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OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton
The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

- Aug. 20 Faculty Inservice
- Aug. 20 Open House / Picnic (5-7:30)
- Aug. 21 Faculty Inservice
- Aug. 22 1st Day of School

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.

It will be the **COOLEST**
thing you'll see all summer!



**A robot
will serve
you your
Blizzard®!**



Friday, Aug. 16 - 1 p.m. to close

\$1 for every Blizzard® sold during this time
will be donated to the GT Robotics Club.

**When you buy a Blizzard®, the
GT Robotics robot will serve
you the Blizzard®.**

**Only at the Groton Dairy Queen
Only inside service**

DPS Receives Federal 9-1-1 Grant

PIERRE, S.D. – South Dakota's Department of Public Safety has received a federal grant of more than \$1.5 million that will be used for equipment at the statewide 9-1-1 emergency centers, also known as public safety answering points (PSAPs).

The money, which comes from the federal 9-1-1 Grant Program, is part of the ongoing effort to upgrade the system to Next Generation 9-1-1 (NG9-1-1) at the 28 PSAPs across South Dakota. NG9-1-1 allows citizens, first responders and 9-1-1 call takers to use digital, internet-based, broadband-enabled technologies to coordinate emergency responses.

"This is another good example of governments working together at all levels to strengthen our communities," said Governor Kristi Noem. "DPS was able to apply for this funding for use at the local level to help protect and serve the public. These dollars will go a long way in bolstering our systems and keeping South Dakota safe."

A transition to NG9-1-1 has been a major objective of the state's 9-1-1 Coordination Board, which is part of Department of Public Safety. Board Chair Lee McPeck of Watertown said the grant money is part of this effort.

"We want the PSAPs to have the most current equipment and technology available to do their job and keep citizens safe," he said. "We plan to use 100 percent of the grant funds to directly benefit the PSAPs."

More than \$109 million in grant funds was awarded to 34 states and two tribal nations by the U.S. Departments of Commerce and Transportation. To be eligible for the money, an entity had to apply.

South Dakota's 28 PSAPs are Bon Homme County 911, Brookings Police Department, Brown County Communications, Butte County Dispatch Center, Central South Dakota Communications (Pierre), Charles Mix County 911, Clay County Emergency Services Communications Center, Custer County Communications Center, Fall River County Sheriff's Office, Huron Police Department, Lake County 911 Communications, Lawrence County Sheriff's Office, Lincoln County Communications, Marshall County 911, Meade County Telecom, Metro Communications Agency (Sioux Falls), Miner County Sheriff's Office, Mitchell Regional 911, Moody County 911, North Central Regional E911 Center (Mobridge), Pennington County 911, Roberts County Sheriff's Office, Spearfish Police Department, Spink County Sheriff's Office, Union County Sheriff's Office, Watertown Police Department, Winner Police Department and Yankton Police Department.

THINKING ABOUT HEALTH

Facing Surgery? Some Important Questions to Ask Your Hospital and Doctor, Too

By Trudy Lieberman, Rural Health News Service

Last month the New York Times ran a cautionary tale about the heart surgery and care astronaut Neil Armstrong received and his death two weeks later at a community hospital in a Cincinnati suburb in 2012.

The Times had received documents from an anonymous tipster who said he/she was "compelled to share this information" so "others can be saved as a result of the dissemination of this information to the public because this American hero did not have to die an untimely death."

The hospital had made a secret \$6 million settlement with the family, the Times reported, and consulted cardiac experts who pointed out numerous trouble spots in Armstrong's care. One of those experts Dr. Ashish Jha, a professor of medicine at Harvard University, told the paper, "It feels to me like his death was wholly preventable. It's not completely clear to me he needed the cardiac surgery that he got."

The Times noted that the records did not say why Armstrong or his family chose a community hospital rather than the University of Cincinnati Medical Center, a larger academic institution that perhaps had more experience dealing with patients like Armstrong.

That's the takeaway for countless others considering surgeries and procedures, especially ones that are complex. You want your surgeries done at facilities by surgeons who have experience and expertise at doing them.

Shortly before the Times published its stories, a Washington-based organization, The Leapfrog Group, released a report on minimum volume requirements for eight high-risk procedures.

Leapfrog is one of many organizations that make public information about hospital safety. I believe it is one of the most credible. Its warnings about hospitals performing too few complicated procedures that carry a high risk of complications, even death, are to be taken seriously.

Now Leapfrog has a new standard that sets minimum targets that both hospitals and individual surgeons should meet for patient safety. Previously they had standards only for hospitals.

"Studies that have looked at correlation show you have a greater risk of dying when you're at a lower volume hospital," says Leah Binder who heads the group.

Her group does not believe it is safe for patients if their surgeons have not done a minimum number of eight complicated procedures. Those are surgeries, she said, where compelling evidence shows that volume is crucial to positive outcomes.

The procedures are: bariatric surgery for weight loss; carotid endarterectomy; esophageal resection for cancer; lung resection for cancer; mitral valve repair and replacement; open abdominal aortic aneurysm repair; pancreatic resection; and rectal cancer surgery.

For example, for a cancer lung resection, only about 22 percent of hospitals and 17 percent of surgeons met Leapfrog's standard for adequate experience with these procedures. Bariatric surgeries for weight loss had the best numbers with about 68 percent of hospitals meeting the standard and 51.5 percent of the surgeons doing the same.

I asked Binder why bariatric surgeries had the best results. She explained that health insurers have imposed regulations for covering the procedure, and they may require preauthorization and other checks. "Because of that scrutiny, we think they are better."

In other words, insurance company oversight may be a good thing, especially since three-quarters of hospitals overall had not established criteria to determine whether the other seven procedures on Leapfrog's list were appropriate for the patient.

Binder said that rural hospitals were most likely to fall short of the volume requirements. They struggle

because sparse populations in their areas mean they don't perform the same procedure often enough to gain expertise.

"The priority has to be not the hospital but the people served by their hospital."

Patients must understand the level of risk they face if they choose to have complicated procedures done at a hospital with such low volume.

"Some people may not want to drive to a facility that's further away but at least they should understand that the procedure is not that safe," Binder warns.

The hospital industry maintains that attributing surgical expertise only to the numbers of procedures performed ignores other safety improvement strategies.

Binder says she can't say performing 100 surgeries is better than 90, but "I do know that 100 is better than one, two, or three. "People in health care know it, and it's time the rest of the people know that, too."

What's been your experience with hospitals or surgeons harming a loved one? Write to Trudy at trudy.lieberman@gmail.com.

There's no substitute for face-to-face meetings

By Jim Speirs, Executive Director, Arts South Dakota

During the summer, Arts South Dakota co-hosted a number of Arts Happy Hours around the state, from Hill City to Aberdeen and from Yankton to Faulkton. Situated in popular local after-hours gathering spots, the events brought neighbors together in an informal atmosphere to share ideas, concerns, program successes and the spirit of collaboration.

In Hill City, a stronger connection with city government and the local Chamber of Commerce resulted from Happy Hour conversations, while the Yankton gathering brought together local arts advocates and college leadership to plan new collaborative efforts. The Aberdeen Happy Hour introduced interested local educators to the Arts Education Institute thanks to an art exhibition by an AEI participant. In Faulkton, famous for its murals, new ideas for public art came together at a Happy Hour meeting with artist Zach DeBoer.

These meetings, and countless others held in communities throughout the state, have two things in common: leadership by involved, active community volunteers and face-to-face conversation among a diverse group of local citizens who care about the quality of life in their community. By being in the same room, showing hometown support and exchanging viewpoints with neighbors, local residents make things happen.

Other Arts Happy Hours are planned for this fall and winter, as community arts councils partner with Arts South Dakota to keep the conversations going. If you'd like to open a dialogue about the arts and cultural traditions in your hometown, we'd like to help out. Just contact me at jim@ArtsSouthDakota.org and we'll get things started.

Even if your community doesn't host an Arts Happy Hour, there are opportunities for you to add your voice to the creative conversation. Local arts councils need your input—and your participation—to build a better community.

Whether you are a community volunteer, an educator, artist or arts advocate, you can learn more about the arts in South Dakota by visiting www.ArtsSouthDakota.org.



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2019-2020 Groton Area School District Back to School Information

Groton Area School District 06-6 – “Mission Statement”

Each school will foster a school climate conducive to learning by encouraging good behavior and citizenship, good attendance, a thirst for knowledge, and high academic standards. Teachers will employ strategies and approaches to instruction to meet the needs of all children assigned to them. With proper motivation and instruction, all children can learn!

Teacher Qualifications

All teachers of core academic subjects must hold at least a bachelor’s degree, have full state certification, and demonstrate knowledge in the core academic subject they teach. For information regarding the qualifications of your child’s teachers, you may contact the superintendent’s office at 397-2351.

Registration

Anyone new to the District should contact the respective building principal(s) as soon as possible. Most kindergarten children were registered at pre-school screening in April; therefore, only those who did not register in April need to report for registration. Middle School and High School Schedule changes can be made on Monday, August 19th from 9:00 AM to 3:30 PM. New student registration for students entering grades JK-5 will be held on Tuesday, August 6 at the Elementary School.

School Supply Lists

Students’ school supply lists for the elementary school (preschool – grade 5) are posted on the District’s web site at www.grotonarea.com under the District Info Heading. Students in the middle school (grades 6-8) will be required to have the same color notebook, folder, and book cover for each class. Math will be green; English, blue; reading, red; science, purple; and social studies, black. The students can choose their own colors for PE, art, health, and computer classes.

Welcome Back Picnic & Open House – Tuesday, August 20

All students enrolled in the district for the 2019-2020 school year, their parents, and all staff are invited to a “Welcome Back” picnic and Open House on Tuesday, August 20. The picnic will run from 5:00PM – 6:30PM at the Groton Area Elementary School. A free meal will be served and door prizes will be given away.

Open House will run from 6:30PM – 7:30 PM at the elementary school. There will be no open house activities at the middle/high school building following the picnic with the exception of 6th Grade Orientation.

6th Grade Orientation – Tuesday, August 20

Orientation for all 6th grade students and their parents will take place at 6:00PM on Tuesday, August 20. This will be an opportunity for the 6th grade students and their parents to review class schedules and become familiar with the building and ask questions about their transition to Middle School. Students and their parents should enter through the MS/HS Office.

Tablet PCs Issued to Freshmen, Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors

Prior to being issued their tablet PC, students and their parents must sign and return the following documents: Laptop Computer Protection Agreement, the Student Pledge, E-mail Acceptable Use Agreement, the Groton Area School District Network/Internet agreement, and the Parental Consent to Publish Student Photos/Work. Required forms can be picked up in the High School Office or will be sent home with students on the first day of classes.

First Day of School – Thursday, August 22

The first day of school is on Thursday, August 22. Students participating in band should bring their instruments. Buses will run and school lunch will be served. Each route driver will contact parents to confirm bus arrival times. Other bus route questions may be referred to transportation supervisor, Loren Bahr, at (605) 397-8117. The GRASP (OST) program at the elementary school will be available on the first day of school.

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Junior Kindergarten and Kindergarten

The District offers all-day, every day kindergarten classes. Children may enter kindergarten if they are 5 years of age on or before September 1 of the year in which they are to enter school. The District offers a junior kindergarten program each day from 12:15PM – 3:23PM for students that are eligible to attend kindergarten, but are not quite ready for kindergarten. Students enrolling in first grade must be 6 years of age on or before September 1 of that school year.

Non-Resident Enrollment

For out-of-district students, applications to open enroll may be accepted throughout the school year. Applications are available from any school district administrative office. All open enrollment requests and related questions should be referred to school superintendent, Joe Schwan, at (605) 397-2351.

2019-2020 School Hours

Groton Area Elementary	8:15AM	Arrival Time (Supervision)
	8:25AM – 3:23PM	Classes in Session
Groton Area MS/HS	8:25 AM	First Bell
	8:30AM – 3:30PM	Classes in Session

GRASP (OST) Program

The GRASP program services children in junior kindergarten through grade five with before and after-school homework help, supervised learning activities, and snacks. The GRASP program will be held in the Groton Area Elementary School from 7:00AM - 8:00AM and 3:25PM – 6:00PM each day that school is in session. Rates are \$2.75 per hour, per child. Any OST questions or registrations may be directed to Elementary Principal, Mr. Brett Schwan, at (605) 397-2317.

K-12 Breakfast and Lunch Program

The school provides breakfast and lunch for all students each day school is in session. All meals are on a cash basis (i.e. pay as you go), while recognizing the provisions for free and reduced price meals. Guidelines for 2019-2020 applications for free and reduced priced meals were mailed out the week of August 12th. Parents are encouraged to apply for free and reduced priced meals if there is a possibility they may qualify. Prices are as follows:

Groton Area Elementary:

Daily Breakfast \$2.50

Daily Lunch \$3.25

Prices for second servings at the elementary are \$1.00.

Groton Area Middle School/High School:

Daily Breakfast \$3.00

Daily Lunch \$3.75

Prices for second servings at the middle/high school are \$1.25.

Activity Tickets

Activity tickets are intended to admit all students to regularly scheduled home activities or events, with about the only exceptions being tournaments and the Pops Concert. Students in grades 1-5 may purchase an activity ticket, if they wish. All students who participate in activities for which an activity stipend is paid are required to purchase an activity ticket as a condition of participation since they are the primary beneficiaries of the activity programs. For example, staff activity stipends include: all sports, marching band, forensics, cheerleading, drama, oral interp, DI, FFA, FCCLA, FBLA etc.

Activity Ticket prices for 2019-2020 are as follows:

Grades 1-5 \$25.00

Grades 6-12 \$30.00

Adults \$45 (10 events)

Adults – All Events \$75.00

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Admission Prices:

Adults = \$5.00; \$6.00 for double headers

Students, Grades 1-12 = \$4.00

School Cancellations

All school cancellations or early dismissals due to inclement weather or emergencies will be sent out via the School Messenger System. Within minutes, School Messenger automatically sends a pre-recorded message to every recipient on a selected list. Parents will be asked to provide phone numbers and e-mail addresses (when available) to the school so that a selected calling list can be created. Emergency cancellations will be broadcast over TV stations KSFY, KDLT, and KELO as well as the District Facebook page and website, www.grotonarea.com, and by push notifications on the District app (Groton Area Tigers, SD).

Groton Area Tigers, SD Mobile App

New for the 2019-2020 school year is an app for the Groton Area School District available for both Apple and Android devices. Search "Groton Area Tigers, SD" in your app store and download the free app. Be sure to set up the app to allow push notifications to receive timely and important updates from your child's school. The app includes event calendars, athletics schedules, staff contacts, school menus, access to up-to-date news and information and access to archived documents.

Immunization Requirements (SDCL 13-28-7.1)

State law requires that any pupil entering school or an early childhood program in the state shall, prior to admission, be required to present the appropriate school authorities certification from a licensed physician that the new child has received or is in the process of receiving adequate immunization against poliomyelitis, diphtheria, pertussis, rubeola, rubella, mumps, tetanus, and varicella, according to recommendations provided by the Department of Health. The Department of Health may modify or delete any of the required immunizations. As an alternative to the requirement for a physician's certification, the pupil may present:

- Certificate from a licensed physician stating the physical condition of the child would be such that immunization would endanger the child's life or health; or
- A written statement signed by one parent or guardian that the child is adherent to a religious doctrine whose teachings are opposed to such immunization; or
- A written statement signed by one parent or guardian requesting that the local health department give the immunization because the parents or guardians lack the means to pay for such immunization.

Students enrolling in 6th grade are required to get one dose of Tetanus, Diphtheria, Pertussis (Tdap) vaccine and one dose of Meningococcal vaccine on or after their 11th birthday.

Harassment and Bullying Policies

The district has harassment & bullying policies in place in both buildings. Bullying among students can be defined as intentional, repeated hurtful acts, words or other behavior, such as name-calling, threatening and/or shunning committed by one or more students against another. This definition also includes "cyber-bullying" which is the sending or posting of cruel or harmful texts or images using the Internet or other digital media such as cell phones, etc. For a complete copy of the district's harassment or bullying policy, please contact the building principal.

Grievance Procedure

In an effort to maintain effective communications, if you have a particular concern about your child's progress or about what is happening on the bus, at school, in a class or activity, first discuss it with the driver, teacher, or director of the activity. If your concern or grievance remains unresolved at that level, or if there is a need to share your concern, contact the principal in charge of the school in which your child attends. If the concern/grievance remains unresolved at that level, contact the superintendent. If school policy is at issue or if the concern/grievance remains unresolved, you may request that the superintendent include the subject on the school board meeting agenda. To maintain confidentiality, student matters may be confined to an "executive session" with the Board and administration.

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Complaint Policy for Federal Programs and Homelessness Policy

A parent, student, employee, or district stakeholder who has a complaint regarding the use of federal funds and is unable to solve the issue, may address the complaint in writing to the district's superintendent. Disputes addressing the enrollment, transportation, and other barriers to the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness are also addressed under this procedure. For a copy of the complete policy, contact the school superintendent or refer to the District web site.

Child Find

Parents or guardians are to be informed that the Groton Area School District 06-6 continuously conducts a "Child Find" search to identify and evaluate District children ages 0-21, with special education needs. Persons who know of a child with un-served education needs may refer the child, by name, to the appropriate building principal. With the parent or guardian's consent, an evaluation will be made. After the evaluation has been completed, a placement committee will meet with the parent or guardian to determine if special assistance is needed.

Title I

The federal government provides funding to states each year for Title I services. The goal of Title I is to provide extra help in math and reading for eligible students. Students are selected for the program based on information provided by classroom teachers, parents, and achievement test results. Title I services in our district are provided to students in grades K-5, with a strong emphasis on students in grades K-3.

Title I Right to Know – Teacher Certification

As a parent or guardian of a student attending a school that is receiving Federal Title I dollars (Groton Area Elementary), you have the right to know the professional qualifications of the teacher(s) and instructional paraprofessionals who instruct your child. We are happy to provide this information to you. At any time, you may ask:

1. Whether the teacher met state qualifications and certification requirements for the grade level and subject he/she is teaching; 2. Whether the teacher received an emergency or conditional certificate through which state qualifications were waived, and; 3. What undergraduate or graduate degrees the teacher holds, including graduate certificates and additional degrees, and major(s) or area(s) of concentration.

You may also ask whether your child receives help from a paraprofessional. If your child receives this assistance, we can provide you with information about the paraprofessional's qualifications.

Federal Compliance Notice

Students, their parents, and employees of the Groton Area School District #06-6 are hereby notified that this school district does not discriminate on the basis of gender, race, national origin, color, age, disability or religion in employment practices and educational activities. To ensure compliance with Section 427 of GEPA, effective steps shall be taken to remove potential barriers so as to ensure equity of access and participation in grant programs and to achieve high standards. Any person having inquiries concerning compliance or application of Title VI, Affirmative Action, Title IX, Section 504, and the Americans with Disabilities Act is directed to contact Federal Program compliance coordinator, Joe Schwan, Superintendent, Groton Area School District 06-6, Phone 397-2351 or, Department of Education, Civil Rights Office, 8930 Ward Parkway, Suite 2037, Kansas City, MO 64114; Phone: (816) 268-0550; TTD (800) 4370-0833; FAX: (816) 823-1404; Web link: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/index.html?src=mr>

FERPA Notification of Rights

The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) affords parents and students who are 18 years of age or older ("eligible students") certain rights with respect to the student's education records. These rights are:

- The right to inspect and review the student's education records within 45 days after the day the Groton Area School District receives a request for access.

Parents or eligible students should submit to the school principal a written request that identifies the records they wish to inspect. The school official will make arrangements for access and notify the parent or eligible student of the time and place where the records may be inspected.

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- The right to request the amendment of the student's education records that the parent or eligible student believes are inaccurate, misleading, or otherwise in violation of the student's privacy rights under FERPA.

Parents or eligible students who wish to ask the Groton Area School District to amend a record should write the school principal, clearly identify the part of the record they want changed, and specify why it should be changed. If the school decides not to amend the record as requested by the parent or eligible student, the school will notify the parent or eligible student of the decision and of their right to a hearing regarding the request for amendment. Additional information regarding the hearing procedures will be provided to the parent or eligible student when notified of the right to a hearing.

- The right to provide written consent before the school discloses personally identifiable information (PII) from the student's education records, except to the extent that FERPA authorizes disclosure without consent.

One exception, which permits disclosure without consent, is disclosure to school officials with legitimate educational interests. A school official is a person employed by the school as an administrator, supervisor, instructor, or support staff member (including health or medical staff and law enforcement unit personnel) or a person serving on the school board. A school official also may include a volunteer or contractor outside of the school who performs an institutional service of function for which the school would otherwise use its own employees and who is under the direct control of the school with respect to the use and maintenance of PII from education records, such as an attorney, auditor, medical consultant, or therapist; a parent or student volunteering to serve on an official committee, such as a disciplinary or grievance committee; or a parent, student, or other volunteer assisting another school official in performing his or her tasks. A school official has a legitimate educational interest if the official needs to review an education record in order to fulfill his or her professional responsibility.

Upon request, the school discloses education records without consent to officials of another school district in which a student seeks or intends to enroll, or is already enrolled if the disclosure is for purposes of the student's enrollment or transfer.

- The right to file a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education concerning alleged failures by the Groton Area School District to comply with the requirements of FERPA. The name and address of the Office that administers FERPA are:

Family Policy Compliance Office
U.S. Department of Education
400 Maryland Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20202

Student Directory Information

The Groton Area School District routinely discloses names, addresses, and telephone numbers to the South Dakota Board of Regents, South Dakota Technical Institutions, and upon request, to military recruiters, subject to a parent's or eligible student's request not to disclose such information without written consent. Parents or eligible students who wish to opt-out of the disclosure of this information may contact the school office for the appropriate document or may obtain it here: https://core-docs.s3.amazonaws.com/documents/asset/uploaded_file/372177/JOAE2StudentDirectoryInformationOptOut.pdf

Notice of Nondiscrimination

Applicants for admission and employment, students, parents, employees, and all professional organizations holding negotiated agreements or professional agreements with the school district are hereby notified that this district does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, age, gender, disability, national origin, or ancestry in admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs and activities.

Section 504

Section 504 is the part of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 that applies to persons with disabilities. Section 504 is a civil rights act that protects the civil and constitutional rights of persons with disabilities. It states that no person with a disability can be excluded from or denied benefits of any program receiving

federal financial assistance. Section 504 and special education are two separate services.

Notification of Asbestos in School Building(s)

In compliance with the Asbestos-Containing Materials in Schools Rule, the Groton Area School District had its school buildings inspected on 3/19/2019 by an asbestos inspector, accredited by the state of South Dakota. During that inspection, areas of suspected asbestos (ACBM) were identified and inspected. The Groton Area School District has an Asbestos Management Plan which provides information on the periodic monitoring of the condition of asbestos (ACBM) remaining in the school buildings. Anyone that would like to see the Asbestos Management Plan can contact a building principal or superintendent.

We need our farmers.

We need them physically strong. We need them mentally strong.

Northeastern Mental Health Center is now offering counseling services for farmers and their families-**at no cost.**

With the current state of the industry, we understand that farm families can feel overwhelmed in times of stress, instability, and uncertainty.

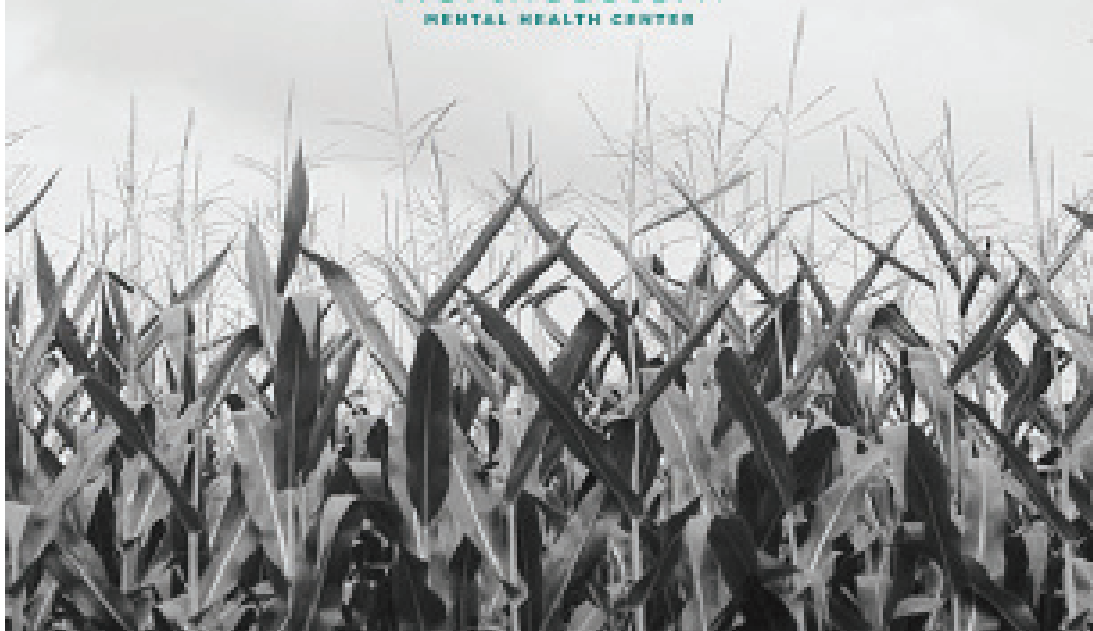
We're here to help.

Call 605-225-1010 for more information.

Northeastern Mental Health Center services the counties of Brown, Campbell, Day, Edmunds, Faulk, Marshall, McPherson, Potter, Spink and Walworth.



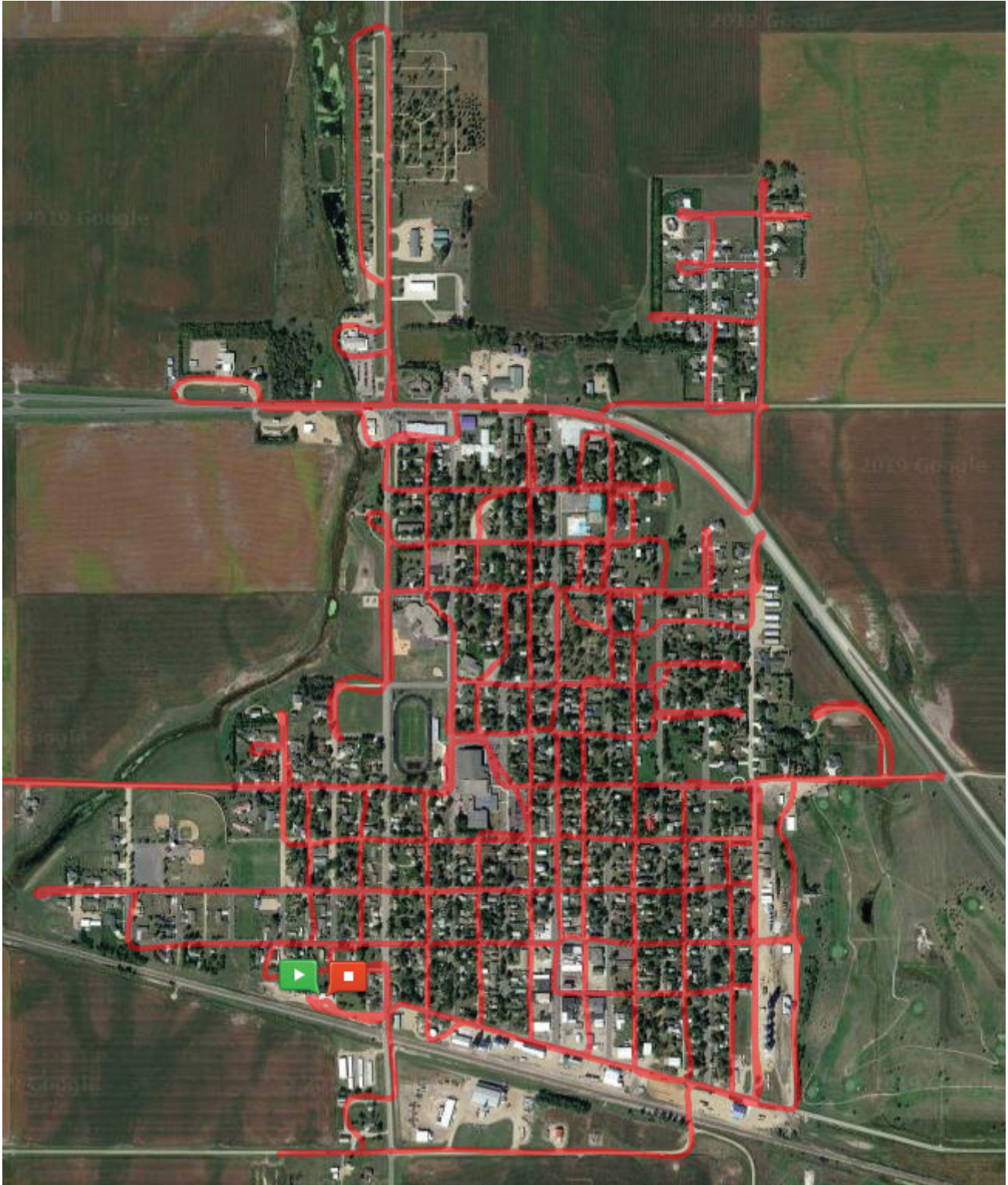
Northeastern
MENTAL HEALTH CENTER



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Mosquito Control Last Night



The City of Groton did adult mosquito control last night. About 7 gallons of Evolver 4x4 was used to cover 25 miles. The wind was NW about 3-5 mph and the temperature was 63 degrees.

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Today



Patchy Fog
then Sunny

High: 82 °F

Tonight



Clear

Low: 60 °F

Saturday



Sunny then
Showers
Likely

High: 79 °F

Saturday
Night



T-storms
Likely

Low: 52 °F

Sunday



Mostly Sunny

High: 74 °F

Dry Today
Storms Return on Saturday
Highs Today: 79 to 85

National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD
Created: 8/16/2019 4:58 AM
www.weather.gov/abr
NWSAberdeen
@NWSAberdeen

Published on: 08/16/2019 at 1:02AM

Pleasant weather expected today. Storms will return on Saturday as another front works its way across the area. Large hail and damaging winds will be possible in the afternoon and early evening.

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Today in Weather History

August 16, 1986: Thunderstorm winds gusted to 60 mph in Forestburg, in Sanborn County. Thunderstorm winds gusting to 100 mph uprooted trees and damaged buildings in the northern part of Hanson County. On several farms, barns, garages, silos, and small buildings were destroyed. The worst affected area was south of Epiphany where large steel sheds were damaged, and a roof was blown in.

1777: The Battle of Bennington, delayed a day by rain, was fought. The rain-delayed British reinforcements and allowed the Vermont Militia to arrive in time, enabling the Americans to win a victory by defeating two enemy forces, one at a time.

1992: One of the most destructive United States hurricanes of record started modestly as a tropical wave that emerged from the west coast of Africa on August 14. The wave spawned a tropical depression on August 16, which became Tropical Storm Andrew the next day.

1909 - A dry spell began in San Bernardino County of southern California that lasted until the 6th of May in 1912, a stretch of 994 days! Another dry spell, lasting 767 days, then began in October of 1912. (The Weather Channel)

1916 - Altapass, NC, was deluged with 22.22 inches of rain in 24 hours to establish a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Afternoon and evening thunderstorms developing along a cold front produced severe weather from Oklahoma to Wisconsin and Lower Michigan. Thunderstorms in central Illinois produced wind gusts to 80 mph at Springfield which toppled two large beer tents at the state fair injuring 58 persons. Thunderstorms also drenched Chicago IL with 2.90 inches of rain, making August 1987 their wettest month of record. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms developing along a slow moving cold front produced severe weather from North Dakota to Lower Michigan during the day. Nine tornadoes were sighted in North Dakota, and thunderstorms also produced hail three inches in diameter at Lakota ND, and wind gusts to 83 mph at Marais MI. Thirty-seven cities in the northeastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, including Rockford IL with a reading of 104 degrees. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Late afternoon and evening thunderstorms in the Central High Plains Region produced golf ball size hail at La Junta CO, Intercanyon CO, and Custer SD. Afternoon thunderstorms over South Texas drenched Brownsville with 2.60 inches of rain. Fair skies allowed viewing of the late evening full lunar eclipse from the Great Lakes Region to the Northern and Central Plains Region, and across much of the western third of the country. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

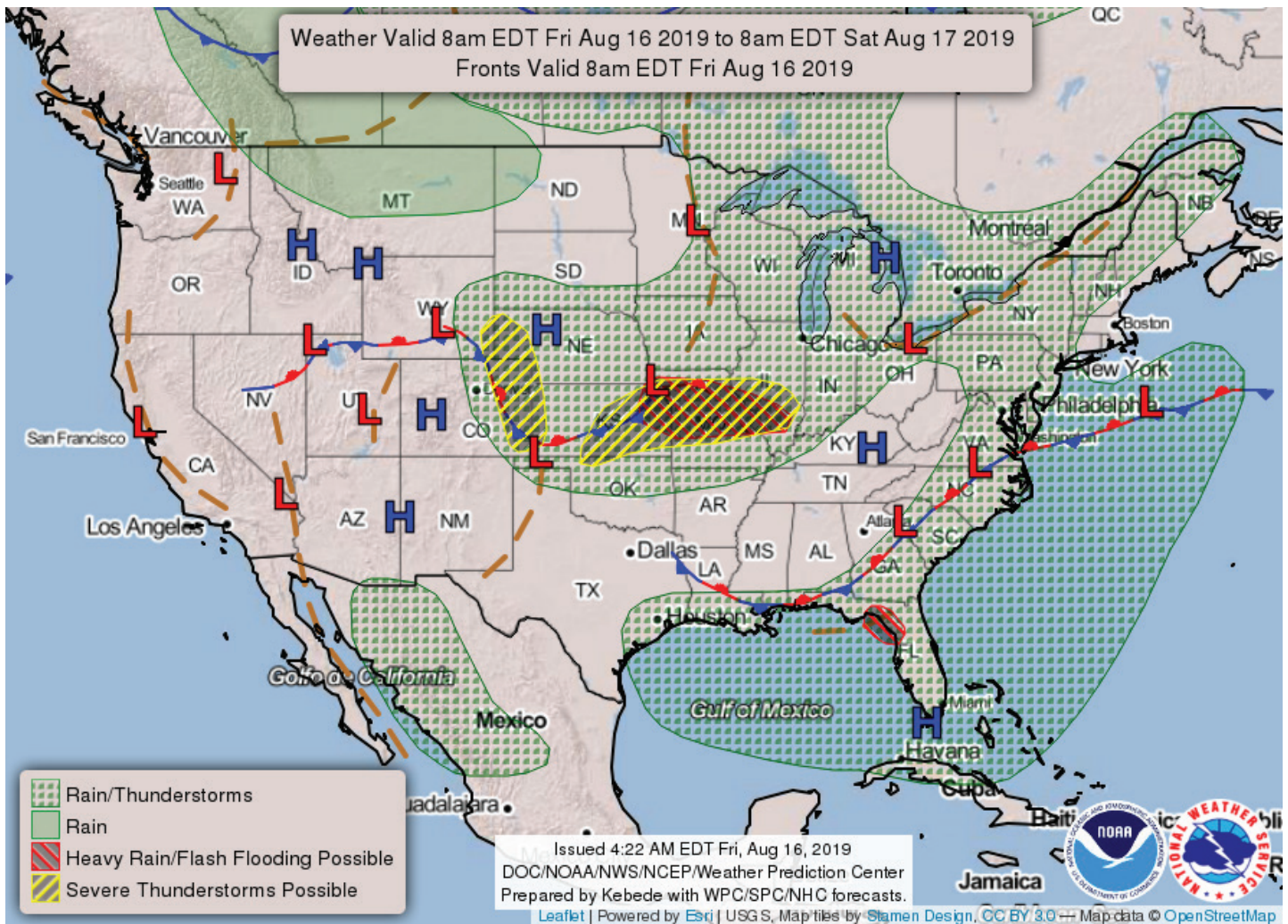
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 78 °F at 3:09 PM
Low Temp: 55 °F at 6:07 AM
Wind: 43 mph at 4:31 PM
Day Rain: 0.87

Record High: 105° in 1988
Record Low: 42° in 1897
Average High: 82°F
Average Low: 57°F
Average Precip in Aug.: 1.17
Precip to date in Aug.: 2.49
Average Precip to date: 15.03
Precip Year to Date: 19.08
Sunset Tonight: 8:40 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:37 a.m.



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COMMITTED LIVING

Throughout the Book of Proverbs, Solomon does not allow wiggle room. It is either this is the way or that is the way or do not forget the way. Its like a visit to a physician: If you want to be healthy, you must follow these directions and take this prescription. If anyone has a desire to honor God, live a life that is pleasing to the Lord, avoid doing what is wrong, and walk in the ways of the Lord, Solomon leaves no doubt about what we are to do. He is also very clear about the dangers and consequences of following our own ways and selfish ends.

Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek the Lord understand it fully. There is little doubt about who Solomon had in mind when he wrote these words: Evil men are those who are committed to doing evil things. When we examine the lives of evil men, we find evidence of evil thoughts, evil deeds, and evil friends. Their lives are so centered on acts of evil that they have lost their understanding of justice. Their lives are so corrupt, so devious, and so unjust that they cannot see or even recognize right from wrong.

On the other hand, those who seek the Lord are fully capable of making the right choice when facing a difficult decision. From his own experience as a leader and from following the advice of his father, King David, Solomon learned that if anyone has a commitment to do what God will honor, God will grant that request and give him the power to overcome evil. When our thoughts come from Gods wisdom, choices become clear, and Gods power available.

Prayer: Empower us, Father, with the strength and courage that comes from Your Word, to do what is right. We know You will give us strength to live righteous lives. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Proverbs 28:5 Evil men do not understand justice, but those who seek the Lord understand it fully.

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2019 Groton SD Community Events

- 08/07/2019 Storybook Land Theatre Performace at Granary Rural Cultural Center
- 09/07/2019 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 09/08/2019 Sunflower Classic at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 09/12/2019 St. John's Lutheran Luncheon
- 09/20/2019 Presbyterian Luncheon
- 09/28/2019 Granary Living History Fall Festival
- 10/11/2019 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/12/2019 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 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

- 01/26/2020 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
- 04/04/2020 Groton Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 04/25/2020 Fireman's Stag (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 05/02/2020 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)
- 06/8-10/2020 St. John's VBS
- 07/04/2020 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
Groton Hosting State B American Legion Baseball Tournament
- 07/12/2020 Summer Fest/Car Show
- 09/12/2020 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 10/10/2020 Pumpkin Fest

News from the Associated Press

South Dakota School for the Deaf moving to smaller campus

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota School for the Deaf is moving to a smaller campus this fall despite record enrollment.

Demographic data shows the school serves nearly 600 students who are deaf and or have some hearing loss. The number is expected to jump to about 650 by 2021, the Argus Leader reported.

As the facility moves to a smaller one, administrators said they're looking at potentially hiring more help and planning for growth. They also said they're trying to smooth over any potential problems during the transition.

They are moving because nonprofit group Sioux Falls Ministry Center bought the current facility in May for \$6.9 million, according to the Argus Leader.

Now, the school's move has been criticized by the deaf community and lawmakers.

"We're going to be challenged in terms of space," Superintendent Marje Kaiser said. "You saw the two or three classrooms that are down there right now. We won't have that comparable space in the new facility."

Administrators said they can't guarantee the new campus will be the same size as the current one, which worries Kaiser.

"Where are we going? How do we build to meet the need that we hear from parents from the deaf community?" Kaiser said. "The challenge is people who have gone to residential schools cherish that experience as part of their education. But it's almost impossible to replicate that in today's world."

The move can also bring a disruption in audiology services offered to students by the campus because of the time it will take to disassemble, move and reassemble the school's sound booth used to evaluate students, according to a presentation last week by school officials to the South Dakota Board of Regents.

School officials are expected to present a new three-year strategic plan to the Board of Regents for review in October.

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

Latest bankers survey indicates shrinking rural economy

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — The latest monthly survey of bankers in parts of 10 Plains and Western states indicates a shrinking rural economy, and three-quarters of bankers said President Donald Trump's trade policies are having a negative effect on their local economies.

The Rural Mainstreet survey released Thursday shows the its overall index falling from an already anemic 50.2 in July to 46.5 this month. Any score below 50 indicates a shrinking economy.

Creighton University economist Ernie Goss, who oversees the survey, says trade tensions "are driving growth lower for areas of the region with close ties to agriculture." Goss also noted that despite negative consequences from tariffs, nearly 7 of 10 bank CEOs surveyed support either raising or continuing the Trump administration's current tariffs.

Bankers from Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming were surveyed.

Brandon officials say water quality report was doctored

BRANDON, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Department of Health and city officials from Brandon are trying to assure residents the quality of the city's drinking water is just fine.

Concerns were raised after a doctored water quality report surfaced online that indicated unsafe radium levels. The report had redacted information about the company that conducted the testing, as well as the identity of the customer who hired the water quality assessment done.

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The Argus Leader says the state and city investigated and found the report posted online July 28 had been altered.

The city of Brandon held a press conference Wednesday afternoon to address the issue and assure residents Brandon's drinking water meets Environmental Protection Agency safety standards.

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

Hy-Vee warns of security problem with credit card readers

WEST DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — An Iowa-based grocery store chain is warning customers about what it says is a security incident involving payment card systems.

Hy-Vee said in a news release Wednesday that it launched an investigation after it detected unauthorized activity on some of its payment processing systems — activity that the company thinks has stopped.

The investigation focused on card payments at Hy-vee restaurants, fuel pumps and drive-thru coffee shops. Company officials think the problem doesn't involve payments systems used inside its grocery stores, drugstores and convenience stores. They use encryption technology for processing card transactions.

Hy-vee intends to notify customers when it can share specific timeframes and locations that may have been involved.

The company is based in West Des Moines and operates more than 240 retail stores in eight Midwestern states: Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

Probation for woman convicted of stealing from grandmother

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A Trent woman has been put on probation and ordered to more than \$100,000 in restitution after pleading guilty to stealing from her grandmother.

The South Dakota Attorney General's Office says Second Judicial Circuit Judge Bradley Zell has suspended a 180-day jail sentence for Jennifer Jo Ahrendt and ordered her to serve 10 years of probation.

Ahrendt was the power of attorney for her grandmother, who has since died. She was accused of taking nearly \$116,000 from her grandmother's accounts from December 2016 and May 2018 and "gambling away" much of the money.

The Argus Leader says the 46-year-old Ahrendt pleaded guilty in May to theft by exploitation of an elder or adult with a disability in a Minnehaha County courtroom.

Death of man found near suicide victim investigated

MONTEVIDEO, Minn. (AP) — Authorities are investigating the shooting death of a South Dakota man who was found next to a woman who officials say committed suicide in western Minnesota.

Chippewa County sheriff's officials say 42-year-old Andy Wilcox, of Sioux Falls, was found with a gunshot wound to the head Sunday west of Sparta Cemetery in Montevideo. Wilcox was taken to North Memorial Medical Center where he was pronounced dead.

The Argus Leader reports 41-year-old Charity Hoffelt, also from Sioux Falls, was found dead near Wilcox. Authorities say Hoffelt's death from a gunshot wound has been determined to be a suicide. Sheriff's officials say the two were dating.

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

Global stocks recover some ground at end of turbulent week

By The Associated Press undefined

LONDON (AP) — Global stock markets looked set to end a turbulent week on a positive note although worries about the U.S. economy and the trade conflict between the U.S. and China still have the potential to derail Friday's recovery.

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Investors in stocks were spooked earlier this week by developments in the U.S. bond market, which was pricing in a likely recession next year. Add in worries over the trade conflict between Washington and Beijing, Brexit, weak economic performance in Germany and political unrest in Hong Kong and stock markets have endured one of their worst weeks this year.

On Friday, amid a dearth of economic data, sentiment appears to have turned more positive, although confidence that it could be sustained for the rest of the session was low.

"Exhausted traders the world over head into the weekend in a more buoyant mood," said Craig Erlam, senior market analyst at OANDA. "While I'd like to think there'll be no more drama in the final hours of trading, I'm just not that optimistic."

In Europe, Germany's DAX was up 1% at 11,523 while France's CAC 40 rose 1.1% at 5,294. The FTSE 100 index of leading British shares was 0.7% higher at 7,115. Trading on the FTSE was delayed by over 90 minutes by what the London Stock Exchange said was a "services issue."

U.S. stocks were poised for solid gains at the open too with Dow futures and the broader S&P 500 futures up 0.9%.

"Despite the positive start today, it seems unlikely that it will be enough to prevent another negative week," said Michael Hewson, chief market analyst at CMC Markets. "Nothing we've heard over the last few days has come close to changing investor concerns that the global economy is on the cusp of a sharp slowdown, and if anything, a lot of the data has only served to reinforce those fears."

Investors are also keeping a close watch on the trade backdrop. Hopes of a swift resolution between the U.S. and China have been dashed and investors appear to be digging in for a protracted dispute. U.S. President Donald Trump has defended his stance once again and insisted that a resolution with China has to be "on our terms."

Earlier in Asia, Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 recouped early losses to gain 0.1% and finish at 20,418.81. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 was little changed, inching down less than 0.1% to 6,405.50. South Korea's Kospi fell 0.6% to 1,927.17, while Hong Kong's Hang Seng added 0.9% to 25,734.22. The Shanghai Composite gained 0.3% to 2,823.82.

ENERGY: Oil prices recovered in the slipstream of stocks. Benchmark U.S. crude added 82 cents to \$55.29 while Brent crude, the international standard, rose \$1.01 to \$59.24.

CURRENCIES: The euro was down 0.2% at \$1.1079 while the dollar rose 0.2% to 106.32 yen.

Lawyer says India promises to ease Kashmir lockdown in days

By ASHOK SHARMA Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — India's government assured the Supreme Court on Friday that the situation in disputed Kashmir is being reviewed daily and unprecedented security restrictions will be removed over the next few days, an attorney said after the court heard challenges to India's moves.

A senior Indian official in Kashmir, B.V.R. Subrahmanyam, confirmed there would be some loosening, telling reporters in Srinagar city that landline phone services would be restored gradually beginning Friday night and schools reopened from Monday.

He didn't announce any immediate restoration of mobile phone service, which he said could be misused by terrorist groups.

A heavy troop presence and restrictions including a near-constant curfew and a news blackout remained in place for a 12th day. The government imposed the lockdown to avoid a violent reaction to its decision on Aug. 5 to downgrade Muslim-majority Kashmir's autonomy.

The Supreme Court decided to give the government more time before ruling on a petition demanding the lifting of media restrictions, attorney Vrinda Grover told reporters. She represents Kashmir Times editor Anuradha Bhasin, who said she was unable to publish her newspaper in Srinagar.

Subrahmanyam also said that government offices had started functioning normally. He said Friday's prayers were held peacefully and life in 12 of the region's 22 districts was almost back to normal.

Public transport will be restored gradually after evaluating the security situation, he said.

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"Some preventive arrests were made in the region as a preventive measure to maintain law and order," Subrahmanyam said, though he did not give the number of people in government custody.

"We have prevented any loss of life or serious injuries to anyone despite concerted efforts by terrorist groups, radical groups and continuing efforts by Pakistan to destabilize the situation," he said.

Meanwhile, the family of a Kashmiri journalist for a regional daily newspaper said he has been detained by the Indian armed forces. Irfan Amin Malik works for Greater Kashmir, one of the largest newspapers in Kashmir.

Malik's father, Mohammed Amin Malik, told The Associated Press that Malik was taken into custody late Wednesday night at his house in Tral in Pulwama, a southern district in Kashmir.

"We are worried about our son," he said.

Principal Secretary Rohit Kansal of the Jammu and Kashmir region said he was looking into the case. Jammu and Kashmir police chief Dilbagh Singh declined to comment.

Malik is the first journalist known to have been detained since India's decision to revoke Kashmir's special constitutional status. The decision has raised tensions with Pakistan. The nuclear-armed rivals both claim Kashmir and the Himalayan region is divided between them.

Pakistan's military said earlier Friday that Indian firing across the Line of Control dividing the region killed another soldier, raising the death toll to six in less than 24 hours.

Pakistan's foreign ministry summoned an Indian diplomat and lodged a protest over the killings. The ministry said in a statement that the "cease-fire violations by India are a threat to regional peace and security and may lead to a strategic miscalculation."

There was no immediate comment from the Indian army.

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan condemned the continued clampdown in Indian-administered Kashmir and warned his counterpart, Narendra Modi, that "no nation can be defeated militarily when it rises for independence."

Khan in a tweet described Modi as a "fascist, Hindu supremacist." He equated Modi with Adolf Hitler and said he feared "genocide of Muslims in Kashmir."

Before Indian elections in April and May, Khan had expressed hope that the Kashmir issue could be resolved through talks if Modi's Hindu nationalist party won the vote.

Modi has defended the Kashmir changes as freeing the territory from separatism, and his supporters welcomed the move.

One of the revisions allows anyone to buy land in Indian-controlled Kashmir, which some Kashmiris fear could change the region's culture and demographics. Critics have likened it to Israeli settlements in Palestinian territories.

Associated Press writers Munir Ahmed in Islamabad, Pakistan, and Sheikh Saaliq in New Delhi contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected to show spelling of Indian official's name is Subrahmanyam instead of Subramaniam.

Trump ties US success to 2nd term: 'You have to vote for me'

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

MANCHESTER, N.H. (AP) — President Donald Trump sought to reassure his supporters about the state of the U.S. economy despite the stock market volatility and told rallygoers in New Hampshire, a state that he hopes to capture in 2020, that their financial security depends on his reelection.

"Whether you love me or hate me you have to vote for me," Trump said.

Speaking to a boisterous crowd at Southern New Hampshire University Arena, Trump dismissed the heightened fears about the U.S. economy and a 3% drop Wednesday in the Dow Jones Industrial Average, which was fueled by a slowing global economy and a development in the bond market that has predicted

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previous recessions. Avoiding an economic slump is critical to Trump's reelection hopes.

"The United States right now has the hottest economy anywhere in the world," Trump said.

Trump, who reached the White House by promising to bring about a historic economic boom, claimed, as he often does, that the markets would have crashed if he had lost his 2016 bid for the presidency. And he warned that if he is defeated in 2020, Americans' 401(k) retirement accounts will go "down the tubes."

The Republican president also defended his tactics on trade with China. He has imposed 25% tariffs on \$250 billion of imports from China and has threatened to hit the remaining \$300 billion worth of Chinese imports with 10% tariffs. He has delayed that increase on about half of those items to avoid raising prices for U.S. holiday shoppers. He said China wants to make a trade deal with the U.S. because it's costing the country millions of jobs, but he claimed that the U.S. doesn't need to be in a hurry.

"I don't think we're ready to make a deal," Trump said.

Trump's rally was the first since mass shootings in El Paso, Texas, and Dayton, Ohio, killed 31 people and wounded dozens more. The shootings have reignited calls for Congress to take immediate action to reduce gun violence. Trump said the U.S. can't make it more difficult for law-abiding citizens to protect themselves, but he advocated for expanding the number of facilities to house the mentally ill without saying how he would pay for it.

"We will be taking mentally deranged and dangerous people off of the streets so we won't have to worry so much about them," Trump said. "We don't have those institutions anymore, and people can't get proper care. There are seriously ill people and they're on the streets."

Along with discussion of the economy and guns, Trump hit a number of other topics, accusing the European Union of being "worse than China, just smaller"; bragging about his 2016 electoral victories in Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania; and calling it a "disgrace" that people were throwing water on police officers in New York.

The rally was interrupted about a half an hour in by a handful of protesters near the rafters of the arena. As the protesters were being led out, a Trump supporter wearing a "Trump 2020" shirt near them began enthusiastically shaking his fist in a sign of support for the president.

But Trump mistook him for one of the protesters and said to the crowd: "That guy's got a serious weight problem. Go home. Start exercising. Get him out of here, please."

After a pause, he added, "Got a bigger problem than I do."

New Hampshire, which gave Trump his first GOP primary victory but favored Hillary Clinton in the 2016 general election, is doing well economically, at least when using broad measures. But beneath the top-line data are clear signs that the prosperity is being unevenly shared, and when the tumult of the Trump presidency is added to the mix, the state's flinty voters may not be receptive to his appeals.

An August University of New Hampshire Survey Center poll found that 42% of New Hampshire adults approve of Trump while 53% disapprove. The poll also showed that 49% approve of Trump's handling of the economy and 44% disapprove.

Some Democratic presidential campaigns are holding events to capitalize on Trump's trip. Joe Biden's campaign set up down the street from the arena to talk to voters and enlist volunteers. A group for Pete Buttigieg's campaign gathered in nearby Concord to call voters about his support for new gun safety laws. And Cory Booker urged Trump to cancel the speech and instead order Congress to take immediate action to prevent gun violence.

At 2.4%, New Hampshire's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate for May was among the lowest in the nation. But wage growth is significantly below national gains. Average hourly earnings rose a scant 1.1% in New Hampshire in 2018, lagging the 3% gain nationwide, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

In other ways, like the home ownership rate — first in the nation — and median household income — seventh in the U.S. — the state is thriving, according to census data.

New Hampshire's four Electoral College votes are far below that of key swing states like Florida, Wisconsin and Michigan, but its influence can prove powerful in close election years like 2000, when George W. Bush's victory in the state gave him the edge needed to win the White House.

AP Economics Writer Josh Boak and AP Polling Editor Emily Swanson in Washington and Associated Press writer Hunter Woodall in Manchester, N.H., contributed to this report.

Claims: Migrant kids split at border harmed in foster care

By **GARANACE BURKE, JULIET LINDERMAN AND MARTHA MENDOZA** Associated Press

SANTA ANA, California (AP) — This story is part of an ongoing joint investigation between The Associated Press and the PBS series FRONTLINE on the treatment of migrant children, which includes an upcoming film.

After local Guatemalan officials burned down an environmental activist's home, he decided to leave his village behind and flee to the United States, hoping he'd be granted asylum and his little boy, whose heart was failing, would receive lifesaving medical care.

But after crossing the border into Arizona in May of last year, Border Patrol agents tore the man's 7-year-old son from his arms and sent the father nearly 2,000 miles (3,220 kilometers) away to a detention center in Georgia. The boy, now 8, went into a U.S.-funded foster home for migrant children in New York.

The foster care programs are meant to provide migrant children with care while authorities work to connect them with parents, relatives or other sponsors. But instead the boy told a counselor he was repeatedly sexually molested by other boys in the foster home.

A review of 38 legal claims obtained by The Associated Press — some of which have never been made public — shows taxpayers could be on the hook for more than \$200 million in damages from parents who said their children were harmed while in government custody.

The father and son are among dozens of families — separated at the border as part of the Trump administration's zero tolerance policy — who are now preparing to sue the federal government, including several who say their young children were sexually, physically or emotionally abused in federally funded foster care.

With more than 3,000 migrant children taken from their parents at the border in recent years, many lawsuits are expected, potentially totaling in the billions. Families who spoke to the AP and FRONTLINE did so on the condition of anonymity over fears about their families' safety.

"How is it possible that my son was suffering these things?" the father said. "My son is little and couldn't defend himself."

The families — some in the U.S., others already deported to Central America — are represented by grassroots immigration clinics and nonprofit groups, along with some of the country's most powerful law firms. They're making claims under the Federal Tort Claims Act as a precursor to filing lawsuits. The FTCA allows individuals who suffer harm as a direct result of federal employees to sue the government.

"It's the tip of the iceberg," said Erik Walsh, an attorney at Arnold & Porter, which has one of the world's leading pro bono programs.

The firm has so far filed 18 claims on behalf of nine families, totaling \$54 million, and Walsh says dozens more are likely coming.

The government has six months to settle FTCA claims from the time they're filed. After that, the claimants are free to file federal lawsuits.

The departments of Justice and Homeland Security — both named in claims — did not respond to requests for comment.

In a statement, Health and Human Services — the agency responsible for the care of migrant children — said it does not respond to pending litigation and that it serves children in a compassionate and organized manner through its Office of Refugee Resettlement.

"The important work happening in each of the facilities and programs in the ORR network around the country — work ORR has done successfully since 2003 — takes an experienced team of competent, hard-working men and women dedicated to the welfare of the children," HHS spokesman Mark Weber said. "We treat the children in our care with dignity and respect."

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Last year, the Office of Refugee Resettlement cared for nearly 50,000 children who crossed the border by themselves, as well as children who were separated from their families under the zero tolerance policy. The agency housed them in foster programs, residential shelters and detention camps around the country, sometimes making daily placements of as many as 500 new arrivals, from babies to teens.

The allegations of abuse and assaults in foster care raise fresh questions about the government's efforts to place younger children with families in lieu of larger shelters and packed detention facilities.

The legal claims, a recent federal court filing and Health and Human Services documents released by Congress earlier this year allege that children have suffered serious emotional trauma after being physically harmed or fondled by other children while in foster care.

Six of the claims for damages involve children who were in foster care. And one recent court filing refers to a migrant child being abused in foster care.

The records released by Congress show the Office of Refugee Resettlement referred at least seven foster care allegations of sexual abuse to the Justice Department in 2017 and 2018. Because some are anonymous to protect the children's privacy, it's unclear if some of the claims are duplicates.

Justice has not responded to repeated queries about those cases from members of Congress.

Three of the four incidents involving physical harm outlined in legal filings occurred at Cayuga Centers in New York, the largest foster care placement for migrant children, housing up to 900 babies and children at a time. The kids are supposed to be placed with Spanish-speaking families who are paid \$1,000 per month per child.

Cayuga Centers did not respond to requests for comment.

In one Cayuga home, a foster parent found a little girl being forced to touch another child's private parts and kiss her on the lips, according to a memo submitted as part of a federal lawsuit related to family separation.

The girl was 3 when immigration officials took her from her father in March, after they'd crossed the border in Texas. As a result of her trauma, the little girl began to regress in foster care, having difficulty eating, drinking and using the toilet, according to her attorney. The girl was sent back to Honduras on Wednesday, a month after her father was deported.

One Guatemalan mother whose 5-year-old daughter was placed in Cayuga last year says her little girl still wakes up crying from what she endured at the foster home.

"Now she's scared each time we go out or when she sees a police car or someone in uniform," said the mother, who has filed a \$6 million claim. "She says 'Mami, don't let them separate us again.'"

Another 5-year-old Guatemalan girl said a boy grabbed her chest and touched her inappropriately, both in her foster home and during daytime classes at a Safe Haven for Children New York foster program, according to a \$3 million injury claim. The girl was moved to a new foster home, but there she suffered verbal abuse from her foster parent's mother, who called her names and locked her alone in rooms as punishment, according to the claim.

A spokesman for Lutheran Social Services of New York, which oversees the Safe Haven for Children New York foster program, declined to comment on the allegation.

Two claims blame the government for wrongful deaths: one, seeking \$20 million, was filed by the wife of a Honduran father who killed himself in a padded cell after officers pulled his 3-year-old son from his arms.

"Essentially what this policy does, is it makes examples out of families that get ripped apart to deter others," said John Escamilla, who is representing the man's wife and two children. He said he plans to file a federal lawsuit stemming from his FTCA claim as soon as Friday. "The people making these policies intended this level of suffering, and that's what's unconscionable."

In another case not involving child separation, a Guatemalan toddler died after a three-week stay in a family detention center. Her mother's \$60 million claim alleges the government failed to give the girl proper medical attention.

The government has not settled any family separation cases in the administrative claims stage. But one federal lawsuit is currently in litigation in Massachusetts, and in February, a federal judge in Connecticut

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approved a \$125,000 settlement in a separate case, for a Honduran mom and her son, then 6, who had been detained for four months and threatened with separation under the Obama administration.

Aseem Mehta, a law student at the Jerome N. Frank Legal Services Organization at Yale Law School who worked on the case, said the settlement — the first of its kind — sends a clear message that such claims have legal standing. Mehta added that Trump's significantly harsher border policies, including family separation, could make for even stronger cases before courts.

"Our case is a benchmark," Mehta said. "The most important takeaway is these claims are viable, and courts will entertain them, and the Department of Homeland Security views them as meritorious; they don't settle cases unless they think there's liability they're exposed to."

Janet Napolitano, who led Homeland Security from 2009 to 2013, said she recalled a number of tort claims were filed against the agency at the time, though she said family separations were rare. The delays in reunifying families and children under the Trump administration may have left the agency open to legal challenges, she added.

"There very well may be some vulnerability there," said Napolitano, now the president of the University of California.

Lawsuits stemming from family separation policies under the Trump administration are expected to be filed by mid-August.

Attorneys for migrant children have aimed several recent legal challenges at larger facilities that are not state-licensed and have held thousands of teens. Some say misconduct is less easily identified in foster care because it requires a child reporting or a foster parent happening to walk in on something occurring in the home.

"We may never know the extent to which children suffered particular abuses in foster homes," said Michelle Lapointe, a senior supervising attorney with the Southern Poverty Law Center.

The Guatemalan father, now living in Southern California, is still struggling to soothe his son's lasting nightmares. He says his third-grader, once talkative and outgoing, is now withdrawn and frequently says he wants to leave this world.

"This can't happen again because for those of us who live through this, it is terrifying," he said.

Daffodil J. Altan of FRONTLINE contributed to this report.

Israel grants Tlaib West Bank visit on humanitarian grounds

By ISAAC SCHARF Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's interior minister said Friday he has received and granted a request by Democratic Rep. Rashida Tlaib to enter the Israeli-occupied West Bank on humanitarian grounds.

The decision marked the latest sharp reversal over what had been a planned visit by Tlaib and fellow Democrat, Rep. Ilhan Omar, to Jerusalem and the West Bank.

On Thursday, Israel had announced it is barring the two from entry — an unprecedented move targeting members of the U.S. Congress. Israel's decision came after President Donald Trump said in a tweet it would show "weakness" to allow in the two Muslim members of Congress who have been sharply critical of him and of Israel's policies toward the Palestinians.

The decision by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu — and Trump's prior prodding — had sparked widespread criticism, including from Israeli and Jewish organization which said it was an affront to U.S. institutions to bar the entry of members of Congress. Critics also argued that it weakened Israel's traditionally strong ties with the U.S. through heavy-handed partisanship.

On Friday, Israeli Interior Minister Aryeh Deri announced the latest twist — that Tlaib had requested and been granted permission to enter the West Bank to see relatives, including her 90-year-old grandmother.

Deri's office published what it said was Tlaib's written request, on congressional stationery.

In her letter, Tlaib said this would likely be the last chance to see her grandmother and that she would respect any restrictions and "not promote boycotts" during her visit.

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Tlaib's office could not immediately be reached for comment.

Deri's office said he "decided to allow her entry to Israel and hopes she will stand by her commitment and that the visit will be for humanitarian needs only."

Tlaib's apparent pledge to conduct the visit in line with restrictions imposed by Israel was bound to anger Palestinians who had hoped the congressional tour, organized by a Palestinian group, would highlight their plight. Israel captured the West Bank, Gaza Strip and east Jerusalem in the 1967 Mideast war. Palestinians hope to establish an independent state on those lands.

Tlaib and Omar are known as supporters of "boycott, divestment and sanctions," or BDS, a Palestinian-led global movement. Israel alleges that BDS targets Israel's very existence, while the movement's supporters say it is intended as leverage to end more than half a century of Israeli military rule over Palestinians.

Israel's decision Thursday had been an extraordinary step bringing the longtime U.S. ally into Trump's domestic fight against political rivals at home.

The U.S. president was essentially relying on Israel to retaliate against Tlaib and Omar. The two are part of the "squad" of liberal newcomers — all women of color — whom Trump has labeled the face of the Democratic Party as he runs for re-election. Trump's actions marked a glaring departure from the tradition of American politicians leaving domestic disputes at the water's edge.

For Israel, the willingness to side so pointedly with Trump marks a deeper foray into America's bitterly polarized politics and risks its relationship with Congress.

Israel announced the ban Thursday after Trump tweeted that "it would show great weakness" if the two were allowed to visit. Asked later if he had spoken to Netanyahu, he said, "I did talk to people over there," but he declined to say to whom.

Omar, who became the first Somali-American elected to Congress, denounced the ban on her and Tlaib's tour as "an affront" and "an insult to democratic values."

In Israel, Netanyahu said Thursday that his country remains "open to critics and criticism," except for those who advocate boycotts against it.

China police exercises across from Hong Kong seen as threat

By **DAKE KANG** and **YVES DAM VAN** Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Members of China's paramilitary People's Armed Police marched and practiced crowd control tactics at a sports complex in Shenzhen across from Hong Kong on Friday, in what some interpreted as a threat against pro-democracy protesters in the semiautonomous territory.

The sound of marching boots and synchronized shouts echoed from the grounds. Officers in green camouflage stood guard at closed entrances. A stadium security guard said "it wasn't clear" when the paramilitary police would leave the grounds.

Chinese state media have only said that the Shenzhen exercises were planned earlier and were not directly related to the unrest in Hong Kong, though they came shortly after the central government in Beijing said the protests were beginning to show the "sprouts of terrorism."

From a distance, police could be seen conducting drills in military fatigues, using shields, poles and other riot-control gear. In one exercise, two groups marched in formation with those in front raising shields as if to protect themselves from projectiles. Others behind held red flags and banners. The words "the law" and "prosecuted" could be seen on one.

Outside, dozens of armored carriers and trucks sat in the parking lot of the Shenzhen Bay Stadium, close to a bridge linking mainland China to Hong Kong.

Weeks of protests in Hong Kong have been marked by increasing violence and a shutdown of the Hong Kong airport earlier this week. The demonstrators are demanding expanded political rights and the scrapping of legislation that could have seen criminal suspects sent to mainland China.

A weekend of protests is expected to begin Friday night with a university student-led "power to the people" rally in Chater Garden, a public square in the financial district.

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A pro-democracy march is planned for Saturday along with a separate pro-government "Save Hong Kong" rally, ahead of a major pro-democracy rally called for Sunday. Police have denied permission for the march on Sunday, but protesters have ignored such denials in the past.

China has pressured foreign and Hong Kong companies to support the ruling Communist Party's position against the protesters.

The CEO of Cathay Pacific Airways, one of Hong Kong's most prominent companies, resigned Friday following pressure by Beijing on the carrier over participation by some of its employees in the anti-government protests.

Cathay Pacific said Rupert Hogg resigned "to take responsibility" following "recent events."

The company chairman, John Slosar, said in a statement the airline needed new management because events had "called into question" its commitment to safety and security.

On Monday, Hogg threatened employees with "disciplinary consequences" if they took part in "illegal protests."

Last week, China's aviation regulator said Cathay Pacific employees who "support or take part in illegal protests, violent actions, or overly radical behavior" are banned from staffing flights to mainland China.

On Friday morning, Frenchman Alain Robert, who has been dubbed "spiderman" for his unauthorized climbs of skyscrapers, hung a banner appealing for peace as he scaled the 62-story Cheung Kong Center, a landmark Hong Kong building that is the base for property tycoon Li Ka-shing's business empire.

The banner showed the Chinese and Hong Kong flags over a handshake and a small yellow sun with a smiley face.

"The banner is to give joy and smile to the people of Hong Kong," he told the AP as he sat in a taxi about to leave for his climb. He added that he didn't want to get "mixed up in the political situation."

Robert, 57, was taken to a police station afterward. It wasn't immediately clear if he would be charged. He was banned in 2017 from returning to Hong Kong for one year after climbing another building.

Kang reported from Shenzhen, China.

AP sources: Trump has talked about buying Greenland for US

By ZEKE MILLER and MATTHEW LEE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Aiming to put his mark on the world map, President Donald Trump has talked to aides and allies about buying Greenland for the U.S.

A Trump ally told The Associated Press on Thursday that the Republican president had discussed the purchase but was not serious about it. And a Republican congressional aide said Trump brought up the notion of buying Greenland in conversations with lawmakers enough times to make them wonder, but they have not taken his comments seriously. Both spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss private conversations.

Still, it wouldn't be the first time an American leader tried to buy the world's largest island, an autonomous territory of Denmark.

In 1946, the U.S. proposed to pay Denmark \$100 million to buy Greenland after flirting with the idea of swapping land in Alaska for strategic parts of the Arctic island.

Neither the White House nor Denmark immediately commented Thursday. Trump is set to visit Denmark next month.

The story was first reported by The Wall Street Journal.

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

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

1. WHO WAS GRANTED A WEST BANK VISIT ON HUMANITARIAN GROUNDS

Israel's interior minister says he has received and granted a request by Democratic Rep. Rashida Tlaib

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to enter the Israeli-occupied West Bank on humanitarian grounds. Israel had earlier decided to ban Tlaib and Rep. Ilhan Omar from visiting.

2. CLAIMS: MIGRANT KIDS SPLIT AT BORDER HARMED IN FOSTER CARE

A review of 38 legal claims obtained by the AP shows taxpayers could be on the hook for more than \$200 million in damages from parents who say their children were harmed while in U.S. government custody.

3. 'YOU HAVE TO VOTE FOR ME'

Trump seeks to reassure supporters about the state of the U.S. economy and tells rallygoers in New Hampshire that their financial security depends on his reelection.

4. POLICE EXERCISES ACROSS FROM HONG KONG SEEN AS THREAT

In light of pro-democracy protests, members of China's paramilitary police have been seen marching and practicing crowd-control tactics at a sports complex across from Hong Kong.

5. TARIFF WAR KEEPS MARKETS UNSTEADY

Global shares were mostly higher, although turbulence continues on global markets amid ongoing worries about the U.S.-China trade conflict.

6. GEORGIA FACING BALLOTING DILEMMA

A judge orders the state to quickly pivot to hand-marked paper ballots if election officials fail to meet the timeline they've set to implement a new voting system.

7. PYONGYANG REBUFFS SEOUL

North Korea says it has no plans to talk with South Korea and fires two more projectiles into the sea to extend a torrid streak of weapons display that's apparently aimed at pressuring Washington and Seoul over their joint drills and slow nuclear negotiations.

8. A BEAUTIFUL TRIBUTE FOR EL PASO VICTIM

A Texas man invites the world to join him in remembering his companion of 22 years, slain in the mass shooting at a border-town Walmart.

9. RELIGIOUS BLACK VOTERS WEIGH GAY CANDIDATE'S BID

When it comes to Pete Buttigieg in South Carolina, many religious black voters are conflicted between a cultural openness for same-sex marriage and their deeply held biblical convictions.

10. 'THIS IS LIKE A PILGRIMAGE'

Tie-dyed pilgrims and white-haired Woodstock festival veterans are converging at the generation-defining site to celebrate its 50th anniversary.

AP Analysis: Trump uses Israel to fuel partisan fires

By **MATTHEW LEE** and **ZEKE MILLER** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's encouragement and support of Israel's decision to ban two Democratic lawmakers may play well to his political base, but it could endanger the foundations of the U.S.-Israel relationship in the longer term.

The move on Thursday to bar Reps. Rashida Tlaib of Michigan and Ilhan Omar of Minnesota from Israel fueled a partisan fire over the Jewish state that has been raging in the United States, with Trump eagerly fanning the flames.

On Friday, though, Israel's interior minister, Aryeh Deri, said he had received and granted a request by Tlaib to enter the Israeli-occupied West Bank on humanitarian grounds, to visit her 90-year-old grandmother. Tlaib's letter said she would respect any restrictions and would "not promote boycotts" during her visit, according to Deri's office. A phone message left at Tlaib's Washington office early Friday wasn't immediately returned.

Trump had celebrated Israel's Thursday decision on Twitter and framed the issue in decidedly political terms: "Representatives Omar and Tlaib are the face of the Democrat Party, and they HATE Israel!"

Shortly before that decision was announced, Trump offered a not-so-subtle nudge to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, tweeting that "it would show great weakness" if Israel allowed the women to visit.

Bipartisan support from Congress has been a bedrock of the U.S.-Israel relationship since Israel's found-

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ing, and critics of Thursday's decision said they worried that Trump and Netanyahu were exploiting the situation for short-term political gain.

Netanyahu faces an election next month, and Trump faces the voters next year.

Tlaib and Omar, two newly elected Muslim members of Congress, are outspoken critics of Israel's treatment of the Palestinians. They had planned to visit Jerusalem and the West Bank on a tour organized by a Palestinian organization aimed at highlighting the plight of the Palestinians.

Israel on Thursday cited their support for the so-called "boycott, divestment, sanctions" movement, or BDS, in support of the Palestinians. Israel, and many pro-Israel U.S. politicians, believe BDS is anti-Semitic and seeks the destruction of the Jewish state, something its proponents deny.

But even some of Israel's strongest supporters denounced Thursday's move, saying it would deepen existing divides in the U.S. over support for Israel.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York, the highest-ranking elected Jew in the country and one of Israel's staunchest defenders, said the move would "only hurt the U.S.-Israeli relationship and support for Israel in America."

"Denying entry to members of the United States Congress is a sign of weakness, not strength," he added.

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee, which has sought to stay above the partisan fray over Israel, weighed in against Thursday's decision.

"We disagree with Reps. Omar and Tlaib's support for the anti-Israel and anti-peace BDS movement, along with Rep. Tlaib's calls for a one-state solution," AIPAC said in a tweeted statement. "We also believe every member of Congress should be able to visit and experience our democratic ally Israel firsthand."

Although there has been partisan friction between the U.S. and Israel in the past, Trump has sought to exploit it unlike any of his predecessors. The seeds were planted during the contentious debate and negotiations over President Barack Obama's 2015 Iran nuclear deal, which Netanyahu vociferously opposed.

Netanyahu spoke at length against the deal at every opportunity he had, including on numerous occasions in the United States while at the White House, before a joint session of Congress and at the United Nations.

Republican lawmakers overwhelmingly opposed the deal, agreeing with Netanyahu's argument that it opened, rather than closed, Iran's path to a nuclear weapon because many of its most onerous restrictions expired over time. Then-candidate Trump seized on the issue, campaigning on an unabashedly pro-Israel platform that had withdrawing from the nuclear deal as a top goal.

As president, Trump decided against the advice of former top aides and over the objections of Democrats to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital, move the embassy there from Tel Aviv, recognize Israeli sovereignty over the Golan Heights and slash assistance to the Palestinians.

Trump has tried to silence his critics and opponents of his decisions by accusing them of anti-Semitism and of being insufficiently pro-Israel.

In recent months, Trump has tried to elevate the two Democratic women of color to the fore of the nation's political debate, believing they will repel Democratic voters, according to Trump allies.

It is part of a Trump strategy that has placed racial animus at the forefront of his reelection campaign in an effort that his aides say is designed to activate his base of conservative voters and those who fear cultural changes across America. The aides, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss campaign strategy, also say Trump is banking that his loud support for Israel will attract more Jewish and evangelical Christian supporters.

His latest exhortation to Netanyahu to bar Omar and Tlaib from Israel may play well with his base, including the evangelical community he will need to win reelection, but it complicates matters for other parts of the administration, notably the State Department.

Although the U.S. ambassador to Israel, David Friedman, tweeted support for the ban, his embassy's primary responsibility is ensuring the safety and security of Americans overseas.

For Israel, the West Bank and Gaza, that has long meant, and still does, a call for all Americans, including those of Palestinian descent or with pro-Palestinian views, to be treated fairly and equally by Israeli

authorities.

"The U.S. government seeks equal treatment and freedom to travel for all U.S. citizens regardless of national origin or ethnicity," the department says in its latest travel advisory for Israel.

The advisory notes that some Arab Americans, including Palestinian Americans, "have experienced significant difficulties and unequal and hostile treatment at Israel's borders and checkpoints."

The department urges those who have faced such treatment to immediately report it to the American Citizen Services unit at the embassy in Jerusalem.

Judge orders paper ballot contingency plan for Georgia

By KATE BRUMBACK Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — If Georgia election officials fail to meet the tight timeline they've set to implement an entirely new voting system, they'll have to quickly pivot to hand-marked paper ballots for the March presidential primaries.

That's according to a Thursday ruling by U.S. District Judge Amy Totenberg.

Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger last week certified a new voting system and said it will be in place by the March 24 presidential primary elections, just over seven months away. The chief information officer for Raffensperger's office, Meritt Beaver, acknowledged during a court hearing last month that the implementation schedule is "tight."

The state's \$106 million contract with Denver-based Dominion Voting Systems includes new touchscreen voting machines that print a paper record with a code that's read by a scanner.

Raffensperger said in an emailed statement Thursday that his office is "already moving full steam ahead" to implement the new system.

It's set to replace the outdated election management system and paperless voting machines that Georgia has used since 2002. Election integrity advocates and individual voters sued in 2017 alleging that the touchscreen voting are unsecure and vulnerable to hacking.

They had asked Totenberg to order an immediate switch to hand-marked paper ballots, noting that special and municipal elections are scheduled before March. The judge declined, citing concerns about the state's capacity to make an interim switch to hand-marked paper ballots while also working to implement a new system.

But she made it clear it's not acceptable for the state to use the old system as a backup if the new system isn't in place in time.

"Georgia's current voting equipment, software, election and voter databases, are antiquated, seriously flawed, and vulnerable to failure, breach, contamination, and attack," she wrote.

Instead, she ordered election officials to develop a contingency plan that includes using hand-marked paper ballots. She ordered a pilot of that contingency plan during elections this November.

Totenberg noted that some dates and details about the implementation have been a "moving target," and that the state has already scaled back a planned pilot program and postponed some deadlines.

This "slippage" gave her concerns about the state's ability to effectively handle the "mammoth undertaking" of procuring, testing and installing the equipment in all 159 counties, as well as installing a new election management, ballot building and voter registration system, she wrote.

Jennifer Doran, elections supervisor for Morgan County, said she's pretty confident the state will meet the deadlines, but she said, "It's better to have a contingency already in place in case it doesn't happen."

Totenberg's ruling applies only to Georgia, but at least parts of eight other states still use paperless balloting. Using voter registration and turnout data, the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU School of Law estimated in a report this week that as many as 12% of voters, or around 16 million people in the U.S., will vote on paperless equipment in November 2020.

The plaintiffs in this lawsuit have said the new machines have many of the same vulnerabilities as the old ones. They also worry that the portion of the printed record that's read by the scanner is a QR code, not human-readable text, meaning voters have to trust that the code accurately reflects their selections.

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Totenberg called the legislation providing for a new system "an essential step forward out of the quagmire, even if just to terminate use of an antiquated vulnerable voting system."

"The wisdom or legal conformity of the Secretary of State's selection of a new vendor's particular ballot system though is not the question now before the Court," she wrote, adding in a footnote that a report last year from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine recommends the use of paper ballots because of the vulnerabilities of electronic systems.

Perhaps alluding to legal challenges of the new system promised by plaintiffs, Totenberg quoted baseball legend Yogi Berra, writing: "The past may here be prologue anew — it may be 'like déjà vu all over again.'"

The state, she wrote, has "previously minimized, erased, or dodged the issues underlying this case." In her 153-page order, Totenberg recounted the history of the case and related actions, or inaction, by the state "to ensure transparency for the future."

Both sides saw victory in Totenberg's order.

"(W)e are pleased the Court endorsed the policy decisions of the state's elected officials to move to a new paper ballot voting system in time for the 2020 elections while not disrupting the 2019 elections," Raffensperger said in an emailed statement. "These activist plaintiffs continue fruitlessly attempting to force their preferred policy outcomes on Georgia voters without success."

Marilyn Marks, executive director of the Coalition for Good Governance, one of the plaintiffs in the case, wrote in an email that it was important that Totenberg "recognized Plaintiffs concerns about the State's plan to move to another form of electronic voting — electronic ballot marking devices." The voters' right to accountable elections requires hand-marked paper ballots counted by optical scanners with thorough audits, she wrote.

David Cross, a lawyer representing several Georgia voters in the case, called the ruling a "big win for all Georgia voters and those working across the country to secure elections and protect the right to vote."

The integrity of Georgia's voting system was heavily scrutinized during last year's midterm election, in which Republican Brian Kemp, the state's top election official at the time, narrowly defeated Democrat Stacey Abrams to become governor.

Totenberg also ordered state officials to develop a plan by Jan. 3 to address errors and discrepancies in the state's voter registration database. Election officials are also instructed to provide each precinct with a paper backup of its voter registration list.

N. Korea fires more projectiles, rules out talks with South

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea on Friday bluntly criticized South Korean President Moon Jae-in for continuing to hold military exercises with the U.S. and over his rosy comments on inter-Korean diplomacy, and said Pyongyang has no current plans to talk with Seoul.

The statement by an unidentified government spokesman came hours before South Korea's military detected two projectiles North Korea fired into the sea to extend a torrid streak of weapons display that's apparently aimed at pressuring Washington and Seoul over their joint drills and slow nuclear negotiations.

South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the projectiles launched from the North's eastern coast flew about 230 kilometers (143 miles) on an apogee of 30 kilometers (18 miles) before landing in waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan. The U.S. and South Korean militaries were analyzing the launches but didn't immediately say whether the weapons were ballistic missiles or rocket artillery.

The North has ignored South Korean calls for dialogue recently and is seen as trying to force Seoul to make stronger efforts to coax major concessions from Washington on its behalf.

Moon, in a televised speech on Thursday, said a momentum for dialogue remains alive despite the series of "worrying actions taken by North Korea recently." He called for Pyongyang to choose "economic prosperity over its nuclear program."

The spokesperson of the North's Committee for the Peaceful Reunification of the Country said Moon's comments would make a "boiled head of a cow (fall into) a side-splitting laughter."

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"A sure thing is that the (South) Korean chief executive is (such a) funny man as he just reads what was written by his juniors," the statement said, while avoiding calling Moon by his name.

The statement also criticized South Korea's recent acquisition of advanced U.S.-made fighter jets and said it would be "senseless" for Moon to believe that inter-Korean dialogue will automatically begin after the end of the ongoing U.S.-South Korean drills.

"We have nothing to (talk about) any more with (South) Korean authorities nor have any (plans) to sit with them again," the statement said.

The North had recently said it would talk only with Washington and not Seoul, and that inter-Korean dialogue won't resume unless the South offers a "plausible excuse" on why it keeps hosting military drills with the United States. Seoul's Unification Ministry, which deals with inter-Korean affairs, criticized the North Korean statement, saying it wouldn't help efforts to improve relations.

Pyongyang has also been demanding that Seoul turn away from Washington and restart inter-Korean economic projects held back by U.S.-led sanctions against the North.

The United States has so far rejected North Korea's demands for sanctions relief in exchange for piecemeal deals toward partially surrendering its nuclear capabilities and urged Pyongyang to commit to completely relinquishing its nuclear and missile program.

Friday's launches were North Korea's sixth round of tests since late July, when it stepped up its weapons demonstrations while expressing frustration over stalemated nuclear negotiations with the United States as well as the U.S.-South Korean drills that the North sees as an invasion rehearsal.

South Korea's presidential office said national security adviser Chung Eui-yong presided over an emergency National Security Council meeting and Moon was briefed on the launches. The Blue House called for the North to stop launches that risk raising military tensions on the peninsula.

The weapons the North tested in recent weeks included a new rocket artillery system and what security analysts say are two new short-range mobile ballistic missile systems that would potentially expand its ability to strike targets throughout South Korea, including U.S. bases there.

Experts say President Donald Trump's downplaying of the North's launches allowed the country more room to intensify its testing activity and advance its short-range weaponry while it seeks to build leverage ahead of a possible resumption of negotiations, which could happen sometime after the end of the allied drills later this month.

Japan's Defense Ministry said the North Korean projectiles did not reach the country's territorial waters or its exclusive economic zone. The White House said it was aware of reports of the launches and was consulting with Seoul and Tokyo.

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

Asian shares mixed amid ongoing worries about US-China trade

By YURI KAGEYAMA AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Asian shares were mixed Friday as turbulence continued on global markets amid ongoing worries about U.S.-China trade conflict.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 recouped early losses to be up 0.3% at 20,456.96 in morning trading. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 inched down nearly 0.1% to 6,402.40, while South Korea's Kospi fell 0.8% to 1,923.56. Hong Kong's Hang Seng added 0.8% to 25,701.58. The Shanghai Composite gained 0.7% to 2,834.85.

On Wall Street Thursday, stock indexes were flipping between gains and losses until a late-day bounce gave the market a modest gain. Worries about a possible recession collided with hopes that the strongest part of the U.S. economy — shoppers spending at stores and online — can keep going.

The major U.S. stock indexes spent much of the day reacting to big moves in U.S. government bond yields, which fell sharply in the early going, fluctuated for much of the day, and then recovered some of their decline by mid-afternoon.

U.S. government bonds have been among the loudest and earliest to cry out warnings about the economy.

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The S&P 500 rose 7 points, or 0.2%, to 2,847.60. The benchmark index swung between a 0.6% gain and 0.5% loss. A day earlier, it plunged 2.9%. The Dow Jones Industrial Average, coming off its worst day of the year, gained 99.97 points, or 0.4%, to 25,579.39. The Nasdaq composite dropped 7.32 points, or 0.1%, to 7,766.62, while the Russell 2000 index of smaller companies lost 5.87 points, or 0.4%, to 1,461.65.

Markets around the world have jerked up and down for weeks. Prices for everything from stocks to gold to oil have been heaving as investors flail from one moment of uncertainty around Trump's trade war to another around what central banks will do with interest rates.

President Donald Trump again defended his trade war and said a resolution with China has "got to be a deal, frankly, on our terms."

After being hopeful earlier this year that a trade agreement may be imminent between the world's two largest economies, investors are increasingly digging in for the tensions to drag on for years.

"Nonetheless, the wider point is that with U.S.-China uncertainties still elevated, we are acutely aware that signs of risk aversion being reined in must not be mistaken for risk eliminated," said Vishnu Varathan of Mizuho Bank in Singapore.

ENERGY:

Benchmark U.S. crude added 62 cents to \$55.09. It fell 76 cents to \$54.47 per barrel Thursday. Brent crude, the international standard, rose 48 cents to \$58.71.

CURRENCIES:

The dollar was little changed at 106.20 Japanese yen, compared to 106.23 yen Thursday. The euro weakened to \$1.1103 from \$1.1150.

Feeling alone, man invites world to El Paso victim's funeral

By JAMIE STENGLE Associated Press

When 63-year-old Margie Reckard was killed by a gunman who opened fire at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas, earlier this month, Antonio Basco lost his entire world. So, as the man who felt so alone planned her funeral, he invited the world to join him in remembering his companion of 22 years.

Since then, condolences and orders for flowers have poured in. When her funeral is held Friday evening in El Paso, an overflow crowd is expected.

"He felt like he was going to kind of just be by himself with this whole thing but it's not so — it's going to be amazing," Perches Funeral Homes director Harrison Johnson told The Associated Press on Thursday.

Johnson, who is also a pastor, will speak at the service, which was moved from one of their funeral homes to La Paz Faith Memorial & Spiritual Center to accommodate the crowd. He said vocalists and musicians have also volunteered to help, including a mariachi band. The public is also welcome at Reckard's burial Saturday morning.

Reckard had children from a previous marriage who are traveling from out of town to the funeral, Johnson said. But he said that for Basco, Reckard was "his life, his soul mate, his best friend." The couple had a car wash business, he said.

"Probably some people have felt like Mr. Tony in a time of death — they felt like they were alone and nobody was around," Johnson said.

On Tuesday, Perches posted on Facebook a photo of a bereft Basco kneeling by a candlelight memorial. The post welcomed anyone to attend Reckard's funeral and soon drew thousands of comments and shares. Among them was Kelly Barton, 35, of Tyler, Texas. "I just wanted him to know that he wasn't alone in it," she told the AP.

Lisa Cano, 48, posted that she was sending prayers from California. Cano, who is from El Paso but now lives in Los Angeles, also sent flowers.

"It's good to be able to be involved and be there emotionally or spiritually for the people who are suffering. It's just giving us something to do — we want to do something," she told the AP.

Perches is among local funeral homes offering free services for the 22 people killed. In the days after the shooting, Basco told El Paso television station KFOX that Reckard's kindness and selflessness was

incomparable. "When I met her she was an angel and she still is," Basco said.

Her son, Harry Dean Reckard, told The New York Times that when he and his brother and sister were children, the family didn't have much money and frequently moved. He said his mother would sometimes work at fast food restaurants or as a hotel housekeeper to add to what her husband earned as a truck driver.

"As a kid, I just remember her feeding us and trying to provide for us the best that she could," said Harry Dean Reckard, who lives in Omaha, Nebraska.

He said that after his father died in 1995, his mother began a relationship with Basco. The couple had moved to El Paso a few years ago. He said his mother, who had been battling Parkinson's disease, "was loved by many."

Johnson said that Basco is "amazed" and "overwhelmed" with the outreach. "He's very appreciative, just so very appreciative to everybody's well-wishing and concerns," he said.

Can Tokyo's efficient rail system handle Olympic strain?

By ALEX BARREIRA Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — First, Tokyo Olympic fans will have to find scarce tickets and pay the price. Then there's the quandary of landing a hotel room with rates that are being inflated due to unprecedented demand. And the summer heat and humidity will be off-putting for some.

Then there's one more hurdle: getting around, or even finding a tiny space to stand on Tokyo's famously efficient but over-stressed rail system.

Japanese professor Azuma Taguchi at Chuo University has researched Tokyo's system for years and says it's already running at double its capacity and the Olympic crunch could push it to the breaking point.

"When peak capacity is twice or three times above normal, it's possible some people could be killed," Taguchi told The Associated Press.

His computer simulation predicts that the biggest wave of Olympic spectators will collide with work commuters at popular transfer stations during the morning rush hour, while small stations closest to venues will be overwhelmed.

Add to the mix, newcomers carrying luggage aboard subway cars and struggling to maneuver off the train and through crowded stations.

Tokyo transport officials characterize train cars at 200% capacity as giving passengers just enough space to read a magazine. This probably represents a normal commuting weekday in Tokyo.

At 250%, they "cannot even move a hand."

Taguchi's study predicts 15 stations will experience greater than 200% capacity, with several reaching nearly 400% at their peak.

Since Tokyo last hosted the Summer Olympics in 1964, railways have designated special oshiya, or "pushers," to pack commuters into rush hour cars— often wearing white gloves. Locals are accustomed to the treatment, but visitors may not be.

Tokyo's Olympic organizing committee question Taguchi's dire predictions. They acknowledge the railways will be packed with 800,000 added passengers daily. They also anticipate that Tokyo expressway congestion will double.

Hoping to head off the crowding, the committee wants to launch a smartphone app, boost multilingual signage, and use boats and robot-assisted technology to help fans and commuters get around. As with all Olympics, authorities are testing special highway lanes and altering the city's transit flow.

Concerns about transportation are nothing new at the Olympics, and crowds are often overestimated and subsequently managed, as was the case in London in 2012. Potential tourists sometimes stay away, knowing it's a bad time to visit with prices soaring. That happened in 2008 in Beijing and again three years ago in Rio de Janeiro.

"Living in Tokyo we experience this 100%, 150%, 180% crowding every day. We know how to navigate the stations at these times," said Katsuhisa Saito, the head of transport strategy for Tokyo's organizers.

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"The main concern is when foreigners attend these events and use the stations. They might not know how to deal with this."

Organizers hope to bring the level of congestion in subway cars down to between 150-180%, a fairly pleasant day for Tokyo commuters. Also, perhaps, a lofty goal.

Taguchi and organizers agree on one thing: keeping Japanese workers at home during the Olympics could go a long way toward solving the problems.

Organizers are asking companies in Tokyo to encourage their employees to work from home during the Olympics, which open on July 24, 2020, and close on Aug. 9. They say more than 2,000 companies have agreed to participate.

Tokyo University professor Katsuhiko Nishinari is working with the organizing committee, an expert in what he calls "jam-ology" — the study of crowd behavior.

"We're used to having one game per day at the stadium, but at the Olympics we have a tight schedule and we have 3-4 games in one day," he said. "We have to exchange the audience two or three times. That's where we don't have experience."

Another major challenge will be convincing a famously industrious workforce to avoid the commute — or the office altogether — for two weeks next summer.

"We're explaining to all the companies and the media, asking people not to work during those two weeks," Nishinari said. "Just enjoy the Olympics."

More AP sports: <https://apnews.com/apf-sports> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Earnhardt takes weekend off after plane crash near Bristol

ELIZABETHTON, Tenn. (AP) — Dale Earnhardt Jr. will take the weekend off from broadcasting to be with his wife and daughter after the three were in a plane crash landing Thursday near Bristol Motor Speedway.

The 44-year-old television analyst and retired driver was taken to a hospital for evaluation after the crash in east Tennessee. Earnhardt was with wife Amy, 15-month-old daughter Isla, a dog and two pilots.

"We're incredibly grateful that Dale, his wife Amy, daughter Isla, and the two pilots are safe following today's accident," NBC Sports said in a statement. "After being discharged from the hospital, we communicated with Dale and his team, and we're all in agreement that he should take this weekend off to be with his family."

"We look forward to having him back in the booth next month at Darlington."

Federal Aviation Administration officials said a Cessna Citation rolled off the end of a runway and caught fire after landing at Elizabethton Municipal Airport at 3:40 p.m. Thursday. FAA officials said the preliminary indication is that two pilots and three passengers were aboard the jet.

The National Transportation Safety Board tweeted that it's sending two representatives to Elizabethton to begin investigating the crash.

Carter County Sheriff's Office spokesman Thomas Gray confirmed Earnhardt was aboard but said he wasn't one of the pilots.

Earnhardt retired as a full-time driver in 2017 and has been working as an analyst for NBC. He is part of the scheduled broadcast team for Saturday night's Cup Series event in Bristol, Tennessee.

This incident comes 26 years after former driver and 1992 Cup champion Alan Kulwicki died in a plane crash while on his way to the spring race at Bristol from a promotional appearance in Knoxville, Tennessee. That crash at Tri-City Regional Airport in Blountville, Tennessee, killed a total of four people.

Earnhardt was part of Rick Hendrick's racing team in 2011 when Hendrick broke a rib and a collarbone while on a small jet that lost its brakes and crash landed in an airport at Key West, Florida. Hendrick's son, brother and twin nieces were among 10 people killed in a 2004 crash of a plane traveling to a race in Virginia.

This isn't the first fiery crash for Earnhardt. He still has a burn scar on his neck from a crash at Sonoma in 2004 during warmups for an American Le Mans Series race that left him with second-degree burns.

Earnhardt has a history of concussions that plagued him over his final years as a driver. He won NASCAR's most popular driver award a record 15 times with 26 career Cup victories.

More AP auto racing: <https://apnews.com/apf-AutoRacing> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Coroner: Gunman had drugs in system during firefight

By JOHN SEEWER and DAN SEWELL Associated Press

CINCINNATI (AP) — The gunman in Dayton who killed nine people had cocaine, an antidepressant and alcohol in his system during the mass shooting, and was cut down by a barrage of at least two dozen police bullets that penetrated gaps in his body armor, a coroner said Thursday.

Montgomery County coroner Dr. Kent Harshbarger said authorities found a pipe device and a baggie of cocaine on 24-year-old Connor Betts. Harshbarger also reported in his preliminary autopsy findings that Betts had more than 50 entry and exit wounds.

"This incident involved an intense firefight that is rarely seen other than combat and an active-shooter incident," Dayton Police Chief Richard Biehl said. "The officers were confronted with a moving shooter wearing body armor, actively executing victims with an AR-15-type weapon and high-capacity magazines."

The coroner said police gunfire hit two people. One of them died, but Harshbarger said the gunman, not police, fired the lethal round.

Police investigators will review the medical records of the 17 who were wounded to determine if any of them were struck by the officers' bullets, Biehl said.

Police haven't yet determined a motive for the shooting.

Meanwhile, Betts' parents have apologized for the wording in his death notice that didn't mention the mass shooting whose victims included his younger sister.

Stephen and Moira Betts issued a statement that said the notice for Connor Betts was "insensitive in not acknowledging the terrible tragedy that he created."

They said they wanted to reflect the son they knew and weren't trying to "minimize horror of his last act."

The notice described Betts as a "funny, articulate and intelligent man with striking blue eyes and a kind smile" before it was taken down Wednesday by a funeral home in their hometown of Bellbrook, Ohio.

Betts opened fire in a popular entertainment district in Dayton. Police shot him as he neared a crowded bar.

It's not known whether Betts targeted his 22-year-old sister, Megan. They had spent an hour together at a bar in the same area before the shooting.

The family will be holding private memorial services for both of their children.

Ethan Kollie, a longtime friend of Betts who told investigators he bought the body armor, a 100-round magazine and a key part of the gun Betts used in the attack will remain in jail after a judge ordered Thursday that he be held without bond until his trial.

Authorities have said there's no indication Kollie knew Betts was planning the mass shooting, but they charged him with lying on a federal firearms form while buying a pistol not used in the shooting.

His attorneys wanted him released on house arrest with electronic monitoring and other conditions, telling the judge Kollie had no history of violence and no role in the shooting. Prosecutors opposed his request to stay with a family friend.

Seewer reported from Toledo.

This story has been corrected to show the statement that the funeral home took down was a death notice for Betts, not an obituary.

Virgin Galactic reveals futuristic outpost for space tourism

By SUSAN MONTOYA BRYAN Associated Press

UPHAM, N.M. (AP) — Spaceport America is no longer just a shiny shell of hope that space tourism would one day launch from this remote spot in the New Mexico desert.

The once-empty hangar that anchors the taxpayer-financed launch and landing facility has been transformed into a custom-tailored headquarters where Virgin Galactic will run its commercial flight operations.

The interior spaces unveiled Thursday aim to connect paying customers with every aspect of the operation, providing views of the hangar and the space vehicles as well as the banks of monitors inside mission control.

Two levels within the spaceport include mission control, a preparation area for pilots and a lounge for customers and their friends and families, with each element of the fit and finish paying homage to either the desert landscape that surrounds the futuristic outpost or the promise of traveling to the edge of space.

From hotel rooms to aircraft cabins, the Virgin brand touts its designs for their focus on the customer experience. Spaceport is no different.

A social hub includes an interactive digital walkway and a coffee bar made of Italian marble. On the upper deck, shades of white and gray speak to Virgin Galactic's more lofty mission.

Company officials say the space is meant to create "an unparalleled experience" as customers prepare for what Virgin Galactic describes as the journey of a lifetime.

Just how soon customers will file into Virgin Galactic's newly outfitted digs for the first commercial flights to space has yet to be determined. A small number of test flights are still needed.

"We were the first company to fly a commercial space ship to space with somebody in the back who was not a pilot — first time that somebody like that has been able to get out of their seats and float around the cabin," Virgin Galactic CEO George Whitesides said. "So it's happening. We have a bit more work to do before we get to commercial service."

Billionaire Richard Branson, who is behind Virgin Galactic, and former New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson, a Democrat, first pitched the plan for the spaceport nearly 15 years ago.

There were construction delays and cost overruns. Virgin Galactic's spaceship development took far longer than expected and had a major setback when its first experimental craft broke apart during a 2014 test flight, killing the co-pilot.

Critics suggested the project was a boondoggle, but supporters argued that there were bound to be hard and sometimes costly lessons.

Democratic state Sen. George Munoz has enduring concerns about the business model for commercial, low-orbit travel for passengers.

"You can have all the money in the world and come back and say, 'Was my 30 seconds of fame worth that risk?'" he said.

Munoz says New Mexico's anticipated return on investment in terms of jobs and visitors is still overdue, with more than \$200 million in public funds spent on Spaceport America in cooperation with Virgin Galactic as the anchor tenant.

At the facility Thursday, the carrier plane for Virgin's rocket-powered passenger ship made a few passes and touch-and-goes over a runway.

Behind the spaceport's signature wall of curved glass, mission control sits on the second floor with an unobstructed view of the runway and beyond.

There's also space behind two massive sliding doors to accommodate two of Virgin Galactic's carrier planes and a fleet of six-passenger rocket ships.

Virgin Galactic posted on social media earlier this week that its main operating base was now at the spaceport. And Branson said the wing of Virgin's next rocket ship has been completed.

Chief Pilot Dave Mackay said the crew in the coming days will fly simulated launch missions to ensure in-flight communications and airspace coordination work as planned. The pilots also will be familiarizing themselves with New Mexico's airspace and landmarks.

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"New Mexico is on track to become one of the very few places on this beautiful planet which regularly launches humans to space," Mackay said.

Whitesides said that once the test flights are complete, commercial operations can begin. He envisions a fundamental shift in humanity's relationship with space, noting that fewer than 600 people ever have ventured beyond the Earth's atmosphere.

"We're going to be able to send way more than that to space from this facility here," he said. "In another 15 years, I really hope that we've had thousands of people go."

About 600 people have reserved a seat, according to the company, at a cost of \$250,000 a ticket.

That buys them a ride on the winged rocket ship, which is dropped in flight from the carrier airplane. Once free, it fires its rocket motor to hurtle toward the boundary of space before gliding back down.

The latest test flight reached an altitude of 56 miles (90 kilometers) while traveling at three times the speed of sound.

Associated Press writer Morgan Lee contributed to this report from Santa Fe.

Weak global growth likely to mean US slowdown, not recession

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER, JOSH BOAK and BANI SAPRA AP Business Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — How fragile is the global economy? The U.S.-China trade war is weakening businesses in both countries, Germany's economy shrank in the second quarter, and Britain appears headed for a disruptive exit from the European Union this fall.

Those trends have hammered American manufacturers and caused global financial markets to plunge on fears that the world's largest economy could slip into a recession.

Yet most analysts expect the U.S. economy to power through the rough patch, at least in the coming months, on the strength of solid consumer spending and a resilient job market.

The U.S. stock market plummeted earlier this week when the bond market, spooked by the global turmoil, sent a possible early warning sign of a recession ahead: The yield on the benchmark 10-year Treasury note slipped briefly below 2-year Treasury yields.

That is an unusual shift that indicates investors expect the U.S. economy to expand much more slowly in the coming months. The shift has preceded at least the last five U.S. recessions, though as much as two years can pass before a recession actually hits.

Still, most economists were buoyed by a robust retail sales report Thursday that suggested that American consumers aren't fretting about bond yields. Sales at U.S. stores and restaurants jumped in July by the most in four months. Online sales soared to their best showing since January. Spending at restaurants is a sign of confidence, given that most people eat out when they feel they have money to spare.

"With the rest of the world sliding into the abyss, the July retail sales figures show a resurgent U.S. consumer riding to the rescue," said Michael Pearce, senior U.S. economist at Capital Economics, a consulting firm.

If anything, it's the Trump administration's trade war that has been harming the world economy. President Donald Trump has imposed 25% tariffs on \$250 billion of imports from China, along with duties on most steel and aluminum imports. He has also threatened to hit the remaining \$300 billion worth of Chinese imports with 10% tariffs, though he has delayed that increase on about half of those items to avoid raising prices for U.S. holiday shoppers.

Still, the tariffs — and Beijing's retaliatory duties on \$110 billion of U.S. goods — have dragged down China's growth to its slowest pace in 26 years. That slowdown in the world's second-largest economy has, in turn, pummeled Germany's economy, because Germans export industrial equipment to China. Germany's economy actually shrank in the second quarter.

Other global headwinds remain a threat. Simon MacAdam, global economist at Capital Economics, said the chances of a "no-deal" Brexit have risen sharply since Boris Johnson replaced Theresa May as British prime minister last month. Johnson "is dead keen on leaving the EU" by Oct. 31, the deadline for any

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deal, MacAdam noted.

An abrupt exit would most likely lower the British pound, raising inflation and cutting into British consumer spending. Supply chains for British manufacturers and retailers would also probably be disrupted as the country reinstates its customs procedures.

One of the U.S. economy's biggest weak spots is manufacturing, which is suffering from the trade war and global growth strains. Factory output has sunk over the past 12 months. Manufacturing job growth has tapered off during the past year. Surveys of manufacturers indicate that the uncertainty from tariffs is hurting their businesses.

American manufacturers appear to be either in a recession or on the verge of a downturn, said Joe Brusuelas, chief economist for the consultancy RSM. The best possible boost for U.S. factories would be if Trump pulled back on trade hostilities with China and achieved a trade deal, Brusuelas said.

"Right now, the recession risks are more policy-driven, and if policy does not change or the trade and finance war with China escalates, then the manufacturing recession will become a broader and deeper contraction that threatens to spill over into other areas of the economy," he said.

Trump, who promised voters a manufacturing renaissance, has yet to acknowledge the sector's bleak condition.

"We're restoring the glory of American manufacturing," the president said Tuesday in Pennsylvania, a state that has lost 5,600 factory jobs so far this year.

In fact, many economists say they're nervous that the government has fewer options to juice the economy than it has in the past. The short-term interest rate that the Fed controls is barely above 2%, giving it far less room to stimulate growth in the event of a downturn. Before the Great Recession in 2007, the Fed's rate was more than twice that level.

And the widening budget deficit, on track to hit \$1 trillion by 2022, also leaves the government with little room to maneuver.

"It is very uncharacteristic — very unusual — to be running larger budget deficits every year," said Tim Quinlan, an economist at Wells Fargo. "The federal government is not in a very strong position to offer a fiscal response in the event that it's needed."

Consumers could also pull back on spending later this year if hiring slows and wage gains slow. Employers have already reduced, on average, the number of hours worked for employees in the second quarter, which cuts into paychecks.

And if Trump imposes tariffs on all \$300 billion of Chinese goods by mid-December, as he says he plans to do, American consumers will pay more for such things as laptops, cellphones, video game consoles and clothing.

At the same time, many economists say they think consumers can withstand the headwinds. Household debt, as a percentage of income, is much lower than it was before the Great Recession. And lower interest rates make it easier to pay off debts.

That's likely to sustain U.S. growth, though at a slower pace.

"Consumers' financial health has improved, and even in the case of an employment and income shock, they're going to remain resilient enough to withstand the shock," said Alexander Lin, U.S. economist at Bank of America Merrill Lynch.

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Associated Press writer Morgan Lee contributed to this report from Santa Fe.

Whistleblower accuses GE of fraud, misleading investors

By CATHY BUSSEWITZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A whistleblower who warned regulators about Bernard Madoff's Ponzi scheme is now accusing General Electric of misleading investors, sending the company's stock on a downward spiral.

Investigator Harry Markopolos accused GE on Thursday of engaging in accounting fraud worth \$38 billion, saying the company is hiding massive losses and heading for bankruptcy.

The issues he outlined lie primarily in GE's troubled Capital unit, a financial services division often seen as a black hole in the company. The Capital unit holds commercial and personal loans, as well as insurance policies that include coverage of long-term care.

In his report, Markopolos suggests that an accounting rule change for insurance liabilities and a significant lack of reserves to cover long-term care liabilities will push GE to take a \$29 billion hit.

GE called Markopolos's claims unsubstantiated and meritless, saying its reserves are well-supported and the company undergoes rigorous testing annually to ensure its reserves are adequate.

"GE operates at the highest level of integrity and stands behind its financial reporting," the company said in a statement. "We remain focused on running our businesses every day, following the strategic path we have laid out."

Boston-based GE's shares closed Thursday down \$1.02, or more than 11%, at \$8.01.

In an apparent move to underscore management's confidence in the conglomerate's future, GE reported after the close of trading that its CEO, Larry Culp, had bought about 250,000 shares of GE stock.

Markopolos disclosed that an unnamed hedge fund paid him for access to his GE report before it was released, revealing that he will be paid through a percentage of the trading profits. Asked about the potential conflict of interest, he told CNBC "I need to get paid. I have a family to support."

Markopolos first became suspicious of GE's accounting when he attended industry luncheons where portfolio managers and analysts said they didn't believe GE's numbers could be true because they met or beat earnings estimates every quarter, year after year.

He said the \$15 billion hit GE took two years ago when it miscalculated the cost of caring for people who lived longer than expected was "a nasty market surprise and it's about to get \$29 billion worse." He said GE should have taken action to boost its reserves years earlier to cover its unfunded long-term care liability, but instead waited until a new management team was in place.

GE is not alone in underestimating the reserves needed to cover long-term liabilities. Private companies and public pension funds alike have struggled to keep up with the growing cost of providing health care to an aging population that's living longer than expected.

"You have to be really kind of smart about the way you write these policies to begin with," said Joshua Aguilar, an equity analyst at Morningstar who follows GE. "Your hands are tied. You can't go back and rewrite premiums."

Morningstar has long believed that GE's assumptions about how it would cover those liabilities were too aggressive, but that's an industrywide problem.

"Does it rise to the level of fraud? My answer to that is, 'No,'" Aguilar said.

Markopolos also said GE misclassified its investment in Baker Hughes, an oil and gas business. He said that by misclassifying its ownership stake, GE hid a \$9.1 billion loss last year. GE said it disclosed potential losses of \$7.4 billion related to Baker Hughes in a recent federal filing and stood by how it classified the business.

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Independent of Markopolos' report, GE Capital was already facing investigations, including an inquiry by the Securities and Exchange Commission about the previous \$15 billion hit.

Markopolos is known for his role as the whistleblower who warned the SEC about Madoff's Ponzi scheme, but those claims were initially ignored by regulators.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Friday, Aug. 16, the 228th day of 2019. There are 137 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On August 16, 1977, Elvis Presley died at his Graceland estate in Memphis, Tennessee, at age 42.

On this date:

In 1812, Detroit fell to British and Indian forces in the War of 1812.

In 1858, a telegraphed message from Britain's Queen Victoria to President James Buchanan was transmitted over the recently laid trans-Atlantic cable.

In 1861, President Abraham Lincoln issued Proclamation 86, which prohibited the states of the Union from engaging in commercial trade with states that were in rebellion — i.e., the Confederacy.

In 1920, Ray Chapman of the Cleveland Indians was struck in the head by a pitch thrown by Carl Mays of the New York Yankees; Chapman died the following morning.

In 1948, baseball legend Babe Ruth died in New York at age 53.

In 1962, The Beatles fired their original drummer, Pete Best, replacing him with Ringo Starr.

In 1987, 156 people were killed when Northwest Airlines Flight 255 crashed while trying to take off from Detroit; the sole survivor was 4-year-old Cecelia Cichan (SHEE'-an).

In 1991, Pope John Paul II began the first-ever papal visit to Hungary.

In 1999, the U.S. version of the quiz show "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire," hosted by Regis Philbin, began a limited two-week run on ABC.

In 2000, delegates to the Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles formally nominated Al Gore for president.

In 2002, terrorist mastermind Abu Nidal reportedly was found shot to death in Baghdad, Iraq; he was 65.

In 2003, Idi Amin, the former dictator of Uganda, died in Jiddah, Saudi Arabia; he was believed to have been about 80.

Ten years ago: Negotiators averted a strike against the San Francisco Bay Area's commuter rail hours before a midnight deadline. Y.E. Yang of South Korea became the first Asian-born player to win one of golf's majors with a three-stroke win over Tiger Woods at the PGA Championship in Chaska, Minnesota. Usain Bolt ran to another world record, winning the 100-meter race in 9.58 seconds at the world championships in Berlin.

Five years ago: Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon declared a state of emergency and imposed a curfew in the St. Louis suburb of Ferguson, where police and protesters repeatedly clashed in the week since a black teenager was shot to death by a white police officer. Pope Francis beatified 124 Korean martyrs during an open-air Mass in Seoul.

One year ago: Aretha Franklin, the undisputed "Queen of Soul," died of pancreatic cancer at the age of 76. Newspapers across the country pushed back against President Donald Trump's attacks on "fake news" with a coordinated series of editorials in defense of a free press. The Pentagon said the Veterans Day military parade ordered up by President Trump wouldn't happen in 2018 and that officials were now looking at 2019; the announcement came hours after reports that the parade would have an estimated cost of \$92 million, more than three times the price first suggested by the White House.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Ann Blyth is 91. Actor Gary Clarke is 86. Actress Julie Newmar is 86. Actress-singer Ketty Lester is 85. Actor John Standing is 85. College Football Hall of Famer and NFL player Bill Glass is 84. Actress Anita Gillette is 83. Country singer Billy Joe Shaver is 80. Movie director Bruce Beresford is

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79. Actor Bob Balaban is 74. Ballerina Suzanne Farrell is 74. Actress Lesley Ann Warren is 73. Rock singer-musician Joey Spampinato is 71. Actor Marshall Manesh is 69. Actor Reginald VelJohnson is 67. Former TV host Kathie Lee Gifford is 66. Rhythm-and-blues singer J.T. Taylor is 66. Movie director James Cameron is 65. Actor Jeff Perry is 64. Rock musician Tim Farriss (INXS) is 62. Actress Laura Innes is 62. Singer Madonna is 61. Actress Angela Bassett is 61. Actor Timothy Hutton is 59. Actor Steve Carell (kuh-REHL') is 57. Former tennis player Jimmy Arias is 55. Actor-singer Donovan Leitch is 52. Actor Andy Milder is 51. Actor Seth Peterson is 49. Country singer Emily Robison (The Dixie Chicks) is 47. Actor George Stults is 44. Singer Vanessa Carlton is 39. Actor Cam Gigandet is 37. Actress Agnes Bruckner is 34. Singer-musician Taylor Goldsmith (Dawes) is 34. Actress Cristin Milioti is 34. Actor Shawn Pyfrom is 33. Country singer Ashton Shepherd is 33. Actor Okieriete Onaodowan is 32. Country singer Dan Smyers (Dan & Shay) is 32. NHL goalie Carey Price is 32. Actor Kevin G. Schmidt is 31. Actress Rumer Willis is 31. Actor Parker Young is 31. Rapper Young Thug is 28. Actor Cameron Monaghan is 26. Singer-pianist Greyson Chance is 22.

Thought for Today: "Genius is the ability to act rightly without precedent — the power to do the right thing the first time." — Elbert Hubbard, American writer (1856-1915).