senate since Wendell Ford in 1992.

"I've been always somebody who stepped up to the plate when asked, when I felt like my country needed me, and this is one of those times," McGrath said in an interview.

She is attempting to repeat her viral moment with a new video, one that leans hard on idealism while also attacking McConnell as the embodiment of a dysfunctional Washington.

"I felt like somebody needs to stand up to him," McGrath said.

McGrath also reprises one element of her first video, pointedly noting that when, as a 13-year-old girl, she wrote to McConnell to make the case that women should be able to fly in combat, the senator never wrote back.

But her attacks on McConnell and his record carry risks because Trump remains highly popular in Kentucky, and McConnell has pushed through much of the president's agenda and, perhaps more importantly, his nominees to federal courts, including Supreme Court Justices Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh.

She said that Kentucky voters are not fans of either political party and they supported Trump in part because of his promise to "drain the swamp" in Washington, lower drug prices and deliver a more effective alternative to the Affordable Care Act.

"Those things haven't happened because of guys like Senator McConnell," she said.

McConnell struck back quickly in a Twitter message that presaged what a race between him and McGrath would look like. The tweet strung together a series of quotes from McGrath that depicts her as an out of touch liberal who also opposes Trump, notably his call for a U.S.-Mexico border wall.

McConnell campaign manager Kevin Golden said McGrath lost in 2018 "in a Democratic wave election because she is an extreme liberal who is far out of touch with Kentuckians."

The Senate majority leader's tone was more sanguine. "It'll be a spirited race," he said Tuesday at the Capitol. He says unlike others, "I actually enjoy campaigns."

Since becoming party leader, McConnell said he notices he gets "more attention than I used to. I look forward to the contest and laying out our differences to the people of Kentucky."

McGrath lost to Rep. Andy Barr by 3 percentage points in the 2018 midterm election, a race that she had been so confident of winning that she was working on her victory speech as the first returns came in.

She ran up comfortable margins in the heavily Democratic Lexington area, but Barr was able to win overwhelmingly in rural areas. Barr also benefited from a campaign appearance by Trump, rare for a House member. Former Vice President Joe Biden went to Kentucky to campaign for McGrath in what proved to be a failed effort to win back onetime Democrats in rural areas.

Trump wasted little time weighing in on the race, tweeting Tuesday night, "Why would Kentucky ever think of giving up the most powerful position in Congress, the Senate Majority Leader, for a freshman Senator with little power in what will hopefully be the minority party."

In the 2018 race, McGrath, a Naval Academy graduate, foreswore negative attack ads against Barr while he and several outside groups supporting him spent millions of dollars labeling her as "too liberal"

for Kentucky. McGrath, who must first win the Democratic nomination, would not show similar restraint against McConnell.

Democrats have prepared briefing books of more than 1,000 pages on McConnell, whose long record and ties to Washington interest groups provide ripe openings for attack. But he also can make the case that he has been able to use his power in Washington for the benefit of the state.

McConnell has in Kentucky a fiercely loyal team of political operatives who are known for hard-hitting campaigns that leave his opponents badly bruised.

Schumer worked hard to persuade McGrath to run against McConnell. Several other would-be recruits, including former Georgia House Minority Leader Stacey Abrams, declined his overtures, and others, like former Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper, former Texas Rep. Beto O'Rourke and Montana Gov. Steve Bullcock, passed on Senate races to run for the Democratic presidential nomination.

Associated Press reporter Lisa Mascaro contributed to this story from Washington.

Validity of Obama health care law at issue in appeal hearing

By KEVIN MCGILL and REBECCA SANTANA Associated Press

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — With health insurance availability, cost and coverage on the line for millions of Americans, a federal appeals court seemed inclined Tuesday to rule that the core provision of President Barack Obama's signature health care law is unconstitutional.

Two Republican-appointed judges on a three-judge panel of the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals peppered lawyers defending the law with skeptical questions, appearing to suggest they might hold that when Congress zeroed out a tax imposed by the law in 2017 it rendered unconstitutional the mandate to purchase health insurance.

It was less clear after the arguments whether the judges also would invalidate the entire health care law, as the Trump administration favors.

The hearing marked the latest development in a 2018 lawsuit by 18 Republican-leaning states claiming that the absence of a tax converts the law into an unconstitutional directive to U.S. citizens to buy a product. A lower court judge ruled in December that it did, and that the entire law must fall as a result. That includes popular provisions such as protection for pre-existing conditions.

As Judge Jennifer Walker Elrod questioned the law's supporters — attorneys for 20 Democratic-leaning states and the House of Representatives — she said the law's "command" that people buy insurance appeared intact without the tax penalty and she questioned the mandate's constitutionality. Judge Kurt Engelhardt seemed to agree. And he pointedly suggested that the courts shouldn't have to work out what parts of the law should or shouldn't survive.

"Congress can fix this," he said at one point.

It was unclear when the panel would rule. The case is likely headed to the Supreme Court, where the same five-justice majority that has twice voted to uphold the law — in 2012 and 2015 — remains in place.

"This is a political solution that you, various parties, are asking the court to roll up its sleeves and get involved in," Engelhardt said at one point near the end of Tuesday's arguments.

But Douglas Letter, an attorney for the House, argued that eliminating the tax penalty didn't undermine the law's constitutionality. And he said Supreme Court precedent dictates that the courts should strive to uphold as many of the law's provisions as possible.

"Remember that the kinds of provisions here that would be struck down if there's no severability are, for example, the provision about when you can be denied or charged more insurance for preexisting conditions," Letter said. "The provision about children can be kept on parents' insurance until they're 26 ..."

The ultimate outcome will affect protections for people with pre-existing conditions, Medicaid expansions covering roughly 12 million people, and subsidies that help about 10 million others afford health insurance.

Obama signed the health care act into law in 2010.

The lawsuit, spearheaded by the Texas Attorney General's Office, was filed after Congress, in 2017, zeroed out a tax the Affordable Care Act imposed on those without insurance. Republicans had tried, but

failed to win full repeal of "Obamacare," as Trump had wanted.

In challenging the law anew, "Obamacare" opponents cited the U.S. Supreme Court's 2012 ruling upholding the legislation. In that ruling, conservative justices rejected the argument that Congress could require everyone to buy insurance under the Constitution's interstate commerce clause. But Chief Justice John Roberts, joining four liberal justices, said Congress did have the power to impose the tax.

Among the arguments by the law's supporters: Those who filed suit have no case because they aren't harmed by a tax that doesn't exist; the reduction of the tax penalty to zero could be read as a suspension of the tax, but the tax's legal structure still exists; and if the individual mandate is now unconstitutional, that doesn't affect the rest of the law.

When the law was proposed, friends and foes of "Obamacare" agreed that the tax was essential to persuade healthy people to get insured, thereby keeping premiums in check. But this year — the first time no fines will be collected — the number of people signing up for subsidized private insurance through the Affordable Care Act slipped only slightly.

The government said in March that a total of 11.4 million people signed up during open enrollment season, a dip of about 300,000 from last year.

5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals Judge Carolyn Dineen King asked no questions Tuesday. King was nominated to the appeals court by Democratic President Jimmy Carter in 1979. Elrod was nominated by Republican President George W. Bush in 2007. Engelhardt was nominated by Trump, a Republican, last year.

Democrats in the U.S. Senate said Monday that Republicans will pay a political price if the case results in the loss of the popular health care law.

"If they are successful in striking down the Affordable Care Act, Republicans will own all of the consequences," Senate Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer of New York said on a call Monday with reporters.

Asked about the court case, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell promised lawmakers would uphold protections for people with pre-existing medical conditions if the health law is struck down.

"There's nobody in the Senate not in favor of covering pre-existing conditions, nobody," the Kentucky Republican said, adding he thinks it's likely the case will go back to the Supreme Court.

However, McConnell did not promise that Congress would be able to pass a replacement for the ACA, as Republicans had once assured the public they would do.

Associated Press writers Mark Sherman, Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar, Alan Fram and Lisa Mascaro in Washington contributed to this report.

Fresh from the lab: Startups make meat that avoids slaughter

By TERENCE CHEA Associated Press

EMERYVILLE, Calif. (AP) — Uma Valeti slices into a pan-fried chicken cutlet in the kitchen of his startup, Memphis Meats. He sniffs the tender morsel on his fork before taking a bite. He chews slowly, absorbing the taste.

"Our chicken is chicken ... you've got to taste it to believe it," Valeti says.

This is no ordinary piece of poultry. No chicken was raised or slaughtered to harvest the meat. It was produced in a laboratory by extracting cells from a chicken and feeding them in a nutrient broth until the cell culture grew into raw meat.

Memphis Meats, based in Emeryville, California, is one of a growing number of startups worldwide that are making cell-based or cultured meat. They want to offer an alternative to traditional meat production that they say is damaging the environment and causing unnecessary harm to animals, but they are far from becoming mainstream and face pushback from livestock producers.

"You are ultimately going to continue the choice of eating meat for many generations to come without putting undue stress on the planet," said Valeti, a former cardiologist who co-founded Memphis Meats in 2015 after seeing the power of stem cells to treat disease.

The company, which also has produced cell-grown beef and duck, has attracted investments from food

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giants Cargill and Tyson Foods as well as billionaires Richard Branson and Bill Gates.

A report released in June by consulting firm A.T. Kearney predicts that by 2040, cultured meat will make up 35 percent of meat consumed worldwide, while plant-based alternatives will compose 25 percent.

"The large-scale livestock industry is viewed by many as an unnecessary evil," the report says. "With the advantages of novel vegan meat replacements and cultured meat over conventionally produced meat, it is only a matter of time before meat replacements capture a substantial market share."

But first cultured meat must overcome significant challenges, including bringing down the exorbitant cost of production, showing regulators it's safe and enticing consumers to take a bite.

"We're a long way off from becoming a commercial reality because there are many hurdles we have to tackle," said Ricardo San Martin, research director of the alternative meat program at the University of California, Berkeley. "We don't know if consumers are going to buy this or not."

As global demand for meat grows, supporters say cell-based protein is more sustainable than traditional meat because it doesn't require the land, water and crops needed to raise livestock — a major source of greenhouse gas emissions.

Many consumers would love to eat meat that doesn't require killing animals, said Brian Spears, who founded a San Francisco startup called New Age Meats that served its cell-based pork sausages to curious foodies at a tasting last September.

"People want meat. They don't want slaughter," Spears said. "So we make slaughter-free meat, and we know there's a massive market for people that want delicious meat that doesn't require animal slaughter."

Finless Foods, another startup in Emeryville, is making cultured fish and seafood. It's produced cell-based versions of salmon, carp and sea bass, and it's working on bluefin tuna, a popular species that is overfished and contains high levels of mercury. The company has invited guests to sample its cell-based fish cakes.

"The ocean is a very fragile ecosystem, and we are really driving it to the brink of collapse," CEO Michael Selden said. "By moving human consumption of seafood out of the ocean and onto land and creating it in this cleaner way, we can basically do something that's better for everybody."

The emerging industry moved a step closer to market in March when the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Food and Drug Administration announced plans to jointly oversee the production and labeling of cell-based meat.

Food-safety advocates will be watching to ensure the agencies provide rigorous oversight and protect people from bacterial contamination and other health threats, said Jaydee Hanson, policy director at the nonprofit Center for Food Safety.

"It will be important for the public that this be well regulated," Hanson said. "Do these really solve the environmental problem? Do they really solve the animal welfare problem? That needs to be part of the review as well."

If cultured-meat companies use genetically modified cells, they would face even greater scrutiny from consumers and government regulators, Hanson said.

Cell-based meat companies also face resistance from U.S. livestock producers, who have been lobbying states to restrict the "meat" label to food products derived from slaughtered animals and have been raising questions about the safety, cost and environmental effect of cultured meat.

"There's still many, many unknowns about these cell-based products," said Eric Mittenenthal, vice president for sustainability at the North American Meat Institute. "We really don't know if it's something consumers will accept from a taste perspective. We don't know if it's going to be affordable."

Uma Valeti at Memphis Meats said he wants to help educate people about the benefits of cell-based meats and eventually open up its production facility to show people how its meat is made.

The company is focused on reducing the cost of cultured meat and producing larger quantities. A plate of chicken that used to cost tens of thousands of dollars to produce can now be made for less than \$100, Valeti said.

Memphis Meats hopes to sell its cell-based meat within the next two years, starting with restaurants, then moving into grocery stores, assuming it passes USDA and FDA inspections.

"We're actually preserving the choice of eating meat for people," Valeti said. "Instead of saying, 'Give up eating meat or eat a meat alternative,' we're saying continue eating the meat that you love."

California air boss: open to compromise in mileage standoff

By TOM KRISHER and ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — California's air pollution control boss says she's open to compromise with the Trump administration over its efforts to relax mileage standards, as the bitter standoff threatens to unleash years of court fights and confusion in the U.S. auto industry.

Five months after President Donald Trump broke off talks with California, the lead state fighting to keep tougher, Obama-era mileage standards, Mary Nichols, chairwoman of the California Air Resources Board, told The Associated Press on Tuesday that the state would be willing to give ground if any final deal includes the needed cuts in climate-changing vehicle emissions.

"Now we still have the Trump administration refusing to bend — but they could change their mind," Nichols said. "It's not too late."

Asked to comment on Nichols' remarks, White House spokesman Judd Deere said in a statement: "The Trump Administration believes strongly in a national fuel standard that promotes safer, cleaner, and more affordable vehicles. The Federal government, not a single state, should set this standard. We are moving forward to finalize a rule for the benefit of all Americans."

Twenty-three U.S. governors — most of them Democrats — signed a pledge Tuesday backing California in the mileage fight, saying a rigorous national standard requiring ever more fuel-efficient cars and light trucks is essential to curbing climate-damaging emissions.

The pledge by the governors says they "will not compromise on our responsibility to protect the health of our communities, our climate, and the savings consumers stand to gain at the pump." It promises "additional concrete actions to fulfill this duty and defend against any threats."

Besides California and Puerto Rico, the pledge was signed by the leaders of Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Montana, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin.

The governors' pledge came a day after Trump delivered a White House address portraying his administration as a champion of clean air and water. Yet Trump often mocks climate-change science in tweets, has sought to roll back environmental regulations he sees as burdensome to business, and promotes global dominance for the U.S. oil and gas industry.

At issue is an administration plan to back off from Obama-era mileage standards that would require cars to get an average of 36 miles (58 kilometers) of real-world driving per gallon (3.8 liters) of gas by 2025. The Trump administration says it prefers to freeze the standards at 2021 levels, about 30 mpg, while California wants to keep them in place.

The auto industry contends that it will have trouble meeting those standards because people are buying less-efficient pickup trucks and SUVs and shunning electric and hybrid vehicles. An automakers' industry group on Tuesday renewed a call for compromise that results in one national standard increasing fuel economy but stops short of the Obama requirements.

The Trump administration argues that demanding ever-more fuel-efficient vehicles will drive up automobile costs and keep less-safe, older vehicles on the road longer. Many engineers have challenged that claim.

At a House committee hearing last month, Bill Wehrum, former assistant Environmental Protection Agency administrator for air regulation, said the agency followed directions from Trump to try to make a deal with California. But Trump also told the agency to finish the final regulations.

Trump's EPA and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration are expected to send a final mileage rule to the White House's Office of Management and Budget in the coming weeks.

California, Nichols said, made offers to come up with standards somewhere between a complete freeze and the Obama-era regulations

For any compromise to happen, Nichols said the administration would have to drop its challenge to California's ability to set its own standards, a power granted by Congress in the Clean Air Act to combat the state's smog problems in the 1970s. The state at one time had more stringent standards than federal ones, but the two sides voluntarily synced their standards under Obama.

Nichols predicted that the nation is headed into a period where California will enforce its own standards, which will be tougher than those from the federal government. But she disputed the contention that auto companies would have to build two versions of each vehicle, one for California and states that follow its rules, and the other for the rest of the country. That's what happened decades ago when automakers added pollution control equipment to meet California standards.

"The idea that there will be chaos ... I think is exaggerated," she said.

Instead, companies would be able to comply with California's rules by sending more efficient vehicles, such as battery powered or gas-electric hybrids, to the state, she said

Nichols said California could be willing to go for something less than the Obama standards, but it would have to be coupled with other changes such as wider use of more efficient auto air conditioners that use chemicals that aren't as damaging to the atmosphere as those in use currently.

Krisher reported from Detroit.

H. Ross Perot rose from poverty to self-made billionaire

By DAVID KOENIG AP Business Writer

DALLAS (AP) — H. Ross Perot rose from a childhood of Depression-era poverty to become a self-made billionaire who twice ran for president with a mixture of folksy sayings and simple solutions to America's problems. His 19% of the vote in 1992 stands among the best showings by an independent candidate in the last century.

Perot died of leukemia Tuesday at his home in Dallas surrounded by his family, family spokesman James Fuller said. He was 89.

As a boy in Texarkana, Texas, Perot delivered newspapers from the back of a pony. He earned his billions in a more modern way, however. After attending the U.S. Naval Academy and becoming a salesman for IBM, he set out on his own — creating and building Electronic Data Systems Corp., which helped other companies manage their computer networks.

The most famous event in his storied business career didn't involve sales or earnings. In 1979, Perot financed a private commando raid to free two EDS employees who were being held in a prison in Iran. The tale was turned into a book and a movie.

"I always thought of him as stepping out of a Norman Rockwell painting and living the American dream," said Tom Luce, who was a young lawyer when Perot hired him to handle his business and personal legal work. "A newspaper boy, a midshipman, shaking Dwight Eisenhower's hand at his graduation, and he really built the computer-services industry at EDS."

"He had the vision and the tenacity to make it happen," Luce said. "He was a great communicator. He never employed a speechwriter — he wrote all his own speeches. He was a great storyteller."

Perot first attracted attention beyond business circles by claiming that the U.S. government left behind hundreds of American soldiers who were missing or imprisoned at the end of the Vietnam War.

Perot fanned the issue at home and discussed it privately with Vietnamese officials in the 1980s, angering the Reagan administration, which was formally negotiating with Vietnam's government. Looking out for the health care needs of veterans became a long-time concern of Perot.

Perot's wealth, fame and confident prescription for the nation's economic ills propelled his 1992 campaign against President George H.W. Bush and Democratic challenger Bill Clinton. In June of that year, a Gallup poll showed Perot leading his major-party rivals.

Perot dropped out in July, however, saying later that he did so to prevent Republicans from sabotaging his daughter's wedding. He rejoined the race less than five weeks before the election, but his popular-

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ity had fallen. Critics said he had a penchant for embracing conspiracy theories. He finished third in the popular vote and was shut out in the Electoral College.

Still, Perot recorded the highest percentage for an independent or third-party candidate since President Theodore Roosevelt's second-place showing in 1912. Some Republicans blamed Perot for causing Bush's defeat by splitting the anti-Clinton vote, although exit polls were inconclusive.

During the campaign, Perot spent \$63.5 million of his own money. He bought 30-minute television spots during which he used charts and graphs to make his points, summarizing them with a line that became a national catch phrase: "It's just that simple."

Perot's second campaign four years later was far less successful. He was shut out of presidential debates when organizers said he lacked sufficient support. He got just 8% of the vote, and the Reform Party that he founded and hoped to build into a national political force began to fall apart.

However, Perot's ideas on trade and deficit reduction remained part of the political landscape. He blamed both major parties for running up a huge federal budget deficit and supporting trade deals that allowed American jobs to be sent to other countries. The movement of U.S. jobs to Mexico, he said, created a "giant sucking sound."

Perot continued to speak out about federal spending for many years. In 2008, he launched a website to highlight the nation's debt with a ticker that tracked the rising total, a blog and a chart presentation.

Perot's themes — that Washington is corrupt, wastes taxpayer money and ignores the working class — have been repeated by other candidates since and helped Donald Trump win the presidency in 2016.

In Dallas, Perot left his mark by creating the Perot Museum of Nature and Science, helping finance the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center, and being a major benefactor of The University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center. He also provided help to families dealing with medical expenses or other challenges, according to those who knew him.

"He gave a lot to other people in public ways, but he also did it in private ways that nobody saw. There were thousands of stories just like that," said Meyerson, a longtime senior executive in Perot's longtime companies.

Henry Ross Perot was born in Texarkana on June 27, 1930. His father was a cotton broker; his mother a secretary. Perot said his family survived the Depression relatively well through hard work and by managing their money carefully.

Young Perot's first job was delivering newspapers in a poor, mostly black part of town from his pony, Miss Bee. He said when the newspaper tried to cut his commission, he complained to the publisher — and won. He said he learned to take problems straight to the top.

From Texarkana, Perot went to the U.S. Naval Academy even though he had never been on a ship or seen the ocean. After the Navy, Perot joined International Business Machines in 1955 and quickly became a top salesman. In his last year at IBM, he filled his sales quota for the year in January.

In 1962, with \$1,000 from his wife, Margot, Perot founded Electronic Data Systems. Hardware accounted for about 80% of the computer business, Perot said, and IBM wasn't interested in the other 20%, including services.

Many of the early hires at EDS were former military men, and they had to abide by Perot's strict dress code — white shirts, ties, no beards or mustaches — and long workdays. Many wore crewcuts like Perot.

The company's big break came in the mid-1960s when the federal government created Medicare and Medicaid, the health programs for seniors, the disabled and the poor. States needed help in running the programs, and EDS won contracts — starting in Texas — to handle the millions of claims.

EDS first sold stock to the public in 1968, and overnight, Perot was worth \$350 million. His fortune doubled and tripled as the stock price rose steadily.

In 1984, he sold control of the company to General Motors Corp. for \$2.5 billion and received \$700 million in a buyout. In 2008, EDS was sold to Hewlett-Packard Co.

Perot went on to establish another computer-services company, Perot Systems Corp. He retired as CEO in 2000 and was succeeded by his son, Ross Perot Jr. In 2009, Dell Inc. bought Perot Systems.

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Forbes magazine this year estimated Perot's wealth at \$4.1 billion.

It was during the Nixon administration that Perot became involved in the issue of U.S. prisoners of war in Southeast Asia. Perot said Secretary of State Henry Kissinger asked him to lead a campaign to improve treatment of POWs held in North Vietnam. Perot chartered two jets to fly medical supplies and the wives of POWs to Southeast Asia. They were not allowed into North Vietnam, but the trip attracted enormous media attention.

After their release in 1973, some prisoners said conditions in the camps had improved after the failed missions.

In 1979, the Iranian government jailed two EDS executives and Perot vowed to win their release.

"Ross came to the prison one day and said, 'We're going to get you out,'" one of the men, Paul Chiapalone, told The Associated Press. "How many CEOs would do that today?"

Perot recruited retired U.S. Army Special Forces Col. Arthur "Bull" Simons to lead a commando raid on the prison. A few days later, the EDS executives walked free after the shah's regime fell and mobs stormed the prison. Simons' men sneaked the executives out of the country and into Turkey. The adventure was recalled in Ken Follett's best-selling book, "On Wings of Eagles," and a TV miniseries.

In later years, Perot pushed the Veterans Affairs Department to study neurological causes of Gulf War syndrome, a mysterious illness reported by many soldiers who served in the 1991 Persian Gulf war. He scoffed at officials who blamed the illnesses on stress — "as if they are wimps" — and paid for additional research.

Perot received a special award from the VA for his support of veterans and the military in 2009.

Clinton and former President George W. Bush praised Perot's patriotism and support for veterans.

Clinton said Perot wanted to tackle budget deficits and rising national debt that kept interest rates too high for middle-class Americans. Bush said he "epitomized the entrepreneurial spirit" and "gave selflessly of his time and resources to help others in our community."

In Texas, Perot led commissions on education reform and crime. He was given many honorary degrees and awards for business success and patriotism.

While he worked at Perot Systems in suburban Dallas, entire hallways were filled with memorabilia from soldiers and POWs that Perot had helped. His personal office was dominated by large paintings of his wife and five children and bronze sculptures by Frederic Remington.

Several original Norman Rockwell paintings hung in the waiting area. Perot told a visiting reporter that he tried to live by Rockwell's ethics of hard, honest work and family.

Associated Press writer Jamie Stengle in Dallas contributed to this report.

UK envoy's leaked views inspire more insults in Trump tweets

By DANICA KIRKA Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — U.S. President Donald Trump lashed out at Britain's ambassador to the United States for a second day, describing him as "wacky" and a "pompous fool" after leaked documents revealed the envoy's dim view of Trump's administration.

Trump fired off a series of tweets about Ambassador Kim Darroch hours after British Prime Minister Theresa May gave the veteran diplomat her continued support.

"The wacky Ambassador that the U.K. foisted upon the United States is not someone we are thrilled with, a very stupid guy," Trump wrote in one tweet.

Darroch's forthright, unfiltered views on the U.S. administration — meant for a limited audience and discreet review — appeared in leaked diplomatic documents that were published in Britain's Mail on Sunday newspaper.

The disclosures have caused embarrassment and an awkward situation for two countries that often celebrate having a "special relationship."

In his Twitter comments Tuesday, Trump combined criticism of Darroch with a broadside at May, chiding

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the British leader for failing to get her Brexit deal with the European Union through Parliament.

"I told @theresa_may how to do that deal, but she went her own foolish way—was unable to get it done. A disaster!" Trump tweeted. "I don't know the Ambassador but have been told he is a pompous fool."

Darroch has served as Britain's envoy in Washington since 2016. In one of his leaked memos, he said that to communicate effectively with Trump, "you need to make your points simple, even blunt."

The published documents also included the ambassador calling the Trump administration's policies on Iran "incoherent," saying the U.S. president might be indebted to "dodgy Russians," and raising doubts about whether the Trump White House "will ever look competent."

Darroch has had a close relationship with numerous Trump administration officials. The president's advisers have been frequent guests at British Embassy events.

An investigation is underway to find who was responsible for leaking the memos, a major breach of diplomatic security.

May's spokesman said Tuesday that the prime minister phoned Darroch to tell him he still had her full support.

But the tweets by Trump, which followed a similar social media barrage on Monday, ratcheted up pressure on Britain's government. Darroch also has been accused by some Brexit-backing U.K. politicians of lacking enthusiasm for Britain's departure from the European Union.

The journalist who reported the leak, Isabel Oakeshott, is a strong Brexit backer and an ally of Brexit Party leader Nigel Farage, who also is Britain's leading champion of Trump.

Trump once said Farage would "do a great job" as ambassador to the United States. Farage sidestepped the idea Monday, saying "I'm not a diplomat."

The tiff with Trump also put pressure on Boris Johnson and Jeremy Hunt, the two men vying to succeed May as Conservative leader and prime minister. Both say they will lead the U.K. out of the European Union and secure new trade deals around the world — notably with the United States.

Hunt, who is Britain's current foreign secretary, reprimanded Trump on Tuesday, writing in his own tweets that the president's comments about Darroch were "disrespectful and wrong."

During a televised debate Tuesday night, Hunt said "if I am our next prime minister, the ambassador in Washington stays, because it is our decision."

Johnson declined during the debate to make a similar commitment to keep Darroch in his post, though he said whoever leaked the diplomatic cables should be "eviscerated."

"I think it's very important we should have a close partnership, a close friendship with the United States," he said.

While British officials hunted for the culprit behind the leak, senior Conservative Party figure and former Foreign Secretary William Hague said the government was right to back Darroch.

"You can't change an ambassador at the demand of a host country," Hague told the BBC. "It is their job to give an honest assessment of what is happening in that country."

Associated Press writers Julie Pace in Washington and Jill Lawless in London contributed to this story.

GOP-led Virginia Legislature abruptly adjourns gun session

By ALAN SUDERMAN and SARAH RANKIN Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Less than two hours after beginning a special session called in response to a mass shooting, Virginia lawmakers abruptly adjourned Tuesday and postponed any movement on gun laws until after the November election.

Democratic Gov. Ralph Northam summoned the Republican-led Legislature to the Capitol to address gun violence in the wake of the May 31 attack that killed a dozen people in Virginia Beach. He put forward a package of eight gun-control measures and called for "votes and laws, not thoughts and prayers" in reaction to the massacre.

But not a single vote was cast on the legislation. Republican leaders said the session was premature and

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politically motivated. They assigned the state's bipartisan crime commission to study the Virginia Beach shooting and the governor's proposed legislation.

In reply, angry Democrats said Republicans were beholden to the gun lobby and afraid of passing commonsense laws they know will save lives.

It was a familiar outcome in a stalled debate that plays out yearly in Virginia on an issue that has divided the nation for more than two decades.

"I wasn't expecting much, but I wasn't expecting this," said Andy Parker, whose journalist daughter, Alison Parker, was shot to death on live TV in Virginia in 2015, along with a cameraman.

"This is just a complete, disgraceful act of cowardice by the Republicans ... And I think it's going to backfire on them," he said.

Republicans said it was Northam, still dealing with the fallout of a blackface scandal that almost drove him from office, who acted improperly. Instead of pushing for votes on legislation that would not have prevented the Virginia Beach shooting, they said, the governor should have called for a blue-ribbon commission to study gun and mental health issues. That is similar to what U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine did as governor following a 2007 mass shooting at Virginia Tech that left 32 people dead and more than a dozen wounded.

"Quite frankly, we need to take a little bit deeper look at these issues and actually do something rather than stage manage a vote in which we're just trying to embarrass each other," said state Sen. Mark Obenshain.

After the 2007 Virginia Tech massacre, the state passed a law prohibiting people deemed seriously mentally ill from buying a gun. But a push at the time for universal background checks failed.

Virginia is generally considered a gun-friendly state and is home to the NRA headquarters. The GOP-led General Assembly has spiked numerous gun-control bills — including several Northam proposed for the special session — year after year.

Richard Keene, a 51-year-old gun owner from Chesterfield, said the session turned out to be "a lot of hype for nothing."

"I'm a little disappointed in everyone, actually," he said. "I don't feel like the common, normal person, the normal American, is represented anymore. It's frustrating."

The special session got off to a chaotic start, with the Republican Senate majority leader averting a mutiny in the GOP caucus by publicly disavowing a gun-control bill he proposed only a day earlier.

On Monday, the leader, Tommy Norment, shocked fellow Republicans by filing surprise legislation to broadly ban guns in any government building statewide. That prompted an immediate backlash in the GOP caucus, which controls the chamber by a slim 20-19 advantage. His top vote-counter, Sen. Bill Stanley, resigned as majority whip in protest.

But the departure did not last long. Stanley said Norment apologized and asked Stanley to reconsider his resignation. The caucus quickly restored him to his position, and Norment announced that he would throw out his own bill.

Outside the Capitol, Northam led a group of gun-control supporters chanting "Enough is enough!" It has become a refrain against gun violence at rallies nationwide after repeated mass shootings.

After the adjournment, Northam issued a statement saying it was "shameful and disappointing" that Republicans "refuse to do their jobs and take immediate action to save lives."

The Virginia Beach attack began when a civil engineer opened fire in a municipal building. The assailant was killed in a gunfight with police.

In calling for gun-control legislation, Northam also cited the fatal shooting of 9-year-old Markiya Dickson in a Richmond park during a May 26 cookout.

Gun-rights advocates also rallied outside the Capitol and filed through an office building to meet with lawmakers. Some made their way through the Capitol with handguns openly visible in holsters, which is permitted.

Jim Snyder, a 69-year-old gun owner from northern Virginia, said the Virginia Beach shooting had not moved the needle on gun issues for him one bit.

"A lot of people say, 'Well, we've got to find common ground,' which means, 'We've got to find gun control

that you'll accept," said Snyder, who is vice president of the gun-rights group Virginia Citizens Defense League. But he said he was speaking only for himself.

Keene, who was standing outside the Capitol after most of the crowds had dissipated, said he was disappointed with the partisanship surrounding the issue.

"I believe there is some common ground for the common good that all of us could work toward," he said.

Court to Trump: Blocking Twitter critics is unconstitutional

By LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump lost a major Twitter fight Tuesday when a federal appeals court said that his daily musings and pronouncements were overwhelmingly official in nature and that he violated the First Amendment whenever he blocked a critic to silence a viewpoint.

The effect of the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals decision is likely to reverberate throughout politics after the Manhattan court warned that any elected official using a social media account "for all manner of official purposes" and then excluding critics violates free speech.

"The government is not permitted to 'amplify' favored speech by banning or burdening viewpoints with which it disagrees," the appeals court said.

Because it involved Trump, the ruling is getting more attention than a January decision by the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that found a Virginia politician violated the First Amendment rights of one of her constituents by blocking him from a Facebook page.

Still, the appeals court in New York acknowledged, not every social media account operated by a public official is a government account, and First Amendment violations must be considered on a case-by-case basis.

"The irony in all of this is that we write at a time in the history of this nation when the conduct of our government and its officials is subject to wide-open, robust debate," Circuit Judge Barrington D. Parker wrote on behalf of a three-judge panel.

The debate generates a "level of passion and intensity the likes of which have rarely been seen," the court's decision read.

"This debate, as uncomfortable and as unpleasant as it frequently may be, is nonetheless a good thing," the 2nd Circuit added. "In resolving this appeal, we remind the litigants and the public that if the First Amendment means anything, it means that the best response to disfavored speech on matters of public concern is more speech, not less."

The Department of Justice is disappointed by the ruling and is exploring possible next steps, agency spokesperson Kelly Laco said.

"As we argued, President Trump's decision to block users from his personal twitter account does not violate the First Amendment," Laco said in an emailed statement.

Appeal options include asking the panel to reconsider, or seeking a reversal from the full 2nd Circuit or from the U.S. Supreme Court.

The decision came in a case brought by the Knight First Amendment Institute at Columbia University. It had sued on behalf of seven individuals blocked by Trump after criticizing his policies.

Jameel Jaffer, the institute's director, said public officials' social media accounts are now among the most significant forums for discussion of government policy.

The ruling "will ensure that people aren't excluded from these forums simply because of their viewpoints," he said.

Katie Fallow, senior staff attorney at Knight, said the institute knew of about 75 individuals who have been unblocked since Buchwald's ruling.

Another 30 or so remain blocked, in part because the Justice Department has required them to cite the tweet that caused blockage, she said.

Among individuals blocked from the account were author Stephen King and model Chrissy Teigen.

Teigen and TV personality Rosie O'Donnell are among those who remain blocked, Fallow said.

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"We certainly think the president should unblock everyone who was blocked because of viewpoint," Fallow said. "If they are not going to do it voluntarily, we'll consider all options, including litigation."

Earlier this year, attorney Jennifer Utrecht, arguing for the president, told the 2nd Circuit Trump's account was created long before he became president and he acted in a private capacity by blocking individuals.

The three-judge panel concluded the official nature of Trump's account "was overwhelming," even though it was created in 2009. It cautioned it was not deciding whether an elected official violates the Constitution by excluding individuals from a "wholly private social media account."

"We also conclude that once the President has chosen a platform and opened up its interactive space to millions of users and participants, he may not selectively exclude those whose views he disagrees with," the judges said.

They noted that Trump had used Twitter to announce his nomination of an FBI director, to announce a ban on transgender individuals serving in the military, to announce the firing of his chief of staff, and about his decision to sell sophisticated military hardware to Japan and South Korea.

The 2nd Circuit said it didn't matter that blocked individuals could still engage in dialogue through "work-arounds," such as logging out to view Trump's tweets or searching for tweets by other users about the president to engage in conversations.

The ruling upheld a decision last year by U.S. District Judge Naomi Reice Buchwald, who did not order Trump to unblock users but said people have a right to reply directly to politicians who use their accounts as public forums to conduct official business.

Trump has been a social media pioneer among politicians, earning daily headlines from tweets.

His Twitter account, @realDonaldTrump, has over 60 million followers and has become a must-read forum for world leaders, critics and fans, who witness Trump boasting of accomplishments, belittling opponents and blasting critical media coverage as "fake news."

'Giant sucking sound': Perot's quips over the years

By The Associated Press undefined

DALLAS (AP) — H. Ross Perot, who died Tuesday at his home in Dallas, was known for memorable quips, especially during his run for president as a third-party candidate in 1992. Here are some quotes from Perot:

ON WHAT HE WANTED TO BE REMEMBERED FOR: "Aw, I don't worry about that." (to The Dallas Morning News in 2016)

ON BEING A TEXAN: "Texas born. Texas bred. When I die, I'll be Texas dead. Ha!" (to The Dallas Morning News in 2016)

ON TRADE: "Well, everybody's nibbling around the edges. Let's go to the center of the bull's-eye, the core problem. And believe me, everybody on the factory floor all over this country knows it. You implement that NAFTA, the Mexican trade agreement, where they pay people a dollar an hour, have no health care, no retirement, no pollution controls, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera, and you're going to hear a giant sucking sound of jobs being pulled out of this country right at a time when we need the tax base to pay the debt and pay down the interest on the debt and get our house back in order." (from a 1992 presidential debate)

ON CHARACTER: "Which one of the three candidates, as a young man, would you want your daughter to marry? Ears and all Which of the three candidates would be the best role model for your children?" (from the 1992 campaign, according to The Baltimore Sun)

ON HIS OWN CAMPAIGN COMMERCIALS: "I love the fact that people will listen to a guy with a bad accent and a poor presentation manner talking about flip charts for 30 minutes, because they want the details." (from a 1992 presidential debate.)

ON NEGATIVE CAMPAIGNING: "And I have said again and again and again, let's get off mud wrestling, let's get off personalities, and let's talk about jobs, health care, crime, the things that concern the American people." (from a 1992 presidential debate)

ON NAFTA: "Will water run downhill? Yes. Will an apple fall from a tree? ... Will jobs flow to cheap labor and get away from government headaches?" (to reporters on conference call in 1993)

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ON GETTING THINGS DONE: "Build a consensus and then do it and then go on to the next one. But don't just sit here slow dancing for four years doing nothing." (from a 1992 presidential debate)

ON MANAGEMENT: "The first EDSer to see a snake kills it. At GM, first thing you do is organize a committee on snakes. Then you bring in a consultant who knows a lot about snakes. Third thing you do is talk about it for a year." (Deriding the business acumen at General Motors compared to his Electronic Data Systems Corp., to BusinessWeek in 1986)

ON POLITICAL ATTACKS: "This is Mickey Mouse tossed salad." (during 1992 news conference)

UK Tory contenders trade blows; Labour backs new Brexit vote

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The two men vying to be Britain's next leader traded verbal blows in a televised debate Tuesday about who is more likely to break the country's Brexit deadlock and lead the U.K. out of the European Union.

About 160,000 Conservative Party members are voting for a successor to Prime Minister Theresa May, who announced her resignation last month after failing repeatedly to get Parliament to back her divorce deal with the EU.

The two finalists, Boris Johnson and Jeremy Hunt, both used their only televised debate to argue that they were best placed to negotiate Britain's twice-postponed exit, currently scheduled for Oct. 31.

Johnson, a populist former mayor of London whom polls suggest is the strong front-runner, argued that Britain leaving on schedule, with or without a divorce deal, is a "do or die" issue.

"Delay does not deliver a deal. A deadline will deliver a deal," Johnson said, adding that his "energy and optimism" would help Britain "get back our mojo."

Hunt, a long-serving but lusterless senior minister who is currently foreign secretary, said he offered experience, realism and a broader appeal than the divisive Johnson.

"I'll be your prime minister whoever you vote for," he said.

Unlike Johnson, Hunt said he would be prepared to delay Brexit for a short time in order to strike a deal with the EU.

That led Johnson to call Hunt "defeatist." Hunt accused Johnson of setting a "fake deadline" and asked whether he would resign if he failed to deliver on his promise to leave by Oct 31.

Johnson did not answer.

"It's not do or die is it?" Hunt snapped back. "It's Boris in No. 10 (Downing St.) that matters."

Hunt and Johnson have both vowed to succeed where May failed and take Britain out of the EU — even if that means leaving without an agreement on divorce terms and future relations.

Most businesses and economists think a no-deal Brexit would plunge Britain into recession as customs checks take effect at U.K. ports and tariffs are imposed on trade between the U.K. and the EU. But many Conservatives think embracing a no-deal Brexit may be the only way to win back voters from the upstart Brexit Party led by Nigel Farage.

Growing concern about the chance of a no-deal Brexit and signs that the British economy could be heading toward recession have weakened the pound, which fell Tuesday to \$1.2440, near a two-year low.

For underdog Hunt, Tuesday's showdown offered a chance to turn the contest around, though it may be too late. Ballot papers have already gone out, and many Conservatives have made their choice.

The two candidates also faced questions about a fierce row over leaked cables from Britain's ambassador in Washington offering unflattering assessments of President Donald Trump's administration.

In the memos, Ambassador Kim Darroch called Trump's White House dysfunctional, inept and chaotic. The president let rip with tweets branding Darroch "very stupid" and "a pompous fool," and saying the administration would no longer deal with him.

Trump also renewed criticism of May's handling of Brexit. In contrast, he has spoken warmly of both Johnson and Hunt.

Hunt reprimanded Trump, saying he should not meddle in Britain's choice of ambassador.

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"I have made it clear that if I am the next prime minister our ambassador in Washington stays," Hunt said. Johnson would not commit to keeping Darroch in his post.

"I have a very good relationship with the White House," he said. "I think it's very important we should have a close partnership, a close friendship with the United States."

As the two Conservatives battled over who was the bigger champion of Brexit, Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn shifted his party's position, calling on May's successor to call a new referendum on Britain's EU membership, in which Labour would campaign to stay in the EU.

In a letter to party members, Corbyn said that the new prime minister "should have the confidence to put their deal, or no-deal, back to the people in a public vote."

"In those circumstances, I want to make it clear that Labour would campaign for Remain against either no-deal or a Tory deal that does not protect the economy and jobs," he said.

Labour's opponents — and many supporters — have accused the party of dithering over Brexit for fear of alienating voters on either side of the national divide over Europe. Until now, Corbyn, a longtime critic of the EU, had resisted calls for a second referendum, saying Labour must respect voters' 2016 decision to leave.

The left-of-center party has previously rejected May's deal but also ruled out leaving the EU without an agreement and called for an election that the party hopes will bring a Labour government to power.

But the party's poor showing in recent local and European elections suggests Labour is losing support to parties including the Liberal Democrats and the Greens that advocate remaining in the EU.

Corbyn's letter clarified the party's position — up to a point. It's still unclear what Labour would do about Brexit if it formed a government.

Labour lawmaker Hilary Benn, who heads Parliament's Brexit Committee, said "this is a very significant moment."

"We saw what a lack of clarity did to Labour in the European elections. We got 14% of the vote," he said.

But John Mann, a Labour legislator who backs Brexit, said the shift would cost the party support in areas of the country that voted strongly to leave the EU.

"There's no indication whatsoever that voters in my area ... have changed their mind," he said.

Associated Press writers Danica Kirka and Pan Pylas contributed to this report.

Follow AP's full coverage of Brexit and the Conservative Party leadership race at: <https://www.apnews.com/Brexit>

With 19 aces, gutsy comeback, Serena reaches Wimbledon semis

By HOWARD FENDRICH AP Tennis Writer

WIMBLEDON, England (AP) — Slowed by a balky ankle, trailing by a service break in the third set of her Wimbledon quarterfinal, Serena Williams appeared to be in trouble Tuesday against an opponent playing the tournament of her life.

Williams was down, yes. But out? No way. And now she is two victories from that 24th Grand Slam title that's been barely eluding her.

Lifting her play a much-needed notch down the stretch to grab the last three games, capping the comeback with her 19th ace — at 121 mph, no less — Williams reached the semifinals at the All England Club by gutting out a 6-4, 4-6, 6-3 win over 55th-ranked Alison Riske.

"I had to just button up and play hard," said Williams, who owns seven Wimbledon titles. "She was playing her heart out."

That she was. Riske, a 29-year-old from Pittsburgh, was appearing in her first major quarterfinal. For Williams, this was No. 51.

That might have made all the difference. It's Williams who possesses boundless muscle memory in these situations, who knows what it takes to come through in the tightest contests on the biggest stages.

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"I definitely thought maybe I had a peek here and there at a couple openings, but Serena really upped her level, as only a champion would," Riske said.

"It was really, actually, very interesting for me to be on the opposite end, because I felt her up her game and her intensity," Riske said with a smile. "Yeah, I hope she takes the title now."

Next for the 37-year-old Williams will be a match against 54th-ranked Barbora Strycova of the Czech Republic, who reached her first Grand Slam semifinal at age 33 with a 7-6 (5), 6-1 victory over No. 19 Johanna Konta of Britain.

"A huge achievement for me," said Strycova, who is playing in her 53rd major tournament.

The other semifinal Thursday will be No. 7 Simona Halep of Romania against No. 8 Elina Svitolina of Ukraine.

After edging Riske in singles, Williams cooled down by riding a stationary bike while holding her nearly 2-year-old daughter, Olympia, in one arm. Then Williams went out and joined Andy Murray to win their second-round match in mixed doubles 7-5, 6-3 against Fabrice Martin and Raquel Atawo.

Halep, a former No. 1 who won the 2018 French Open, followed up her elimination of 15-year-old sensation Coco Gauff by defeating Zhang Shuai of China 7-6 (4), 6-1 to get to her second semifinal at Wimbledon. Svitolina will make her debut in that round at any major tournament thanks to beating Karolina Muchova of the Czech Republic 7-5, 6-4.

These sorts of stakes, and this sort of setting, are unfamiliar for Riske, who mistakenly headed to her changeover chair thinking the match's fifth game was over when the score was just 40-15.

Spectators chortled; she grinned and walked back to the baseline.

Even if Williams was hardly perfect, she got by, aided by her greatest-in-the-game serve and Riske's miscues. Most glaringly, Riske double-faulted five times in the final set, at least somewhat a result of trying to do too much against Williams' superb returns.

"It's no secret that Serena has an amazing serve. But Serena has an equally-as-amazing return," Riske said. "I've never played anyone that has a return like Serena. That put a lot of pressure on my serve."

Still, Riske played tremendously well for most of the afternoon, just as she did while going 14-1 on grass in 2019 until Tuesday.

She won two of Williams' first four service games and finished 5 for 5 on break points. Her deep and flat groundstrokes off both sides jarred Williams repeatedly. Until, that is, Riske wilted late — which was understandable, given that she became the first woman in Wimbledon history to play three-setters in five consecutive matches to open the tournament, according to the WTA.

Williams rolled her right ankle and her movement was hardly ideal. Late in the second set, she was visited by a trainer, who applied extra tape to the ankle. That was during a stretch when Riske, talking to herself between points, claimed four games in a row to take the second set and lead the third by a break at 1-0.

"I thought," Riske said, "I was very close."

Not close enough. Williams was not going to go quietly. She held at love to lead 4-3, and then came the key game. Riske saved a trio of break points and was a point from 4-all after claiming a point when Williams slipped along the well-worn baseline.

First Williams got back to deuce by using a drop shot to set up a volley winner. Then she earned yet another break point on a thrilling 10-stroke exchange, using a drop shot to bring Riske forward and delivering a volley winner. Williams lifted both arms and jutted her jaw. In the stands, her husband leaped from his seat, pointed his index fingers at her and screamed.

On the next point, Riske double-faulted, handing over the last break Williams needed.

After breaking Steffi Graf's record for most Grand Slam trophies in the professional era by winning her 23rd at the 2017 Australian Open while pregnant, Williams took time off. Since returning to the tour last season, she came close to equaling Margaret Court's Slam count of 24 — which was accumulated in part against amateurs — but lost in the finals at Wimbledon and the U.S. Open.

Williams dealt with injuries and illness this year, playing just 12 matches until last week.

"This is the first time since (January) that I actually felt, like, good," she said at her news conference,

while Olympia was held by Williams' agent at the back of the room. "It's been a really, really long year for me already, and hard year."

That's true. Also true: She's Serena Williams.

And so here she is, back in Wimbledon's semifinals for the 12th time.

"She's something," Riske said, "our sport has never seen before."

More AP tennis coverage: <https://www.apnews.com/apf-Tennis> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Most attackers made threats before incident, report finds

By COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — One-third of the attackers who terrorized schools, houses of worship or businesses nationwide last year had a history of serious domestic violence, two-thirds had mental health issues, and nearly all had made threatening or concerning communications that worried others before they struck, according to a U.S. Secret Service report on mass attacks.

The Secret Service studied 27 incidents where a total of 91 people were killed and 107 more injured in public spaces in 2018. Among them: the shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, where 17 people were killed and 17 others injured, and the fatal attack at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh.

The report analyzed the timing, weapons, locations and stressors of the attacker, plus events that led up to the incident, in an effort to better understand how such attacks unfold and how to prevent them. Members of the Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center, which did the study, briefed police, public safety and school officials at a seminar Tuesday.

"We want the community to know prevention is everyone's responsibility," said Lina Alathari, the center's chief. "Not just law enforcement."

Other incidents examined included a man who drove a truck into a Planned Parenthood clinic in New Jersey, injuring three, and a man who killed two at a law firm, and then one at a psychologist's office in June. Criteria for the study included an incident where three or more people were injured in a public place.

Most attackers were male, ranging in age from 15 to 64. The domestic violence history often included serious violence. While 67% had mental health issues, only 44% had a diagnosis or known treatment for the issue.

Most of the attacks occurred midweek. Only one was on a Saturday. As for motive, more than half of the attackers had a grievance against a spouse or family member, or a personal or workplace dispute. Also, 22% had no known motive. In nearly half the cases, the attacker apparently selected the target in advance.

Alathari and her colleagues want communities to be aware of concerning behavior and these trends so officials have something to look out for.

The Secret Service center is tasked with researching, training and sharing information on the prevention of targeted violence, using the agency's knowledge gleaned from years of watching possible targets that may or may not be out to assassinate the president.

Alathari said her team is working on a new report on school shootings and how to prevent them, and investigating averted attacks to try to figure out why someone didn't follow through.

"There is not a single solution," Alathari said. "The more that we're out there, training, the more we're out there with the community ... the more we share information ... I think it will help really alleviate and hopefully prevent even one incident from happening. One is too many."

Asian shares mostly higher ahead of Fed chief testimony

By YURI KAGEYAMA AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Asian shares were mostly higher Wednesday in cautious trading ahead of closely watched congressional testimony by the U.S. Federal Reserve chairman.

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Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 edged down nearly 0.2% in morning trading to 21,529.38. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 added 0.5% to 6,700.10. South Korea's Kospi gained 0.4% to 2,059.44. Hong Kong's Hang Seng rose 0.5% to 28,248.14, while the Shanghai Composite inched up 0.1% at 2,931.18.

Investors have been mostly pausing ahead of the two days of congressional testimony from Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell. Traders will be listening to the exchanges Powell has with lawmakers on Wednesday and Thursday for hints about the Fed's next move on interest rates.

The market rallied through much of June after the central bank signaled it's prepared to cut rates to offset slowing global growth and the fallout from U.S. trade conflicts. But an unexpectedly strong U.S. jobs report last Friday has dimmed investors' expectations.

Many traders still expect the Fed will cut its benchmark rate by a quarter percentage point at the end of the month, but fewer are now expecting a half-point reduction.

The S&P 500 rose 3.68 points, or 0.1%, to 2,979.63. The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 22.65 points, or 0.1%, to 26,783.49. The Nasdaq composite, which is heavily weighted with technology companies, gained 43.35 points, or 0.5%, to 8,141.73. The Russell 2000 index of smaller company stocks added 1.20 points, or 0.1%, to 1,562.59.

The question is whether the Fed will still see a good argument for cutting interest rates after the strong U.S. June jobs data.

The Fed's benchmark interest rate currently stands in a range of 2.25% to 2.5% and the central bank has not cut rates since the Great Recession in 2008. Last year, Fed officials raised rates four times, in part to stave off the risk of high inflation and in part to try to ensure that they would have room to cut rates if the economy stumbled.

"The picking up of tech stocks overnight on Wall Street presents a positive lead for Asia markets, though risks persist with the Fed testimony ahead," said Jingyi Pan, market strategist for IG in Singapore.

"Fed Powell's testimony will be scrutinized for both his views on the economic situation and guidance in terms of any upcoming moves."

ENERGY:

Benchmark crude oil added 81 cents to \$58.64 a barrel. It gained 17 cents to \$57.83 a barrel Tuesday. Brent crude oil, the international standard, rose 60 cents to close at \$64.76 a barrel.

CURRENCIES:

The dollar rose slightly to 108.90 Japanese yen from 108.82 yen. The euro was little changed at \$1.1209, inching up from \$1.1203.

AP Business Writer Alex Veiga contributed to this report.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, July 10, the 191st day of 2019. There are 174 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 10, 1991, Boris N. Yeltsin took the oath of office as the first elected president of the Russian republic. President George H.W. Bush lifted economic sanctions against South Africa.

On this date:

In 1509, theologian John Calvin, a key figure of the Protestant Reformation, was born in Noyon, Picardy, France.

In 1919, President Woodrow Wilson personally delivered the Treaty of Versailles (vehr-SY') to the Senate and urged its ratification. (However, the Senate rejected it.)

In 1925, jury selection took place in Dayton, Tennessee, in the trial of John T. Scopes, charged with violating the law by teaching Darwin's Theory of Evolution. (Scopes was convicted and fined, but the verdict was overturned on a technicality.)

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In 1929, American paper currency was reduced in size as the government began issuing bills that were approximately 25 percent smaller.

In 1940, during World War II, the Battle of Britain began as the Luftwaffe started attacking southern England. (The Royal Air Force was ultimately victorious.)

In 1951, armistice talks aimed at ending the Korean War began at Kaesong.

In 1973, the Bahamas became fully independent after three centuries of British colonial rule. John Paul Getty III, the teenage grandson of the oil tycoon, was abducted in Rome by kidnappers who cut off his ear when his family was slow to meet their ransom demands; Getty was released in December 1973 for nearly \$3 million.

In 1979, conductor Arthur Fiedler (FEED'-lur), who had led the Boston Pops orchestra for a half-century, died in Brookline, Mass., at age 84.

In 1985, the Greenpeace protest ship Rainbow Warrior was sunk with explosives in Auckland, New Zealand, by French intelligence agents; one activist was killed. Bowing to pressure from irate customers, the Coca-Cola Co. said it would resume selling old-formula Coke, while continuing to sell New Coke.

In 1999, the United States women's soccer team won the World Cup, beating China 5-4 on penalty kicks after 120 minutes of scoreless play at the Rose Bowl in Pasadena, California.

In 2002, The House approved, 310-113, a measure to allow airline pilots to carry guns in the cockpit to defend their planes against terrorists (President George W. Bush later signed the measure into law).

In 2004, President George W. Bush said in his weekly radio address that legalizing gay marriage would redefine the most fundamental institution of civilization, and that a constitutional amendment was needed to protect traditional marriage.

Ten years ago: General Motors completed an unusually quick exit from bankruptcy protection with promises of making money and building cars people would be eager to buy. Pope Benedict XVI stressed the Catholic church's opposition to abortion and embryonic stem cell research in his first meeting with President Barack Obama at the Vatican. British conductor Sir Edward Downes, 85, almost blind and growing deaf, and his terminally ill wife, Joan, 74, ended their lives together at an assisted suicide clinic in Zurich, Switzerland.

Five years ago: Germany demanded that the CIA station chief in Berlin leave the country as a new round of allegations of U.S. espionage worsened friction between the two allies.

One year ago: A daring rescue mission in Thailand was completed successfully, as the last four of the 12 boys who were trapped in a flooded cave for 2 1/2 weeks were brought to safety along with their soccer coach. The other eight had been brought out in the two preceding days. Rancher Dwight Hammond and his son Steven, who had been convicted of intentionally setting fires on public land in Oregon, were pardoned by President Donald Trump.

Today's Birthdays: Former New York City Mayor David N. Dinkins is 92. Actor William Smithers is 92. Broadway composer Jerry Herman is 88. Director Ivan Passer is 86. Actor Lawrence Pressman is 80. Singer Mavis Staples is 80. Actor Mills Watson is 79. Actor Robert Pine is 78. Rock musician Jerry Miller (Moby Grape) is 76. International Tennis Hall of Famer Virginia Wade is 74. Actress Sue Lyon is 73. Folk singer Arlo Guthrie is 72. Rock musician Dave Smalley is 70. Country-folk singer-songwriter Cheryl Wheeler is 68. Rock singer Neil Tennant (Pet Shop Boys) is 65. Banjo player Bela Fleck is 61. Actress Fiona Shaw is 61. Country musician Shaw Wilson (BR549) is 59. Bluegrass singer-musician Tim Surratt (Balsam Range) is 56. Actor Alec Mapa is 54. Country singer-songwriter Ken Mellons is 54. Rock musician Peter DiStefano (Porno for Pyros) is 54. Actor Gale Harold is 50. Country singer Gary LeVox (leh-VOH') (Rascal Flatts) is 49. Actor Aaron D. Spears is 48. Actress Sofia Vergara is 47. Rockabilly singer Imelda May is 45. Actor Adrian Grenier (grehn-YAY') is 43. Actor Chiwetel Ejiofor (CHOO'-ih-tehl EHJ'-ee-oh-for) is 42. Actress Gwendoline Yeo is 42. Actor Thomas Ian Nicholas is 39. Singer-actress Jessica Simpson is 39. Rock musician John Spiker is 38. Actress Heather Hemmens is 35. Actress Emily Skeggs (TV: "When We Rise") is 29. Rapper/singer Angel Haze is 28. Pop singer Perrie Edwards (Little Mix) is 26.

Thought for Today: "The people I distrust most are those who want to improve our lives but have only one course of action in mind." — Frank Herbert, American author (1920-1986).

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City Council July 2 Meeting Minutes

July 2, 2019

The Groton City Council met on the above date at 7:00pm at the Community Center for their first monthly meeting with the following members present: Blackmun, McGannon, Peterson, Glover via telephone, Babcock via telephone, and Mayor Hanlon presiding. Also present were: Attorney Drew Johnson, Hope Block, Paul Kosel, and Kathy Sundermeyer.

Public comments were welcomed pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1, but none were received.

The minutes from the previous meeting were approved on a motion by McGannon and seconded by Blackmun. All members voted aye.

Moved by Glover and seconded by Babcock to authorize the following bills for payment. All members voted aye.

Payroll, \$45,717.54, Employee salaries; Executive, \$577.19, ; Administrative, \$3,179.69; Public Safety, \$15,571.05; Public Works, \$9,029.55; Culture & Recreation, \$17,360.06; First State Bank, \$6,168.77, SS and WH ; First State Bank, \$499.98, HSA contributions; Dakotaland FCU, \$1,900.00, Employee savings; Allied Benefits, \$10,180.20, Employee insurance; SD Retirement System, \$7,870.82, Employee retirement; Colonial Life, \$299.88, Employee insurance; Guardian Insurance, \$237.36, Employee insurance; Aflac, \$250.28, Employee insurance; DENR, \$100.00, Street project storm water construction annual fee; SD State Treasurer, \$10,117.54, Sales tax 5/19; Milbank Baseball, \$200.00, Tournament fee; Drew Johnson, \$1,300.00, Legal fees 6/19; CocaCola, \$4,349.00, Soda for resale; Creative Product Sourcing, \$474.76, DARE shirts; Irby, \$76.20, Glove testing; Midstates, \$125.00, PD tickets; Grand Slam, \$329.63, Laptop for timecard module and ethernet bridge for load management; Aaron Severson, \$44.91, Umpire protector; Dakota Brush, \$185.32, Garbage bags; Runnings, \$476.11, Weed trimmer, adaptor, torque set, sparkplug, labor, ratchet set, tray, hose reel, antifreeze, Blade adapter kit, turf builder; Locators & Supplies, \$50.82, Marking paint for sewer; Pressure Washer Central, \$11.95, Sewer tip; Mac's, \$27.98, Zip ties; Harry Implement, \$463.69, Elbow, hose, ends, element, cub cadet parts, labor; Dept of Transportation, \$26.42, Windsock; NW Energy, \$1,039.77, Natural gas; Cody Swanson, \$31.82, Laminate paper for pool; Core & Main, \$256.38, Adj risers; Dairy Queen, \$168.00, Concession resale; Employers Mutual, \$85.20, Employee insurance; Verizon Wireless, \$42.61, Dump camera internet; Bruce Kleinsasser, \$1,700.00, Pool employee recertifications; Stop Stick, \$473.00, Stop stick; SD Dept of Health, \$75.00, Water testing; SD Dept of Revenue, \$112.75, License plates; SD Supp Retirement, \$670.00, Employee retirement; Cash-Wa Distributing, \$630.22, Concession resale, Damian Bahr, Kami Lipp, Cody Swanson, and Kelli Hanson entered the meeting at 7:04pm.

Resolution 2019-5 regarding stop signs North and South bound on Washington Street and 5th Avenue was discussed and the item was tabled on a motion by Glover and seconded by Peterson. All members voted aye.

The swimming pool will be having a moonlight swim from 9 to 11pm July 11, 25 and August 8. Concessions will be sold, and the entry fee will be \$5 per person. Hanson offered to volunteer her time for moonlight swims. Swim Fest consisting of water relays will be held July 14 from 1-3pm. Donations will be taken for admission. Moved by McGannon and seconded by Blackmun to approve the new pool events. All members voted aye.

Lipp, Swanson and Hanson left the meeting, and Terry Herron and Dwight Zerr entered the meeting at 7:20pm.

Herron reported that construction has begun on State Street, and that the rain has hindered the timeline of the street project. Flooding issues will be resolved in the cemetery by installing a drain system. Funding for emergency street repairs at the intersection of 7th Avenue and 1st Street will be discussed at the next meeting. Herron left the meeting at 7:41pm, and Stacy Mayou entered.

Zerr reported that the sweeper is still running well, the lift stations are running at three times what they

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should be, and the lagoon was emptied for the second time. He has been trying to keep levels down and water pumping. He left the meeting at 7:46pm.

Mayou reported that stop sticks were used in a pursuit, so they have been replaced. He would also like to see a new patrol vehicle in the 2020 budget.

Moved by Peterson and seconded by Glover to grant City employees eight hours of leave on July 5th to align with Governor Noem's declared state holiday. All members voted aye.

Moved by McGannon and seconded by Peterson to pay lodging costs of \$440 per person for Hanlon and Babcock to attend the Leadership Institute event in Chicago in October 2019. All members voted aye.

Spring flooding has been declared a presidential disaster, and funding will be discussed at the July 8th meeting in Aberdeen.

Quotes from newspapers were read aloud. Groton Dakota Press quoted legal line rate of .28, classified rate of \$3 minimum (.10 per word over 20 words), open display rate \$3 per column inch and 212 subscribers in city limits. Groton Independent quoted legal line rate of .304, classified rate of \$3 per week, open display rate \$3.50 per column inch and 273 subscribers.

Moved by Glover and seconded by Peterson to designate SD FIT and 1st State Bank of Groton as official banks, and to designate Groton Dakota Press and Groton Independent at their quoted rates as official newspapers. All members voted aye. Peterson added that newspapers must present receipts, billings and notifications in a timely fashion.

Moved by Blackmun and seconded by McGannon to adjourn into executive session for personnel and legal items 1-25-2 (1) & (3) at 8:07pm. All members voted aye. Council reconvened into regular session at 8:37pm.

Moved by McGannon and seconded by Glover to adjourn the meeting at 8:37pm. All members voted aye.

Scott Hanlon, Mayor

Hope Block, Finance Officer

Published once at the total approximate cost of \$_____.